

Girl escapes kidnap bid in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least five children were abducted in Santhia upazila yesterday afternoon, said a victim who claimed to have escaped from the kidnappers.

However, police and upazila administration could not immediately confirm who were kidnapped but said a drive was going on to trace the kidnappers' vehicle.

The victim, Meem Khatun, 12, daughter of Md Ratan of Nariagodai village and a student of class five at Nariagodai Primary School, was handed over to her father.

Quoting Meem, Jahangir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Santhia police, said a black microbus stopped in front of her school when she came outside. Passengers of the vehicle forced her into the microbus making her unconscious with a handkerchief around 11:00am, she added.

The victim further said she got back her consciousness when the microbus reached Dhulauri point and jumped from the vehicle when it slowed down. The microbus went towards Aitakula Road, said the OC, adding, Meem ran to Demra Road in panic where locals rescued her.

"According to Meem's statement, four other unconscious girls were inside the microbus. But she could not identify any of them," the OC said.

The law enforcers alerted nearby police stations and a drive was going on to trace the microbus, the OC told this newspaper when this report was being filed.

Talking to The Daily Star, Md Jahangir Alam, upazila nirbahi officer, however said there was no report of any missing children in Santhia. He added they have informed all education institutions about the matter.

"All the education institutions in the upazila have been alerted. If any student is found missing, the school authorities concerned will report to us immediately," the UNO added.

AL leaders

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the Dhaka Metropolitan Police asked them to arrange it on Saturday during the weekend, at Suhrawardy Udyan. "That's why we have decided to hold the rally on Saturday."

The party will announce its future course of action and strategy at its Saturday's rally, Fakhrul said.

He said police are now hesitant as the Awami League-led 14-party grand alliance would hold a meeting at Mohanagar Natya Mancha the same day. "Their venue is far from ours. So, we cannot understand what the problem is if our programme is held on the same day."

Fakhrul said they held a joint meeting of their party for making the rally a success.

The BNP leader declined to comment on whether leaders of other political parties -- especially those who are trying to unite against the government -- would be invited to the rally.

Meanwhile, a BNP delegation, led by its Publicity Affairs Secretary Shahid Uddin Chowdhury Annie, met the DMP authorities around 1:00pm to know about the permission for their rally.

Annie told The Daily Star that they gave the DMP authorities an alternative proposal for holding their rally at Suhrawardy Udyan on Sunday. "The authorities would inform them about their decision later. They asked us to hold the rally at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, on Saturday."



Some of the Bangladeshi returnees from Libya at the airport yesterday. Story on page 1.

PHOTO: STAR

Wounded Tigers

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driven home in light of the fact that since Shakib's debut in August 2006, Bangladesh had played just five matches without the two stalwarts that revolutionised the country's cricket -- the last instance coming in March 2014. They lost three of those matches, the last win coming in November 2013.

But far from being daunted by the series of unfortunate events, not least of which was the heat in which they have had to play, Bangladesh's bowlers and fielders responded with a rousing display that effectively added 20 runs on the board.

It was off-spinner Mehedi Hasan Miraz who drew first blood when opener Fakhar Zaman advanced in the first over and tried to clear mid on, where Rubel Hossain took a brilliant leaping catch. In the next over, Mustafizur trapped Babar Azam leg-before, and returned in the fourth over to have Pakistan skipper Sarfraz Ahmed chasing an off-cutter to be brilliantly caught by keeper Mushfiqur. Mushfiqur, struggling with his ribs and fatigue, went off the field at the end of the 15th over and handed the gloves to Liton Das.

A 67-run stand between Imam-ul-Haq and danger man Shoaib Malik was ended when Rubel got Malik to play uppishly towards midwicket, where skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza took a Super-man style leaping take, sparking the fielders into life. There was then a surprise, as part-timer Soumya Sarkar -- used to fill up the fifth bowler's quota -- had Shadab Khan caught behind off the hook with a gentle, medium-paced bouncer. Another partnership took shape between Imam, who scored his third ODI fifty, and Asif Ali. It was however ended on 71 in the 40th over, stumped off Mehedi after being dropped by Liton casually off Mustafizur in the 34th over.

When Mahmudullah had Imam bowled in the next over for 83 to bring the score to 167 for seven, it was all but over for Pakistan. Mustafizur took the next two wickets, having Hasan Ali and Mohammad Nawaz caught. Shaheen Shah Afridi and Junaid Khan denied Mustafizur his fourth five-wicket haul, but they could not deny Bangladesh a famous win that was a shining example of character under extreme duress.

Earlier, Bangladesh's innings started in customary fashion with the first three wickets falling before the end of the fifth over and with just 12 runs on the board. It was an unhappy and incompetent return to the ODI fold for Soumya Sarkar, who was the first to depart at the first opportunity to be irresponsible. He reacted late to a Junaid Khan bouncer in the third over but went through with the shot anyway, the top edge making it as far as the hands of square leg.

Mominul Haque, in for Shakib, hit a sweetly timed four in the next over off Shaheen Shah Afridi, but was beaten by pace and lost his stumps through a gap between bat and pad off the next delivery. While the ball snuck in for Mominul, it passed Liton's outside edge on way to rattle timber in the next over when Junaid came around the wicket and the batsman decided to play to mid on instead of straight.

Mushfiqur, Bangladesh's big hope at the top, then started the rebuilding job that has become a compulsory part of his job description of late and found an able ally in Mohammad Mithun. From Liton's dismissal in the second ball of the fifth over till the end of the 14th, the pair scored just 36 runs with the odd boundary here, the edged four there. But by that time the new ball, aided by a smattering of grass, had lost its venom and the pair continued unfettered on a good batting wicket. In the 16th over, Mushfiqur hit two fours to greet leg-spinner Shadab Khan, in the process bringing up the half-century stand. Even though the next 10 overs did not produce any boundaries, the duo made full use of the middle overs and still managed to score 53 runs in those boundary-less overs.

Mushfiqur completed his 30th ODI fifty off his 68th delivery in the 26th over. Mithun followed suit in the 29th over, striking a boundary off Hasan Ali and bringing up the second half-century of the tournament and his career off his 66th ball.

Five overs later, however, a rush of blood ended Mithun's innings as he slogged Hasan Ali across the line, just as he had done against Sri Lanka in the tournament opener after a similarly vital partnership, to end a 144-run fourth-wicket stand. He left for an 84-ball 60 with four boundaries, but Bangladesh were not out of trouble at 156 for four. Imrul Kayes was out leg-before to Shadab 11 runs later. Mahmudullah came in and dominated and added 30 with Mushfiqur, but there was to be no century for Mushfiqur as he became the first Bangladesh batsman to be out for 99 when he was caught behind looking for the coveted single off Shaheen Shah. He hit 116 balls and hit nine fours in his match-turning innings.

Mehedi contributed 12 before he became Junaid's third victim, and the pacer -- playing his first game of the tournament in place of Mohammad Amir -- picked up his fourth four-wicket haul when he bowled Mahmudullah for a 31-ball 25. Mashrafe hit the innings' maiden six in penultimate over off Hasan, but the over also produced two more wickets as Rubel Hossain was run out and Mashrafe caught at long on, ending the innings with 11 balls left unused.

Actions against Rohingya

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committee hearing on "Burma's Genocide Against the Rohingya" in Washington DC yesterday.

He said the Burmese military made no distinction between men, women and children, adding one woman recalled watching as "newborns and [children] who could barely walk, they threw them in the river..." while she desperately hid in bushes across the river.

"It is hard to hear these accounts without feeling queasy. But we must catalogue these atrocities so that we can one day hold the perpetrators accountable."

Greta Van Susteren of the Voice of America and Stephen Pomper of the International Crisis Group testified during the hearing.

Commending the US administration for speaking out against these atrocities and humanitarian assistances, Royce asked it to go further.

"To all who have met with Rohingya refugees, who have heard these accounts, it is clear that these crimes amount to genocide," he said, adding, "Confronting genocide of the Rohingya is a moral issue and a national security issue. No one is more secure when fanaticism and unchecked violence are growing in this part of the world."

"The trauma of the refugees' violent departure from Myanmar is fresh. Pregnant women carry their babies not knowing if that child was conceived through their marriage or as a result of a gang rape by the Myanmar military," said Greta Van Susteren in her testimony before the House of Foreign Affairs Committee.

Greta, who made four trips to investigate the atrocities against Rohingya and for on-the-ground reporting for VOA, said children had witnessed unspeakable brutality and lived with those memories. "I heard many people in the refugee camp speak about the Myanmar military's use of machetes to kill or maim."

"The Rohingya people may look different from us, espouse a different culture, and practice a different religion. But fundamentally, they just want to live their lives and raise their children in a secure, peaceful home. They want to be healthy. They want to be educated. They want to work. These refugees in the camps are considered to be the lucky ones because they escaped."

She also screened a short video during her testimony.

Stephen Pomper, the US programme director of International Crisis Group, said in his testimony the civilian govern-

ment's direct responsibility for the 2017 violence in northern Rakhine was limited by the fact that it did not have oversight or control of the armed forces, nor visibility of what they were doing.

"Nevertheless, it is also now clear that the civilian government, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, is part of the problem -- not only for failing to speak out, but for failing to curb anti-Rohingya hate speech in the state media, denying that human rights abuses have taken place, providing cover to the military, and perpetuating policies in Rakhine State," he said.

He suggested that the United States mount pressure through sanctions, continue to engage diplomatically and whatever assistance it was able to offer to international accountability efforts, it should also recognise that these alone were not likely to change the direction of the government's handling of the Rohingya crisis.

"We will never again have the opportunity, unfortunately, to prevent the atrocities of summer 2017. Through the right balance of pressure and engagement, however, the United States now has an opportunity to try to prevent them from happening again, while providing some measure of justice to the victims," he added.

From dream to nightmare

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Of the 234 Bangladeshis in Libya, 157 were repatriated yesterday and the rest will be repatriated soon. 10 of those repatriated were sick and were seen by a doctor at the airport who prescribed them some medicines, according to the ministry.

After completing the immigration procedures around 5:00pm, they came out of the terminal in groups of threes and fours -- all of them carrying small handbags each in stark contrast to the other passengers from elsewhere who walked with trolleys full of luggage.

Dadan could not say for sure on which date he flew, but said that he reached Dubai before Ramadan last year. From there, he was flown to Turkey and then to Tripoli, the capital of Libya.

"I was not charged any money before leaving for Libya. The brokers told me that I would have to pay them Tk 5 lakh once I arrive in Libya," Dadan told The Daily Star at the airport.

After arriving in Tripoli, members of a Bangladeshi trafficking gang in Libya took the new arrivals to a room with dozens of other Bangladeshis.

"The brokers asked me to call my wife and ask her to pay Tk 5 lakh. I called my wife and she paid the money," Dadan said.

As soon as the money was paid, he said, he was handed over to a group of Libyans, who began to torture him.

"They used to beat me and demanded money. They even made me call my wife to [let her know the extent of] how I was tortured.

"After a few days, my father died. I told them about it but they said it was a normal matter and did not bother to release me."

After a few weeks, his wife managed Tk 3 lakh and paid it to the members of the gang in Bangladesh.

Asked how his wife managed money, he said he had no idea.

Toriqul fights

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But after attending the exam for three hours, Toriqul was in pain and had to leave without completing it. He said he requested the authorities to allow him special provisions for taking the exams, but the authorities did not accept it.

"I applied on Tuesday for allowing me to take the exam at the University Medical Centre. The doctors at the medical centre approved my application considering my condition. I don't know why the university authorities did not accept it," said a frustrated Toriqul, also a quota movement leader.

"I cannot even sit properly for a couple of minutes without feeling pain. How can I take the four-hour exam at a stretch like others?" He said the next exam is on October 2.

Contacted, M Babul Islam, exam controller, said, "We approve such applications if a student is suffering from an infectious disease."

Meanwhile, students of the university urged the authorities to allow Toriqul to take the remaining five exams at the medical centre.

This correspondent went to the vice chancellor's office around noon for his comments, but one of the officials there said he was at a meeting. The VC also could not be reached over the phone.

In the afternoon, an office secretary answered the phone and said the VC would be available in the evening. He was still not available for comments till filing of this report around 8:00pm.

Two killed

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adding that all the dead and injured were from Sajapur village.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Qaiyum mourned the loss of his wife and daughter as he lay on his hospital bed. "I left Savar with my wife almost 25 years ago. We lived in Dhaka where I worked as a rickshaw puller. We were going back to our village on the truck, driven by my brother's son, to fulfill my dream of living in the village with the rest of my family permanently. That dream was snatched away from me by this tragedy," he said.

Monirul Islam, a fire fighter at Bogura Fire Services and Civil Defense, who rushed to the spot along with the other fighters and later took part in the rescue operation, said, "The mother and daughter were sitting on the iron-rod angles along with their furniture while the others were in the driver's cabin."

The truck was carrying approximately 10 tonnes of iron-rod angles, said Md Bazlur Rashid, senior station officer of Bogura Fire Services and Civil Defense.

Witnesses told police that the truck driver seemed fatigued and sleepy which may have been the reason he lost control over the steering, leading to the accident.

Sub-Inspector of Shahjahanpur Police Station Shahjahan Ali said the bodies were still in hospital and yet to be handed over to family.

ACC quizzes

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Bhattacharya, ACC's public relations officer.

The anti-graft watchdog quizzed them in connection with the "Tk 4 crore suspicious transaction in the account of a very important personality of the country".

Speaking anonymously, an ACC official said the very important person is former chief justice SK Sinha.

Reporters approached the six for comments as they were leaving the ACC interrogation cell, but they left in a hurry without responding.

People in power

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power are organised and have black money. They will not allow you and me to do so [forging a national unity]," he said at a discussion with professionals.

The veteran lawyer, also president of Gonoforum, hoped there would be a popular uprising against the "undemocratic" government.

Jatiya Oikya Prokriya organised the discussion titled "Essentiality of a polls-time nonpartisan government" at the city's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Dr Kamal said Oikya Prokriya would have to organise the people to achieve its target of forging a national unity.

"We will have to forge a national unity like the one we had forged in 1971 to snatch the country's independence."

He said Awami League leaders before the January 5, 2014, national election had said they were holding the polls to ensure continuation of constitutional rule. They had also pledged to hold another election following discussion with all the stakeholders, but they forgot all about it, he added.

The Gonoforum chief alleged that the government was destroying the country in the name of a democratic rule.

He urged all to visit every villages and wards to make people understand that Jatiya Oikya Prokriya's aim was to ensure welfare of the people.

Speaking at the programme, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Zainul Abedin blasted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her recent comment that Dr Kamal

"Maybe she sold whatever land she had. Or my brothers sold their land. My phone was taken away. I had no way to call home," said Dadan, who used to be a construction worker before leaving for Libya.

Before getting arrested by Libyan police five months back, he was taken to a coastal area by the brokers and was kept in a room with over a dozen other Bangladeshis. He could not say if they were meant for boats heading for Europe.

Tanvir Islam, an official at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, posted at the expatriates' welfare desk at the airport, said most of the returnees went to Libya on social visas.

Abdul Haque, another returnee from the country, said he boarded a ship meant for Europe from the Libyan coast via the Mediterranean Sea.

However, after 17 hours of him boarding, the Libyan coastguards intercepted the boat and arrested those on board.

Over 36,000 Bangladeshis returned home during the Libya crisis in 2011.

During that time, some 70,000 Bangladeshis were working there. However, the numbers of those currently employed in that country could not be verified.

Afterwards, Bangladesh had banned travel of Bangladeshi workers to Libya in early 2015. However, researchers said brokers had been arranging the passage of Bangladeshis to Libya via Dubai, Turkey or via Dubai and Egypt.

"They [Bangladeshi workers] were charged high amounts ranging from \$8,000 to \$18,000 [around Tk 600,000-15,00,000]. The brokers had promised them immigration to Europe," said Shakirul Islam, executive director of Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Program, who conducted a research on the matter in 2017.

and former president Badruddoza Chowdhury joined forces with corrupt people to fight corruption.

BNP Vice Chairman and former FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoosaid an anarchic situation was prevailing in the country in the name of democracy.

Prof CR Abrar of Dhaka University said why the government was afraid of holding a free and fair election if it thought that it carried out a lot of development works.

Former caretaker government adviser Mainul Hossain said it was very unfortunate that those who came to power through a "voter-less election" and now plundering money was terming others corrupt and thief.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President ASM Abdur Rob, Prof Nurul Amin Bepari of DU, Gano Shasthya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, SCBA Secretary AM Mahbub Uddin Khokon, former vice president of Dhaka University Central Students Union Sultan Mohammad Munsur Ahmed, senior journalist Mahfuz Ullah, Gonoforum leaders Subrata Chowdhury and Mostafa Mohsin Montu, among others, spoke at the programme. They expressed solidarity with Dr Kamal for forging a national unity.

Mentioning that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman were convicted in graft cases, the prime minister on Monday said Dr Kamal and Badruddoza Chowdhury joined forces with corrupt people to fight corruption.

She was addressing a civic reception accorded to her by the US Awami League in New York's Hilton Hotel.

Let's sit for discussion

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on September 30 or at any time convenient for the Editors' Council.

Mahfuz Anam, who is now abroad, welcomed the invitation. "We will respond to the letter soon after talking with our members," he said over phone last night.

In a statement, the DRU said, "The information minister has sent a letter and invited the DRU leaders to hold talks for an immediate and acceptable solution to the problem. The law and IT ministers will be present [at the meeting]. At the same time, it was requested to cancel the programme [human chain]."

So the DRU has decided to suspend its today's programme. The platform will decide its next course of action after the discussion with the ministry, the statement said.

Digital Security Bill 2018 was passed in parliament with a harsh provision allowing police officials to search or arrest anyone without any warrant.

The bill got through by voice vote amid opposition from a number of Jatiya Party lawmakers, ignoring concerns of journalists, owners of media

houses and rights activists over some of its sections.

Journalists and rights activists have expressed worries over the new law, saying it was passed without addressing their concerns.

They also said the act goes against the main spirit of the constitution and will restrict free-thinking, freedom of speech and freedom of expression. It will also impede independent journalism.

'Drug peddler'

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Hospital where doctors declared him dead, he added.

Malek was wanted in 11 cases filed with different police stations, said Alamgir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station.

Rab also claimed to have recovered one pistol and a magazine, three bullets, Tk 2500 in cash and 800 yaba pills from the spot.

With this, at least 235 alleged drug traders and peddlers were killed since the anti-narcotics drive began on May 4. Most of them were killed in so-called shootouts involving police or Rab.