



These illegal fruit shops have blocked the entrance to Jatrabari park, undoing initiatives to increase the charm of this rare open space in Dhaka. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

#### DEATH IN ACCIDENT

Bus owner, driver asked to pay Tk 1cr to family

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka tribunal directed owner and driver of Suprobhat Paribahan Ltd to pay Tk 1 crore as compensation to the family of Pintu Sheikh, who was run over and killed by one of its buses in 2016.

Judge AHM Habibur Rahman Bhuiyan of the Claims Tribunal of Dhaka gave the landmark judgment under Sections 128, 129 and 130 of Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983.

This is the first ever judgment in the country under such Ordinance, said Dhaka District Additional Public Prosecutor Bimal Samaddar.

The judge directed bus owner Nurul Islam and its driver Sohag Miah to pay the amount within 60 days, in default of which the victim's wife, daughter and other heirs can realise the amount through the proper court.

Pintu Sheikh (28), an employee of Asian Electronics, was run over by a bus of Suprobhat Paribahan around 3:00pm on September 13, 2016 in front of Utrara Bank Ltd in the city's Rampura DIT Road when he was on a bicycle.

The victim was declared dead at DMCH.

Following the accident, the family filed a case on January 5 of 2017, claiming Tk 2,77,48,256 as compensation from six people, including bus owner and its driver.

## Trafficking in LEGAL GARB

7 victims, who returned from Kyrgyzstan after 8-month-long captivity, share their ordeal

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and DIPAN NANDY

They had valid visas, training and work permits.

But they were either sold out or held captive by the employer once they reached a foreign land.

These fortune seekers were promised by the recruiting agency that they will be paid a monthly salary of Tk 55,000 for working in factories for seven to eight hours with food and accommodation facilities.

However, the reality was not as beautiful as the promises. They were forced to work for 17 to 18 hours, for a monthly payment of Tk 10,000. If anyone failed to meet the 17-18 work hours for a day, they would be physically assaulted and subjected to unbearable torture.

The horrific tales came to the fore after seven Bangladeshis, who returned from Kyrgyzstan after eight-month-long captivity, shared their experiences. They managed to return last month with support from Rights Jashore and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

These seven victims are now passing days in misery due to pressure from lenders to return the money they borrowed to go abroad.

Amir Hamza, a Narayanganj resident, went to Kyrgyzstan by

**I have no money left. I don't know where to go with my wife and one-year-old child. Moreover, I am receiving threats from the agency members to not file a complaint. I feel utterly helpless.**

**AMIR HAMZA**  
Trafficking Victim

**The agencies' act is a kind of labour trafficking through a legal channel. The government should bring all those responsible to book and ensure justice to the victims.**

**CR ABRAR**  
RMMRU Executive Director

paying Tk 3.10 lakh to the agency, which he gathered by selling land and borrowing money from relatives.

"I have no money left. I don't know where to go with my wife and one-year-old child," Hamza told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Moreover, I am receiving threats from the agency members to not file a complaint. I feel utterly helpless."

Like Hamza, 14 other Bangladeshis left the country for Kyrgyzstan to change their fortune.

Only seven of them have managed to return home, while seven others still suffer in the foreign land.

Another fortune seeker Md Waliullah, who was also in Kyrgyzstan, said he had a valid visa, work permit and even a smart card issued by the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

"But upon reaching Kyrgyzstan, we came to know that the recruiting agency sold us for USD 8,300 to the garment factory owner there. When we refused to work for long hours and tried to return to the country, Md Ibrahim, the factory owner, told us that he will only allow that if we pay him back," he said.

This newspaper tried to contact Ibrahim or locate the factory, but none of the returnees was able to provide any relevant information.

Mehedi Hasan, an auto-rickshaw driver in Brahmanbaria, said he sold out his mother's jewellery and three cattle to collect the money to go to Kyrgyzstan.

"But I have lost everything in the process," he lamented.

Seven other Bangladeshis, who are still in captivity in Kyrgyzstan, were identified as Shariful Islam, Alamgir Hossain, Delower Hossain,

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## 'Why are we struggling for fuel?'

Speakers ask at roundtable on power, energy crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Why did the government not enhance the exploration capacity of Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex) since independence, asked speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

They also wanted to know what the power subsidy was used for.

The roundtable, titled "Power and Energy Crisis: Citizen Thoughts", was organised by Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Dr Anu Muhammad, former professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University, said, "For the last 20 years, we have been hearing that Bapex has no exploration capability, and we need help from international oil companies. But enhancing capability needs proper planning. Did we ever take such initiatives?"

While explaining the reasons behind leaving energy sources unexplored, Anu said it is a ploy to give businesses to private companies and receive commissions by importing LNG (liquefied natural gas).

"Over Tk 90,000 crore subsidies were spent in capacity building in the power

### QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE EVENT

Why is Bapex inactive?

What was the power subsidy used for?

Why no initiative taken to increase production or explore new gas fields?

Why such slow progress in sea exploration?

sector, but we could not use the maximum capacity in the last 11 years. Of the payment, only 12 companies got about Tk 60,000 crore," said the eminent economist.

"When the government passed the indemnity act on power in 2010, we said the government wanted to do something illegal. But what the government did afterwards was beyond our imagination," he added.

In the keynote presentation, energy expert Badrul Imam said the main

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Govt gives directives to save power at public offices

BSS, Dhaka

The government has issued several directives to save electricity at public offices, aiming to tackle the power and fuel crisis prevailing across the globe.

The directives include using LED lights and painting walls with appropriate colours to brighten areas; using power-saving lighting system at common spaces such as stairs, wash-rooms, waiting rooms and corridors; maintaining proper lighting level as per building code; keeping electric bulbs clean; and ensuring maximum usage of daylight, said a press release yesterday.

It also directed to keep the temperature of air-conditioners (AC) at 25 degree Celsius or above, keep all windows and doors closed while using the AC, use double-glazed glass or curtain for windows, keep AC-filter clean, service ACs at least once a year, examine for pipe or duct leakage of ACs, and use power-saving and inverter-based ACs and fridges, it added.

Besides, the government also asked all public offices concerned to use power-saving fans, and keep computers on power-saving mode, according to the press release.

'They stole 500 bikes in 7 years'

DB arrests 5 members of motorbike-theft gang

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nur Mohammad used to work as a carpenter at a furniture shop in Dhaka's Jurain area. One day, he got introduced to Robin at a tea stall, and from then on, the two started looking for ways to earn some easy money.

At some point in their discussions, they had their "eureka" moment.

As per the plan, they made a special key for Suzuki Gixxer motorbikes, a key that would turn on any bike of that brand. The next course of action is quite obvious -- steal the bikes.

- Gang made special key to start bikes
- It stole bikes from Dhaka and sold them in rural areas
- Target locations Sonir Akhra, Gendaria, Jatrabari, Dhalpur, Demra, Wari, Jurain
- Gang posted vehicles' photos on Facebook to get customers
- Sold bikes worth Tk 2.5 lakh to 4 lakh for Tk 40,000 to 50,000

And so, a group was formed to steal motorbikes from the capital and sell them in rural areas of Dhaka's nearby districts. In the last seven years, the gang has stolen at least 500 motorbikes.

Police's detective branch (DB) yesterday disclosed this information after five members, including the ring leader, of the inter-district bike-theft gang were arrested.

The arrestees are ringleader Nur Mohammad, 26, his right-hand man Robin, 23, Sajal, 18, Monir, 22, and Akash, 22.

The latter three were responsible for arranging customers, Mahfuzur Rahman, assistant commissioner of DB (Wari), told The Daily Star.

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## Mismanagement, graft to blame Says Fakhrul on price hike of essentials

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the prices of essentials are going up alarmingly due to the government's "corruption" and "mismanagement".

"The management of the essential consumer goods market is held hostage by a syndicate of some corrupt businessmen..." he said.

He was speaking at a press conference arranged at BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Fakhrul said the government has been spending public money imprudently on unnecessary projects, creating an economic crisis in the country.

He alleged that the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has been indulging in corruption by selling fuel at high prices while thousands of crores of taka are being siphoned off from the power sector.

The BNP leader urged all to get united to oust the current government.

"This corrupt government has no accountability to people. They have become ruthlessly cruel and merciless as they are least bothered about the welfare of people."

He said when people are living in extreme miseries due to skyrocketing prices of the commodities, then ministers are making reckless comments, which is like rubbing salt in the wounds.



The road in front of Gulistan cinema hall has been completely occupied by hawkers, making it difficult for vehicles or pedestrians to pass. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Dengue death toll **17**

Total number of patients **4,081**

**414** still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **3,650**

**98** more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

**PRAYER TIMING**  
AUGUST 18

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4:25 12:45 4:45 6:38 8:00  
JAMAAT 5:00 1:15 5:00 6:41 8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION