

# Of brave cop on UN job

WASIM BIN HABIB

It was a heart-stopping moment. An angry mob was encircling a house of a young woman in Pleebo, Maryland County in Liberia, threatening to kill her.

Liberian police, though armed, failed to control the situation as throngs of Pleebo residents gathered there bringing allegation against the Liberian woman of killing a person using witchcraft.

At that moment, responding to a call for help from the cops, a Bangladeshi police officer, working at the UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia as an UN police officer showed up with his team and rescued the woman from the violent crowd.

The rescue operation, carried out by Faruque Hossain and his team was no less than a thriller movie, and sets an example of gallantry, occurred on January 4 this year. It earned him commendation from the

United Nations Police (UNPOL) and Liberian local government authorities.

"We got information around 11:00am that around 1,000 residents of Pleebo surrounded a 29-year-old woman. The local Liberian police sought our help as they failed to control the crowd," Faruque, officer-in-charge of Faridpur Police Station in Pabna, told to The Daily Star.

Faruque and his partner UN police officer, Katarina Paulson, along with a team of Liberian police rushed there. Interestingly, they led the operation unarmed.

The crowd had tried to block their way but they got their vehicle through it, Faruque said. The mob had asked them to leave saying they would hold her trial, he added.

"We instantly made a decision to get her in the vehicle and speed away. As per the decision, I asked Paulson to turn the vehicle around. At one point, the Liberian police officers on his team cleared the way

and they got the victim into the car," he said.

The crowd then started throwing stones at their vehicle, damaging the windshield and the right rear window. But the team drove the woman to safety, at Harper Police Station, some 20 kilometres off the spot.

Faruque was awarded certificates by the Mayor of Pleebo for "expedient, gallant, and rapid response during the evacuation and rescue operation."

In a letter of appreciation, UNPOL said, "You have demonstrated your bravery in the face of danger, and your compassion as an international police officer, for the value of human life."

"Your dedication and commitment contribute not only to the success and achievement of the team's goal and objectives in support of our national counterparts but also to the implementation of mission mandate in general."



John Nielsen, police commissioner of UN mission in Liberia, reading out a letter of appreciation to Bangladeshi police officer Faruque Hossain, right, for his heroic act in saving a Liberian woman from a mob on January 4. The photo was taken on August 28 at the UN regional headquarters in Harper, Liberia. PHOTO: COURTESY

ELECTING GRAMEEN MD

## BB finds proposed law unclear

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The finance ministry should make clear the provision in the proposed Grameen Bank Act for electing the microcredit bank's managing director, the central bank has said.

Under the proposed Grameen Bank Act 2013, Grameen Bank, with approval from the Bangladesh Bank, will appoint its chief executive from a panel of three people recommended by a selection committee.

But the BB in its opinion has said the Act does not make it clear whether one name or three names would be sent to it for approval.

The registrar of the Joint Stock Companies and Firms and the industries ministry have also submitted their opinions about the draft.

In its opinion, the industries ministry said the qualification of the three directors, who are to be appointed by the government, should be made clear.

In the new Act, the finance ministry has sought to decrease the number of directors from four to three for meeting the quorum for a board meeting.

Neither the central bank nor the industries ministry has raised any question about the necessity to reduce the number of directors.

The Act will replace the Grameen Bank Ordinance 1983.

## 2 'robbers'

FROM PAGE 20 and Shariful Islam's house.

Mizanur, the elder brother, at that point managed to inform the police and some of his neighbouring relatives using his mobile phone of the incident, said Raipur Police Station OC Monirul Islam.

Neighbours surrounded the house hearing the noise made by all the family members before police came to the spot.

On sensing police presence, the gang started shooting at the people and police. The law enforcers returned fire, said OC Monirul.

The robbers attempted to escape, and two of them were chased down and beaten to death by the mob on the spot. The rest of the gang managed to flee.

The dead robbers could not be identified immediately, reported our Noakhali correspondent.

The bodies were sent to the Lakshimpur Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsies and police recovered a gun and two bullets from the scene, said the OC.

Sources confirmed that 10 of the victims were admitted to the Raipur Upazila Health Complex while the other five were taken to different private clinics.

## Zubaida

FROM PAGE 20 politics to bring a new image and fresh blood in the party.

In reply, Khaleda had only rendered a smile.

Zubaida has been living in London with her husband since 2008, when Tarique obtained bail from the Supreme Court on medical grounds in several cases filed by the last military-backed caretaker government.

Sources close to Zubaida told The Daily Star that she would not do anything without the consent of her husband and mother-in-law.

Mir Sharfat Ali, general secretary of Swachhhabak Dal, told The Daily Star that they thought Zubaida, as a member of the Zia family, would naturally enter political arena when needed. That is why they put her portrait along with the party icons.

BNP sources said a section of party leaders wanted to use Zubaida's "clean and good image" to boost the main opposition party.

They thought well-educated Zubaida had grown enough to join politics, as from behind the scene she had closely seen many rises and falls in politics, the sources added.

## OSD for 16 years!

FROM PAGE 1 allowance.

A good number of civil bureaucrats are made OSD usually because of political reasons or personal enmity.

But in the case of Kadar, a civil servant of the 1985 batch of Bangladesh Civil Service, the story is different.

He was made an OSD on June 23, 1997 for abnormal behaviour. The authorities brought charges of professional misconduct against him the next year, and they apparently forgot him since then.

Kadar lives alone in a small government flat on Bailey Road. He hardly comes out or talks with others. He doesn't meet anyone, not even his batch mates, and maintains secrecy about his movement.

"I tried to meet him several times but he didn't open the door of his flat. He talked from inside and said if he had opened the door somebody might kill him," said one of Kadar's batch mate, who is now a deputy secretary.

"He was a very brilliant

officer. We never imagined that we would find him in such a condition," said the bureaucrat asking not to be named.

When The Daily Star reporter called Kadar, who is from Char Fassion in Bhola, over his cell phone, he said he was in Barisal. He refused to talk about his retaining the post of OSD for such a long time.

The public administration ministry officials said Kadar had filed several petitions with the High Court for making him an OSD.

According to the procedure, a medical board is formed to examine an officer with such problems. And the government determines the fate of the officer on the basis of the medical report.

Successive governments have remained silent about Kadar on humanitarian grounds until recently when the public administration ministry decided to form a medical board to examine Kadar.

Abdus Sobhan Sikder,

senior secretary of the public administration ministry, said an official cannot continue as an OSD for such a long time.

However, in some cases, one can be kept as an OSD, and paid the salary and benefits on humanitarian grounds, he said.

"The medical board will examine him. His fate will be decided on the basis of the medical report," he told The Daily Star.

If the officer is found fit he will be brought back in service, otherwise not, Sikder said.

Successive governments have made many civil servants OSDs, and spent crores of taka in their salaries and benefits. This policy has deprived the country of their services for years, and left a negative impact on civil bureaucracy.

A total of 3,605 officials were made OSD between 2004 and 2012 and the nation had to spend Tk 150.9 crore in their salaries and benefits, according to a recent report of the public administration ministry.

## Newspaper reports

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The report was based on a diary, which the law enforcers recovered from the Nakhhalpara home of Ashraf.

Azab showed two pages of the diary that was printed with the report of Dainik Purbadesh.

According to the investigation agency, the names and addresses of 20 intellectuals were in Ashraf's diary and those of eight intellectuals, who were abducted during the Liberation War, were tick marked. Several prosecution witnesses have talked about the diary.

On January 13, 1972, Purbadesh published a report headed, "Help arrest the killer of intellectuals", with a photograph of Ashraf. Azab showed the picture during his 65-minute testimony yesterday.

Later, tribunal-appointed defence counsels Salma Hai Tuny and Abdus Shukur Khan completed his cross-examination before the

tribunal.

Yesterday, Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah presided over the proceedings and adjourned the case until September 1. Tribunal Chairman Justice Obaidul Hassan was on leave.

ALIM'S CASE Meanwhile, the tribunal rejected a petition by war crimes accused Abdul Alim seeking a recall of a tribunal order limiting the number of defence witnesses.

On August 21, the tribunal allowed three out of a list of 3,328 defence witnesses to defend the former BNP lawmaker but Alim's defence on August 27 filed a petition seeking recall of the order.

A total of 35 prosecution witnesses, including the investigation officer of the case, testified against Alim, who is facing 17 charges, including murder and genocide he allegedly committed during the Liberation War.

The first defence witness has already testified in the case.

## 'Mini-brain'

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Just a few millimetres across, the "cerebral organoids" are built up of layers of brain cells with defined regions that resemble those seen in immature, embryonic brains.

The scientists say the organoids will be useful for biologists who want to analyse how conditions such as schizophrenia or autism occur in the brain.

The organoids are also expected to be useful in the development and testing of drugs.

Researchers at the Institute of Molecular Biotechnology in Vienna started with stem cells and grew them into brain cells in a nourishing gel-like matrix that recreated conditions similar to those inside the human womb.

After several months the cells had formed spheres measuring about 3-4mm in diameter.

"The cerebral

organoids display discrete regions that resemble different areas of the early developing human brain. These include the dorsal cortex identity -- the dorsal cortex is the largest part of the human brain.

"They also include regions representing the ventral forebrain and even the immature retina," said Madeline Lancaster, who was first author of the paper published in Nature on Wednesday.

Jürgen Knoblich, who was part of the team that created the organoids, said that tests on the brain cells in the structures showed that they were functional.

He said the team's goals included growing larger organoids and modelling more brain diseases.

Knoblich added the intention of the research was not to grow replacement brain parts or an entire brain in culture.

## Ex-girlfriend

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pornography, according to reports in a respected South Korean newspaper.

The Chosun Ilbo said performers from a well-known orchestra and light music ensemble were arrested on August 17, accused of filming themselves having sex and then selling copies of the tapes.

While this breached North Korean anti-pornography laws, some of the musicians were also found to have Bibles in their possession and all were treated as political dissidents, according to the newspaper's unnamed source.

They were executed in public by machine gun fire three days later, reportedly as the rest of the Unhasu Orchestra and Wangjaesan Light Music Band were forced to watch.

In accordance with the country's rules on guilt by association, their families were then taken away to detention camps, according to the reports.

Among those killed was

said to be singer Hyon Song-wol, who reached an international audience when she won a Hungarian competition in 2005 and released the hit single "A Girl In The Saddle Of A Steed" -- often mistranslated as "Excellent Horse-Like Lady".

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met Hyon a decade ago, and they were reported to have been in a relationship until Kim's father Kim Jong-il said he disapproved.

The South Korean reports included images showing the dictator attending a concert given by Hyon and the groups on 8 August in Pyongyang, and there have been rumours that the couple continued their affair after both married other people.

The paper said Kim's current wife Ri Sol-ju was also a member of the Unhasu Orchestra before she married him. It said: "Whether she had any hand in the executions is unclear."

Quotations from another source, again unnamed, indicated that the executions

on 20 August were in keeping with the dictator's recent activities, and "show that he is fixated on consolidating his leadership". The source said: "Kim Jong-un has been viciously eliminating anyone who he deems a challenge to his authority."

While it is often impossible to verify reports coming out of the closed-off communist state, an authority on North Korean affairs and professor at Tokyo's Waseda University told the Daily Telegraph there seemed to be "a political reason" behind the killings.

Toshimitsu Shigemura told the paper: "If these people had only made pornographic videos, then it is simply not believable that their punishment was execution."

"They could have been made to disappear into the prison system there instead."

"There is a political reason behind this. Or, as Kim's wife once belonged to the same group, it is possible that these executions are more about Kim's wife," he said.

## Agri scientists not happy

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home, and attracted by greater opportunities abroad, at least 300 scientists went into self-retirement from the public research institutions under the Nars.

"The government has increased the retirement age of scientists working at Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) from 59 years to 67 years whereas, we've (agri-scientists) long been promised of such incentives but nothing has been done so far," Director General of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) Dr Md Syedul Islam told The Daily Star.

Dr Rafiqul Islam Mondal, who heads Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (BARI), the biggest of all agro-research institutions in the country, said the agriculture ministry has recently taken a list of 750 scientists working in the Bari to provide them with special increments in sala-

ries in recognition of their good jobs.

"But it is more important for us that the government addresses the issues like enhancement of agri-scientists' retirement age and giving them in situ promotions as in the public universities," said Rafiqul.

The Bari pursues research and development of as many as 203 crops grown in Bangladesh.

The other agro-research institutions are Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, Bangladesh Institute of Nuclear Agriculture, Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute, Soil Resources Development Institute, Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute, Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute, Bangladesh Forest Research Institute, Bangladesh Tea Research Institute and Bangladesh Sericulture Research and Training Institute.

Many scientists of these institutions told this corre-

spondent that they would refuse to accept any special increment in salaries and recreation benefits, as planned by the government, if incentives like increase of retirement age and in situ promotions are not announced.

Asked about agri-scientists decision of not accepting anything short of the previously promised incentives from the government, Barc Executive Chairman Dr Wais Kabir admitted that he has heard about the scientists' rejection of special increment.

"For the last four years, we've pleaded with the government and in turn it assured us of special incentives but to no avail. So, the heads of all the Nars institutions today (Thursday) once again reminded the government, through the agriculture secretary, of its promise," said Wais.

The scientists working in the 11 Nars institutions do not get promotion unless higher posts all vacant. This

has long been a serious disincentive, even prompting a Barc scientist to quit job and pursue a career in politics. And he is now a minister.

"But, if in situ promotion policy is followed as in the public universities, we'll get promoted on the basis of evaluation of our work after certain periods," explained one scientist.

At a reception Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina hosted on June 24, 2010 for the scientists who decoded jute genome, she said, "We will take special measures so that researchers do not face any trouble due to limitation of job tenure and limited salary."

Dr Maqsoodul Alam, the celebrated geneticist and man behind the country's success in jute research, said recently that scientists cannot pursue science as long their families have to worry about their poor earnings.

## 18th witness also tells

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gunshots at dawn on May 14, 1971. "I came out from my house. Hiding in a bush I saw Nizami, Asad, Quader and Sattar along with the Pakistani army and collaborators advancing to the village shooting indiscriminately," he said.

Johurul said he along with a number of fellow freedom fighters had run away from their village and returned to Rupshi Baugari after six to seven hours.

The witness further said he had identified the bodies of 50-60 people including Aken Fakir, Wafazuddin, Brozram, Upendranath and Jitendranath.

Sensing it was not safe for them to stay in Pabna, they had left for India in mid-June to receive training and

returned to Bangladesh after 41 days.

The witness also corroborated the testimony of those prosecution witnesses, who had testified against Nizami earlier.

Ainul Haque, ninth prosecution witness in the case, said four days after a meeting to form a peace committee on May 10 at Rupshi Govt Primary School, the Pakistani army massacred 300-400 people in Pabna.

Johurul said he had learned about that meeting from Ainul during the Liberation War in 1971.

Nizami, facing 16 war crimes charges for committing crimes against humanity during the war, was produced before the tribunal yesterday.

The proceeding of the case was adjourned until

September 1. QUASEM'S CASE

The tribunal yesterday deferred the date of giving an order on charge framing in the war crimes case against Jamaat leader Mir Quasem Ali until September 5.

The tribunal led by Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim with Justice Anwarul Haque fixed the new date after accepting a defence petition partially.

The defence said their senior lawyer Abdur Razzaq wanted to place arguments on their discharge petition. Since he was abroad and would be available on September 8, they prayed to the tribunal to adjourn the order on charge framing until the second session of September 8.

Opposing the petition, prosecutor Sultan Mahmud

Simon said there was no such provision in the relevant laws.

Accepting the prayer partially the tribunal said for the ends of justice, it allowed the defence petition. "Let the matter be fixed on September 5 for an order on charge framing. If the learned counsel appears before this tribunal in the meantime, we will allow him to argue on discharge petition," said Justice Selim.

The tribunal on August 21 fixed yesterday to decide about indicting Quasem on 14 charges of crimes against humanity committed during the war.

Meanwhile, the prosecution yesterday began placing arguments on charge framing against war crimes accused ATM Azharul Islam at the tribunal.