

# 5 children drown

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Five children drowned in ponds at Bahadurpara and Kalitala villages in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila yesterday afternoon.

Villagers of Bahadurpara said around 1:00pm some eight to 10 children went to a pond to have a bath while it was raining. Four kids drowned when they took a dip in the pond.

Hearing the others' hue and cry, locals rushed to the spot and recovered their bodies.

They are Fahim, 8, Rifat, 10, sons of Enamul Haque, Latifur Rahman, 10, son of Nazrul Islam and Nurul, 8, daughter of Chutu of Bahadurpara village.

Mostafizur Rahman, chairman of Jagannathpur Union Parishad, confirmed the incident.

A pall of gloom has descended on the village.

In another incident, a minor boy, Shakil, 7, son of Jamir Uddin, drowned in a pond at Kalitala village.

## Ershad

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any pressure on the media and will implement the policy after holding talks with everyone.

"Let the media broadcast the truth and learn to accept the truth," he said addressing the government.

Ershad said days of the two main parties as well as their chiefs have come to an end. And it will be his party which will be elected next, he said, urging the people to vote for his party in the next polls to bring a change in the country.

In his speech, he again asked BNP leaders to join his party, claiming that JP is the only party that believes in nationalism.

## 136 embark

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unwilling to go.

A flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines left Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport with the pilgrims at 8:30pm.

The religious affairs ministry and Hajj Agencies Association Bangladesh (Haab) made the arrangements with money collected from responsible Hajj agencies and Hajj Pilgrims' Welfare Fund, said Abul Malek, assistant Hajj officer.

"I was dejected as I could not perform Hajj last year. Now I am very happy as I am finally going to the holy place," Maulana Abdul Gafur, 62, a retired school teacher from Netrakona told The Daily Star.

## BCL men

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attacked him around 9:30pm. He was kicked and slapped, he said.

The victim said he might have been attacked because of his role against the killing of Saad by BCL men early this year.

The left-leaning student bodies, including his Chhatra Front, were very vocal against the murder in media and through street protests. Saad was beaten up on March 31, and he died the next day.

Meanwhile, the left-leaning student bodies under the banner "Progatishil Chhatra Jot" yesterday brought out a procession on the campus demanding punitive measures against those who attacked Milton.

The proctor said necessary steps would be taken after a proper investigation.

## Jolie, Brad Pitt

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petals, while Shiloh and Knox served as ring bearers.

The couple obtained a marriage licence from a judge in California before flying to France last week. The same judge conducted the ceremony.

Jolie and Pitt have been together for almost a decade after falling in love while filming Mr and Mrs Smith.

When the question of marriage was raised in interviews, Pitt maintained that the couple would tie the knot only when same sex marriage was legalised across the US.

In 2012, he said: "We made this declaration some time ago that we weren't going to do it till everyone can. But I don't think we'll be able to hold out."

He admitted that the couple's children were keen for them to marry. "It means so much to my kids, and they ask a lot. And it means something to me, too, to make that kind of commitment."

This is a second marriage for Pitt -- he was divorced from Jennifer Aniston in 2005 -- and a third for Jolie. She was previously married to the actors Jonny Lee Miller and Billy Bob Thornton.

The couple began leasing Chateau Miraval in 2008 and bought it three years later. The sprawling property has its own vineyards and a tiny chapel in the grounds with standing room for around 20 people.

Taiwanese media have reported

## Back to where he belongs

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father said he could identify the baby as there are similarities between the twins.

Expressing gratitude to the media for the stories on the baby theft, the father said he wants his sons to be journalists. As someone quipped it was the Rab who rescued the baby, the father said, "If you insist, one will be a Rab official and the other a journalist."

Rab Media Wing Director Mufti Mahmud Khan told The Daily Star that they handed over the infant to parents without delay. The authorities concerned will run a DNA test if needed.

At the press briefing, he said Rab members raided the house of Parvin in Board Bazar around 3:00am. Based on her statement, the team rescued the infant from Rahima's house in the same area.

Parvin, who served at different clinics as midwife and owns a pharmacy in Board Bazar, sold the baby to Childless Rahima for Tk 40,000

on the morning of August 21.

"Parvin has previous records of stealing babies from clinics. After stealing a baby, she would tell the parents that their babies were born dead. Later, she would sell the infant to other people," the Rab official said, based on information provided by the woman during interrogation.

Parvin went to the DMCH on August 20. Posing as an attendant of an imaginary patient, she offered services to the new mother struggling to nurse the twins.

The next day, she disappeared with one of the infants around 7:30am.

Runa later identified the woman from the CCTV footage, said the Rab official.

Sub-Inspector Ferdous Alam, investigating officer of the case filed by the hospital authorities in this connection, said they were working to find out whether hospital employees or anybody else were involved in the incident.

## Family points finger

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television channels.

Faisal filed a murder and robbery case with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar police station yesterday against eight to nine unnamed persons.

Police have yet to ascertain the motive or arrest anyone in this connection.

Faisal said his father used to preach his belief in majars (shrines) and "milad mahfils". "Those who oppose this thought threatened him with dire consequences. They often said: 'You are confusing people through these activities. Stop it or we'll kill you.'"

Soon after the May 5 rally, Faruqi had received a call from an unknown person who told him that he should go to the Supreme Court mosque wearing a shroud, Faisal said, adding that his father then went to the mosque with police escort. A few months ago, his father asked them to be alert all the time as he was getting threats.

Faruqi, aged about 60, was the international affairs secretary of Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat, an Islamist group, and a presidium member of Bangladesh Islami Front. He also owned a hajj agency, Faruqi Tours and Travels Private Ltd.

The recent confrontation between Hefajat and Ahle Sunnat goes back to March-April last year, when thousands of Hefajat men took to the streets in Dhaka, Chittagong and elsewhere.

Hefajat, a Chittagong-based radical Islamist group rose as a force against the Shahbag Movement that began in February last year, demanding the capital punishment to war criminals.

For its part, Ahle Sunnat in a rally at Lalidighi Maidan in the port city demanded the capital punishment to Hefajat leaders for "demeaning Islam and the Prophet (pbuh) in their publications".

Around 8:30pm on Wednesday,

some eight to 10 unidentified assailants entered Faruqi's house to talk about hajj-related matters.

At one point, they pointed a firearm at his forehead and held a machete against his throat, demanding Tk 50 lakh. He offered them Tk 1 lakh which he had in his home, but the killers forced him into the dining room, where his body was later found with his throat slit, said Maruf, Faruqi's nephew.

According to Faisal, it was a planned murder although the assailants took away gold ornaments and cash worth over Tk 6 lakh.

Meanwhile, leaders and activists of Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Sena, student wing of Bangladesh Islami Front, demonstrated in front of the Jatiya Press Club around 2:30pm and held a press conference at the press club from where the leaders announced a countrywide demonstration programme.

They threatened to call a nationwide dawn-to-dusk hartal on Sunday if the killers of are not arrested by tomorrow.

Leaders and activists of the Front also demonstrated in Comilla, Narayanganj and Chandpur. They blocked several highways in Chittagong and called various programmes protesting the murder.

They will hold protest rallies across the country on Saturday and bring out processions at divisional cities on Sunday, Mosahib Uddin Bakhtiar, a member secretary of the Front, told the press conference.

Biplab Kumar Sarkar, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said the family members yesterday informed them about the threats that Faruqi had been receiving.

"We are looking into the matter seriously. We are also investigating if there was any link of robbery or any personal or financial feud related to hajj," he told The Daily Star.

## Spying allegations won't hurt China ties: Taiwan

AFP, Taipei

Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou yesterday said ties with Beijing will not be affected by his government's probe into a former top negotiator on China policy accused of leaking state secrets.

"Cross-strait relations are like a big tree ... if a pest is discovered we need to find it and remove it so the tree can develop normally. One pest won't affect the development of cross-strait ties," Ma told reporters.

"Since I took office six years ago, cross-strait ties have been systemised step by step and normalised to a certain extent and won't be affected by this incident. Relevant contact and negotiations are still going on."

Ma was asked to comment on the case of Chang Hsien-hao, an ex-deputy minister at Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council who stepped down earlier this month and is under investigation over allegations he leaked confidential work-related information.

Prosecutors on Thursday reportedly raided Chang's residence and questioned him over suspicions he hid confidential documents at home, reported the United Evening News, citing unnamed sources.

A spokesman at the Taipei district prosecutor's office was not immediately available for comment.

Taiwanese media have reported

that Chang is suspected of being a spy for China and allegedly leaked secrets including Taiwan's bottom line in trade negotiations to Chinese officials.

Chang has denied the accusations against him of spying and leaking secrets, and insisted that he followed the instructions of his superiors in dealing with China during his two-and-a-half-year term as deputy minister.

He has alleged that "a few people" risked damaging the improving relations between Taiwan and China by accusing him of being a spy.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war, although Beijing still considers the self-ruled island part of its territory awaiting reunification, by force if necessary.

However, ties between the former bitter rivals have improved markedly since Ma became Taiwan's president in 2008, leading to the signing of 21 trade and other agreements so far.

The scandal came after China's top official in charge of Taiwan affairs, Zhang Zhijun -- the most senior Chinese official ever to visit the island -- paid a landmark four-day visit in June.

Some observers said Chang's removal could complicate Ma's pro-Beijing push, which has already been hampered by major student-led protests in Taipei against a trade pact earlier this year.

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## Student stabs

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broke into the room and slashed at his head and arms with a machete, said the registrar.

Prof Neaz, also a vice-president of Sust Teachers' Association, was taken to MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

His condition was improving but he was still not out of danger, said doctors there.

Students caught Oyes and gave him a beating before handing him over to police.

Oyes was also undergoing treatment at the same hospital in police custody, said Officer-in-Charge Gausul Hossain of Jalalabad Police Station.

The university registrar filed a case against Oyes with the police station.

Although the motive behind the attack was unclear, police said Oyes claimed that the professor used mentally torture him.

As the news of the attack spread, students of the department of social works locked the department gate and boycotted exams and classes.

They held a demonstration in front of the administrative building for couple of hours from around noon. At one point, they vandalised a car.

Sust Teachers' Association called for a work abstention on Sunday. They also demanded stern action against Oyes within 10 days.

Meanwhile, in a separate incident, allegedly Bangladesh Chhatra League activists assaulted Anwar Hossain, a lecturer of the department of Geography and Environmental Science, and also beat up at least five students, witnesses said.

Anwar tried to prevent the Chhatra League men from beating up a student, they added.

Anjan Roy, vice-president of the Sust unit of Chhatra League, denied involvement of any Chhatra League men in the assault.

Additional police had been deployed on the campus.

## Rejoinder

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closed by Caab."

"The two issues which are yet to be closed do not have any immediate safety concern as the aircraft in question will not fly unless permitted by Caab," it added.

About the collapse of the nose gear of one of its ATR-72 aircraft at Cox's Bazar Airport on July 20, the rejoinder said the incident is still under investigation by a four-member team of Caab and the ATR was sending the experts to investigate it as well.

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"We are looking into the matter seriously. We are also investigating if there was any link of robbery or any personal or financial feud related to hajj," he told The Daily Star.

Mizoram police, BSF and federal Indian intelligence agencies are interrogating the arrested persons.

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