

Last month's Pahela Baishakh incident that took place at the TSC area, has shaken citizens, especially women, to the core. It is disheartening to see that even after weeks of analysing the CCTV footage and of course playing the blame game on social media, the authorities are yet to arrest the culprits, the molesters, the men who were clearly seen ganging up on women, molesting and stripping them. This incident however is not the only one worth mentioning of course.

Such episodes have been taking place in Bangladesh for decades.

Christina Gomes
Probha (not her real name)

second time he asked, and at one point screamed in fear. By then, 3-4 men had joined him and were asking me why I was being disrespectful to the 'boro bhais' (big brothers) of the area. They cornered me against a wall and began to touch my clothes, pull my hair, touch my body and pull my orna. I froze for a few seconds. I lost all strength to move and protect myself. When one of the men tried to pull my orna off completely and was joking to

his friends about wrapping me up in it as punishment for my 'disrespectful' behaviour, I came to my senses. I began to struggle and scream for help. People

THE VULNERABLE CORE

ELITA KARIM

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

was just 15-years-old when she was attacked and molested by 4-5 men while returning home from her math tuition classes. Luckily enough, she escaped and ran home at the first opportunity.

Other than a few close friends, nobody knows of the incident that traumatised Probha for life. "I along with my classmate would usually walk from home to class and back," says 36-year-old Probha. "We never took a rickshaw because we lived right next to the coaching centre in Farmgate. Every Monday and Wednesday after lunch, I would wait for my friend in the garage at her place and walk to Math class together. On our way back in the evenings, I would usually walk a small distance alone after dropping her off."

A few men hanging out at the local tea stalls had noticed the girls' routine. "One evening after walking my friend home and making towards my own, a man approached me on a bike, asking if I needed a ride," Probha remembers. "I ignored him the first time, said no the

nearby rushed to the corner where I was being molested. This scared the men who moved away casually, smiling as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. I made a

dash for home and was shaking with fear for the rest of the night. Even today, I cringe within when I remember the attack. For years I was traumatised and would find it very difficult to have a proper conversation with male classmates or colleagues."

Such incidents happen every day to females of all ages in this country - girls on a rickshaw going to school, women on way to office on a bus or even inside banks and in front of ticket counters. Despite the common knowledge that most streets and platforms in Dhaka are not safe and women-friendly, the authorities end up averting their eyes, behaving like ostriches. If this is because of the age-old taboo, it needs to break. After all, the core of a society is vulnerable, if its women are unsafe. ■

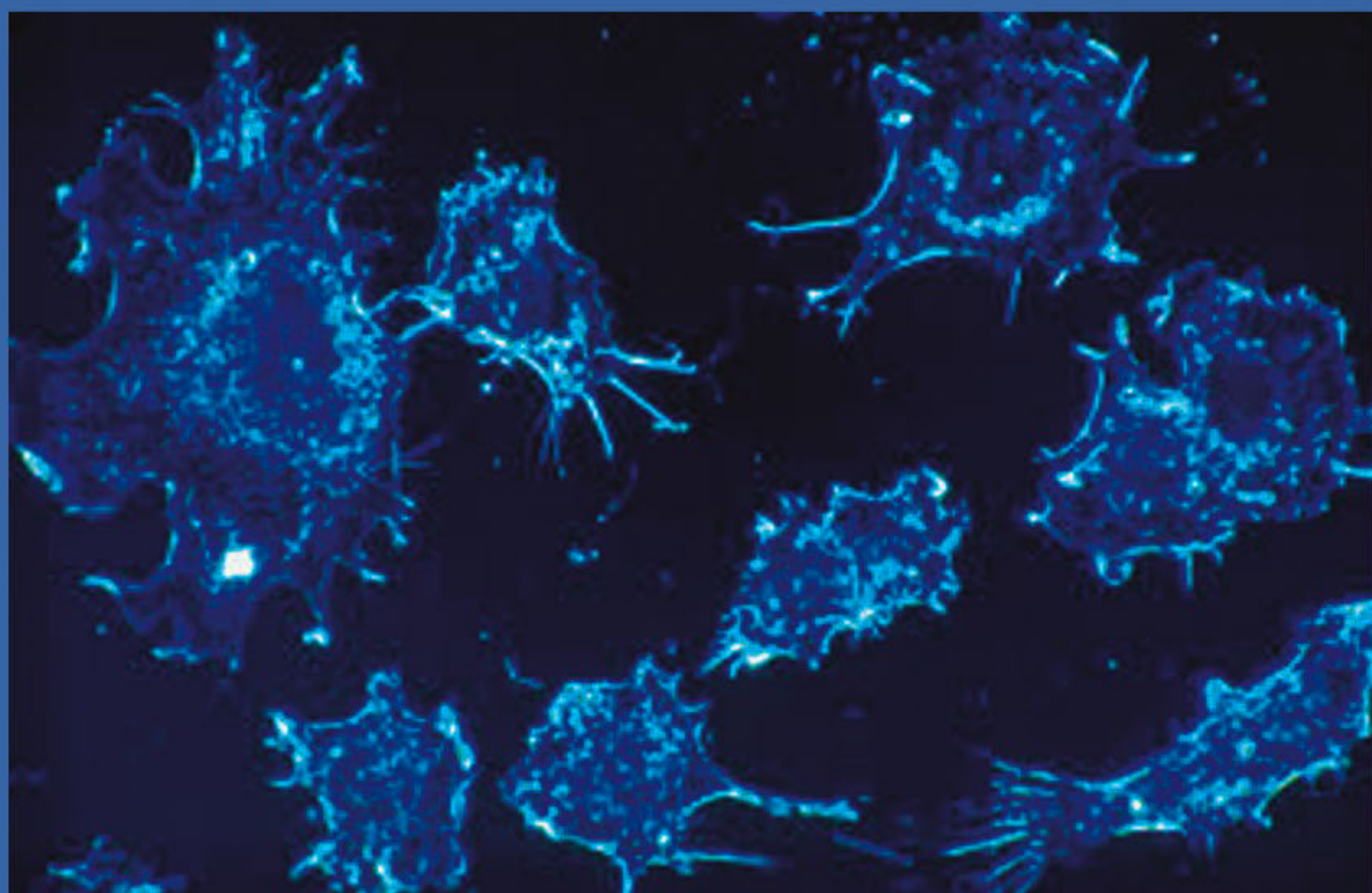
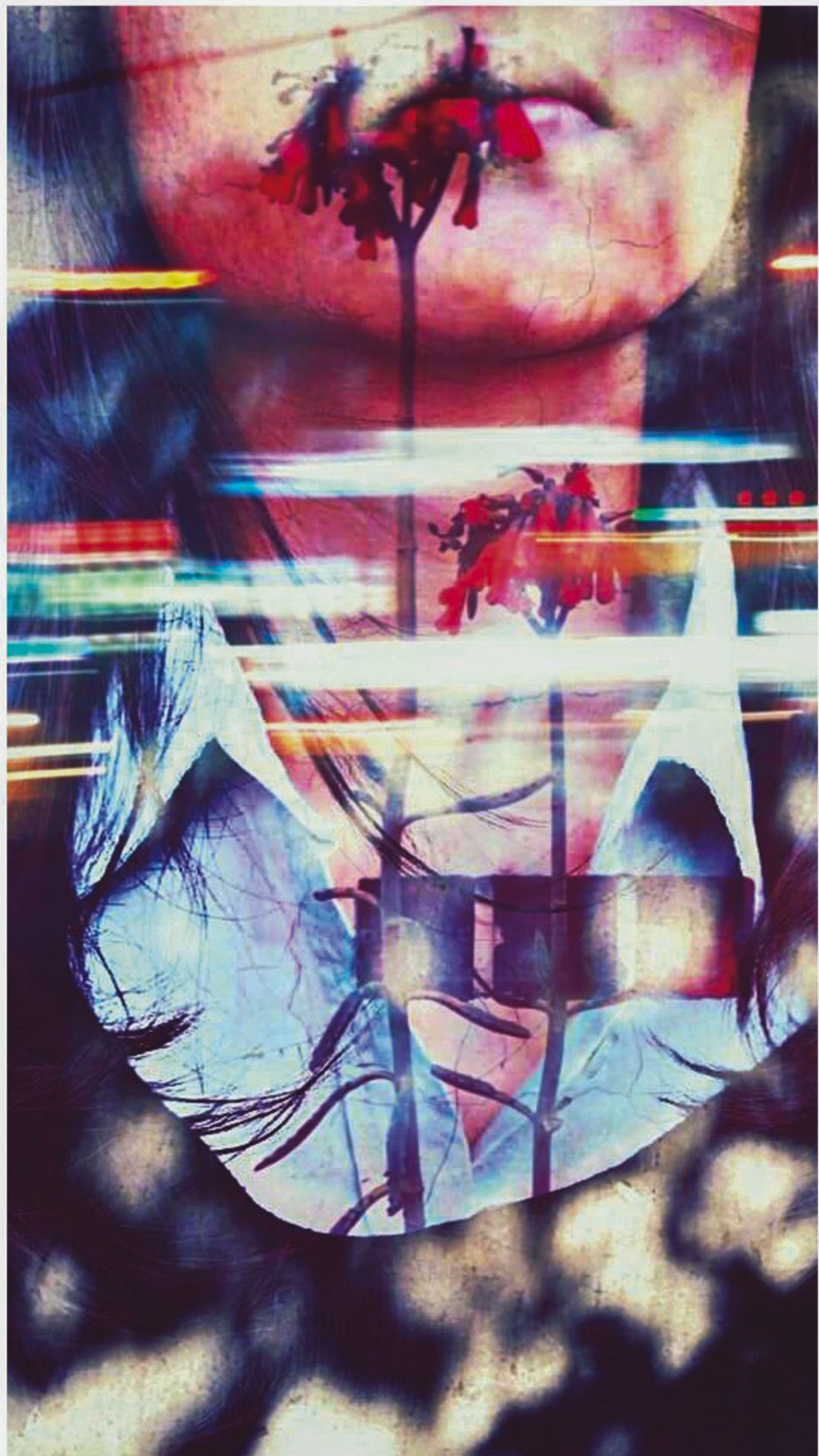


PHOTO: INTERNET

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Scientists have developed a new test that can predict with 100% accuracy whether someone will develop cancer up to 13 years in the future. Small but significant changes taking place in the body more than a decade before cancer was diagnosed helped researchers at Harvard and Northwestern University make this success.

They found protective caps on the ends of chromosomes, which prevent DNA damage were more worn down those who went on to develop cancer.

Dr, Lifang Hou, the lead study author, said "because we saw a strong

relationship in the pattern across a wide variety of cancers, with the right testing these procedures could be used eventually to diagnose a wide variety of cancers. Understanding this pattern of telomere growth may mean it can be a predictive biomarker for cancer...We found cancer has hijacked the telomere shortening in order to flourish in the body."

SOURCE: TIMESOFINDIA.INDIATIMES.COM