



PHOTO: COURTESY

Journalist Probir Sikdar, who was picked up by detectives from his Indira Road office in the capital on Sunday evening, is taken to a Faridpur court. A case under the ICT Act was filed against him for "tarnishing the image" of a minister.

## Journo Probir sent to jail

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Probir, editor of Bangla daily Bangla 71 and online news portal u71news.com was picked up by detectives on Sunday evening from his office in the capital.

Police first said they took him to the DB office to "discuss" the threats he was under as he claimed in his Facebook post. Later around midnight, they admitted to have arrested him in the case filed with Faridpur Sadar Police Station.

The arrest of Probir, who lost his father and several other family members during the Liberation War, sparked huge protest on the streets and also in social media.

The senior journalist wrote a series of reports titled "Sei Razakar" in Bangla daily Janakantha in 2001 against some alleged war criminals, including a controversial businessman from Faridpur and the now condemned war criminal Abul Kalam Azad, also known as Bacchu Razakar, according to a draft GD that he posted on Facebook after police allegedly refused to record it.

He was attacked in April 2001 following his write-ups. In the attack, he lost a leg and also strength and mobility of one hand.

Meanwhile, legal experts have raised questions over the filing of the case.

"Under the ICT law, only the aggrieved person can lodge a case.

## Schoolgirl sues

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been opposing it, she said.

Swapna, in his early thirties, has recently come from a Middle Eastern country. The marriage took place without her signing any paper of marriage and saying "Kabul", Sharmin said, which the bride and the groom have to say in approval of their marriage according to Islamic tradition.

After the so-called marriage, Golenur, who decides everything in the family as her husband stays abroad, took Sharmin to her uncle's

house in Khulna and locked her into a room with Swapna.

The girl fled from the house four to five days ago and headed to her grandmother's house at Bagri Bazar of Rajapur but Golenur got hold of her on the way to Pirojpur.

Then she was taken back to her mother's house in Rajapur, where she was again forced to stay in a room with Swapna, Sharmin said.

"He tortured me every night as I refused to sleep with him."

She had also been warned against disclosing the matter, Sharmin

added.

On Sunday, she left her mother's house, filed a case against her mother and Swapna with the police station and demanded her safety.

Swapna came to Dhaka that night to leave the country, said a source in Sharmin's family.

The case was filed under the women and children repression prevention act. "We are raiding several places to arrest the accused," the OC said, adding the police had handed the girl to her grandmother and arranged for her safety.

They also demanded his immediate release, withdrawal of the case and scrapping of section 57 of the ICT law under which the case was filed.

Ain o Salish Kendra, Communist Party of Bangladesh and Rajshahi University Journalist Association

## The ball is now in CJ's court

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SC lawyer Eunus Ali Akond filed the writ petition with the HC on July 7 challenging the legality of Maya's holding offices of minister and lawmaker.

In the petition, he also sought HC rule upon Maya to explain under what authority he was holding the posts after the SC scrapped his acquittal in a corruption case.

The lawyer prayed to the court to direct the Awami League leader to

refrain from functioning as a minister and a lawmaker until the HC disposes of the rule.

In the petition, Eunus said Maya could not serve as a minister and a parliament member as per Article 66 (2)(D) of the constitution, as he remained convicted in a graft case followed the SC order.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the corruption case against Maya with Sutrapur Police Station in Dhaka on June 13, 2007.

On February 14, 2008, a special court sentenced Maya to 13 years in prison and fined Tk 5 crore for amassing illegal property in the case.

In October 2010, the HC cleared the AL leader of the charges following an appeal by him.

But on June 14 this year, the apex court scrapped the HC judgment and directed it to hold further hearing, and dispose of Maya's appeal challenging the lower court verdict.

## 'Yaba trader' killed in Rab 'gunfight'

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came across a pick-up van on Port Blatiary link road at 2:45am.

They saw two people in the van and asked them to stop as they were trying to drive away. At that, the two men opened fire at the Rab team, and a gunfight followed.

The pickup managed to flee after a while.

Later, Rab members found Zahidul's bullet-riddled body. He was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital only to be declared dead on arrival. Rab members also recovered 20 thousand yaba tablets, one foreign pistol, one magazine, three bullets from the

spot, Shahid said.

Morgue sources said Zahidul had five bullet wounds in the throat, left chest, right hand and back. There were also bruises on his chest, right hand and right leg.

Family members refuted the Rab statement, calling it a cooked-up story.

Yasmin Akther, wife of the deceased, said her husband was abducted from a friend's house in Dhaka around 8:00am on Friday. Seven to eight people dressed in plainclothes abducted him and his friend Harun at gunpoint from Harun's house in Dhaka. Zahidul was visiting Harun at the time.

"After the abduction, we could not contact him as his mobile phone was found switched off," she said.

"I received a call from the hospital this morning at 8:00am telling me my husband was killed in a gunfight. I want justice for this murder," Yasmin said.

She also claimed that her husband was not a yaba trader and that there were no incidents of a gunfight as Rab claimed.

Another alleged yaba trader Mohammed Zafar Ahmed, 30, was killed in Chittagong in a similar "gunfight" with Rab, on July 26.

The "drinkable book" has now passed two key stages - showing that it works in the lab, and on real water sources.

## Iraq lawmakers refer report on Mosul fall to judiciary

AFP, Bagdad

Iraqi lawmakers voted yesterday to refer to the judiciary a report holding top officials, including ex-premier Nuri al-Maliki, responsible for the fall of second city Mosul, the parliament speaker said.

But there were disagreements over the report, with MPs voting to send it without an official reading, and members of the investigative committee that compiled it complaining that there was no vote to approve the recommendations it contained.

"Parliament voted to refer the (Mosul) file, including facts and evidence and names," to the judiciary, speaker Salim al-Juburi said in televised remarks.

"None of the names mentioned in this report were deleted, and all of them will be sent to the judiciary. An investigation and follow up and accounting of all those who caused the fall of Mosul will be carried out," Juburi said.

**Survivors of latest Med migrant tragedy arrive in Italy**

AFP, Catania

More than 300 survivors of the latest Mediterranean migrants boat tragedy arrived in Sicily yesterday aboard a Norwegian ship also carrying the bodies of 49 of its victims.

The "Siem Pilot" docked at the port of Catania shortly after 11:00H00 (09:00 GMT) and an hour later the first batch of survivors began making their way tentatively down gangways on the side of the giant red vessel.

A medical team had gone on board to carry out initial checks on the traumatised migrants.

A total of 313 people, including at least three children, survived Saturday's sinking of an overcrowded fishing boat in which 49 people died from asphyxiation after being overcome by fuel fumes

The then board's approval of a loan to private firm New Auto Define was an example of how irregularities took place in giving loans to 214 borrowers.

In 2010, the board approved the loan under miscellaneous agenda despite various adverse observations against the loan proposal.

## Blame lies mainly

FROM PAGE 16

Recently, the current board told Finance Minister AMA Muhith and the parliamentary standing committee on finance ministry that a clear-cut robbery took place at the bank, not only in the case of loan disbursement, but also in recruitment, opening of new branches and renting offices.

On condition of anonymity, a finance ministry official said the audit identified the persons involved in the irregularities. Now the ACC would be able to move against them.

The audit found the involvement of 17 board members, including government and non-government representatives, in the anomalies. They had worked as directors from 2010 to 2013.

The present board of BASIC Bank appointed MABS & J Partners and SF Ahmed & Co to identify the irregularities and the culprits after it took over last year.

The two firms audited 214 borrowers of the bank's seven branches.

In April, the firms submitted a 1000-page report to BASIC Bank. Copies of the report were also sent to the finance ministry, Bangladesh Bank and the ACC, which is still investigating the scams.

"In most of the cases that we have audited, it has been found credit facilities were approved for selected borrowers by the board of the bank in different forms despite the proposals were placed to the board identifying gross irregularities, incompleteness, negative recommendations or observations and not having backed by required collateral and other relevant important documents," said the report.

The auditors examined the loans given to 214 borrowers at the bank's main branch and its Gulshan, Dilkusha, Karwan Bazar and Shantinagar branches in the capital, and Agrabad and Jubilee Road branches in Chittagong city.

The audit found that the branches disbursed loans before receiving approval from the board. Besides, credit facilities were given against forged documents.

The branches forwarded loan proposals to head offices before the clients opened their accounts. The board also approved loan proposals without recommendations from branches.

According to the victim's uncle Habibullah, Raja was picked up by Arzu in front of his house in the morning. The Chhatra League leader said the boy was suspected to have stolen his mobile phones and a laptop.

Raja's aunt Ratna Begum claimed that Arzu along with his friends left Raja unconscious in front of their house around 3:30pm. His family members took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead around 4:45pm, she added.

Hospital sources said there were bruises on different parts of his body and injury marks on his head.

Visiting Arzu's house, his sister Rehana Begum told The Daily Star that she saw Raja being taken to their house around 11:30am. Some of Arzu's friends kept Raja confined to a room for an hour and questioned him over the stealing of four mobile phones and a laptop from Arzu's house.

She claimed that the mobile phones belonged to Arzu and one of her maternal uncles Jahangir Hossain. The duo slept on the ground floor of the two-storey building at night and did not find their phones and laptop the following morning.

Quoting Arzu, Rehana said her brother saw Raja loitering in front of their house around 3:30am that night. Arzu also asked Raja what he was doing there.

As Arzu saw Raja that night in front of their house, he suspected that Raja was involved in the stealing, she said.

Police and locals said Arzu, who also lives in the same neighbourhood, took the boy to his house, and along with couple of his friends beat him up with bamboo sticks for a while.

Arzu then took him to an under-construction building at Baddanagar Lane and resumed the beating, said Olive

The report said the loan was sanctioned in a day of the loan application's submission. The borrower has not paid a single taka since it took the loan, and it now owes Tk 10 crore to the bank.

Another borrower, Techno Design & Development Ltd, was given a Tk 80 crore loan though two committees of the bank made negative observations about it.

The bank disbursed Tk 60 crore in 45 days of the loan's approval and the branch concerned didn't verify how the money was spent.

Serious objections and irregularities are indication of breach of trust and abuse of power entrusted to the board under the guidelines of Bangladesh Bank, according to the report.

"It also appears that the board has ignored its own instructions for compliance to be followed in case of previous credit facility approvals and in some cases violated its own policy just for the sake of approving huge amount of irregular loans, putting a huge sum of depositors' money at risk," said the report.

The board members, who had approved loans in meetings, and also the members, who didn't dispute the minutes in subsequent meetings, were responsible for the irregularities, said the report.

"In these circumstances, it can be concluded that availing of such huge amount of loans by the concerned borrowers and failing to repay them in instalments in time are evidence of their malafide intention."

The board approved loans knowing well that the bank was confronting acute fund crisis.

The loans were approved with a "subject to" clause for rectification of the irregularities identified by the loan committee. It clearly shows the intention to transfer their responsibility to some other persons.

The report said the entire process of approving loan proposals was completed within a very short time immediately before the board meetings, leaving no time for inclusion of a separate agenda for such cases.

The approval of huge amount of loans without complying with the norms made the loans non-performing, according to the audit report.

Contacted, BASIC Bank Chairman Alauddin A Majid said they already took action against some of the bank officials whom the audit found involved in the irregularities.

Criminal cases would be filed against the bank officials and the borrowers who worked in connivance to embezzle money from the bank, he added.

## 'BCL men' beat boy to death

FROM PAGE 16

evening. The elite force, however, did not confirm this as of filing of this report at 1:00am today.

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Arzu then took him to an under-construction building at Baddanagar Lane and resumed the beating, said Olive

Mahmud, sub-inspector of Hazaribagh Police Station. The group took the child to Chankharpul area on a motorcycle and beat him up again.

Police said they found broken bamboo sticks that were used for beating Raja.

Contacted, a local Awami League leader said the detainees were local BCL men and party leaders were aware of Arzu's "unruly behaviour".

Meanwhile, locals last night staged a protest at the killing of Raja in front of Arzu's house.

Raja's elder sister Reshma Akther Shabana filed a murder case with Hazaribagh Police Station last night, accusing Arzu and 14 others of the crime.

## Libya risks becoming 'another Somalia', Rome warns

AFP, Rome

Italy warned yesterday that Libya risked turning into "another Somalia" as it signed a joint statement with the US and several European allies condemning "barbaric