

# Reynolds dies a day

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 website TMZ.

Reynolds was the girl-next-door lead of a string of hit musicals in the 1950s after being discovered by MGM studio bosses at a beauty contest in southern California, going on to earn an Oscar nomination for playing the title role in 1964's "The Unsinkable Molly Brown."

"We have lost a unique talent and a national treasure. Coming so close to the death of her daughter, Carrie Fisher, this is truly a double tragedy," Screen Actors Guild president Gabrielle Carteris said in a statement.

"Their imprint on our culture is profound, and they both will live on."

Reynolds is best remembered as sweet but shy voice artist Kathy Selden in "Singin' in the Rain" (1952) and holding her own despite being cast opposite tap-dancing superstar Gene Kelly, who was more than twice her age.

Off-screen, she was known as the wronged party in one of Hollywood's most notorious scandals, when her husband, singer Eddie Fisher, left her for her friend and fellow screen icon Elizabeth Taylor.

Reynolds' daughter Carrie Fisher, who catapulted to worldwide stardom as rebel warrior Princess Leia in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, died in Los Angeles on Tuesday, four days after suffering a heart attack on a transatlantic flight.

Media reports said Reynolds had been at her son's house to discuss funeral arrangements.

Fans and fellow celebrities struggled to come to terms with another devastating blow so soon after Fisher's death.

"Debbie Reynolds was one of the last of Hollywood Royalty. It breaks my heart that she is gone," "Star Trek" actor William Shatner said on Twitter.

Reynolds, who received a humanitarian award at the Academy's "Honorary Oscars" last year, was just 19 when she got her big break in "Singin' in the Rain," which celebrates Hollywood's transition from the silent era into "talkies."

Her 2013 autobiography "Unsinkable: A Memoir" detailed the highs and lows of her rocky personal life and a career which was still going strong into her 80s as she performed her one-woman stage show.

"Singin' in the Rain" and childbirth were the hardest things I ever had to do in my life," she wrote in an earlier

autobiography entitled "Debbie."

Mary Frances Reynolds was born on April 1, 1932 in El Paso, Texas, the second child of railroad carpenter Raymond Francis Reynolds and his wife Maxine.

Now synonymous with tap, Reynolds had never danced professionally, according to the Internet Movie Database, when picked to star in "Singin' in the Rain."

Several more MGM musicals followed, with Reynolds typically cast as a wholesome young heroine, before she turned to more serious screen acting, as well as a career on Broadway.

To support the family, Reynolds performed at her casino in Las Vegas, where she housed her memorabilia collection until it shut in 1997.

Reynolds, admired for her versatility, starred in her own sitcom, "The Debbie Reynolds Show," in 1969-1970 and was also known for her Emmy-nominated role as Grace's quirky mother on NBC's "Will & Grace."

Her career in cinema was largely over by the 1970s, though she continued to star in TV movies and series. She also acted on stage and portrayed Liberace's mother Frances opposite Michael Douglas in 2013's "Behind the Candelabra."

"Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds," a documentary about Reynolds's at-times rocky relationship with her daughter, premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival and is due to air on HBO in March.

## AL, BNP

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 The last parliamentary elections were most disputed after the BNP boycotted them. The country witnessed widespread violence centring on the polls.

On the first anniversary, the BNP and its allies enforced nearly a ceaseless blockade and hartal for the first three months of the year. Street violence left at least 95 people killed and about 1,000 others injured, mostly in targeted arson attacks on public transports.

On the second anniversary, the party held a rally in the capital. It did not call hartal. Both the ruling party and the opposition held rallies in the capital on two different dates.

# An inexplicable collapse

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 below-par total or according to New Zealand batsman Neil Broom 'a fighting total', Bangladesh had every reason to eclipse that score.

They were on course towards that goal when opener Imrul Kayes and Sabbir took the score to 105 for one in 23 overs after the soft dismissal of Tamim Iqbal. But the run-out of Sabbir in comical fashion changed the complexion and Bangladesh lost their last nine wickets for 79 runs.

The collapse is simply inexplicable. Skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza attributed the run-out of Sabbir as the turning point of the game. So did Broom, who hit a fine maiden ODI century in his side's fighting total. Want an input of chief selector Minhajul Abedin? He will tell you he was convinced Bangladesh have lost the game when the opposition scored 250. "Gavin Larson told me 250 was not a safe score on this wicket. But I told him since you already crossed 220 our batsman will not be able to chase down the total."

But for those who watched the game and had a good understanding of the wicket, this collapse has more reasons than just a run-out. It was actually a collective explosion of mind for no good reason.

Four batsmen departed after that in quick succession playing nothing shots. Mahmudullah Riyad scored one before being bowled by a good yorker from Lockie Ferguson. It was a good yorker but an experienced batsman like Mahmudullah, who seemed to be expecting a bouncer, should have done enough to readjust his mode of action. The next three batsmen were out to an occasional off-spinner in New Zealand captain Kane Williamson.

Shakib Al Hasan cut straight to the short third man fielder after scoring seven. Mosaddek Hossain deposited a tame catch to mid-off and debutant leg-spinning all-rounder Tanbir Hayder stepped down the pitch and made an innocuous delivery into a yorker and was stumped.

The three wickets in quick succession might have even surprised the Kiwi captain, whose intention when he came into the attack was more to do with breaking the menacing partnership between Sabbir and Imrul. But of all the wickets that have been gifted the most crucial was that of Shakib's.

Shakib has made it a habit of throwing his wicket away. The notion that this is the way he plays is increasingly becoming too irritating for anyone's liking. With Mushfiqui Rahim not around due to a hamstring injury, it was expected that he should play more responsibly for the cause of the team. He scored a fine half-century in the last game Christchurch. The compulsive stroke-maker was out

# Voters chose

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 to be dominated by people with poor educational backgrounds and criminal records. The more well-educated and candidates with a clean image are elected, the more it would bring qualitative changes in local government bodies," said M Hafiz Uddin Khan, president of Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan).

Eight chairmen-elect have completed Higher Secondary Certificate and one Secondary School Certificate. However, only two could not complete schooling.

Like the previous national and local government polls, Wednesday's maiden zila parishad elections also witnessed the trend of a rising number of businessmen becoming winners, said experts.

Of the newly elected chairmen, 35 are businessmen and nine lawyers. The others are physicians, teachers and private employees.

"While no one can question businesspersons' rights to enter politics, problem arises when this happens because the public office is perceived and used as a profit-making venture, most often by abuse of power," said Transparency International Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

"A robust conflict of interest law should be enacted and strictly enforced to prevent use of public offices for promoting business interest and ensure that such interest do not affect decision-making of public officials and representatives," he told The Daily Star.

There are 64 zila parishads in the country. Polls in Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari are held under a separate law. Chairman elections in two other districts were postponed following a High Court order.

Of the 59 chairmen-elect, 21 favourites of the ruling Awami League were elected uncontested.

Forty-six newly elected chairmen took part in the elections with AL's blessings, 11 winners were AL rebels, one was backed by Jatiya Party and another was an independent candidate.

## Winter brings

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 Over one hundred poachers are active in the area.

"The poachers openly sell migratory birds in many markets," says Saiful Islam, secretary of the local conservation group, the Chalan Beel Jeeb Boichitra Sangrakshan Committee.

He estimates up to 300 local families are accustomed to eating wild bird meat. But having migratory birds up for sale is a broader problem, he notes, to be found through Singra, Baraigram, Gurudaspur and sadar upazilas in Natore and also in Tarash and Ullahpara upazilas in neighbouring Sirajganj.

Bodiuzzaman Bodi, 55, from Natore sadar's Chandpur village freely admits to being a bird hunter. "I hunt birds every winter as it is very profitable and we have no other work in this season, so we haven't any choice. With nets and other traps I can catch up to 30 birds per day. We have been doing this for years. In this area it is a usual occupation, just as in the rainy season we catch fish."

"I know that bird hunting is a punishable offence," says Lalon Hossain, 30, another hunter from Chandpur village. "But we have no choice since we are really poor and our families depend on bird hunting of a winter."

Chandpur High School teacher Nazim Uddin says many in the village hunt wild birds for income and for food. "Some they sell; others they eat at home," he says.

"Although local people, together with our group, protest the hunt we often fail to protect the birds," Saiful explains. "On 15 December 2016 we caught a hunter, Shafiur Rahman, with an airgun. From him we seized three migratory birds. But his brother Ataur Rahman is influential and he took both his brother and the birds from us. Still we urged them to free the birds but they refused, saying there's nothing at all wrong with hunting them."

"Bird hunters crowd the Chalan Beel area every winter season," says Natore sadar upazila's chairman, Shariful Islam Romzan. "Their illegal hunting goes on openly; sometimes villagers protest but with little effect."

"The hunters even offered to sell wild birds to me at a low rate," he adds. "I refused and told them to find another profession."

Professor Aktaruzzaman who is an adviser to the Chalan Beel conservation group notes that the number of migratory birds has been decreasing year by year, with further decline anticipated due to the poaching nuisance as well as the onset of climate change.

According to locals, a few years ago about 35 species of migratory birds could be found in Chalan Beel each winter. These days the numbers of many species are down.

"We conduct mobile courts in the area of Chalan Beel," says Shahina Khatun, the deputy commissioner of Natore. "We have jailed poachers on several occasions. Meanwhile, we are trying to increase awareness that wildlife hunting is illegal. We are also making a list of poachers in order to provide them with alternate work."

# 2 'robbers' killed in Noakhali, Rajbari

STAR REPORT

Two alleged robbers were killed in separate incidents in Noakhali and Rajbari yesterday.

In Noakhali, a suspected robber was beaten to death by a mob at Chhobirpaik in Kabirhat upazila early yesterday morning.

The deceased was Shahabuddin, 35, of Ewazbalia union in Sadar upazila, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

On Wednesday night, 10 to 12 masked robbers stormed the house of one Humayun Kabir at Chhobirpaik. They held the members of the house hostage at gunpoint and looted cash and gold ornaments.

After the robbers left, the members screamed for help. Locals then made

an announcement about the incident over the loudspeaker of a mosque, prompting people to chase the robbers. They managed to catch Shahabuddin and gave him a good beating. The other managed to flee.

Injured Shahabudin was taken to Noakhali General Hospital where he died yesterday morning, said Nibhu Ranjan Datta, sub-inspector of Kabirhat Police Station.

Moktar Hossain, officer-in-charge of the station, said Shahabudin was accused in two robbery cases.

Our Kushtia correspondent reports that an alleged robber was killed in a "gunfight" with police at Kalibari area on Rajbari-Kushtia highway in Rajbari Sadar early yesterday.

The deceased was Abdul Khaleque

Biswas, 55, of Dhekipara in the district's Pangsha upazila.

Tarequzzaman, additional superintendent of police in Rajbari, said following a tip-off, a team from Rajbari police raided the spot on the highway around 3:45pm when some robbers were preparing to commit a robbery on vehicles.

The criminals opened fire when the police team reached the spot, he said, adding that police retaliated by firing back.

Abul Bashar Mia, OC of Rajbari Sadar police, said they found Khaleque's body after the robbers fled, and recovered one homemade gun, two bullets and two swords from the spot.

Khaleque was accused in four robbery cases, he added.

# Make Rohingya issue a priority

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 They observed, "Over the past two months, a military offensive by the Myanmar Army in Rakhine State has led to the killing of hundreds of Rohingya people. Over 30,000 people have been displaced."

"Houses have been burned, women raped, many civilians arbitrarily arrested, and children killed. Crucially, access for humanitarian aid organisations has been almost completely denied, creating an appalling humanitarian crisis in an area already extremely poor."

The open letter said, "Thousands [of Rohingyas] have fled to neighbouring Bangladesh, only to be sent back. Some international experts have warned of the potential for genocide. It has all the hallmarks of recent past tragedies -- Rwanda, Darfur, Bosnia, Kosovo."

The dignitaries expressed frustration at Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's non-initiative in ensuring rights of the Rohingyas.

In the letter, they said, "Despite repeated appeals to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, we are frustrated that she has not taken any initiative to ensure full and equal citizenship rights of the Rohingyas. Daw Suu Kyi is the leader and is the one with the primary responsibility to lead, and lead with courage, humanity and compassion."

They said, "It is time for the international community as a whole to speak out much more strongly. After Rwanda, world leaders said 'never again'. If we fail to take action, people may starve to death if they are not killed with bullets, and we may end up being the passive observers of crimes against humanity which will lead us once again to wring our hands belatedly and say 'never again' all over again."

The signatories include 11 Nobel laureates in Peace: Professor Muhammad Yunus (2006), José Ramos Horta (1996), Máiread Maguire (1976), Betty Williams (1976), Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1984), Oscar Arias (1987), Jody Williams (1997), Shirin Ebadi (2003), Tawakkol Karman (2011), Leymah Gbowee (2011), and Malala Yousafzai (2014), and two Nobel laureates in Physiology or Medicine Sir Richard J Roberts (1993) and Elizabeth Blackburn (2009).

The other signatories are ex-Italian prime minister and foreign minister Romano Prodi and Emma Bonino; The Huffington Post Founder and Editor Arianna Huffington; business leaders and philanthropists Sir Richard Branson and Jochen Zeitz; business leader Paul Polman; entrepreneur and philanthropist Mo Ibrahim; SDG advocate and film director Richard Curtis; SDG advocate and fellow of the

Voice of Libyan Women Alaa Murabit; and human rights activist Kerry Kennedy.

They referred to the head of the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the Bangladesh side of the border, John McKissick, who has accused Myanmar's government of ethnic cleansing.

The UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar Yanghee Lee has condemned the restricted access to Rakhine State as "unacceptable," they also noted.

The Nobel laureates observed that the Rohingyas are among the world's most persecuted minorities, who for decades have been subjected to a campaign of marginalisation and dehumanisation.

"In 1982, their rights to citizenship were removed, and they were rendered stateless, despite living in the country for generations. They have endured severe restrictions on movement, marriage, education and religious freedom. Yet despite the claims by government and military, and many in society, that they are in fact illegal Bengali immigrants who have crossed the border, Bangladesh does not recognise them either," they stated.

They further noted that Rohingyas' plight intensified dramatically in 2012 when two severe outbreaks of violence resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands and a new apartheid between Rohingya Muslims and their Rakhine Buddhist neighbours. "Since then they have existed in ever more dire conditions."

They also observed that the latest crisis was sparked by an attack on Myanmar border police posts on October 9, in which nine Myanmar police officers were killed.

"The truth about who carried out the attack, how and why, is yet to be established, but the Myanmar military accuse a group of Rohingyas. Even if that is true, the military's response has been grossly disproportionate. It would be one thing to round up suspects, interrogate them and put them on trial. It is quite another to unleash helicopter gunships on thousands of ordinary civilians and to rape women and throw babies into a fire," they said.

The open letter referred to one Rohingya, interviewed by the Amnesty International, who said, "They shot at people who were fleeing. They surrounded the village and started going from house to house. They were verbally abusing the people. They were threatening to rape the women."

It also mentioned another witness describing how her two sons were arbitrarily arrested: "It was early in the

# Some MPs' role, money mattered

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 Sources in the local AL alleged that Ali distributed a lot of money among voters, which Ali dismissed as false.

In Panchagarh, AL rebel Amanullah Bacchu beat AL-backed candidate Mahfuzur Rahman, who was backed by local lawmakers and the district AL.

Two other candidates, supported by lawmakers in the district, came out third and fourth in the race boycotted by the BNP and the Jatiya Party.

In Sunamganj, all district lawmakers worked for AL-backed candidate Enamul Kabir Emon. Yet, he lost to party rebel Nurul Huda Mukut, general secretary of the district AL for the last 16 years. He got the support of the local leaders and workers. Mukut got 797 votes against Emon's 417.

In Pirojpur, local lawmaker AKM Awal and other leaders worked for party rebel Mohiuddin Moharaj. AL-backed candidate Shah Alam bagged 302 votes and Moharaj 423.

In Satkhira, AL favorite Monsur Ahmed, also president of the district AL, lost to the party revel, as the party rank and file was "highly annoyed" with him for years for his "corruption and misbehaviour".

Ahmed dismissed the allegations, saying some lawmakers, upazila chairmen and party leaders worked against him to ensure victory for Nazrul Islam, the rebel candidate.

Nazrul, general secretary of the district AL, is locally known for his good manners and strong ties with the grassroots, sources said.

In Jamalpur, AL rebel Faruque

Ahmed Chowdhury beat party candidate HR Zahid by 227 votes.

Party insiders said the state minister for jute and textile, Mirza Azam, extended his support to Faruque. Azam, also a former general secretary of Juba League, has close contacts with party grassroots who voted for Faruque.

In Narail, the lone AL lawmaker of the district Kabirul Haque Mukti, district AL President Subhash Chandra Bose and Sadar Upazila Chairman Syed Foyzul Amir Litu worked for party rebel Soharab Hossain Biswas, a member of the district AL.

AL-backed Syed Ayub Ali, a vice-president of the district AL, got hardly any support from the party leaders and workers, sources said.

In Chuadanga, it seemed that the election was between two lawmakers. The lawmaker from sadar constituency and the district AL supported Mahfuzur Rahman, who got 247 votes. The rebel candidate, Shamsul Abedin, who was supported by another lawmaker and the municipal mayor, got 266 votes.

In Brahmanbaria, AL rebel Shafiqul Alam, who was dropped from the district AL committee by an influential party leader and lawmaker, pulled off a "miraculous" win. He defeated the AL backed candidate by 51 votes, though no important party leaders were with him, at least publicly.

Before the election, hardly anyone was seen seeking votes for him, sources said, adding that the influential leader did everything to ensure victory for AL-supported candidate Emdadul Bari in vain.

AL insiders said party General

Secretary Obaidul Quader wanted to force party rebels to withdraw their candidacies. But party chief and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked him not to be too tough on them.

Contacted, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said as district council elections were not held on party lines, the AL just extended support to some candidates. The party did not take any tough action against rebels as no other parties took part in the election.

"If there were no other [rebels from the party] candidates, everyone backed by the Awami League would have own uncontested, as no other parties fielded any candidates. That is why we were flexible and soft on them [rebels]," he said.

In the first-ever district council election since independence, AL bagged 25 chairman posts while party rebels took 11 posts. A Jatiya Party man and an independent candidate won in two districts on Wednesday, when 38 districts went to polls to elect chairmen. Earlier, 21 AL candidates won unopposed. In two districts, polls to the post of chairman were postponed following a High Court order.

In all, AL-sponsored candidates bagged 46 of the 61 district council chairman posts. There are 64 district councils in the country. But polls to the three hill districts -- Bandarban, Rangamati and Khagrachhari -- are held separately under their own law.

[Our correspondents in Sunamganj, Pirojpur and Brahmanbaria contributed to this report.]