

# 5 arrested for beating up 2 college girls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

Police on Wednesday night arrested five youths for allegedly beating up two college girls with iron rods in Sakhipur upazila of Tangail.

The assault took place earlier that day, and police made the arrests after Renubar Rahman, principal of Sakhipur Residential Women's College, filed a case on charges of attempt to kidnap and rape.

The two girls were going to Sakhipur Bazar from their hostel on a battery-run rickshaw when three youths wearing masks stopped them near a private school.

They dragged the girls off the rickshaw and beat them with iron rods. Hearing their screams, a local trader named Malik Ali came to help the girls, but the youths attacked him as well, the case stated.

When more people came forward, the attackers fled the scene.

Eye-witness accounts led the police to a nearby tea stall, where the attackers were customers, moments before the attack. The tea-vendor informed the police that he overheard from conversation of the five that three of them were to attack the girls and the other two would be their accomplices. The police have yet to know where the two accomplices were at the time of the attack.

After arresting one of the five, further questioning and investigation led to the arrest of the other four.

The arrestees are Antor Hossain, 25, president of a local boys' club, Jahid Hossain Agun, 19, Sakib-Al-Hasan, 18, Kabuya Rahman, 18, and Siam Hasan, 20.

They are from different areas under Sakhipur municipality, and are allegedly supporters of the ruling Awami League, local sources said.

While being given treatment at Sakhipur Upazila Health Complex, one of the victims told local journalists that she could not identify the three attackers as they were wearing masks.

Meanwhile, students of the college brought out a procession and gathered in front of Sakhipur Police Station yesterday to protest the attack.

They later held a rally in Mokhtar Foara Chatter area.

The arrestees were produced before Senior Judicial Magistrate Court in Tangail yesterday morning with a prayer for seven days' remand for each. The bail prayers were rejected and hearing on the remand prayer would be held on December 26.

# Nasa picks finalists to explore comet, Saturn's moon

AFP, *Washington*

Nasa on Wednesday announced two finalists for billion-dollar robotic missions -- one to explore a comet and another Saturn's moon Titan -- with a launch by the winner planned in the 2020s.

"These are tantalizing investigations that seek to answer some of the biggest questions in our solar system today," said Thomas Burbuchen, associate administrator for Nasa's Science Mission Directorate.

Titan is Saturn's largest moon, and is seen as one of the most likely hosts of some form of life in the solar system because of its rivers and lakes filled with methane.

The mission, called Dragonfly, would involve sending a "drone-like rotorcraft that would explore the prebiotic chemistry and habitability of dozens of sites," Nasa said in a statement.

# Birangana waits

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brought her home; but their family shop was looted and burned. Biva was given in marriage to a local, Anukul Majumdar, in August 1971, not much more than two months later.

With more than 10 members of both families, Biva then started on the perilous and long journey by boat and on foot to reach India as refugees. Passing through Orakandi and Ramdia, as she recalls, they eventually arrived at Helencha in India's West Bengal.

"After liberation, we returned to a deserted, abandoned home," she says. "Our son was born in 1988 and he was alright, but later he suffered a head injury. We took him to the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital and due to incorrect treatment, the nerves and muscles in his feet, along with his brain, were affected. He became both physically and mentally disabled. My husband left for India and since then I have had to face the fight for our survival alone."

"I am old now," Biva says. "I still have to care for my son. I had hoped to be recognised for the events that led to me being a victim of the Liberation War, so two years ago I filed an application online. Since then I've heard nothing."

Moklesur Rahman, commander of the district's freedom fighter committee, says they have no information regarding the delay.

# AB Bank board restructured

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Former foreign minister and BNP leader M Morshed Khan and his son Faisal Morshed Khan attended the AGM as the bank's sponsor shareholders.

According to AB Bank sources, Morshed and his family reportedly own around 25 percent shares in the bank.

Morshed nominated Wahidul as a director of the bank on December 12, 2007. Wahidul became the bank's chairman in July 2008 and held the post till yesterday.

"Wahidul was a representative of my company and I nominated him. But in recent times, the board and the management failed to comply with the rules and regulations properly.



M Wahidul Haque

"None of the shareholders stood by Wahidul at the annual general meeting," he told this newspaper over the phone.

Morshed alleged that in the past, the bank recruited qualified and skilled people through proper tests, but the existing management has been hiring people in breach of the rules.

There will be no corruption at the bank if the management carries out internal audit from time to time, he added.

## THREE NEW DIRECTORS

Sajir Ahmed, Mushtaq Ahmed Chowdhury and Shirin Sheikh Mainuddin were appointed as board members at yesterday's AGM.

Mushtaq and Shirin were nomi-

nated by Morshed, and Sajir by his father Salim, who quit as the bank's vice chairman.

Mushtaq, a leader of the Awami League, is chairman of Cox's Bazar Zila Parishad.

The AB Bank board had decided to hold the AGM on August 17 at the Bashundhara Convention Centre. It later rescheduled the AGM for December 21 and chose Kurmitola Golf Club as the venue. But finally it held the meeting at Le Meridien hotel.

## ALLEGATIONS OF MONEY LAUNDERING

According to a BB probe report, the AB Bank board in December 2013 approved investment of Tk 165 crore in Singapore-based firm Pinnacle Global Fund Pte Ltd (PGF) through the bank's Offshore Banking Unit (OBU).

In February 2014, the OBU laundered the money to an account at the UAE-based Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank.

The account belonged to Cheng Bao General Trading LLC which acted as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or a mediator for the PGF. Cheng Bao immediately withdrew the money and closed the account.

Wahidul, two ex-managing directors M Fazlur Rahman and Shamim Ahmed Chaudhury, and its former head of financial institutions and treasury Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal were directly involved in laundering the money, says the BB report.

The central bank on October 13 wrote to the AB Bank, asking it to suspend Abu Hena, ex-treasury head, from his job at the bank in line with the service rules.

The BB also instructed it to immediately classify the laundered money as bad loans, and stop borrowing, investing and lending through the OBU.

This was the second instance of money laundering by the AB Bank in the last two years.

The BB last year detected that the bank laundered around Tk 340 crore (\$40.25 million) to Singapore and the UAE through its OBU.

# Marbled cats

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cat they had found was the beautiful marbled cat, scientific name *Pardofelis marmorata*, a species thought to be extinct in the country since independence.

At the time, wildlife experts believed that the creature had been long extinct and was probably the last of its kind. Wildlife specialist Shari Khan was the first to correctly identify the animal.

He told this correspondent that after the country's liberation war, these wild-cats were thought to have all died out and could not be found anywhere. As a result, many people thought that it was extinct from the country. This was the first time it was found in the country.

The cat has been under the care of the Bangladesh Wildlife Service Foundation in Srimangal upazila of Moulvibazar in their zoo.

Swapan Deb Sojol, director of the wild animal care foundation, told this correspondent that when they found the kitten, its eyes were yet to open. They realised that it would be very difficult to save the animal.

But no one was willing to give up on the little creature. First, they fed him cow's milk using a dropper. As it grew bigger and stronger, the dropper was replaced with a feeder. Like a human

child, it slept wrapping itself in a towel. Nowadays, he can eat on his own, preferring pigeons, quails, rooster and other small birds.

Tabibur Rahman, Assistant conservator of wildlife management and nature conservation department in Moulvibazar told this correspondent that marbled cats are valued for their skin, meat and bones. Thus, this poses a threat to their existence.

Dr. M Monirul H. Khan, professor of the zoology department at Jahangirnagar University told this correspondent, that marbled cats were once found deep in the forests of Sylhet, Mymensingh and Chittagong Hill Tracts. It feeds on small birds, birds' eggs, kittens, wild rabbits, big rats, frogs etc. A mother cat can give birth to one to four children together, which mature in around 21 months.

Larger than a domestic cat, it measures 3 feet in total length, half of which consists of its tail.

As a sub-genus, *pardofelis*, the marbled cat is distinguished from the leopard-cat and other oriental relatives by the structural differences of its skull which is short, broad and more rounded, and has wider cheek arches. Wild marbled cats have an average life expectancy of about 12 years.

# Police move

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year's Primary Terminal Examinations. Their education was hampered as they could not fulfil the children's needs due to the financial problem, Shahida added.

On November 23, Sumon Mondal converted to Islam from Hinduism. Three days later, he married Nurul's daughter Sonia and started living with his in-laws.

On Saturday, Nurul reopened his tea stall for the first time with the help of some locals.

Nurul said hearing it, the UP chairman summoned Nurul to his house and asked him why he reopened the shop. At one stage, he began to beat him up.

On Saturday night, some supporters of the chairman vandalised the tea stall, he alleged.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mujibur

Rahman, a supporter of the chairman, said the whole society became angry with Nurul's family following the incident of a Muslim girl marrying a Hindu boy.

He said that to keep the situation calm, they asked Nurul to close his shop as per the decision of the village arbitration.

Contacted, UP Chairman Sabur had said on Wednesday they would allow him to reopen the shop within a few days.

But he denied the allegations of assaulting Nurul and vandalising his shop.

Sabur also claimed that the local police station knew of the incident of shutting down the shop.

Shahidul Islam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Nesarabad Police Station, termed the chairman's claim baseless.

# Designed to harm Khaleda's

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the lawsuit according to the Penal Code.

During yesterday's arguments, the lawyer read out some key points from the statements of 32 prosecution witnesses, including the complainant and the investigation officer of the case.

He also argued over the statements of different witnesses and said they could not prove the charges brought against the BNP chief.

Meanwhile, Khaleda submitted her written self-defence statement to the court in connection with the Zia Charitable Trust graft case.

The court extended her ad-interim bail in the two cases till December 26 after her lawyers had submitted two petitions.

Judge Md Akhteruzzaman of the Special Judge Court-5 in the city's Bakshibazar adjourned the hearing till Tuesday.

On that date, the court will also hear arguments in the charitable trust case.

The Anti-Corruption Commission had filed the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case in July 2008, accusing Khaleda, her elder son Tarique Rahman and four others of misappropriating over Tk 2.1 crore that had come from a foreign bank as grants for orphans.

Three years later, the anti-graft body lodged the Zia Charitable Trust graft case against four people, including Khaleda, on charges of abusing power to raise funds for the trust from unknown sources.



The voting results are displayed on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly in which the United States declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital was declared "null and void" yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

# 350 prisoners feared 'disappeared' by Iraqi Kurd forces

AFP, *Baghdad*

Hundreds of detainees in Iraq are feared to have been "forcibly disappeared" by Kurdish authorities after they were arrested for suspected ties to the Islamic State group, Human Rights Watch said yesterday.

"More than 350 detainees held by the Kurdistan Regional Government in the Iraqi city of Kirkuk are feared to have been forcibly disappeared," the US-based rights group said in a statement.

Most of those missing are Sunni Arabs detained by the Kurdish Asayish security agency on suspicion of IS "affiliation" after Kirkuk was taken from the jihadists in 2014, the statement said.

"Families in Kirkuk are desperate to know what has become of their detained relatives," said HRW's deputy Middle East director, Lama Fakih.

"The secret, incommunicado detentions raise grave concerns for their safety."

# Jatileswar

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During the last two years, the singer was hospitalised several times for renal treatment, she said.

Mukhopadhyay's body would be kept at Rabindra Sadan in Kolkata today to allow the people to pay their last respects. His cremation would take place later in the day.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee condoled the singer's death and said it was a big loss for the world of music.

"I wished him on his birthday only a week ago. Very sad. Condolences to his family," the CM said in a message.

The state government had conferred him with the "Sangeet Samman" award in 2012.

Mukhopadhyay, who had learnt music under the guidance of doyens of Bengali light classical music Chinmoy Lahiri and Sudhin Dasgupta, carved his own individual style, which enriched Bengali music in the 70s-80s.

Among his popular numbers were 'E kon sakal', 'Tomar Sange Dekha Na Hole', 'Aamar Swapan Kinte Paare' and 'Bondhuya Amar Chokhe Jal Enechhe'.

# Prime accused

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A Sunamganj court sent Yahya to jail yesterday.

The case was filed with Dirai Police Station by Munni's mother Rahela Begum on Monday accusing Yahya and his friend Tanvir Ahmed.

Tanvir was arrested on Monday in connection with his involvement in the murder and a local court sent him to jail the same day.

# US slaps Myanmar

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stand against human rights abuse and corruption globally," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

"Treasury ... will continue to take decisive and impactful actions to hold accountable those who abuse human rights, perpetrate corruption, and undermine American ideals."

Anti-corruption campaigners, who have long argued that graft and physical human rights abuses go hand in hand, welcomed the Trump administration's new stand.

"The United States has used financial pressures for decades against transnational threats such as nuclear proliferation and terrorism," said Brad Brooks-Rubin of The Sentry, an anti-corruption advocacy group.

"With these designations, the United States now recognizes public corruption and targeting of human rights defenders in this same light," he said.

"Over time, we look forward to robust use of these sanctions to target these threats wherever they occur."

# Top S Korean court spares 'nut rage' heiress jail

AFP, *Seoul*

South Korea's top court kept a Korean Air heiress out of prison yesterday in the final verdict on the "nut rage" incident that triggered national uproar in 2014.

Cho Hyun-Ah, a daughter of Korean Air chief Cho Yang-Ho and then the company's vice president, became infuriated when a flight attendant served her some nuts in a bag rather than in a bowl.

She lambasted the chief steward over the behaviour of his cabin crew and ordered the Seoul-bound flight, which had just left the gate in New York, to turn back so he could be ejected.

The incident caused fury at home and made global headlines, eventually prompting Seoul prosecutors to charge her with offences including violating aviation security and business practices laws.

Cho was initially convicted on most counts and sentenced to a year in jail, but she was freed after the appeals court cleared her of hampering an air route -- the most serious charge -- as the aircraft was still on the ground.

It maintained the more minor convictions, including interfering with business practices, but reduced her penalty to 10 months in prison, suspended for two years.

# Baby born from embryo frozen

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revealed the birth announcement this week.

The embryo was conceived by another couple and frozen on October 14, 1992.

Tina Gibson, the woman who just gave birth to Emma Wren, was born in 1991, NEDC marketing director Mark Mellinger told AFP on Wednesday.

By some measures, that would make the embryo that became Emma Wren only about a year younger than her mother.

"We could have been best friends," said Gibson, now 26, in an interview with local television WBIR.

Gibson said she wasn't told by doctors until she was pregnant that the embryo had been frozen more than 24 years earlier.

"I just stared at them, I was like, what? Are you kidding?"

Mellinger said Gibson and her husband selected the embryo based on a profile of genetic characteristics, but was not told how long the embryo had been frozen.

Gibson was implanted with three embryos, and only one survived, he added. There remain two more cryopreserved embryos from the same biological parents.

The case marks the "longest-frozen embryo to successfully come to birth," said the NEDC, citing the research staff

at the University of Tennessee Preston Medical Library as a source.

However, some experts expressed caution about proclaiming such a record.

US companies are not required to report the age of the embryos, just the outcome of the pregnancies, Zaher Merhi, director of IVF research and development at New Hope Fertility Center in New York, told CNN.

"Nobody has these records," he said.

The previous record-holder was believed to be a baby boy frozen for 20 years, born to a New York woman in 2011.

The embryo was stored by the NEDC, a Christian organization that describes itself as "the world's leading comprehensive embryo adoption program," with 686 babies born to date.

Its mission is to "protect the lives and dignity of frozen embryos that would not be used by their genetic parents and to help other couples build the families they have longed for via donated embryos."

Gibson and her husband were unable to conceive a child on their own, and are thrilled with their new baby.

"Emma is such a sweet miracle," said father Benjamin Gibson in a statement.

"I think she looks pretty perfect to have been frozen all those years ago."

# Work contracts do little

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labour migration.

"Without addressing the gaps that exist in the current female labour migration, applying an idealistic contract template is not feasible."

While it is widely acknowledged that migration has made multi-dimensional positive contribution on socio-economic development of countries of origin and destination, it also brings in associated potential risks of exploitation and abuse of migrant workers, and women migrant workers are the most vulnerable ones, said Paul Norton, chief of mission of IOM Nepal, at the inaugural session.

"In order to accelerate progress towards the protection and promotion of rights of women migrant workers, there is need to take into account the regional and local priorities and responses," he added.

Formalising women's roles with official contracts is a basic component to ensure their access to safe and fair labour migration, said Sukanya Thongthumrong, officer-in-charge of Regional Migration and Women's Economic Empowerment of UN Women Asia-Pacific.

"The guiding gender-responsive template developed by UN Women and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation can help move towards the implementation of fair, transparent and gender-sensitive STOEs, which are a powerful tool to promote the ethical recruitment of women," she added.

The template could also be used as a basis for bilateral labour agreements between South Asian sending coun-

tries and the Middle Eastern host countries, the study said. The countries' respective labour attaches play a critical role in this process, it mentioned.

Officials, diplomats, delegates from international organisations and representatives of civil society were in the Nepalese capital on December 20-21 to discuss the findings of the report, and how best to include gender-sensitive priorities in such bilateral agreements in future.

"While we talk about the multi-dimensional contributions made by the labour migrants, they continue to face problems in the entire migration cycle, in the countries of origin, transit and destination, which start from the recruitment phase, in the workplace and during return.

"It is the shared responsibility of all the stakeholders -- the private sector recruiting agencies, employers, countries of origin, transit and destination and the international agencies -- to protect workers from all forms of exploitation and to ensure their safety, security, health and well-being," said Laxman Prasad Mainali, secretary of Nepal's labour and employment ministry.

"Women migrant workers must be able to make informed choices about their employment, they must be able to understand and consent to their contracts, and be confident that those contracts meet certain standards, and will be respected or enforced," said Thongthumrong.

"Only then will they be able to make the most of the opportunities for themselves, their families, their futures and for the communities that host them," she added.