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# MURDER, GANG RAPE OF TANIA

## Charges pressed against nine

Bus driver, helper key accused

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Police yesterday pressed charges against nine suspects in a case filed over the murder and alleged gang rape of a nurse in a moving bus in May.

The investigation found bus driver Nuruzzaman, his cousin Borhan Uddin and his assistant Lalon Mia directly involved in the raping of Shahinor Akter Tania and killing her afterwards, said Inspector Sarwar Jahan of Bajitpur Police Station.

Sarwar submitted the 312-page charge-sheet before the court of Kishoreganj Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Al Mamun.

Police also pressed charges against six others who were involved in the crime and had attempted to mislead the investigation, officers said.

Bus counter managers Rafiqul Islam and Khokon Mia, ticket sellers Bakul Mia and Al Amin, owner of the bus Al Mamun, and managing director of the transport company Parvez Sarkar were named in the charge sheet.

Borhan, Parvez and Al Amin are on the run while police arrested the rest. Nuruzzaman, Lalon and Rafiqul had made confessional statements before a court.

On May 6 night, Shahinor was travelling in a bus of Swarnalata Paribahan heading towards Kishoreganj's Bajitpur from Dhaka, according to the first information report (FIR) of the case.

After other passengers got down from the bus in Katiadi station, Nuruzzaman, Lalon and Borhan raped her and shoved her off the moving vehicle in Gozaria Jamtoli area on Kishoreganj-Bhairab road.

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A truck loaded with goods tries to overtake another near a turn on Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Narayanganj's Rugganj area recently. Overtaking at such places is prohibited as it carries risks of accidents.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# KHULNA GANG RAPE

## File an FIR against the accused cops

Court orders railway police

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An officer-in-charge and some other members of Khulna railway police, who are accused of raping a woman, were interrogated by two probe committees yesterday.

The committees, formed by Railway Police Headquarters and Pakshey Railway Police, also spoke to the woman at the Khulna Jail gate.

Meanwhile, responding to the woman's complaint, the chief judicial magistrate's court directed the superintendent of railway police to file a First Information Report (FIR) against the accused under the Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention) Act, 2013, court sources said.

Speaking to The Daily Star over the phone, Superintendent of Police in Pakshey Railway Nazrul Islam yesterday said, "The

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# Bharat Ratna for Pranab

NDTV ONLINE

Pranab Mukherjee - former Indian President and a life-long Congressman respected across party lines -- has received India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna, from his successor President Ram Nath Kovind.

The award ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan yesterday evening was attended by top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who hailed him as the "outstanding statesman of our times" when the names of the recipients were announced in January.

Two others received the award posthumously

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# India PM defends Kashmir decision

Says move needed to curb terrorism; Pakistan rules out military option, bats for diplomacy; 560 detained in J&K

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday said his powderkeg move to strip the disputed Kashmir region of its autonomy was necessary to stop "terrorism", as Pakistan voiced further outrage and the UN chief urged "maximum restraint."

Modi's Hindu-nationalist government imposed direct rule on the Indian held portion of Kashmir on Monday, setting off a new crisis in one of the world's most volatile security flashpoints.

Speaking for the first time since the move, and with the people of Kashmir enduring a military lockdown, Modi hailed it as a "historic decision" that would bring peace to the region.

"Friends, I have full belief that we will be able to free Jammu and Kashmir from terrorism and separatism under this system," Modi said in a televised address.

He accused Pakistan of using the special status "as a weapon against the country to inflame the passions of some people" against India.

Modi said the special status had "not given anything other than terrorism, separatism, nepotism and big corruption".

But with Kashmir now fully part of the Indian union, the region would enjoy more jobs, corruption and red-tape, he said, adding that key infrastructure projects would be expedited.

Kashmir has been divided between Pakistan and India since independence from the British in 1947.

The contesting claims over Kashmir have led to two of the three wars between the neighbours.

Pakistan yesterday said it would not take military action this time.

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# Experts fear conflicts in the region

PORIMOL PALMA

Scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir's autonomy by the BJP-led government may fuel conflicts in India and beyond, international relations and security experts have observed.

Indian-administered Kashmir witnessed for long separatist insurgency leading to thousands of deaths over the last three decades. India accuses Pakistan of supporting insurgents -- an accusation Pakistan denies, claiming it only gives moral and diplomatic support to Kashmiris demanding self-determination.

Many of the Kashmiris believe they were not given full autonomy as enshrined in the Indian constitution. Some of them fought to join Pakistan and some wanted independence of Kashmir, experts said.

Now, as part of an electoral pledge, the BJP government revoked the special status of Kashmir, aimed at fully integrating its only Muslim-majority region with the rest of the country.

The decision means cancellation of a bar on property purchases by people from outside Jammu and Kashmir. It also means state government jobs and some college places will no longer be reserved for state residents.

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# Scientists develop self-healing robots

MAIL ONLINE



Scientists are developing self-healing robots that can feel pain, sense damage, and even repair themselves without any human intervention.

The soft robotic hands are made through 3D printing and able to carry out a wide variety of applications, from grabbing delicate and soft objects in the food industry to performing minimally invasive surgery.

They could also play an important role in creating lifelike prosthetics.

However, the soft materials also make them susceptible to damage from sharp objects or excessive pressure.

But now researchers have developed new polymers that can heal themselves, by creating new bonds in 40 minutes, with the end goal making the healing automated.

The robotics have been developed as part

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# 'Drug peddler' killed in a 'gunfight'

Two bodies recovered in Cox's Bazar

STAR REPORT

A suspected drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with members of Rapid Action Battalion in Barishal city early yesterday.

The dead Malek Fakir, 35, was accused in at least 15 cases related to drugs, said Nurul Islam, officer-in-charge of Barishal Kotwali Police Station.

Raisuddin, additional superintendent of Rab-8, claimed a team of the

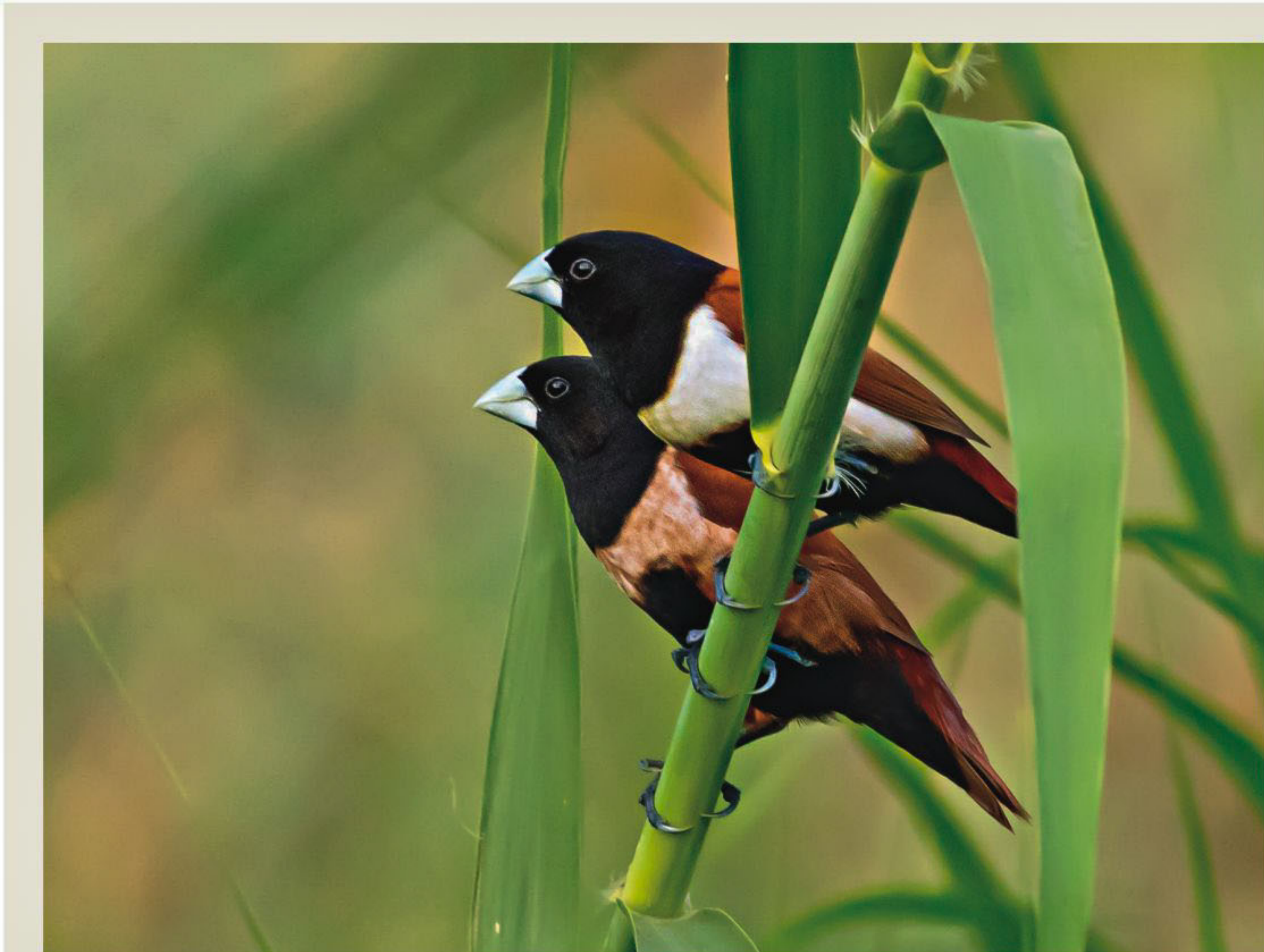
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### PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 9

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-20 12-30 5-00 6-47 8-15  
JAMAAT 4-55 1-15 5-15 6-50 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



# CHAR VISITORS

Two black-headed munia spotted in Rajshahi Padma Char area recently. The passerine bird forages in the shoals and breeds during Monsoon.

PHOTO COURTESY: ALI ASHRAF BHUIYAN

# TEA GARDEN WORKERS

## Losing links to the roots

MINTU DESHWARA

After decades of discrimination, the communities of tea plantation workers in Sylhet region are on the verge of losing their native languages and traditions.

The majority of workers in Sylhet, Habiganj and Moulvibazar districts are descendants of people who were brought to the plantations from different parts of India by the British colonists about 150 years ago, according to the Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD).

Disconnected from their ancestors' land, many have lost touch with their roots and cannot remember their history or their language.

"As a child, I had learnt a couple of words from my paternal grandfather, but I have forgotten those due to lack of practice," said 45-year-old Lakhan Tanti, a worker at Amu tea estate in Habiganj's Chunarughat.

Lakhan, who went to a local primary school, has been using Bangla since childhood.

Another Tanti community member, Sanjoy Tanti, 30, a resident of Holichhara tea estate in Moulvibazar's Kulaura, said, "We have even forgotten most of our traditional songs, rituals, cuisines and costumes."

Although the Tantis are mostly Hindus, they used to have their own rituals, he said, adding that his community people had forgotten them and observed the worship rituals of local Hindus.

The SEHD in 2016 identified 80 ethnic communities in 156 tea estates in Sylhet, Habiganj, Moulvibazar, Chattogram and Rangamati.

According to its study, four distinct groups of Tantis,

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