

## One held

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When the girl started screaming, her neighbours rushed there and rescued her. But Dilu managed to flee the scene.

Later that night, the victim's mother filed a rape case against Dilu with Pagla Police Station of Gafargaon.

Police held Dilu around 11:00am yesterday and the girl was sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital for medical tests, said Md Shahinuzzaman, officer-in-charge of Pagla Police Station.

In Jashore's Sharsha, father of a nine-year-old girl yesterday lodged a case against his neighbour on charge of attempting to rape his daughter.

The accused is Abdul Hamid, 40.

The girl's mother said her daughter was playing in front of their home on Tuesday afternoon. Hamid, luring her with sweets, took her to his home and tried to violate her.

Hamid's family members were not at home at that time.

When the girl started screaming, her family members rushed to the spot and rescued her. But Hamid fled the scene and went into hiding.

Talking to The Daily Star, Sukhdeb Roy, officer-in-charge of Bagachra police outpost, said they were trying to arrest Hamid.

Our Mymensingh and Benapole correspondents contributed to this report.

## Ex-Goalanda OC

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Besides, the court fined Zakia Tk 1 lakh, in default of which she will have to suffer three-month more in prison.

After the placing the verdict, the court cancelled the duo's bail and sent them to prison with conviction warrant to serve jail term.

To add to this, the court directed the concerned authorities to confiscate wealth of the duo that include 186.25 decimals of land in Dhaka's Rampura and Narayanganj's Bandar upazila, a flat in Dhaka's Gulshan and a deposit of Tk 25,000 with Gulshan branch of Standard Chartered Bank.

According to prosecution, Saiful acquired the illegal wealth during his deployment at different police stations across the country and his wife assisted him to do so.

On August 4, 2009, the ACC served a notice asking Saiful to submit his and his family members' wealth statement.

Receiving the notice, Saiful submitted a wealth statement of Tk 52,423,350 on September 29 the same year.

During investigation, the ACC found that the ex-OC concealed wealth from the statement.

On top of that, the couple set up two filling stations, a Chinese restaurant and bought a microbus with the illegal money, the ACC added.

The ACC pressed charges against the couple on January 20, 2011.

The charges were framed against them on August 4, 2011.

## Over 100

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134 people while about 115 were missing, bringing the death toll of Mediterranean migrants to over 600 this year.

That put 2019 on course to be the sixth year in a row with more than 1,000 deaths, UNHCR spokesman Charlie Yaxley said at the time.

## Court sells

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Guo, who claims to be a corruption whistle-blower and has lived in the US since 2014, is wanted by Chinese authorities on a series of charges, including fraud and bribery. Many of his assets in China have been frozen or repossessed by the government.

According to the online listing, only two bidders signed up to participate in the auction, though more than 150,000 people registered to watch the sale online. Bidding was open for 24 hours, with only two offers for the building made in that time.

The property eventually sold for just under 5.19 billion yuan (\$734 million), only 5 million yuan (\$708,000) above the opening bid.

The buyer has been identified as Beijing property firm Yucheng Zhiye, according to a statement released by its parent company, BBMG Corporation. And the group may have secured something of a bargain: The auction listing claims the tower is worth over 7.4 billion yuan (\$1.05 billion) -- more than 40% above the selling price.

Guo claims that the property is worth even more. In a video uploaded to YouTube on Wednesday, he said the winning bid was only 10% of its estimated value.

With a combined floor space of more than 1.5 million square feet, the skyscraper currently serves as the China headquarters for American technology firm IBM. It was designed to resemble a dragon's head, with a further four towers representing the creature's body and tail.

Pangu Plaza's other buildings -- which contain offices and a self-described "7 Star Hotel" -- were not included in the auction.

# Beijing says holding UK's Hong Kong consulate employee

AFP, Beijing

An employee of Britain's consulate in Hong Kong who went missing earlier this month is being held in China, Beijing confirmed yesterday.

The incident comes as relations between Britain and China have become strained over what Beijing calls London's "interference" in pro-democracy protests that have wracked Hong Kong for three months.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular press briefing the detained man had been "placed in administrative detention for 15 days as punishment" by Shenzhen police for breaking a public security law.

Geng said the employee was from Hong Kong and therefore the issue was an internal matter.

"Let me clarify, this employee is a Hong Kong citizen, he's not a UK citizen, which is also saying he's a Chinese person," Geng said.

The man, named by his family as Simon Cheng, travelled to Shenzhen, a megacity on the China-Hong Kong border, for a one-day business meeting on August 8.

That night, Cheng returned via high-speed train and sent messages to his girlfriend as he was about to go through customs.

"We lost contact with him since then," the family said in a Facebook post.

Geng said the employee had

violated the Public Security Administration Punishments Law -- a law with broad scope aimed at "maintaining public order in society" and "safeguarding public security", as well as making sure police and security forces act within the law.

The ongoing protests have raised fears of a Chinese crackdown in some form.

The unrest was initially triggered by a controversial law that would allow extradition to the mainland, but has since broadened into a call for wider democratic reforms.

Beijing has repeatedly warned Britain -- the former colonial ruler of Hong Kong -- against any "interference" in the protests, which erupted 11 weeks ago and have seen millions of people hit the streets calling for democratic reforms.

"Recently the UK has made many erroneous remarks about Hong Kong," Geng said at the press briefing yesterday.

"We once again urge the British side to stop gesticulating and fanning flames on the Hong Kong issue."

With Beijing attempting to shape the narrative of the unrest in Hong Kong, Chinese authorities have increased their inspections at the Shenzhen border, including checking the phones and devices of some passengers for photos of the protests.

The mainland metropolis of Shenzhen sits behind China's "Great Firewall" --which restricts access to

news and information -- while Hong Kong enjoys liberties unseen on the mainland.

China promised to respect the freedoms in the semi-autonomous territory after its handover from Britain in 1997, including freedom of speech, unfettered access to the internet and an independent judiciary.

Beijing also faced criticism in the past for detaining foreign nationals amid ongoing diplomatic spats.

Ottawa has urged Beijing to release two Canadian citizens detained in December amid escalating diplomatic tensions between the two countries.

Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor were detained amid a diplomatic crisis sparked by the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer for Chinese tech giant Huawei, in Vancouver on a US extradition bid.

Former diplomat Kovrig and consultant Spavor were picked up in China on suspicion of espionage days after her arrest, in a move widely seen as retaliation.

Friends of the missing employee staged a protest outside the British Consulate in Hong Kong on Wednesday afternoon to pressure the UK government to "save Simon".

"Hong Kong people are still fighting to oppose the extradition bill, yet something like this happened without such a bill," organiser Max Chung told AFP.

## HC seeks info on ACC officials

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But even as Jaha Alam, now 32, languished in jail for a crime he did not commit, eight of these 11 officials were given promotion effective from January 24.

The promotion order came even after ACC's own internal investigation found they all miserably failed to do their job.

Their elevation to higher positions, although it was part of their regular promotion, has breed discontent and resentment within the ACC.

"This sets a bad example. It shows how someone can get away with such blunders and even be rewarded after that," said an ACC official, asking to remain unnamed.

ACC Chairman Iqbal Mahmood declined to comment on the matter, only saying, "We will go by the rules and court's decision."

Under section 40 of the ACC Service Rule of 2008, these officials could face several penalties, including demotion, postponement of their promotion, forced retirement and even termination.

Their promotion raised serious questions particularly because ACC's own investigations found that Jaha Alam had to lose three years of his life in prison because these officials "erroneously incriminated" him in over two dozen money laundering cases involving Tk 18.5 crore.

"It seems that the mistake of identifying Jaha Alam as Abu Salek [the actual suspect] happened because

of the investigation officials," said the report placed before the HC on July 11 this year.

During investigation, none of these officials visited Jaha Alam's house to confirm his identity, the report said, adding that some bank officials and introducers of Abu Salek's bank accounts misled the investigators.

"But it is the duty of the investigation officials to unearth the truth and present it before the court. There is no scope for shifting this duty to bank officials or someone else," the report further said.

The eight officials are Selina Akhtar Moni, Masudur Rahman, Debrata Mandal, Mefthahul Jannat, Silvia Ferdous, Muhammad Joynal Abedin, Rafi Md Nazmus Sadat and Saiduzzaman.

After promotion, Selina, Masudur and Debrata became deputy directors while Mefthahul, Silvia, Joynal, Sadat and Saiduzzaman became assistant directors. All of them have been tasked with important departments such as money laundering and special investigation.

Saiduzzaman was later suspended over negligence and misconduct in a separate investigation.

Two other officials -- Deputy Director Shekh Mesbah Uddin and Assistant Director Sumitra Sen -- hold the same post.

Contacted, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "Such

rewards to inefficient officials send signal of a bad precedence."

HOW DID HE LAND IN JAIL?

The whole saga began in September 2010, when a money laundering case was filed with the Motijheel police against one Abu Salek and his associates over misappropriation of Tk 18.5 crore from Sonali Bank's Cantonment branch.

According to the case statement, the laundered money was then transacted to different accounts of 33 branches in 18 public and private banks.

In 2012, the ACC filed 33 cases over the incident after it took charge for further investigation. A total of 12 ACC officials were appointed as investigation officers of the cases.

Of the 33 cases, Abu Salek was named in 30. Later, his name was dropped from four more cases. In the end, he faced 26 cases that were investigated by 10 ACC officials.

Taking charge as investigation officer for two of the 26 cases, Selina Akhtar Moni asked the bank officials to produce Abu Salek before her.

In December 2014, bank officials produced Alam as Salek before Selina.

Without any field visits or cross-checking the authenticity, Selina pressed charges against Alam, identifying him as Salek.

The other investigating officers did the same and placed charge sheet against him in the rest 24 cases.

Jaha Alam was eventually arrested in 2016 and was sent to jail.

## J&K tensions spike

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Highlighting the growing international concern, a senior US official, who has just returned from a visit to the region, called on India Tuesday to quickly release detainees and restore basic liberties.

"We continue to be very concerned by reports of detentions, and continued restrictions on the residents of the region," the State Department official told reporters.

"We urge respect for individual rights, compliance with legal procedures and an inclusive dialogue," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Officials in France said that President Emmanuel Macron would bring up Kashmir with Modi when the two meet in Paris ahead of the G7 summit.

Earlier this year India and Pakistan again came close to all-out conflict over the region after a militant attack in Indian-held Kashmir in February was claimed by a group based in Pakistan, sparking tit-for-tat air strikes.

India has bristled at any suggestion of foreign mediation and strenuously denied a claim by Trump last month that Modi had invited him to act a peacebroker.

It was also left seething when the UN Security Council held its first formal meeting on Kashmir in nearly half a century last week, saying it would not accept "international busybodies... tell(ing) us how to run our lives."

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told Modi in a phone call

on Tuesday that the Kashmir dispute must be resolved between India and Pakistan alone, Downing Street said.

An Indian statement said Modi had raised with Johnson the "violence and vandalism perpetrated by a large mob against the High Commission of India in London" on August 15.

Several thousand people had protested in London that day over India's Kashmir move. Police separated them from a smaller pro-Indian counter-demonstration and made at least one arrest.

Clashes are common between Indian security forces and militants opposed to Indian rule, with tens of thousands of people killed in the past 30 years, most of them civilians, adding to public resentment towards New Delhi.

But the latest gun battle in the north Kashmir's Baramulla district, reported by Kashmir police yesterday, id the first since the August 5 move.

"One terrorist killed... Arms and ammunition recovered. Our colleague SPO (special police officer) Billal attained martyrdom. SI (subinspector) Amardeep Parihar injured in the incident is being treated at Army Hospital," Kashmir Zone Police said on Twitter.

A later tweet said that the dead militant was identified as a local man "affiliated" with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

LeT is a UN-listed militant organisation based in Pakistan and is accused by India and Washington of masterminding the four-day Mumbai attacks in 2008.

# Trump accuses Jewish Democratic voters of 'great disloyalty'

AFP, Washington

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday Jewish Americans who vote for Democrats display "either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty," sparking accusations that he is promoting and politicizing anti-Semitism.

His comments, which drew fierce rebuke from Jewish groups, came amid his ongoing dispute with Democratic Muslim congresswomen Ilhan Omar of Minnesota and Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, both of whom support a boycott of the Jewish state for its treatment of the Palestinians.

"Five years ago, the concept of even talking about this -- even three years ago -- of cutting off aid to Israel because of two people that hate Israel and hate Jewish people -- I can't believe we're even having this conversation. Where has the Democratic party gone?" Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

"I think any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty."

Israel last week barred Omar and Tlaib from entry on the grounds that

they support the boycott against the country, and after Trump urged the Jewish state to block the two.

Trump's comments prompted condemnation from Jewish groups, which charged the president with anti-Semitism by questioning the loyalty of Jewish citizens, part of a longstanding trope accusing Jewish people of dual allegiance.

"It's unclear who @POTUS is claiming Jews would be 'disloyal' to, but charges of disloyalty have long been used to attack Jews," tweeted Jonathan Greenblatt, the CEO of the Anti-Defamation League.

"It's long overdue to stop using Jews as a political football."

Executive Director for the Jewish Democratic Council of America Halie Soifer echoed the sentiment, saying the president "has no right to tell Jewish Americans he knows what is best for us or to demand our loyalty."

"Trump needs a reality check -- we live in a democracy and Jewish support for the @GOP has been halved in the past four years," she tweeted.

Presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders also took to Twitter to denounce the president's words.

# Zimbabwe bans third opposition protest

AFP, Harare

Zimbabwean police outlawed anti-government protests that had been scheduled to take place on Tuesday in Gweru, the country's third largest city, the main opposition MDC said.

The march, organised by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), is the third demonstration to be banned in less than a week.

In a statement the MDC described the move as not just "a ban on civilian politics, but a de-facto state of emergency".

"The prohibition orders that are being used to stifle and throttle democratic space are in themselves unconstitutional," it said.

MDC Vice President Tendai Biti said in a tweet that "the regime's actions are effectively banning the MDC and suspending the constitution."

But, he promised, "we will soldier on peacefully and constitutionally."

Police have already banned marches in the capital Harare and Bulawayo, the country's second largest city.

The protests aim to highlight the worsening economic conditions in the southern African country.

Riot police patrolled the streets of Gweru on Tuesday where some shops kept their shutters down, according to witnesses.

On Friday, police using teargas and batons scattered demonstrators who defied the ban in Harare, leaving 12 people wounded.

The European Union, Australia, Canada and the United States have called on the authorities to exercise

restraint and proportionality.

The "intimidation, harassment and physical attacks on human rights defenders, trade union and civil society representatives, and opposition politicians -- prior to, during and following the demonstration in Harare on 16 August -- are cause for great concern," their envoys said in a rare joint statement issued in Harare.

But the government lambasted the statement saying it was dismayed by the reaction of the Western countries' envoys.

"Government is taken aback by the intrusive and judgemental tone of the statement," said government spokesman Nick Mangwana in a statement.

Zimbabwe's government is trying to mend relations with the West after decades of isolation over human rights abuses under veteran leader Robert Mugabe who was ousted in a military-led coup in 2017.

Mangwana said government believed that any efforts to re-engage Zimbabwe by the West "should not be in any way prescriptive, coercive or manipulative".

Mugabe's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, won elections last year on a pledge to revive the country's sickly economy.

But many Zimbabweans say things have gone from bad to worse with shortages of bread, fuel and medicines. Inflation is now running at triple figures.

According to the UN, about five million Zimbabweans, or a third of the population, are in need of food aid.