



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

# Three arrested for stealing babies

Gang targeted low-income parents, say police

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Some nurses, hospital staff members and employees of diagnostic centres of Chattogram are involved in stealing babies, said police.

They steal babies from low-income people and later sell them to childless couples, law enforcers added.

Police came up with the information yesterday after arresting three members of a baby-stealing gang and rescued a seven-month-old baby boy -- stolen from his mother on May 27. Law enforcers rescued the baby from a couple in port city's Dampara area.

The arrestees are: Md Afsar alias Jafar Sadek (38), Parvin Akhter (30) and Sujit Kumar Nath (45). Afsar is the ringleader of the gang, claimed police.

According to police sources, a two-month-old baby was stolen from a beggar on May 28 in the city's Riazuddin Bazar. Later, the mother filed a case with Kotwali Police Station, accusing unnamed people in this regard.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammed Mohsin of Kotwali Police Station said Afsar works at Basic Diagnostic Center lab in Chattogram Medical College Hospital area. Through work, he developed good

relations with medical college hospital's staff and nurses.

"Afsar collected information on childless couples who came to the hospital for treatment, and offered them babies in exchange of money," said the OC.

Inspector (investigation) Kamruzzaman of Kotwali Police Station told The Daily Star, "The gang members used to target babies of low-income parents and applied several tactics to steal them."

According to the case filed by Shefaly Begum, a youth lured her saying that he would buy new clothes for her and her child on May 26 when she was begging in Kazir Dewri area. The youth came the following day and took the child and the mother to Riazuddin Bazar to buy clothes.

At the market, the youth took her to an eatery and they had food together. After eating, Shefaly fell sick and started vomiting. The youth asked her to wash her hands and face at a nearby hotel. Shefaly went inside the hotel to wash up, leaving her baby with the youth. After she returned, she found her son missing along with the youth.

OC Mohsin said they collected CCTV footage from the hotel and identified the youth who took the child. Police later

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# One more death from dengue in Khulna

STAR REPORT

A dengue patient, who was undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH) for the last three days, died early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sandha Rani Saha (55), wife of Bimal Saha of Tala upazila under Satkhira district.

Sandha had been suffering from dengue fever for days and was admitted to KMCH on October 30 in a critical condition, said Sailendranath Biswas, residential physician of KMCH.

She was moved to intensive care unit of the hospital where she died of dengue shock syndrome, he said.

Atiar Rahman Sheikh, assistant civil surgeon of Khulna, told The Daily Star that 24 people have died from dengue fever and 1,938 patients were infected with the disease in Khulna. Now, 53 patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals and clinics.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 107 patients died of dengue this year. However, unofficial death toll would be higher.

According to the DGHS, a total of 184 dengue patients were admitted to different hospitals across the country in the last 24 hours till 8am yesterday, of whom 128 were outside Dhaka.

A total of 96,646 dengue patients were admitted to hospitals across the country this year, of whom 49,746 were in Dhaka, according to the DGHS.

A total of 900 dengue patients are now undergoing treatment at different hospitals across the country, of whom 518 are outside Dhaka.

# House help dies falling off roof

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A house help died after falling off the rooftop of a seven-storey building in port city's Surson Road area yesterday.

The deceased is Lucky Akhter, 35, of Halishahar-Bou Bazar area, said police.

Sub-inspector (SI) Azharul Islam of Kotwali Police Station said Lucky used to work at a house of the "Sanmar Valencia" building's fifth floor.

Quoting the building's guards and house owner, Azhar said at 11am, Lucky went to the rooftop carrying a carpet.

On the rooftop, the gap between the building and the adjacent one is covered with sheets of tin. Police suspect Lucky stood on the tin covering to place the carpet, but it broke under her weight.

She died on the spot, and the guards informed police, who recovered the body around 11:30am and sent it to Chattogram Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy, he added.

Law enforcers were investigating the incident, while an unnatural death case was lodged in this connection, the SI added.

# CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS AT JU TIB seeks ACC investigation

JU CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) yesterday called upon the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to investigate the allegations of corruption and irregularities in development projects at Jahangirnagar University (JU).

The anti-graft watchdog thinks JU Vice-Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam should step aside from the post temporarily for the sake of proper and fair investigation into her alleged involvement in corruption.

TIB voiced grave concern over the news that students who continued staging demonstration against corruption on the university campus, are being harassed.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman in a statement said the removal of two top leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was a positive move but it was not enough in terms of ensuring transparency and accountability.

Accountability of both student leaders have not yet been ensured under a legal procedure and no investigation has been carried out despite the allegations against the VC and her family members, Iftekharuzzaman said.

Iftekharuzzaman, in the statement, expressed grave concern as ACC has yet not taken any initiative to investigate the matter and said, "We urge ACC to conduct a free and fair investigation into the matter and hold the real offenders accountable."

Meanwhile, a group of teachers and students met with Education Minister Dipu Moni to discuss the ongoing crisis yesterday evening. Prof Khabir Uddin, one of the organisers of the movement, confirmed the meeting.

As part of the ongoing programme, protesters besieged the exam controller office from 8:30am yesterday.

Protesters have been staging demonstration on the campus, demanding VC's removal since September 18, while the strike began on October 28.

# BCL INFIGHTING ON CAMPUS

## Sust expels one, suspends seven

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) on Saturday expelled one student and suspended seven others for a semester over disciplinary issues.

The university syndicate in a meeting, chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, took the decision, following recommendations from the disciplinary board, said syndicate member Dr Mohammed Mastabur Rahman.

All eight students are involved with the university unit of Chhatra League and hold different posts in the organisation.

Abdur Rashid Rasel, a student of social work department, has been expelled on charges of stabbing a student, Jahid Hasan Nayem, on March 25 last year.

Nayem is the university BCL unit's organising secretary while Rasel is mass education affairs secretary, said sources.

Meanwhile, the other seven students were suspended for their involvement in an attack on Sust BCL unit's joint secretary Rajib Sarkar on March 23 this year.

# 2 bus helpers sent to jail over rape attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A court in Gazipur yesterday sent two persons to jail on charge of attempting to rape a ninth grader.

The accused are Ashik, 22, and Juwel, 28. They were helpers of a bus plying between Gazipur city and Mawna bus station.

Police said the girl resides in Narayanganj and studies at a school in Dhaka.

Around 8pm on Saturday, she got on the bus at Chandona intersection in Gazipur to go to Rajendrapur to participate in a cultural event, said Manjurul Haque, officer-in-charge of Mawna Highway Police Station.

After driving for a while, the driver and two helpers told other passengers to get off the bus. They told her to stay put, assuring of dropping her off at her destination.

The driver stopped the bus on Mawna flyover and the three tried to rape her. But she fought back, started screaming and kicked down a window. Hearing her scream, people gathered there and informed police. Law enforcers rushed to the spot, rescued her and arrested the two, said the OC.

Police also seized the bus but its driver Harun Miah fled the scene, he added.

The girl filed a case yesterday, said OC Liakat Ali of Sreepur Police Station.

# DISPUTE OVER JUBO DAL COMMITTEE Fakhru rejects 4 BNP leaders' resignation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday rejected resignations of four party leaders. They tried to resign from different posts of the central committee over Jubo Dal's Sylhet unit convenor committee formation.

Those who submitted resignation are: Abdur Razzak, assistant micro-credit affairs secretary; Shamsuzzaman Zaman, assistant voluntary affairs secretary; Ariful Haque Choudhury, member of the central committee; and Dr Shahriar Hossain Chowdhury, also member of central committee.

"We met the secretary general at the party's Gulshan office this morning [Sunday] and tried to submit resignation letters but he [Fakhru] refused to accept them, and assured us of resolving the feud over Jubo Dal committee formation," Ariful, also mayor of Sylhet City Corporation, said.

On November 1, after 19 years, new convenor committees of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal's Sylhet district and city units were declared -- headed by Siddiqur Rahman and Nazibur Rahman respectively.

That night, central and local leaders of BNP in Sylhet arranged a meeting at Kumarpara and the four central leaders from Sylhet decided to resign from the party as many dedicated activists were not given posts in the newly-formed committees.

Regarding this matter, Ariful Haque Choudhury said the party's activities have not been on the right track for a long time and organisational procedure was not followed during formation of the district and city units this time -- leaving many deprived of their desired posts.



SHUTKI GALORE... a man piles up dried fish on a field in Biswanath upazila of Sylhet. He and many others buy a variety of freshwater fish -- caught mostly from haors -- from local markets, dry those under the sun and sell to wholesalers and retailers. The photo was taken from Lamakazi area recently.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



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