

# NEWS

## National and world news in brief

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### Saudi rape victim sentenced to 200 lashings

SAUDI ARABIA -- A rape victim had her sentence increased from 90 lashes to 200 last week, following her appeal. The Saudi government tried to legitimize the lengthened sentence by accusing the victim of "trying to aggravate and influence the judiciary through the media."

The 19-year-old victim was charged with "meeting with an unrelated male." The man she was meeting was a longtime friend from whom she was retrieving photographs. During their meeting, the pair was abducted by seven men who viciously beat both of them and raped the woman. The rapists received sentences ranging from 10 months to 5 years in prison.

The victim's lawyer, Abdulrahman al-Lahim, appealed the rapists' sentences, claiming their punishment should be life in prison. Lahim argued there is an edict under Islamic law, which states that crimes such as rape are Hiraba (sinful violent crime) and the perpetrators should be executed.

After the appeal, Judge Saad al-Muhanna from the

Source: CNN



Qatif General Court extend the sentences of some of the rapists, but also doubled the victim's sentence. Al-Muhanna also barred Lahim from defending his client, and revoked his law license.

"Currently she doesn't have a lawyer, and I feel they're doing this to isolate her and deprive her from her basic rights," said al-Lahim. "We will not accept this judgment and I'll do my best to continue representing her because justice needs to take place."

President Bush declared in his second inaugural address that America would be fighting for women's rights around the world. According to the President, "America will not pretend...that women welcome humiliation and servitude." Despite their promises, the Bush administration has no plans to intervene with the Saudis on the situation. When asked what the administration's stance is on the issue, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack replied with "I am not aware of any direct contact with the Saudis on this issue."

### Teacher jailed for students naming teddy bear "Mohammed"

SUDAN -- A British teacher was sentenced to 15 days in prison in Sudan for allowing one of her students to name a teddy bear "Mohammed" on Thursday. The teacher, Gillian Gibbons, was arrested on Sunday after organizing a school project. The project, was for her class of 7-year-olds to name a stuffed animal. The most popular name from the class, was Mohammed. Gibbons faces the charges under article 125 of Sudan's constitution, which relates to "insulting religion and inciting hatred." If convicted, Gibbons faces the possibility of being deported after she serves her court sentence. Gibbons left her position as deputy head teacher at a school in Liverpool, England in August to teach in Sudan.

Gibbons' lawyer was quoted as saying he was "very disappointed" with the verdict and that an appeal was imminent. Gibbons got off of two other charges she faced, which included inciting hatred and showing contempt for religious beliefs.

Gibbons was escorted to her closed hearing on Thursday by her defense lawyers and a staff member from the British Embassy in Khartoum. Police

had a high presence outside the courthouse, keeping most of the journalists and general public away from Gibbons. Twenty-five police officers linked arms to create a human wall to force bystanders away from the court entrance. They even mistakenly kept one of her defense attorneys from reaching her.

Gibbons' sentence of 15 days is minimal compared to what she was facing. Other possible sentences were 40 lashes, fines or even a jail term up to one year, according to the Foreign Office.

British officials are doing their best to aid Gibbons. "We are extremely disappointed that the charges against Gillian Gibbons were not dismissed," Said Foreign Secretary David Miliband. "As I said this morning, our clear view is that this is an innocent misunderstanding by a dedicated teacher. Our priority now is to ensure Ms. Gibbons' welfare, and we will continue to provide consular assistance to her."

### Students concerned continued from page 1



Chris Brown/THE BEHREND BEACON

Poorly-lit Jordan Road and speeding cars are major concerns to people who walk along the road.

quickest route to the REDC building. That is why I use the road."

Student safety concerns along roadways are well justified, in light of a recent accident on the Bayfront Connector. On Monday Nov. 26, a pedestrian was hit by a car and killed while crossing the busy road. 52-year-old Pamela Sparks of Erie was crossing the Connector in her wheelchair, when one car swerved to avoid hitting her, and the following vehicle made contact.

Ream informs that the road is actually owned by Harborcreek Township. Any changes such as adding lights at the crossing points, reducing the speed limit, or conditioning the road surface, must be taken up with the township authorities. "We have already had ongoing discussions with them about making safer crossings for people traveling the campus." Ream mentions that Behrend Maintenance and the Harborcreek Township have also collaborated on what he calls a "Traffic

Calming Study". The study consisted of a close observation of the road's traffic flow. They noted any problems or ways to make things go more smoothly. Most of the study's focus was on the road's speed limit. He adds, "Traffic is usually going at a rather high speed. The upper part of the road near the maintenance building has a speed limit of 35 miles-per-hour, and the lower part of the road near the campus entrance is 25 miles-per-hour. We found that the actual speed should be clarified."

Lighting additions are not in the plans of the Maintenance department. Ream assures the road is well lit for the crossing, and otherwise there is not a need to add lights along the road since students are not encouraged to be walking on it. He concludes, "We think the campus is well lit, and if there is an official walking area that is too dark, I would appreciate knowing the concern."

### Students favor longer Thanksgiving break continued from page 1

weekend. I probably wouldn't be able to go home at all. I don't know if I could crash a friend's Thanksgiving, it would be weird."

Because this year brought in the most out-of-state students yet to Behrend, the longer break is very beneficial to those with either long drives or expensive flights. For these students, one long break is obviously easier to manage and more worthwhile than two short ones. Even to local students it provides the opportunity to stock up on supplies and provisions, a difficult task when lacking a car, as well as catching up with old friends and even have

a couple of days with no obligations at all.

The new, longer break is a new trend among bigger universities. Although smaller, private schools tend to hang onto the two long weekends system, the long Thanksgiving break is catching on. Some of the Big Ten schools, including Indiana and Iowa, also had the full week. However, Karen Schultz, the Penn State University Registrar, wants to point out that "only students had the entire week off. The University was open for business Monday through Wednesday and on Friday. So most of us were working that week."

### Quotes on Civility

"Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson,  
American essayist, public  
philosopher and poet  
(1803-1882)

Janet Neff Sample Center  
for Manners & Civility



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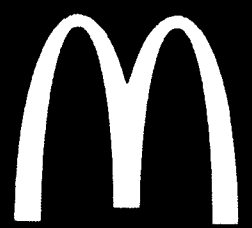


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