

'I'm the luckiest person on earth'

Shakib says as PM cooks for his family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan received an overwhelming surprise yesterday, after being delivered delicious food cooked by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself.

"I am the luckiest person on earth, I'm truly speechless by this gesture of our honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as I got to taste her delicious cooking which she cooked herself this morning and sent to my house for my wife because she mentioned it was her favourite food when we visited her yesterday [Saturday]. Can't thank enough for this amazing gesture. This will always remain in my heart for the rest of my life! We are truly blessed," the cricketer wrote on his Facebook page yesterday.

Shakib is currently serving a two-year ban from cricket, with the second of those suspended, after failing to report corrupt approaches from a bookie.

The ace cricketer also posted pictures of

13 Rohingya women rescued in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday rescued 13 Rohingya women from a house in the capital's Aftabnagar. A human trafficking gang had holed them up there for seven months with plans to traffic them abroad, the elite force yesterday said in a press release.

During the drive, the Rab team also arrested two members of the human trafficking gang, seized a huge number of passports, fake birth registration forms, certificates and passport forms, the Rab-3 press release said.

Contacted around 7:30pm yesterday, Rab-3 Commanding Officer Lt Col Rakibul Hasan could not tell the exact number of passports recovered.

The arrestees are Kabir Ahmed (40) and Md Emran (28), both hailing from Cox's Bazar.

Rab said they arrested Kabir from a rented house in Aftabnagar. He had brought the Rohingya women to Dhaka from the camps in Cox's Bazar, the press release added.

It said the traffickers were also involved in "managing" Bangladeshi passports for the Rohingya with the help of some unscrupulous passport officials.

Two others members of the gang -- arrestee Emran and another named Habib -- were tasked with arranging passports for the victims. They also "managed" visas of different countries including Malaysia and UAE for the refugees, the release said, adding, "The Rohingya women are sold to international human trafficking gangs for large sums of money," said the press release.

Earlier on December 5, Rab-3 members busted a house at Shantipur in South Goran of the capital, and arrested three members of a human trafficking gang from Cox's Bazar.

During the drive, Rab members rescued five Rohingyas and seized 115 passports -- 93 of which were of women -- and a huge number of birth certificates.

"Human trafficking has increased alarmingly in recent times. Taking opportunity of the helplessness of Rohingya people, a group of brokers are trafficking them abroad," the press release said.



PHOTO OF THE DAY

RAJIB RAIHAN



Pori the tigress at Chattogram Zoo tends to her cub. Two cubs were born to Raj and Pori in December last year, but only the girl survived. After ensuring that the cub grows up healthy in the next three months in the company of her parents, the zoo will allow visitors to see her. The photo was taken yesterday.

Rape victim's family says they are being threatened

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Family members of a 15-year-old girl, who was gang-raped by four youths on January 15 in Gazipur, alleged that they were being threatened by relatives of the accused, who are her neighbours.

Rab arrested the accused on Friday after the girl's mother filed a case with Sreepur Police Station on January 16 and sought Rab's help.

"After the incident, they threatened us not to file a case. Now, parents of an accused are warning us of dire consequences if anything happens to their son. They are also keeping us under watch," the victim's mother told The Daily Star over phone yesterday.

She said they have informed the matter to the police station concerned.

Sub-inspector Nazmus Sakib of Sreepur Police Station, who is investigating the case, said they are looking into the matter seriously. "We suggested the family to file a general

diary in this regard," added the SI.

The incident took place when the girl attended a birthday party in Sreepur, where she was served a drink spiked with sedatives.

When she fell unconscious, the four accused took her to a bush and raped her, said Lt Col Abdullah Al Mamun, company commander of a Specialised Company of Rab-1, at a press briefing after arresting the four.

The arrestees are: Sharif Hossain (18), Imran Hasan Sujon (19), Sharif Uddin Mollah (20) and a 16-year-old boy. Another accused is a 19-year-old woman, the victim's neighbour, who took the girl to the party. She was arrested on January 16.

Sujan recorded the incident on his mobile phone and later circulated it on social media, the Rab official said.

In the video, the four were seen saying, "Hello friends, we might be in jail tomorrow. So, there's a little chance to meet you again." The rape incident and the video sparked a huge

outcry on social media, which led to their eventual arrest.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team conducted a drive at Rajbari of Gazipur city around 10:30pm on Friday and arrested accused Sharif, said the Rab company commander.

Gleaning information from him, the team arrested three others from Mymensingh. During primary interrogation, the four confessed to their crime, the Rab official said.

The four were produced before a Gazipur court and five-day remand was sought for each. The court set tomorrow for hearing and sent them to jail. The 19-year-old accused woman is also in jail.

According to Ain o Salish Kendra, the number of rape victims in Bangladesh has doubled in 2019 within a year. A total of 1,413 women were either gang-raped or subjected to rape last year. The actual number may be much higher as many do not report the abuses, the rights body says.

Voter list bill passed at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The House yesterday passed "Electoral Rolls (Amendment) Bill 2020", extending the deadline to update voter lists till March 1 instead of January 31.

Law Minister Anisul Huq moved the bill, which was passed by voice vote. It was also decided that National Voter Day will be observed on March 2 instead of March 1 every year.

BNP MPs Rumeen Farhana and Harunur Rashid said the government has destroyed the culture of holding elections in a free, fair and neutral manner. That is why there is no need to amend the bill.

The two opposition MPs also demanded presenting the bill to public for their opinion. Their proposal was, however, scrapped in voice vote.

ADMITTING STUDENTS EXCEEDING UGC LIMIT

Three private universities fined Tk 10 lakh each

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday fined three private universities Tk 10 lakh each for admitting students beyond the approval of University Grants Commission (UGC).

South East University, Eastern University and Islamia University were ordered to pay the fine to the Liver Transplant Unit of Birdem General Hospital and Kidney Foundation Hospital. The universities were fined over admitting students to their law faculties in excess of the limit set by UGC.

However, the apex court upheld the HC order that directed Bangladesh Bar Council to allow candidates from the three universities to fill up forms and to give them registration cards so they can appear for its enrollment test.

According to the ruling, the Bar Council will allow candidates to appear for the test only after the universities have paid the fines and placed money receipts before the Appellate Division of the SC.

A six-member bench of the Appellate

Division, headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain, passed the order after rejecting three review petitions filed by Bangladesh Bar Council seeking necessary order to fine the institutions for violating UGC's directives, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza told The Daily Star.

On April 23, 2014, the UGC issued a directive stating private universities will not be allowed to admit more than 50 students to their law faculties per semester. The Bar Council on October 1 last year issued a notification saying it will not issue registration cards beyond 50 LLB Honours graduates from private universities per semester.

Following this, students of the three universities filed petitions with the HC challenging the SC decision. The HC on different dates in September last year directed the Bar Council to allow the students to appear for the test.

The SC on October 27 upheld the HC directives, following leave-to-appeal petitions by the Bar Council.



Two elderly men, among a crowd of people, wait for hours in front of a bank in the chilly morning of Sylhet city to receive their government allowance. They said although the money was supposed to be sent to their bank or mobile financial accounts, authorities asked them to be physically present. This photo was taken last week from the city's Ambarkhana area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Road crashes kill four

STAR REPORT

Four people were killed and at least seven others were injured in three separate accidents across the country yesterday, report our correspondents. In Mymensingh, at least two people were killed and five others were injured in a road crash on Mymensingh-Tangail road at Natun Bazar area yesterday morning.

In Muktagacha Municipality in Mymensingh this morning. One of the deceased was identified as Md Harun-or-Rashid (45) while the other was an unidentified woman aged about 52, reports our Mymensingh correspondent.

Harun was posted as sub-assistant engineer at Madhupur Municipality in Tangail, said police.

The accident took place around 8:30am when a Tangail bound truck collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw, killing the two on the spot and injuring five other passengers of the auto-rickshaw, said Mohammad Ali Mahmud, officer-in-charge of Muktagacha Police Station.

On information, police rushed the injured to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH), recovered the bodies and sent them to morgue for autopsy.

Police seized both vehicles but the truck driver managed to flee. A case was lodged with the police station in this regard.

In Rajshahi, a man was killed in a road accident in Rajshahi-Chapainawabganj highway near Godagari area yesterday morning, reports our Rajshahi University correspondent.

Deceased Shariful Islam (48) died after the three-wheeler carrying him lost control and turned over on the highway. This also injured the driver of the vehicle, who was admitted to a local health complex, police said.

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9TH WAGE BOARD FOR JOURNOS

SC asks HC to expeditiously dispose of rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked the High Court to expeditiously hear and dispose of the rules issued over the legality of the gazette regarding the 9th wage board for journalists and workers of newspapers and news agencies.

A four-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after disposing of two separate leave to appeal petitions filed by Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (Noab) and the government.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam represented the state at the hearing, along with Deputy Attorney General Biswajit Debnath. Senior advocate AM Amin Uddin appeared on behalf of Noab, accompanied by lawyer Md Yusuf Ali.

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Official notice from the Bangladesh Government regarding the admission of students exceeding UGC limits. The notice is in Bengali and includes details about the fine imposed on three private universities and the conditions for student admission.