

Missing JnU student sued under DSA

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Jagannath University (JnU) student Tithy Sarker, who has remained missing for 10 days, was sued under the Digital Security Act yesterday for making "derogatory" comments about religion on Facebook.

Abu Musa Rifat, a student of the same university's zoology department, filed the case with the Cyber Tribunal in Dhaka, Shamim Al Mamun, bench assistant of the tribunal, confirmed to The Daily Star.

After a hearing, judge Mohammad Ash Sams Joglul Hossain took the case into cognisance and recorded the complainant's statements.

The court also instructed the Cyber Crime Investigation Division of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CITC) unit of police to investigate the matter and submit a report to it by December 8.

According to the case documents, Tithy Sarker, a zoology student of JnU, willingly made "derogatory" comments about Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Islam on Facebook between October 16 and October 23, hurting people's religious sentiment.

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A large gaping hole formed on this road at Chattogram city's Bahaddarhat area yesterday, after a pipeline of water cracked, releasing a huge amount of water underneath the road. The surface eventually gave in to the water pressure, forcing pedestrians and vehicles to precariously circumvent the broken part.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Over 50pc road crash victims 21-40 yrs old

Says Accident Research Institute report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than half of road crash victims are between 21 and 40 years old, the most productive segment of the population, according to Accident Research Institute (ARI) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

Around 43 percent of road crashes happened on national highways, while 23 percent took place on city roads. Out of all city road accidents, 74 percent occurred in the capital, according to ARI research.

Pedestrians are predominantly road crash victims; 70 percent of pedestrians involved in crashes died, it stated.

ARI prepared the analytics based on police's first information report (FIR) on road accidents between 1998 to 2014. ARI Director Prof Md Hadiuzzaman yesterday presented the data at a seminar.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA), in association with ARI, organised the event on "Road Safety in Dhaka City and Role and Initiative of DTCA" at a Buet auditorium.

Citing police data, Prof Hadiuzzaman said some 2,700 people get killed and 2,400 injured in more than 3,000 road crashes annually in Bangladesh.

He, however, said police data is "under-reported", as the number of injured persons should be 10 times higher than fatalities.

Prof Hadiuzzaman said 52.4 percent of road crash victims are from 21-40 age group.

When asked for the reason, he told The Daily Star that these people usually must support their families economically, so they must travel by road the most, making them more vulnerable to such crashes.

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Unabated sand-mining ruining rivers: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at an online seminar yesterday warned against the dangerous practice of uncontrolled sand-mining, cautioning that this is destroying our rivers.

While it is legal to mine sand from quarries, the conditions under which such mining can be done is not followed, said Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA).

The webinar, titled "River Sand Mining and Navigation Management: Costs and Benefits" was organised by the Trans-boundary Rivers of South Asia project, Change Initiative and Oxfam Bangladesh.

"A location can only be declared as a sand quarry if it is environmentally sound. While sand quarries are legal, how lawfully these are leased out is a question," said Hasan.

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INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Lack of education, jobs pushing them to ultra-poverty: MJF

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to lack of education, indigenous people living both in plainlands and hill tracts are continuously being deprived of job opportunities, which is pushing them to ultra poverty, a study has found.

The number of ultra-poor among indigenous people is higher than the national rate of ultra-poor, according to the study by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) titled "Understanding the Dynamics of Livelihood of the Indigenous Population: Chittagong Hill Tracts and Plain Land".

The research was conducted jointly by professor of Dhaka University Sadeka Halim, assistant professor of Dhaka University Debasish Kumar Kundu, and senior research associate of Brac Mrinmoy Samadder on 505 indigenous people of both hill tracts and plainland of five

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Six arrested with crystal meth worth Tk 60 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A single dose of crystal meth costs around Tk 10,000 to 12,000.

Organised syndicates after smuggling this highly-priced third generation narcotics from Malaysia, Australia, China and Singapore in baggage, supply it to people who live in posh areas of the country.

Following seizure of 600-gramme of crystal meth, the police's detective branch disclosed the findings yesterday.

Also known as ice or de-meth, crystal meth is a colourless form of d-methamphetamine -- a powerful, highly addictive stimulant.

DB officials said price of the seized narcotics is at least Tk 60 lakh and smugglers used to sell each 10-gramme of ice for Tk 1 lakh.

A team of DB Ramna division seized

the narcotics and arrested six persons in this regard after conducting a special drive in the capital's Gulshan, Banani and Bashundhara areas on Wednesday, said AKM Hafiz Akter, additional commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

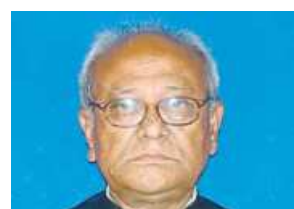
The arrestees are Chandan Ray (27), Siraj (52), Avi (48), Juwel (50), Rubayet (30), and Kany (36).

Addressing a briefing at DMP media centre, Hafiz Akter said the arrestee, Chandan, admitted that he was the main dealer of ice in Bangladesh and he recently smuggled it from Malaysia through his expatriate relative -- one Shankar Biswas.

Chandan is a gold trader by profession. He and others used to smuggle the narcotics in luggage as it looked like crystals, according to officials.

Hafiz Akter said they are suspecting that

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Shawkat Ali on life support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, former deputy speaker, of the parliament, was put on life support at Dhaka Combined Military Hospital (CMH) yesterday.

Suffering from multiple old-age complications, including kidney and heart related problems, he was admitted to CMH on October 29, his grandson told The Daily Star.

The 83-year-old, who was one of the accused in the Agartala conspiracy case, is also suffering from pneumonia, he said.

Shawkat was elected MP from Shariatpur-2 constituency six times.

In the last parliamentary elections, Enamul Haque Shamim was given nomination, and he was elected from the constituency.

22-day hilsa netting ban a success: officials

30 injured during anti-fishing drives

SUSHANTA GHOSH, Barishal

The 22-day ban on hilsa catching was a success, officials of Department of Fisheries (DoF) claimed after the ban period's end yesterday.

"The campaign to save hilsa was largely successful this time. In addition, Breeding and hatching of hilsa has exceeded expectations due to favourable weather," said Anisur Rahman Talukder, Deputy Director of Fisheries Department's Barisal divisional office. "This year, more than 50 percent of the mother hilsa have laid eggs," he said.

Officials said a lower number of mobile court cases, jails, and fines were recorded compared to the previous year. This was the same for the amount of illegally caught hilsa seized.

However, DoF officials also acknowledged that the number of attempts to fish illegally has increased this year, though most were thwarted. Officials claimed these were mostly undertaken by seasonal anglers.

Abu Sayed, District Fisheries Officer (DFO) said, "Miscreants have shown a new trend this year. Most of the attacks on officials and law enforcement during the ban period came from seasonal fishermen."

According to sources, at least five attacks were committed and at least 30 people, including fisheries officials and law enforcement personnel, were injured during drives.

Barishal division fisheries department records say in 2019, there were 2,538 drives, 1,071 mobile courts and 1,757 cases, while 1,447 anglers were jailed. In 2020, there were 2,505 drives, 1,026 mobile courts and 1,249 cases while 1,133 were jailed. Total amount of fines stood at Tk 48.7 lakh, but this year, it stands at Tk 20.1 lakh.

In 2019, 19.03 lakh tonnes of hilsa were seized and 69.79 lakh tonnes of nets were seized, which is 11.77 lakh tonnes and 82.932 lakh meters respectively this year.

Bimal Chandra Das, fisheries officer of Barishal, said anglers have started fishing after the ban. However, not all mother hilsa have stopped laying eggs, as some eggs have been found in the fish near the end of the ban.

Meanwhile, at least 2,000 maund hilsa from Kalabadar, Meghna, Arial Kha and Bishkhal rivers were brought to the Port Road hilsa fish wholesale market on Thursday.



Tonnes of hilsa fish have started streaming into the Barishal Port Road wholesale market. Yesterday was the first day after the 22-day ban on hilsa netting, and the entire market was in jubilant form for the start of the new season.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

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Then why do you talk about BNP all the time?

Mirza Fakhru slams Obaidul Quader's dismissal of the party

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday slammed his ruling party counterpart Obaidul Quader for questioning the existence of his party.

"They don't see the existence of BNP and they say BNP is in crisis. Then why do you talk about BNP all the time? Because you know that BNP is the only party that can bring democracy back, change the situation and it can put an end to the anarchy you've created," he said while speaking at a discussion at the Jatiya Press Club, marking the second death anniversary of former minister and BNP standing committee member Tariqul Islam.

Fakhru said no BNP leaders and activists joined Awami League, though its chairperson Khaleda Zia was sent to jail, one lakh cases were filed against 35 lakh party followers and repressive acts like killing and enforced disappearance unleashed against them.

Fakhru also alleged that the government is pushing the country towards "darkness" by "holding people hostage".

"Whose interests are they now protecting? The prices of essential commodities have skyrocketed. The price of each item has tripled or quadrupled... They've formed a syndicate which is looting all the profits,"

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Former RHD chief engineer, wife sued over illegal wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed two cases against former chief engineer of Roads and Highways Department Mohammad Jawed Alam and his wife Anwara Begum for amassing about Tk 3.09 crore illegally.

ACC deputy director Nasir Uddin filed the cases against them.

The case against Jawed is for amassing about Tk 84.64 lakh beyond known source of income, while the one against Anwara for amassing about Tk 2.24 crore illegally. ACC had issued notices to Jawed and his wife to submit their wealth statements on February 20, 2019.

MINI BYTES



2020 IS A GAMER'S PARADISE

EH SANUR RAZA RONNY

Back in the early 2000's I used to head out to Eastern Plaza in Dhaka with my pocket full of hard earned savings to buy games to play. Cracked games mostly and the occasional originals for consoles shared by friends. Wow, those were expensive. And when all else failed, it was time to head out to the shady, makeshift, sweat smelling street corner shops with arcade machines. That still cost money. Two taka per game would add up to many, many 'monies'.

FREE FOR MOBILE

Fast forward to 2020 being a terrible year so far, but gamers rejoice. Some of the best games are free. Massive new Call of Duty is a battle royale game competing with similar Valorant, PUBG Mobile (banned in India), Fortnite and Apex Legends. It saw 72 million downloads in the first two months. So many options and they are all free to play on your phone. You don't even need an expensive high end device as long as you are okay with some lag and low graphics. Don't want to shoot people? Grab cutesy creatures in 2016's Pokemon GO which is still going strong at more than 570 million downloads. It earned \$445.3 million in the first half of 2020.

Many developers are giving away free titles to play. As Trump would say looking fondly at his Atari console, "Great titles, very big titles. So big, they are very big titles."

PC GAMES GALORE

Developers like Epic and Ubisoft are giving away PC games for taking part in social media promos like watching a video stream of playing a demo. Assassin's Creed Odyssey and Watch Dogs 2 were handed out just like that.

Game stores like Epic and Steam are doing giveaways every month. You just have to keep track of their release dates. I got hold of GTA V this May when they gave it away with a whole lot of add-ons. It was free for seven days as is the norm for most of the free offerings. With a job and a kid growing up, I never got to play Rockstar's 2013 mega hit. Seven years old and it is still an immersive and beautifully rendered game today.

CONSOLE WARS

Now if you want the newest game titles, get a subscription services serving next gen consoles. Microsoft's Xbox Game Pass and Sony's PlayStation Plus Collection. You can log in and use the monthly Game Pass or PlayStation Plus accounts that cost just under \$10. Tons of games to pick from. And we can pay just like we avail Netflix here.

Heads-up: Superb single player/multiplayer strategy game Dungeons 3 will be available on Epic from November 6. Features comprehensive campaign and humour.

See more gaming updates on our site. Mail queries to ronnyraza@gmail.com