

SECTION 57 OF ICT ACT

# Man held over Facebook post

He faces charges of hurting religious sentiment, denies making the post

STAR REPORT

Another man was arrested under controversial section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act over an alleged Facebook post.

Vishnu Malo, the owner of a computer and mobile servicing shop at Hatkrishnapur Bazar in Faridpur's Sadarpur upazila, was held on Thursday noon after an angry mob vandalised his home and shop, centring the alleged post "hurting religious sentiments".

Vishnu denied making the post, police say.

Around 11:00pm on Thursday, a local businessman, Israt Munshi, filed the case against the 22-year-old with Sadarpur Police Station.

Showing the youth arrested, police yesterday produced him before a district court which sent him to jail.

"Israt filed the case against Vishnu under section 57 for posting a manipulated photo on his Facebook account, hurting religious sentiments," Harunar-Rashid, office-in-charge (OC) of the police station, told our Faridpur correspondent.

He also said they first arrested Vishnu to "avoid any more unwanted

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## Govt may seek

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General Mahbub Alam told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the government in the petition would pray to the apex court to restore parliament's power to remove SC judges.

The government received the certified copy of the verdict on October 10 and according to the SC rules, the review petition has to be filed within 30 days of that date. The deadline will expire on November 9 (Thursday).

In the full verdict released on August 1, the apex court said the provision of Supreme Judicial Council for the removal of SC judges for misconduct or incapacity has been reinstated in the constitution.

On October 12, Law Minister Anisul Huq told reporters that the government would file the review petition within the 30-day deadline and it would explain the reasons to the SC, if the deadline was missed.

An 11-member committee, led by the attorney general, was formed in October for filing the review petition.

The SC's dismissal of the 16th Amendment to the Constitution has been a much talked-about topic among politicians from the ruling party as the SC in its full verdict made some observations, which were critical of the country's present political culture.

The Jatiya Sangsad on September 13 passed a resolution calling for legal steps to nullify the SC verdict.

## Bangladesh stays top

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nations, ranking 106th. Pakistan remains at the lowest position in this region.

Bangladesh, which according to the report has made progress across all dimensions of the economic opportunity and participation, secures the third spot among the lower-middle income countries. The country has ranked seventh in the political empowerment index, shows the report by the Geneva-based WEF.

"Bangladesh has improved gender parity for legislator, senior official and manager as well as professional and technical roles, in addition to estimated earned income and wage equality for similar work—despite a slight widening of its healthy life expectancy gender gap"

The country has also made gradual progress in the gender gap from 2008 when it had ranked 91st among 115 nations, reads the report.

With an average remaining gender gap of 34 percent, South Asia is the second-lowest scoring region on this year's Global Gender Gap Index, ahead of the Middle East and North Africa and behind Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the report.

This year's analysis reveals gender gaps at the industry level and, in particular, highlights that even though qualified women are coming out of the education system, many industries are failing to hire, retain and promote them, losing out on a wealth of capacity.

GENDER GAP INDEX		
Country	Position (2017)	Position (2016)
Bangladesh	47	72
Maldives	106	115
India	108	87
Sri Lanka	109	100
Nepal	111	110
Bhutan	124	121
Pakistan	143	143

The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the WEF in 2006 as a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time.

"To build future economies that are both dynamic and inclusive, we must ensure that everyone has equal opportunity. When women and girls are not integrated -- as both beneficiary and shaper -- the global community loses out on skills, ideas and perspectives that are critical for addressing global challenges and harnessing new opportunities," Klaus Schwab, founder and executive chairman of the WEF, says in the report.

He opines as the world moves from capitalism into the era of "talentism", competitiveness on a national and on a business level will be decided more than ever before by the innovative capacity of a country or a company. In this new context, the integration of women into the talent pool becomes a must, he added.

## Mro community

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"This is an easy business for me. I only have to buy the cow and the rest is free of cost as the cattle roam free and graze on grass and leaves in the hilly terrain," said Kaiplem, who has become an inspiration for others in the village.

Johrom Mro of the same community has followed in her footsteps and now has six cows, changing the financial fate of his family.

Reng Nok Mro also bought a cow recently for Tk 20,000 and hopes to be able to sell it at a profit within a year.

"Indigenous women don't get a chance to have a say in the finances, but Kaiplem has changed that," said Ulien Mro, karbari of Mrolong Para.

With dreams of growing the herd in future, Kaiplem said, "I am glad our small community is able to encourage one another." The mother of three, all of whom are now married, now spends her days taking care of her cattle.

Jhum cultivator Taien Mro, Kaiplem's husband, said cattle farming is more profitable than other traditional forms of agriculture in the hills.

"There is good demand for the organic, free range cattle from the hilly areas," said Sirajul Islam, a cattle businessman of Bandarban. "I have no trouble selling this produce."

Being born into the hill-tracts-based Mro community means to inherit a rich culture of age-old tradition, including the agricultural practice of jhum cultivation. But instead of relying on the established ways, Kaiplem is paving the way for new traditions.

## Australia

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travel to Bangladesh," read the advice.

It asked the Australian citizens to consider the kind of places known to be terrorist targets and the level of security provided.

"If you decide to travel, take additional security measures, register your travel on Smartraveller and monitor the media and other sources about possible security risks."

The latest travel advice is almost similar to the one issued on March 25. However, it was not clear what prompted the Australian government to issue the fresh alert.

According to the travel advice, local security authorities remain on high alert and continue to arrest individuals alleged to be planning further acts of violence. "The threat of further terrorist attack persists at this time."



Rohingya refugees wait with their belongings in Palongkhali after crossing into Ukha yesterday. Inset: a Rohingya child falls asleep while being carried in a basket.

PHOTO: AFP

## Unblock citizenship issue

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The legislation is sponsored by senior lawmakers including the Republican Senate Armed Services Committee chairman John McCain, and Senator Ben Cardin, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The fresh move is being considered as one of the strongest efforts yet for Washington to intervene in the humanitarian crisis and introduced the day before US President Donald Trump leaves on his first trip to Asia as President.

Trump, who will spend nine days from November 5-13 visiting south-east Asia, will take him to Japan on November 5-7, South Korea on 7-8, China on 8-10, Vietnam on 10-11 and Philippines on 12-13.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson announced that he will travel to Myanmar scheduled for November 15, becoming the most senior US official to visit since the start of the Rohingya crisis.

He is expected to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State, announced "economic options" and a "human rights law" targeting leaders involved in violence against Rohingya minority.

Tillerson previously urged Myanmar's military chief Min Aung Hlaing to help end violence in the Rakhine State and condemned the August attack by Muslim insurgents on security forces in the region.

The US legislation would bar the United States from supplying most

assistance to the country's military until perpetrators of atrocities against the Rohingya are held accountable, reports Reuters.

Yesterday, a spokesman for Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi said the proposed US sanctions targeting Myanmar's military would hinder the fledgling civilian government sharing power with the generals.

Responding to the moves in Washington, Suu Kyi's spokesman, Zaw Htay, told Reuters, "We need internal stability to improve the country's economy. Imposing international sanctions directly affects the people in travel and in business investments, and there are many bad consequences."

Myanmar officials would explain the government's efforts on Rakhine

during the visit of the Secretary of State, he added.

Meanwhile, a US state-department delegation, led by Acting Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration Simon Henshaw, is now on a four-day visit to Bangladesh and discussing the humanitarian crisis and human-rights concerns stemming from the crisis in Rakhine.

Prior to visit Bangladesh, the delegation paid a three-day visit to Myanmar from October 31.

The US delegation which also concluded a two-day visit to Rohingya refugee camps and makeshift settlements in Cox's Bazar, is scheduled to address a press conference in Dhaka this afternoon.

## No end in sight

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Local sources told our Cox's Bazar correspondent that several hundred more Rohingyas streamed into Shah Porir Dwip yesterday.

According to an estimate, more than 623,000 refugees have crossed over into Bangladesh and taken shelter in crowded settlements in Cox's Bazar since August 25, fleeing a brutal military crackdown in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Meanwhile, the UN warned that life-threatening levels of malnutrition have

risen dramatically among Rohingya children sheltered into Bangladesh.

The UN children's agency yesterday said preliminary data indicated a full 7.5 percent of the children crammed into one of the camps in Cox's Bazar were at risk of dying from severe acute malnutrition, writes AFP.

Malnutrition rates among children in northern Rakhine were already above emergency thresholds. The condition of these children has further deteriorated due to the long journey across the border and the conditions in the

camps, said Unicef.

"The Rohingya children in the camp-- who have survived horrors in Myanmar's northern Rakhine State and a dangerous journey here -- are already caught up in a catastrophe," said Unicef Bangladesh Representative Edouard Beigbeder in a press release.

"Those with severe malnutrition are now at risk of dying from an entirely preventable and treatable cause."

Around 26,000 people now live in the Kutupalong camp, faced with an acute shortage of food and water, unsanitary

conditions and high rates of diarrhoea and respiratory infections. Cases of measles have been reported, said the UN agency's press release.

The Kutupalong nutrition assessment conducted between October 22 and 28, surveyed 405 households including families who arrived there both before and after violence escalated in northern Rakhine on August 25.

The Unicef and partners are treating over 2,000 acutely malnourished children at 15 treatment centres, with six additional centres currently being set up.

## Just so easy

FROM PAGE 1

foreign-made pistols, 45 magazines and 136 bullets--all brought from India.

Karim, now 37, started with phensidyle at a very young age and turned to arms three to four years back as it fetches more money.

Once he gets an order, he makes a phone call to his counterpart in Malda with phensidyle at a very young age and turned to arms three to four years back as it fetches more money. Karim, now 37, started with phensidyle at a very young age and turned to arms three to four years back as it fetches more money.

Once the person on the other side collects the items, he calls back using a Bangladeshi SIM card. The two then gather near the fence at an opportune moment and packages are lobbed from the Indian side across the fence, dodging the eyes of border guards.

When Karim uses Indian SIM, it is not possible for law enforcers in Bangladesh to track him. The same is true for his counterpart.

In September, after over an hour's drive by a microbus from Chapainawabganj town and 10 minutes' walk, this correspondent reached the zero line in Shahabzpur union of Shibganj.

Paddy fields and bushes in the zero line area and on the other side of the barbed-wire fence facilitate the consignment delivery without being noticed.

Apart from gunrunners and criminals, militants also use the border point to smuggle in firearms and explosives from India, investigators say.

"We just bring in arms when parties place orders. We do not know who is a criminal and who is a militant," Karim said, standing near the zero line on September 14.

He agreed to talk to this correspondent after being persuaded by a source on condition that his identity would not be disclosed.

Police and local sources said there are over a dozen professional arms smugglers in Chapainawabganj that shares 155km border with India's Malda and Murshidabad districts.

"Finding small firearms or bullets in the bordering areas of Malda and Murshidabad is no big deal," Karim said.

He added, "I just bring in the arms and hand those over to parties. There are people who would carry your arms if you pay them. After a certain distance,

the goods change hands."

The parties sometimes assign labourers to take the consignment directly to the capital, Karim said, claiming that he has kept himself out of the racket these days as he is facing cases though not related to smuggling.

Sometimes, cowboys while bringing cattle from India through corridors in different districts including Chapainawabganj also carry firearms and bullets.

The items often remain hidden inside goods-laden trucks entering Bangladesh through land ports, according to sources in law enforcement agencies.

Smuggling goes on also through several points of 4,096km porous border shared by Bangladesh and India.

Apart from firearms and explosives, phensidyle and heroin are smuggled in from India while counterfeit Indian currencies smuggled out from Bangladesh.

According to Karim, the price of a 6mm pistol is around Tk 20,000, 7.62mm pistol Tk 32,000 and 9mm pistol Tk 40,000 in India. Local smugglers pay the money through hundi, a method of illegal money transaction. The 6mm, 7.62mm and 9mm pistols sell at around Tk 40,000, Tk 60,000 and Tk 76,000 respectively once they reach the capital.

**MILTANCY, MALDA & MUNGER**  
Nine firearms, including three AK-22 rifles, and grenades used by the "Neo JMB" militants in Gulshan café attack on July 1 last year were brought in through Chapainawabganj and Jessore borders. Those were manufactured in Munger of Bihar, investigators said.

On August 15 this year, the National Intelligence Agency of India along with local cops busted a house, used as an arms factory, in Devipur village under Kaliachak Police Station in Malda. Kaliachak is just around 10km from Shahabzpur in Chapainawabganj.

The Devipur operation was conducted following information from Bangladesh police, said Md Moniruzzaman, assistant inspector general (intelligence and special affairs) at Police Headquarters.

During the raid, law enforcers seized 48 firearms, including 9mm and 7.62mm pistols, and arms manufactur-

ing materials.

The firearms were made in Munger, known as a village of small arms makers. Mohammad Sayeed alias Mannai, the chief manufacturer, has been arrested.

On September 6, cops arrested suspected "Neo JMB" member Tuhidul Islam from Dhobrabazar of Shibganj with a pistol and four bullets.

Chapainawabganj police, BGB and Rab seized 75 firearms and over 33kg gunpowder and arrested 116 people in eight months till August.

Chapainawabganj Superintendent of Police ATM Mojahidul Islam, who played a key role in busting a number of militant dens in the district in recent months, said they, in close coordination with BGB and Rab, have been working to stop smuggling.

Lt Col SM Abul Ehsan, commanding officer of BGB 9, told The Daily Star on October 19 that they always stay alert to check smuggling.

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) recovered a number of illegal arms in Chapainawabganj border area since last year, he mentioned, refusing to accept that this is an established route for smuggling.

Ahsan said there might have been some smuggling activities there in the recent past but the situation is now under control of border guards amid constant vigilance.

**CTG CONNECTION**  
Smugglers also use Mizoram border to bring arms into the country apart from the sea route, said sources in agencies. Chittagong Hill Tracts borders the Indian state on the east.

The 22 foreign-made pistols and bullets police seized in Chapainawabganj on October 24 last year were destined for Chittagong. One Osman Ali of Boalkhali upazila in Chittagong used a cowboy of Telkupi in Shibganj to smuggle in those.

In 2005, an NGO named Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre estimated that there were around 4 lakh illegal firearms in the country.

In the first six months of this year, police and different other agencies have recovered 1,128 illegal firearms across the country.

[Subrata Acharjee in Kolkata and Rabiul Hasan Dollar in Chapainawabganj contributed to this report]

## Another

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Bangladesh Environment Protection Act 1995 and Real Estate Development and Management Act 2010.

Shahed Ali, another resident of Rayerbazar, said that during construction of the Rayerbazar graveyard near Rayerbazar killing ground, the mouth of the canal on the eastern side became blocked, reducing the water flow.

He said many boats used to ply the canal even in 2013 but are now completely gone.

A part of the canal goes through Basila graveyard in Mohammadpur and the rest snake their way around Basila.

Chief Estate Officer of DNCC, Aminul Islam said the owner of the canal is the DC office and thus the DNCC can't interfere. He, however, said they sent a surveyor recently to visit the canal and see the illegally filling.

Basila falls under the jurisdiction of DNCC Ward-33. But Councillor of the Ward, Tarequzzaman Razib, seemed to be very reluctant about stopping the illegal canal filling.

"There is no place to park so many trucks. Since there is no flow in the canal...it can be used for terminal purposes," he said. He claimed that truck owners' association's leaders informed him of seeking lease of the land from the DC office.

He, however, changed his tune when asked how a canal can be filled up as it is also his duty to protect and renovate canals. "I sought help from authorities concerned to stop the filling activities. I also requested the truck owners' association again and again to stop the work."

On condition of anonymity, a top official of the DC office, who is responsible for checking such illegal filling up works and protecting canals, said they did not lease any part of the canal to truck owners or others.

He claimed he did not know about the illegal filling of canal.

But Tarequzzaman and some other locals contradicted that claim and said some officials of DC office have already visited Lautola Kanchabazar and are well aware of the illegal encroachment.