



Detectives arrested three people with 2,000 bottles of Phensidyle in Jhenidah yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

US govt backs off case of female genital mutilation

REUTERS, New York

A decision by the US Department of Justice not to fight to defend a federal law banning female genital mutilation (FGM) sends a "damaging message" to those working to end the practice, advocates said on Friday.

Government lawyers said on Wednesday they would not appeal a decision by a Michigan federal judge who dismissed charges involving FGM as unconstitutional, ruling it was a state issue.

Congress in 1996 outlawed FGM, a ritual that involves partial or total removal of external genitalia, which the World Health Organization has called "a grave violation of the human rights of girls and women."

Half a million girls and women in the United States have undergone or are at risk of undergoing FGM, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The decision by the U.S. government "is sending a damaging message to law enforcement, the courts and to the courageous survivors who are breaking the silence around FGM," said Shelby Quast, an office director for Equality Now, an international human rights organization, in a statement.

Listed drug

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cases filed for crimes related to drugs, explosion and extortion with different police stations in Chuadanga.

The OC said Ruhul had earlier been arrested twice but was released on bail.

No family members or relatives of Ruhul agreed to comment in this regard.

Finally it's

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Globe as the playwright's workplace.

It had previously been identified that the Shakespeare lived in Central London near Liverpool Street Station, then known as the parish of St Helens, after he was listed on taxpayer records in 1597/98, but the exact location was never identified.

According to Marsh, evidence suggests Shakespeare had lived in a property overlooking the churchyard of St Helens as a tenant of the Company of Leathersellers, a guild that organized the Elizabethan leather trade.

While erratic spelling made it a challenge to decipher and interpret the documents, Marsh was able to analyze records that were "remarkably" preserved, stretching back to the 1550s.

"The place where Shakespeare lived in London gives us a more profound understanding of the inspirations for his work and life," said Marsh, who is also the director of the Victoria and Albert Museum's Department of Theatre and Performance.

"Within a few years of migrating to London from Stratford, he was living in one of the wealthiest parishes in the City, alongside powerful public figures, wealthy international merchants, society doctors and expert musicians."

The historian added that living in a place like London would have "enhanced Shakespeare's status as he developed his career, sought a family coat of arms and planned to buy an impressive and expensive house in Stratford."

46,000 yaba

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cylinders was going to Gazipur from Cox's Bazar, said the SP, adding, they were looking for the persons involved in the yaba trafficking.

MPs urge

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He had sought refuge in the embassy in 2012 while on bail awaiting extradition to Sweden for allegations of sexual assault and rape, which he always denied.

In the letter, the MPs and peers urge British Home Secretary Sajid Javid to "give every assistance to Sweden should they want to revive and pursue the investigation".

British law states that if Sweden does make an extradition request, it would be up to Javid to decide which should take precedence.

"We must send a strong message of the priority the UK has in tackling sexual violence and the seriousness with which such allegations are viewed," the letter says.

The sexual assault claim expired in 2015 and Swedish prosecutors dropped a preliminary investigation into the rape allegation in 2017, arguing that since Assange could not be reached, they could not proceed.

Following his arrest, however, the alleged rape victim asked that her case now be reopened – but the limitation period on this claim expires in August 2020.

"We do not presume guilt, of course, but we believe due process should be followed and the complainant should see justice be done," the letter says.

The MPs and peers add that it is "of grave concern to us" that the Swedish authorities did not appear to have prior warning of Assange's arrest, unlike the US authorities.

The letter was also copied to Diane Abbott, the home affairs spokes-

woman for the main opposition Labour party.

Abbott said: "Assange skipping bail in UK, or any rape charge that may be brought by Swedish authorities shouldn't be ignored.

"But the only extradition request is from USA, because he's a whistleblower on atrocities caused by US military ops. This extradition would be wrong so we oppose it."

Assange is currently being held at the high-security Belmarsh jail in southeast London.

The 47-year-old Australian claims the Swedish cases against him were politically motivated, linked to the leak in 2010 of a huge number of US military and diplomatic documents.

He sought refuge with Ecuador, claiming that his extradition to Sweden was a pretext for his transfer to the United States.

But Ecuador withdrew his asylum status and allowed British police into the embassy on Thursday to arrest the white-bearded Assange.

He appeared in court a few hours later and was found guilty of breaching his bail terms back in 2012. He could be jailed for up to a year when he is sentenced at a later date.

The separate extradition case on US charges of computer hacking is set for May 2, although the United States has until June 12 to submit full extradition papers.

Assange's London lawyer Jennifer Robinson said: "He's obviously going to fight extradition and fight it hard."

The Panta magic

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five varieties -- BRRI-28, Pari, Miniket, Aman and Balam -- and found the presence of micronutrients to be higher in soaked rice than in cooked rice.

It said the amount of calcium, iron, potassium and sodium increased many folds when rice is soaked in water for a prolonged period.

For example, if Miniket rice is fermented for eight to 12 hours, calcium sees a 351.94 percent increase while iron increases by 11.66 percent and sodium by 47.53 percent, it said.

The study also said Panta Bhaat is high in nutritional value and helps strengthen body immunity and remove anaemia and iron deficiency.

"When normal rice is soaked for 8-12 hours in water, Phytic acid reacts with water and creates lactic acid which increases the nutrient quality of rice," states the report.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dr Monirul Islam, director (nutrition) at the Barc, said, "Fermented food is full of useful bacteria. According to scientists, there are around 10 trillion good bacteria in half a cup of fermented food."

In Bangladesh, people suffer from calcium and iron deficiencies, he said, adding that consumption of proper

amounts of soaked rice can help solve the problem.

Monirul also said soaked rice helps boost the human body's immune system. "Girls in their adolescence face iron deficits. Fermented rice can minimise the problem."

Having Panta Bhaat on a regular basis could be useful as, according to the National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) 2016, about 5.5 million children under 5 (36 percent of the total number of country's children) suffer from chronic malnutrition (stunting or low height-for-age) and 14 percent are acutely malnourished.

Nutritionists said soaked rice keeps the body light and energetic as it is easily digestible. The body also feels less tired.

Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman of Dhaka University's Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, said the nutritional value increases in soaked rice as many vitamins and micronutrients are likely to be added.

"In normal rice, iron, potassium, calcium and sodium is less absorbable to the human body. But in fermented rice, it is easily absorbable and the amount also increases," he said.

US, German defense chiefs discuss IS foreign fighter issue

AFP, Washington

German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen and Pentagon chief Patrick Shanahan discussed Friday the need to repatriate Islamic State foreign fighters from Syria or fund detention centers to hold them long-term.

Washington wants European allies to take back hundreds of IS fighters from their countries who were captured in recent months in Syria.

The alternative is to hold them long-term in camps or prisons in Syria or Iraq, but that would need financing.

"We have assured once more that we will take care individually of every single case," von der Leyen told reporters after meeting Shanahan, the acting secretary of defense.

"But we were both also convinced of the fact that the challenge consists mostly in collecting the evidence in the region

as regards to the terrorist activity of the terrorist fighters," she added.

Some European countries are refusing to repatriate and put on trial their nationals given the absence of any investigation on the ground in Syria showing what they might have done with Islamic State.

In addition, the fighters are being held by the Syrian Democratic Forces, who do not have the status of a sovereign government.

But Washington fears that if they are not repatriated, the fighters could rejoin jihadist operations. The US wants the Europeans to finance the building of detention centers, which could be in Iraq, according to the Pentagon.

Baghdad has said it could put on trial the alleged jihadists, but that it would need funding to support that.

Syria's air defences intercept missiles near city of Hama

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli planes targeted a military position near the province of Hama in Syria yesterday, but Syrian air defences intercepted and downed some of the rockets, Syrian state television said on Saturday.

Citing military sources, SANA news agency and Syrian state television said that Israeli aircraft had targeted "one of our military positions towards the city of Masyaf". "The enemy missiles were dealt with and some of them were shot down before reaching their target, resulting in the damage of a few buildings and the injury of three fighters," SANA added.

Since the civil war started, Israel has carried out scores of military strikes in Syria during against suspected arms transfers and deployments by Iranian forces and their Lebanese Hezbollah allies which are backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Welcome back!

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training on surgery.

Dr Mohammad Asaduzzaman Ratan, assistant professor of the Nephrology Department in MMC and one of Tshering's classmates, said their joys knew no bound when their classmate had been elected the prime minister.

"Boishakh celebrations for the MMC students and teachers will have extra flavours of joy following Tshering's visit," said Ratan.

Reminiscing old memories, Ratan said Tshering had dressed up as a king on the college's "Rag Day" in 1999 and now he is the prime minister.

Dr Md Shafikul Bari Tuhin, a friend of Tshering, said he was very attentive and hardworking regarding his studies. Tshering secured first position in final professional exams.

He was also good in sports -- table tennis, badminton and football. On various occasions, he won prizes in inter-batch athletic competitions.

"We were the champion of inter-medical college football tournament in 1995 and Tshering was one of the players in a forward position," said Tuhin, an assistant professor of Pediatric Surgery Department at MMC.

"He was very amicable and we used to travel to Mymensingh city for tea and snacks. I accompanied him on various occasions to visit Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU)," Tuhin, who is still in touch with Tshering, said.

Tshering used to stay at a new building of Baghmara Medical Hostel with other foreign students and we were very close, he added.

He was interested in surgery and took training under Prof Dr Khademul Islam, the then head of Surgery Department of MMCH, said Tuhin.

When Dr Khademul was transferred to Sir Salimullah Medical College in Dhaka, Tshering also left Mymensingh with Dr Khademul in 2000. Tshering left Bangladesh in 2003 after completing his FCPS in Surgery, he said.

The students of MMC are also in celebratory mood. "We will celebrate the Pahela Boishakh with unlimited joy," said Arifur Rahman, a final year student.

Strict security measures were taken for the visit of Bhutan's Prime Minister Dr Lotay Tshering, said Shah Abid Hossain, Superintendent of Police, Mymensingh.

Cop 'tortures'

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"I asked the OC of Khoksa to submit a report within two days," he further said, adding they would take departmental action against the SI if he was found guilty.

The victim was preparing to get admitted to Kushtia General Hospital for treatment around 9:45pm when this report was filed.

Why Ecuador

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the assertions last October.

Quito was also irritated by Assange's support for the Catalanian independence movement: Its Foreign Ministry told Assange to refrain from making statements that could impair Ecuador's relations with other countries, including Spain.

More recently, WikiLeaks got personal. On March 25, WikiLeaks posted a tweet bringing attention to a corruption probe that Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno is facing. It linked to an anonymously registered website hosting a vast trove of leaked emails, text messages and other documents pertaining to Moreno's private life.

The Ecuadorian government blamed WikiLeaks for the leaked documents, dubbed the INA Papers, an allegation that WikiLeaks denies.

For WikiLeaks and its supporters, the Ecuadorian government tried to use the INA Papers leak as yet another pretext to terminate Assange's asylum.

Moreno has denied any wrongdoing. The attorney general's office has launched an investigation into the allegations. WikiLeaks denied any involvement in the release of the INA Papers, but that hasn't stopped Moreno from pointing the finger at Assange and WikiLeaks.

Assange does not have the right to "hack accounts or personal phones," Moreno told the Ecuadorian Radio Broadcasters' Association last Tuesday.

Over the weekend, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Foreign Relations ramped up the rhetoric against Assange when it put out a fiery statement rejecting "the fake news that has circulated in the last few days on social media, many of them spread by an organization linked to Mr. Julian Assange."

Relations between Assange and Ecuador deteriorated further on Wednesday when WikiLeaks called a press conference and claimed the

group had discovered a spying operation against Assange from within the embassy.

Speaking to reporters in London, Kristinn Hrafnsson, the editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, said Ecuador had made surreptitious video and audio recordings of Assange and his interactions at the embassy, including a medical examination and meetings with legal representatives.

Assange is Australian but had been granted Ecuadorian naturalization in 2017. Less than 24 hours after WikiLeaks' press conference, Assange's Ecuadorian citizenship had been revoked, his asylum rescinded, and embassy officials had invited the Metropolitan Police over to forcibly remove him.

Moves against WikiLeaks were not just taking place in London. In Ecuador, the Interior Ministry announced that it had arrested a "close collaborator" of Assange at Quito's airport as he was preparing to fly to Japan on Thursday.

Interior Minister Maria Paula Romo told CNN that the individual under arrest is Ola Bini, a Swedish software developer who she said had visited the Ecuadorian Embassy in London several times.

Romo said at a press conference Thursday that Bini, Assange and WikiLeaks have been trying to destabilize the government of Moreno. She accused Bini of working with Ricardo Patiño, who was foreign minister during the government of former President Rafael Correa, who granted asylum to Assange.

Correa told CNN Thursday that the decision by his successor to revoke Assange's asylum status was "the biggest betrayal perhaps in Latin American history."

Hyperbole, perhaps. But whatever the truth, the story of Assange's turbulent 2,488 days in the Ecuadorian Embassy isn't over yet.

Sudan army

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responsible for the killing of demonstrators demanding an end to military rule.

Defence Minister Awad Ibn Auf stepped down as head of the transitional military council late on Friday after only a day in the post.

Celebrations erupted on the streets of Khartoum overnight after Ibn Auf's resignation. Thousands of protesters waved flags and illuminated mobile phones in the darkness and drivers hooted car horns. People chanted: "The second has fallen!" a reference to Ibn Auf and Bashir, witnesses said.

"Islamists have now lost control and they are in shock. Their ability to project influence in an organized way inside the state appears weak," said Sudanese analyst Khalid al-Tijani.

"The reason for the changes in Sudan is the pressure from protesters and pressures within the army, and the fear among military commanders of a split in the armed forces."

Burhan, the new head of the military council, was the third most senior general in the Sudanese armed forces and is little known in public life. As head of Sudan's ground forces he oversaw Sudanese troops fighting in the Saudi-led Yemen war and has close ties to senior Gulf military officials.

The Sudanese Professionals Association (SPA), which has been leading protests to demand a civilian

government, called for more demonstrations earlier yesterday.

"Today, we continue the march to finish the victory for our victorious revolution," the SPA said in a statement.

"We assert that our revolution is continuing and will not retreat or deviate from its path until we achieve ... our people's legitimate demands of handing over power to a civilian government," it said.

Bashir, 75, seized power in a 1989 military coup.

The protests against him escalated last Saturday when thousands of demonstrators, apparently bolstered by change in Algeria following similar protests, marched towards the Defence Ministry in Khartoum to deliver a memorandum demanding the military side with them.

Demonstrators have been camping outside the compound since then to push for a handover of power.

At least 16 people were killed and 20 injured by stray bullets at protests and sit-ins on Thursday and Friday, a police spokesman said. Government buildings and private property were also attacked, spokesman Hashem Ali added.

The military council under Ibn Auf had said it would not extradite Bashir to face accusations of genocide at the international war crimes court. Instead he might go on trial in Sudan.

Trump asylum policy gets temporary reprieve from Court of Appeals

REUTERS, Wilmington

The US government can continue at least temporarily to send asylum seekers back to Mexico after President Donald Trump scored a rare ruling in his favor on Friday from the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

The asylum program was set to be shut down at 8 p.m. EDT (midnight GMT) by an order issued on Monday by US District Court Judge Richard Seeborg, but the Trump administration had asked for the Court of Appeals in San Francisco to intervene.

The Court of Appeals issued a two-paragraph order saying the lower court injunction was temporarily stayed while the parties prepare to submit arguments next week on the government's request for a longer stay that would remain in place for the months-long appeals process.

The government told the Court of Appeals in papers filed late Thursday that the United States faced "a humanitarian and security crisis" at the southern border and needed to the policy to deal with surging number of refugees.

Seeborg had ruled on Monday the policy was contrary to U.S. immigration law and ordered a nationwide injunction to halt the program, but delayed implementation of his order to allow the government to appeal.

"This is an interim step while the court considers the government's stay request," said a statement from Judy Rabinovitz, a lawyer for the American Civil Liberties Union who represented plaintiffs in the case and who opposed the stay.

Since January, the administration has sent more than 1,000 asylum seekers, mostly from Central America, back to Mexico to wait the months or years it can take to process claims through an overloaded immigration system.

Although it is appealing and the lower court order had yet to take effect, Reuters reporters confirmed that the Trump administration was allowing some asylum seekers from Mexico to return to the United States.

Trump has bristled at limits on his administration's ability to detain asylum seekers while they fight deportation, and the administration was in the midst of expanding the program when Seeborg blocked it.

The 9th Circuit Court has been a frequent target for Trump's criticisms of the judicial system, which has blocked his immigration policies on numerous occasions.

After Seeborg ruled on Monday, Trump tweeted: "A 9th Circuit Judge just ruled that Mexico is too dangerous for migrants. So unfair to the us out of control!"