

# 6 cops closed for 'destroying 35,000 eggs'

Vendor 'refused to give them Tk 20,000 bribe'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nature

Six policemen of Bogura Highway Police were closed yesterday for allegedly destroying more than 35,000 eggs of a pickup after a vendor denied meeting their demand of Tk 20,000 bribe.

The six police personnel are Assistant Sub-Inspector Bijoy Kumar Sarker, Assistant Traffic Sub-Inspector Ashraf Alam, Constable Faruk Hossain, Constable Sohail Rana, Constable Bulbul Ahmed and Constable Shahim Reza.

Jahangir Alam, superintendent of Bogura Highway Police, said the vendor -- Biplob Kumar Saha -- submitted a complaint to him.

Police are investigating the matter and would take "straight action" if they find any policeman's involvement in the incident, the SP added.

According to Biplob, his pickup driver was going from Sirajganj to Jashore with 35,100 eggs. On the way, the pickup's tire had a puncture and the driver lost control over the vehicle, making it fall beside Bonpara highway.

At one point, the driver sought help from nearby Bonpara Highway Police to get the pickup back on the road with their wrecker van but the policemen demanded Tk 20,000 bribe. As the driver denied to meet their demand, they cut off the rope that was holding the eggs on the pickup, causing those to fall on the ground, he added.

Mohammad Shahid, additional superintendent of Bogura Highway Police, visited the spot to investigate the allegation.

# Youth held for raping 8th grader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Police yesterday arrested a youth on charge of raping a 14-year-old physically challenged girl in Netrakona's Kalmakanda upazila.

The girl, an eighth grader, is now pregnant, according to her family.

Her mother filed a rape case against the accused, Akbar Ali, 23, with Kalmakanda Police Station on Thursday night.

Quoting the case statement, Md Mazharul Karim, officer-in-charge of the police station, said the girl, daughter of a day labourer, was born with a defect in her right leg. Several months ago, she met Akbar when she went to the upazila's Purbo Julpara village to visit one of her relatives.

Later, the accused lured her into going to different places where he raped her, the OC said.

Recently, the girl's mother noticed physical changes in her daughter and took her to a private clinic from where they came to know that the victim was three months pregnant. Afterwards, the girl told her parents what happened to her, the police official said.

After the case was filed, police arrested Akbar yesterday afternoon. He was being in being interrogated last night.

The OC also said the girl would be sent to Netrakona General Hospital today for medical tests. Later in the day, she would be taken to a court in the district for recording her statements, he added.

# Five stabbed in 'revenge attack by drug dealers'

The victims handed over 3 peddlers to cops last month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

Criminals stabbed five people, who earlier handed over some drug peddlers to police in Chandpur's Kachua upazila, on Thursday night.

Police suspect that the drug peddlers attacked them.

The injured are chairman of Jagatpur union community police Mofizul Islam, 60, his son Iman Hossain, 35, Shariful Islam, 23, Md Shakil, 18, and Mostakim Hossain Miraj, 40.

They were undergoing treatment at Kachua Upazila Health Complex, Oli Ullah, officer-in-charge of Kachua Police Station, told The Daily Star.

According to the case statement filed over the attack, the victims were returning home around 10:00pm Thursday when a group led by "drug peddler" Mostafizur Rahman Kohag attacked and stabbed them at Khajuria.

One of the injured Iman yesterday lodged a case with Kachua Police Station against eight people, including Kohag, the OC said.

On April 24, three people were caught red-handed selling yaba pills at Khajuria. They were then handed over to police.

The drug peddlers might have attacked them after coming out of prison on bail, the police official added.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is greeted by Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader with a bouquet of flowers on the occasion of her Homecoming Day at the Gono Bhaban yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

# Frightening phone calls

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received similar calls from numbers such as +194752, +123456789, 008801580249995, 008801537210700.

Many of them even paid the money. "Since police seem to be doing nothing, I decided to give the money," said a private service holder, who along with several partners are now constructing a building in that region.

Contacted, law enforcers said the calls were made using the internet and the illegal Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP).

Bhasantek Police Station Sub-Inspector Mashur Rahman, who investigated two GDs -- one filed by Rubel and the other by another trader -- admitted that they could not trace the location of the callers.

The locations appear to be different at different times, said police sources.

Once a petty criminal in Kachukhet and nearby areas, Shahin is said to have gone into hiding two to three years ago. He claims he now lives in Canada and operates a gang from

there, according to some of the victims and law enforcers.

But Shahin is not the only one with this modus operandi. Many other listed criminals, including Shahadat Hossain, Subrata Bain, Noruttam Saha Ashik, Mehedi alias Kolinch and former Jubo League leader Ramjan, are demanding and taking extortion money from businessmen and traders in some other parts of the city, according to the police.

At times, the criminals make calls to businessmen through messaging apps like WhatsApp and IMO or Viber, they said.

Besides, former Banani Jubo League joint convener Yusuf Sardar Sohail alias Sundori Sohail, who fled the country after killing a youth on July 15 last year, is currently reorganising his gang members in the capital and demanding extortion money in a similar way, police and locals said.

He was using a number with the country code of Albania, police said, adding they were working to have him arrested.

Additional Commissioner of Detective Branch of Police Abdul Baten earlier said top criminals, hiding in the UK, the USA, Sweden, Malaysia and India, were running criminal gangs in Bangladesh.

Over a dozen people have been killed in the capital over the last two years by these gangs, while many had to pay extortion money to them by either hundi, an unauthorised way of transaction, or bank accounts.

These crimes have been continuing unabated for years as law enforcers cannot trace the criminals holed up abroad. Police seldom can arrest their local gang members, said their sources.

Fearing repercussion, many people do not dare to lodge any general diary or complaint against the criminals, the sources said.

Deputy Commissioner (north) of DB Mashur Rahman has recently said some top criminals were running gangs hiding abroad and they kill people to establish supremacy in some areas from where they collect a

huge amount in illegal tolls.

Asked about bringing them to book, the DB official suggested posting of police officers in Bangladeshi missions abroad to continue to persuade their counterparts to arrest the criminals.

Several hundred police officials of different countries are posted to Bangladesh to get "their job done", he added.

Apart from these gangs, a group of petty criminals and local frauds, impersonating as top criminals, are also demanding extortion money from people.

Mufti Mahmud Khan, director (legal and media wing) of Rapid Action Battalion, has recently said those who were making the phone calls were frauds and using the name of the top criminals to frighten people.

Many of them remained out of the dragnet of law enforcers as they use mobile phone SIMs registered with fake identities.

Law enforcers said they were working to have the SIMs blocked, in an attempt to curb the crime.

# 2.5 lakh

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amounted to "genocide".

UNHCR puts the number of Rohingya refugees currently crowded into settlements in Cox's Bazar at around 900,000, although the UN often gives a lower number than Bangladesh authorities and other aid organisations.

They are stateless, despite the fact that many of their families have lived in Myanmar for generations, since members of the Muslim minority have had their citizenship eroded over decades.

"The registration exercise, which began in June 2018, is about safeguarding the right of Rohingya refugees to be able to return home voluntarily to Myanmar in future," Maheic said.

Myanmar and Bangladesh have signed a memorandum of understanding about repatriating the Rohingya, but so far safety fears and concerns over citizenship mean the refugees have refused to return.

The new ID cards, provided to all refugees over the age of 12, lists important information, including names, family links and fingerprints and iris scans.

Maheic also said that the cards list Myanmar as the refugees' country of origin.

In total, 270,348 refugees, or nearly 60,000 families, have been registered, and around 4,000 people are added to the roster each day, he said.

UNHCR's goal is to complete the process of registering all the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar by November.

Maheic pointed out that comprehensive registration is important for improving the accuracy of data on refugees in Bangladesh, and provides authorities and humanitarians with a better understanding of the population and its needs.

He also said that the registration "can also serve as a better tool vis-a-vis the authorities to prevent and combat smuggling and trafficking".

His comment came after a rise in attempted human smuggling of Rohingya in the last few months, amid growing desperation in the camps.

Earlier this week, Bangladesh police shot dead two suspected Rohingya human traffickers, after rescuing 103 refugees in two days about to make the perilous sea voyage to Malaysia.

# Don't allow

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from self-exile. She had left the country after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and most of his family members in 1975.

Hasina said the AL has always struggled to establish democracy in the country. "Because, we believe without democracy it is not possible for a country to advance socioeconomically."

She thanked the grassroots AL leaders and activists to keep the organisation alive defying all sorts of conspiracies to destroy it.

The PM mentioned that the AL is currently the number one political party in the country. The party gained the people's trust and that is why they cast their votes for it in the last national election, she added.

"The reason for this success is that the party worked for the welfare of people, for the development of the country... people realised it and that is the most important thing for a political party."

For a political leader, it is very important to gain people's trust and confidence, Hasina said.

She said it is quite normal for a ruling political party to lose popularity, but the AL has gained the confidence and trust of the people staying in power.

The government in the last 10 years has taken the country forward socioeconomically, reduced the poverty rate and strengthened the national economy, the PM mentioned.

Hasina, the AL president for last 38 years, said she and her family members never did anything that might tarnish the country's image.

"We never worked for our personal gains. We always worked for the welfare of the country."

Mentioning about her long tenure as the party chief, the PM said, "This is too much. Now time has come for you, too. I'm getting old as well."

Recalling her Homecoming Day, Hasina said thousands of people had gathered at the airport on that day defying inclement weather.

"I might not have found my known faces on that day, but I was overwhelmed by the love and affection of thousands of people there," she said.

# Terrific Tigers

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in 24 overs with player-of-the-series Shai Hope top scoring for the side with 74 while his opening partner Sunil Ambris was not out on 69.

This was a series where a collective approach from both the senior and junior members of the Bangladesh squad simply clicked throughout the series.

# They call it 'game'

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In their code language, the traffickers call it a "game" and make hefty sums, Tk 8-9 lakh from each migrant, according to Rab officials.

Rab officials learned this after interrogating three members of a trafficking ring involved in the trafficking some of the Bangladeshi job seekers who likely perished in the Mediterranean last week after their boat capsized.

Abdur Razzak Bhuiyan, 34, Akkas Matubbar, 39, and Anamul Haque Talukdar, 46, were arrested from the capital yesterday, Mufti said.

The arrests came after relatives of three victims filed separate cases in Sylhet and Shariatpur. Anamul, owner of Yeahia Overseas, a travel agency in Sylhet, is involved in trafficking for 10 to 12 years. Razzak is his close associate, Mufti told a press briefing at Rab's Kawran Bazar media centre.

This gang may have trafficked several hundred Bangladeshis to Libya in the past few years.

Akkas has his own travel agency, Rab officials said, but did not disclose its name.

"We have come to know about five to six travel agencies involved in the trafficking of Bangladeshis. We are now verifying the information," Mufti added.

On May 9, a boat carrying 80 migrants capsized in the Mediterranean off Tunisian coast. There were 54 Bangladeshis on board and only 14 of them were rescued. Three bodies were found while 37 remain missing and feared dead, foreign ministry officials said.

Another boat carrying some 50 migrants, mostly Bangladeshis, reached Italy. A ship from the Tunisian port city of Zuwara had first carried the



Abdur Razzak

Akkas Matubbar

Anamul Haque

migrants and then transferred them to two boats in the middle of the sea. The overcrowded one capsized in the sea.

THREE ROUTES

Since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, Libya has been in a civil war, creating a complete lawlessness. Bangladesh stopped sending workers to Libya in 2014. Taking advantage of Libya's lawlessness, traffickers began operating in various war-torn and poverty-stricken countries in Africa and the Middle East.

These transnational syndicates include Bangladeshi traffickers.

Rab officials said they identified several such syndicates, each having 20 to 30 brokers. These brokers target low-income people in remote areas and lure them into the risky voyage, promising better life in Europe.

The traffickers use three routes to send the migrants to Europe, said Mufti.

The routes are Bangladesh-Turkey-Libya-Europe; Bangladesh-India/Sri Lanka-Libya-Europe; and Bangladesh-UAE-Jordan-Libya-Europe, Rab officials said quoting the arrestees.

Some of the May 9 tragedy victims were taken to Libya through India-Sri Lanka-Istanbul route, they added.

For this trip, they first took the victims to Kolkata by bus and then to Delhi by air. Later, the migrants were sent to Sri

Lanka by air, where they stayed around five days before heading for Libya, Rab said.

Before leaving Sri Lanka, which issues on-arrival visas, the local agents manage "Ok To Board" approval from Libyan authorities to depart from Sri Lanka and enter Libya.

These syndicates have agents in each of these countries. They collect Tk 4 to 5 lakh from each migrant before they depart Bangladesh. The rest of the money is collected in Libya as per the agreement, Mufti said.

They also force the migrants to do odd jobs in Libya if their family delay the payments, he said, adding that migrants sometimes needed to stay in Libya for up to one year.

"The trafficking gangs also confine the Bangladeshis and torture them to create pressure on their families to pay the money," Mufti said.

THE SEA ROUTE

Once the family members fully pay, the traffickers gather the Bangladeshis in a single place and train them on operating the rigid-inflatable boats (RIB) used to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe, said Mufti.

Generally, an RIB can carry 40 to 45 people, but the syndicates load 85 to 90 to save money.

Many of these boats sink as migrants

# City dwellers

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polluted water for years.

Speaking there, Mizanur Rahman, convener of the platform that organised the demonstration, said their protests would continue until the demands were met.

"We don't want to have impure and contaminated tap water. We don't want the hassle of boiling water for purification," he said.

"People are falling ill every day after drinking Wasa water ... we will not pay any Wasa bill until it ensures safe water for consumers," he said.

Abdullah Al-Mamun, a businessman in Jurain, demanded that Taqsem resigns as the Wasa MD,

saying he could not ensure clean water while being at the helm of the water supplier.

As a result, many have to collect drinking water from local mosques and madrasas, he added.

Yesterday's protests came a day after Dhaka Wasa revealed that its water is polluted in 57 city areas because of broken-down supply lines.

It made the admission in a report submitted before the High Court.

The local government and rural development ministry submitted the report on behalf of Wasa, as per the court's order delivered on Monday.

On April 23, in a unique protest,

residents of Jurain brought lemons, a bag of sugar, and a jar of Jurain's murky tap water to the Wasa Bhaban in Karwan Bazar to "treat" Taqsem with sherbet.

The small group of Jurain went to the Wasa office in protest of Taqsem A Khan's April 20 claim that Wasa water "is 100 percent pure," while also admitting that sometimes he himself boils the water at his home.

Taqsem had made the comments responding to a report of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), came out on April 17 that found that 91 percent Wasa subscribers have to boil the supply water to make it drinkable and, in

the process, they burn gas worth Tk 332 crore a year.

Findings also show that nearly 45 percent subscribers do not get the desired amount of water while about 35 percent complain of poor-quality water throughout the year.

Contacted on Thursday, the Wasa MD claimed their water was "100 percent pure" at source, but some 16 percent of it gets contaminated inside the supply lines that are in bad shape at many places.

Asked about his earlier claim about the quality of Wasa water, he said it was a mistake to say that Wasa water was completely safe and pure from source to consumers' homes.