

French jihadist recruiter handed long jail term

AFP, Paris

A Frenchman has been sentenced to 22 years in prison for seeking to recruit dozens of youths to fight as jihadists in Syria and for leading a brigade of French-speaking Islamists in the war-torn country.

Mourad Fares, 35, fled Syria in 2014, and was arrested in Turkey and handed over to French authorities the same year.

Prosecutors said he played a “crucial” role in the recruiting of young people to fight as jihadists in Syria, and noted a lack of any “real regret” for his actions.

Fares appeared unmoved as the verdict was read out at a special court Friday evening.

He admitted to the court he “indirectly” recruited youths to fight as jihadists via his propaganda videos and “facilitated” the entry of a number of people into Syria.



A namaz-e-janaza being held for the people killed in BSF shooting along the border with India at Dhaka University's Raju Sculpture yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

First Chilean police officer in court as protest flare anew

AFP, Santiago

A Chilean police officer appeared in court Friday in the first instance of prosecutors bringing charges over eye injuries blamed on security forces during Chile's months of unrest.

Street protests flared anew the same day, as demonstrators wearing masks and waving flags returned to the capital Santiago's Plaza Italia to express their outrage at Chile's economic inequality and President Sebastian Pinera's right-wing government.

In court, Captain Pablo Carvajal was formally accused of having fired buckshot in the left eye of a protester at a distance of two to five meters (6.5 to 16 feet) during a late October protest in downtown Santiago.

Prosecutor Ximena Chong said Carvajal opened fire after the victim threw a blunt object at a police vehicle, but the victim has not suffered any loss of vision to date.

A month after the crisis began, Chilean police suspended the use of buckshot against protesters as an anti-riot tool, specifying that it was only for use in instances of extreme danger.

Revisit relations

FROM PAGE 16

Provisional measures are the steps to be taken to prevent further harm and comes as the first step of the legal case.

In November, The Gambia filed a suit against Myanmar, alleging it was committing “an ongoing genocide against its minority Muslim Rohingya population” and violating the 1948 Genocide Convention.

The ICJ ruling was the response to that suit.

Urging Myanmar to comply with the ruling, the Canadian high commissioner said that Myanmar now has few months to show the ICJ what it is doing in this regard.

While he termed the ruling “very encouraging”, he also said that it is too early to be triumphant. “We have a still lot of works to do... It's a game of chess... the ICJ process will take several years.”

“It is important to not forget the plight of the Rohingyas,” he added.

He hoped that the ruling will help mobilise more people in the international community.

“This will have a positive effect on all the efforts in the international community to keep this issue in mind...”

At the beginning of the discussion, Shahidul Haque, former foreign secretary of Bangladesh, presented highlights of the ICJ ruling and described how it has affected and would affect the international community.

“The court ruling will have a great impact on the international community. Even Myanmar itself has accepted that war crimes had occurred against Rohingyas and are being investigated,” said Shahidul, who is now working as a senior fellow at the CPS.

He said that the reactions by Canada, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, the UN secretary general, the UN High Commission on Human Rights, the European Union and others are very important. “So, Myanmar is coming under the radar in that sense.”

Bangladesh also needs to revisit its own strategy, policy and approach, and it has to be extremely innovative in terms of balancing its national interest and international obligations, he further said, adding, “There are many countries who have to revisit their policy [on Myanmar] also.”

He, however, said the issue of repatriation should continue like it was before the ruling.

Replying to whether Myanmar would comply with the ICJ ruling, he said, “They will be under surveillance of the court. They have to report every four months.”

“When the ICJ has inaugurated [the process], the [UN] security council will also revisit its position,” he added.

‘Intolerant India’

FROM PAGE 16

instructions of not voting (PM Modi,” Chauthaiwale, BJP's foreign policy in-charge, tweeted.

The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index for 2019 has ranked India 51st among 165 nations and two territories, with its lowest ever score of 6.9 out of 10. The research and analysis division of The Economist Group has attributed the drop to “democratic regression (in) erosion of civil liberties”.

The EIU report mentioned the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act or the CAA, which makes religion a test of citizenship for the first time in India's history, and the NRC.

The CAA provides for citizenship for non-Muslim minorities from Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan if they fled religious persecution and entered India before 2015. Critics believe the law, along with the NRC, will be used to target Muslims.

“The passage by Parliament in December of the discriminatory Citizenship (Amendment) Act suggests India's decline will continue in the 2020 index,” the EIU report said in its observations on India.

The report also referred to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir after the Centre last year ended its special status under the Article 370 of the constitution.

Protests over the citizenship law became a talking point at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where India's railways and commerce minister Piyush Goyal tackled questions on it.

Venezuela's Guaido meets Macron on charm offensive

AFP, Paris

Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido, on a charm offensive to back his bid to oust his country's leader, yesterday claimed to have the “firm support” of French President Emmanuel Macron.

Guaido, recognised as Venezuela's interim president by the United States and 50 other countries, has so far failed to bring down President Nicolas Maduro despite months of struggle and economic crisis.

On Saturday, Guaido told Europe 1 radio: “We had firm support from President Macron,” after the pair held talks in Paris on Friday.

2 Rohingyas killed

FROM PAGE 16

the rebels who they said attacked a bridge in the early hours of the morning.

More than 730,000 Rohingya Muslims were forced to flee northern Rakhine state in 2017 after a military crackdown that the U.N has said was executed with genocidal intent.

More recently, the region was plunged into further chaos by fresh fighting between the military and the Arakan Army, a rebel group that recruits from the mostly Buddhist majority in the state. That conflict has displaced tens of thousands and killed dozens.

Of the several hundred thousand Rohingyas still in Rakhine, many are confined to apartheid-like conditions, unable to travel freely or access healthcare and education. They are caught in the middle of the fighting, and travel restrictions mean they are less able to flee than Buddhist neighbors.

In early January, four Rohingya children died in a blast the military and rebels blamed on each other.

Two military spokesmen did not answer phone calls from Reuters seeking comment on the deaths. In a statement posted on the Russian social media network VK, the army confirmed the deaths but blamed the

Arakan Army, saying its artillery had hit the village during clashes. Accounts belonging to the Myanmar military were removed from Facebook and other social media networks in 2018 over spreading “hate and misinformation”.

Soe Tun Oo, a Rohingya villager living a mile from the village, told Reuters by phone two houses were destroyed in the explosion. “The military always shoots heavy weapons... They shoot heavy weapons around the area they suspect. It is impossible to flee to other places, even though we are scared.”

The Hague-based International Court of Justice ordered Myanmar on Thursday to protect the Rohingyas against further atrocities and preserve evidence of alleged crimes, after west African nation the Gambia launched a lawsuit in November accusing the country of genocide.

A spokesman for the ruling party told Reuters the country was already protecting Rohingyas, but the civilian government had limited power over the military.

Civilian authorities govern jointly with the military in an awkward constitutional arrangement that reserves great powers for the commander-in-chief.

Politics is turning

FROM PAGE 16

the affidavits of 740 contestants.

The findings were unveiled at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Elections to Dhaka north and south city corporations are scheduled for February 1.

About 73 percent candidates in Dhaka north and about 74 percent in Dhaka south are businesspersons. In 2015, when the last polls took place, businesspeople constituted 67 percent in the north and 71 in the south.

It indicates that the tendency among businesspersons to enter politics is growing, it said.

The business people who will win are likely to focus mostly on expanding their businesses and not serve their voters, the report observed.

On education of the contestants, the report said almost two-thirds of the councillor hopefuls studied up to

Three of a family killed

FROM PAGE 16

the bus but its driver managed to flee, confirmed Amtali police station's Officer-in-Charge Abul Bashar.

Locals and police said that a bus named ‘Mayer Doa Paribahan’ was carrying passengers from Barishal to Amtali via Patuakhali on Saturday morning. The bus ploughed into pedestrians on the footpath at the AK School intersection after losing control. Nupur Begum who was standing on the footpath with her two children and niece, were all killed on the spot.

The bus first rammed into a microbus and a battery-run autorickshaw on the side of the road before hitting the pedestrians.

Immediately after the accident, locals took those killed and injured to Amtali Upazila Health Complex. Mamataz Begum and Abdul Jabbar, critically injured, were sent to Barishal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital for better treatment.

The deceased Nupur Begum's mother, Ambia Begum, said in

tears that Nupur had taken Nishat, Mamataz, and Lamia to visit a relative's house in the Gazipur bazaar area. They arrived back in Amtali by an autorickshaw and were looking for another rickshaw to go home when the bus struck the footpath.

On news of the accident, the relatives rushed to the Amtali hospital. Ambia Begum, mourning her daughter and grandchildren, kept saying, “Where is my ma (Nupur)?” and “Bring me my grandchildren.”

In the emergency room of Amtali hospital, six-year-old Mamataz asks for her mother and cries. Relatives have not yet let her know that her mother is dead.

Lamia was an SSC examinee this year, from Tazem Ali School and College of Haldia Union. Nupur's husband Abul Hossain works in Singapore.

The dead bodies have been handed over without autopsy as per the request of their families and a case on the accident is under process, added OC Bashar.

SSC-level.

However, most of the mayor candidates are highly educated.

Besides, most of the councillor candidates are accused in one or multiple cases, it added.

The report urged the Election Commission to ensure level-playing field, and impartial polling officials and law enforcement agencies.

It also called upon the EC to take tough measures against those who provided false information in the affidavit and breached the code of conduct.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumder said business people's participation in national election had already increased, and they were becoming increasingly involved in local government polls.

“It means, our politics is about to turn into business,” he said.

He also criticised the EC for not

taking action against the breaches of conduct.

“We repeatedly requested for tax information of the candidates, but the EC didn't give it. Finally, we were forced to issue a legal notice.”

The EC's decision of using Electronic Voting Machines was not right as the devices can be manipulated without being detected, he said.

Shujan President M Hafizuddin Khan said the EC should scrutinise the affidavits immediately and take steps against the candidates who gave false information in affidavits.

Shujan Central Coordinator Dilip Kumar Sarkar said the campaigners had been violating the code of conduct from the very beginning of the campaign.

“The EC has engaged 43 executive magistrates to deal with the issue, but their effectiveness is yet to be seen,” he added.

Hawk of streets running

FROM PAGE 16

Election Commission, he concealed information about his cases. He said he was not facing any criminal cases.

But he is the prime accused in a case filed over extortion. Fifteen others were sued in the case filed by the DSCC with Motijheel Police Station in February 2017.

According to the case statement, hawkers occupied roads and footpaths and set up temporary shops there every day from 8:00am to 8:00pm, obstructing the movement of people.

“The accused have been collecting Tk 100 to Tk 400 as extortion money from each trader every day. Officials of Dhaka South City Corporation were assaulted by some extortionists while they were carrying out an eviction drive there. They are still issuing threats to the officials,” reads the case statement.

Contacted, Monir Hossain Molla, inspector (investigation) of Motijheel Police Station, said they submitted the charge sheet in the case. “The case is now under trial.”

Another case was filed against Saiful by Baser Molla, a hawker. The plaintiff complained that he was beaten up by Saiful and his men on March 3, 2017 for refusing to give them extortion money.

The case was later transferred to the Police Bureau of Investigation. The PBI has submitted the charge sheet in the case, now pending with a court.

On May 22, 2017, The Daily Star ran a report under the headline “Hawks of streets” on extortion by Saiful.

In February that year, DSCC

Assistant Estate Officer Shamsul Alam had filed two more extortion cases against 66 people with Shahbag and Paltan police stations.

Meanwhile, a hawk of AGB Colony alleged that extortion by the councillor hopeful was still going on.

“He came here last week to collect money,” the hawkler told this correspondent.

Saiful has a gang of men, backed by some ruling party men from Motijheel, said another hawkler who became a victim of extortion.

SAIFUL DENIES ALLEGATIONS

Talking to this correspondent over the phone, Saiful said if elected, his first duty would be stopping collection of extortion money from the drivers of local battery-run auto-rickshaws.

“Several hundred auto-rickshaws ply the by-lanes in my area. Some ruling party men collect extortion money from the drivers daily.”

Asked about the cases against him, the councillor candidate said his political opponents had filed those and that those were “already dismissed by courts.”

He claimed that he mentioned the case information in his affidavit submitted to the EC.

Though Saiful mentioned service as his profession in the affidavit, he told this newspaper that he was a businessman and he owns a clothing shop in Motijheel.

DSCC Returning Officer Abdul Baten said nobody raised the issue of Saiful's cases during the scrutiny of nomination papers.

We can't buy food

FROM PAGE 1

The Bangladeshi students were also worried as their food stocks were running low while most superstores in Wuhan remained closed.

Wuhan, a city of 11 million, is in virtual lockdown with all passenger flights cancelled and checkpoints on the main roads blocking the way out of town. A press release from the external publicity wing of the foreign ministry informed that authorities have imposed similar lockdowns in at least 13 cities near in an effort to contain the outbreak, as part of the ongoing containment effort, locking down nearly 56 million people.

There are about 300 to 400 Bangladeshi students in Wuhan, according to the press release.

The Daily Star contacted one of the students stuck in the dorms at Hubei University of Technology, who also appealed for help through

a Facebook post. Rakibil Turja, 23, went to Wuhan nearly one-and-a-half years ago and is currently pursuing a degree in Mechanical and Automation Engineering.

While the university is closed during this time of year, Rakibil has been under lockdown in his dorm since January 23. According to him, there are at least 140 other Bangladeshi students in his university alone but no official authorities -- the Bangladesh mission and the university -- have gotten in touch with the students.

The students were frustrated not just by the lack of information but also by the diminishing food stocks.

“There is no one infected in the university yet, which is why they are even more vigilant to ensure no one gets infected,” Rakibil said.

“But our mobility is severely restricted. We have to sign our names

in a register, say where we are going and only then are we allowed to go out. And either way, all shopping malls are closed so we really cannot buy any groceries or food,” he added.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Beijing has established contact with the ministry of foreign affairs in China in case emergency support was needed by Bangladeshi expatriates in Wuhan. According to the press release, there has been no news of any foreigner being infected by or dying from the Coronavirus.

Earlier, foreign ministry officials in Dhaka said that no one had reached out to them in this regard.

The Bangladesh Embassy in Beijing has opened a 24-hour hotline number, +86 178-0111-6005, which has been circulated to expatriate students and researchers to call in case of emergencies.

Klingons and Romulans.

It has appeared as a pin on the uniforms of iconic Star Trek characters such as Captain Kirk and Spock ever since the original series debuted in 1966, and continues to feature in the franchise's current shows and movies.

US Space Force's

FROM PAGE 16

“Should’ve been consulting with Gene Roddenberry’s lawyers,” said the popular “Pouremcoffee” account, referring to the late screenwriter and producer of Star Trek's original series and its first spin-off, “The Next

Generation.”

The logo bears an uncanny resemblance to the insignia of Starfleet -- the peacekeeping and exploration force of the United Federation of Planets alliance, which is headquartered on Earth whose adversaries include