

BANGLADESHIS EVACUATED FROM YEMEN

9 more wait for returning home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine more Bangladesh nationals, who had been stranded in Al Hudaydah and Sana'a cities of strife-torn Yemen, reached African country Djibouti yesterday.

A total of 32 Bangladeshis, including the nine, are now staying in hotels of Djibouti, said SM Mahbul Alam, counsellor at the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuwait.

Of them, 23 are men, four women and five children, he said, adding, "We have a plan to send all these people back to Dhaka by today or tomorrow by plane."

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Mahbul said they got information that seven or eight more Bangladeshis had boarded a ship from the Aden seaport yesterday.

He, however, could not confirm when the Bangladeshis boarded. Nor could he say which ship they embarked.

Around 50 to 60 Bangladesh nationals are still waiting at the Aden port to get on a ship to go Djibouti, Mahbul said.

Emdadul Hossain, a Bangladeshi national who was at the port, told

BBC Bangla Service yesterday that a group of 50 Bangladeshis went to the Aden seaport around 7:00am (Yemen local time) as they came to know that an Indian ship would take them to Djibouti. But they were still waiting at the port as of filing of this report at 11:30pm.

The counsellor, who is now in Djibouti, also said three Bangladeshis, who earlier reached Djibouti, had left the African country for Dhaka three days ago.

"They flew on an Air India flight and might have reached Dhaka via Mumbai," he mentioned.

Replying to a query about the evacuation of other Bangladeshis from Yemen to Djibouti, Mahbul said they were trying to bring the rest of the expatriates to Djibouti by air and water.

Another official said around 500 Bangladeshis, who remain stranded in Sana'a and Aden, communicated with Bangladesh officials for evacuation.

Maj Gen Mohammad Ashab Uddin, Bangladeshi ambassador to Kuwait, went to Djibouti on Tuesday to supervise the evacuation procedure of the stranded expatriates from Yemen.

1,500MW more power

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project sites in these locations, but later it sought to change the locations of its Mawa and Dhaka plants to Maheshkhali, Cox's Bazar. This means that the projects would be facing long delays.

According to power ministry sources, Orion must have awarded an engineering procurement contract for Khulna 565MW power plant by March, but it didn't do so. As the firm was very slow on its Chittagong 282MW coal power project, it should be served a notice for scrapping the contract.

Two coal-fired projects (total capacity of 1,200MW) by S Alam and HTG groups in Chittagong have also made a similar dismal progress. Due to its slow implementation, the firm might be served a notice for termination of contract, said the sources.

Besides, some other projects like Ghorashal CMC (365MW), Chapainawabganj (100MW), Ghorashal 3 Repowering, Bibiyana phase-3 and Shikalbaha (225MW) have made almost no progress.

After assuming office in 2009, the Awami League-led grand alliance government had rolled out plans to make load shedding a thing of the past within a few years. It envisioned that the country's power generation capacity would exceed 18,000MW by 2017 from the present 10,000MW (actual generation is 7,200MW). To achieve the target, the government went for all kinds of power plants using petroleum fuel, gas, coal and renewable energy.

MEGHNAGHAT

Local power company Summit is expected to go for full operation of its 335MW Meghnaghat combined cycle power project by the end of this month, about eight months behind schedule. This will be the country's biggest power plant built by a local company.

The dual-fuel plant can run on costly diesel and cheap natural gas. It has been generating 220MW power since November 2013 using diesel in its "simple cycle operation" as the authorities could not ensure gas supplies back then.

Summit later installed the combined cycle component of the plant. In this system, the heat generated by its simple cycle operation is used to generate additional power, making the overall power generation cost effective.

"We are now ready to run the plant in its full capacity; we are just waiting for the gas connection," said Summit chief Muhammad Aziz Khan. The last-minute preparations are on, he added.

A top official of Titas gas company said they would supply around 50 million cubic feet gas to the plant. Titas was ready to supply the gas, but Summit was yet to complete setting up a metering station, he mentioned.

The gas was supposed to be available at the plant in late March.

Summit is also expected to begin partial operation of its Bibiyana phase 2 (341MW combined cycle plant) from late April, three months behind the schedule.

POWER PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT

PROJECT	FULL OPERATION	STATUS
Meghnaghat Summit 335MW	Apr 2015	Ready; 8 months delay
Bibiyana Summit 341MW	Jan 2016	Partial operation this month
Ashuganj 224MW Hyundai	Mar 2015	Testing
Ashuganj modular United	April 2015	Testing
Ashuganj 450MW Inelectra	June 2015	Near completion
Kodda 150MW dual fuel	May 2015	Near completion
Bhola 225MW China Chenga	Aug 2015	Plant awaiting transmission line
Siddhirganj 335MW Isolux	Apr 2016	
Ashuganj 450MW North Technicas	Oct 2016	
Shahjibazar 330MW Guangdong	Dec 2016	
Bheramara 360MW	Jan 2017	
Bibiyana 3 Marubeni	Failed	Deal signed Dec 2012; contract still valid
Ghorashal 365MW CMC	Failed	Deal signed May 2013
Chapainawabganj 100 MW	Failed	Deal signed Mar 2013
Ghorashal 3 Repowering	Failed	Deal signed Jan 2014
Shikalbaha 225MW L&T	Failed	Deal signed Aug 2014
Orion Khulna 565MW (coal fired)	June 2015	EIA not cleared; behind schedule
Orion Mawa 522MW (coal fired)	Mar 2016	Seeking site relocation
Orion Chittagong 282MW	—	LOI issued in Oct 2013; no progress
Orion Dhaka 282MW	—	LOI issued Oct 2013; seeking site relocation
Orion Dhaka 635MW	—	LOI issued Oct 2013; seeking site relocation
S Alam Ctg 612MW	—	LOI Oct 2013; no progress
S Alam Ctg 612MW phase 2	—	LOI Dec 2013; no progress



The two youths, whom the activists of Gonojagoron Mancha captured from their procession in Shahbagh in the capital yesterday in possession of two large knives, inset. The young men were handed over to Shahbagh police.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Campaign for Abbas starts

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The full bench of the SC is scheduled to hear Mintoo's appeal today. During the hearing, Mintoo will seek the Appellate Division's directives upon the Election Commission to accept his nomination.

On Monday, the HC summarily dismissed his writ petition challenging the Dhaka divisional commissioner's order that rejected his nomination due to a procedural flaw.

If Mintoo's appeal is rejected today, the BNP will have no other option than backing either Mintoo's elder son Tabith Awal or Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh leader Mahi B Chowdhury in the mayoral race.

Khaleda Zia has already instructed Tabith to get prepared for the polls while a number of BNP high-ups are in favour of backing Mahi, son of former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, one of the founding members of the party, who was relieved of his party post in 2001, according to BNP insiders.

Mahi, in his first ever press conference at the Jatiya Press Club since campaign started, hoped that the BNP would back him in the DNCC mayoral race if Mintoo failed to contest the election.

Mahi, joint general secretary of Bikalpa Dhara, said he would turn the capital into a safe, bright and dynamic

city if he got elected.

He also vowed to introduce an "aesthetic" form of politics in place of the existing "politics of muscle power, confrontation and bloodbath."

After the briefing he launched his campaign from the capital's Korail slum at Mohakhali and later visited Banani and Gulshan-2 municipality market to woo voters.

ANNISUL & KHOKON'S CAMPAIGN

On the second day of their campaign, Annisul Huq and Sayeed Khokon, Awami League-backed mayoral hopefuls for DNCC and DSCC polls, were joined by a pro-AL citizens' platform called Dhaka Nagorik Samaj.

The platform that was launched yesterday through a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity called upon the Dhaka dwellers to vote for Annisul and Khokon to build a modern Dhaka with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Versatile writer Syed Shamsul Haque and cultural personality Golam Quddus will work as convenor and member secretary of the 146-member platform.

Annisul yesterday started his campaign from the city's Darus Salam area around 11:00am and visited different areas including Kalyanpur, Mirpur, Peerar Bagh and Bangla College.

While Khokon launched his campaign from the city's Bangsal area at

11:00am distributing a rose and a leaflet among voters. He ended his extensive campaign around 11:30pm.

NASIR vs MANJUR

In the port city the AL-backed mayoral aspirant AJM Nasir Uddin yesterday started his formal campaign through assuring voters of a permanent solution to water-logging problems in Chittagong.

Flanked by AL leaders, Nasir started his campaign after visiting the shrine of Hazarat Shah Amanat in Chittagong at 10:45am.

However, BNP-backed mayoral aspirant M Manjur Alam is yet to start his formal campaign as he was busy on the second day holding meetings with the party's grass-root leaders and activists on election strategy at his residence.

AFROZA ABBAS

Flanked by local BNP and Mahila Dal activists, Afroza Abbas yesterday visited different lanes of Khilgaon, Tilpapara, Basabo and Khilgaon. Distributing leaflets among voters, she sought votes for her husband.

About her husband avoiding public appearance, she told reporters that her husband would appear in public and carry out his campaign in person once he got bail from the court as he was accused in many cases.

She hoped that Abbas would get bail soon and join the electioneering.

Gonojagoron Mancha activists catch 2 youths with knives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonojagoron Mancha activists caught two youths with two knives from the Mancha's procession in the capital's Shahbagh intersection and handed them over to the police yesterday.

The youths are Abdullah, 18, and Jewel Rana, 18, from Gopalpur village in Enayetpur upazila of Sirajganj, said Shahbagh police.

"Two knives were recovered from their possession, and the Detective Branch of police took them for further questioning," Shibli Noman, assistant commissioner (Ramna zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

"They were trying to go near Imran H Sarker, who was at the front of the procession, by pushing others," said Akramul Haque, an activist of the platform.

"Their movements raised suspicion, and when we tried to push them back, a knife fell off from the bag of one youth," he said, adding that the incident occurred around 5:15pm.

The activists held the duo till the end of their programme and informed the Shahbagh police.

"When we asked them why they came to the procession with the knives, they gave confusing answers," said Haque.

Imran H Sarker, spokesperson of a faction of the Mancha, said around 3:00pm, five men roamed around their sit-in programme at the intersection in a suspicious way. But they went away as soon as police were informed.

Gonojagoron Mancha, a platform that demands maximum punishment for war criminals of 1971, organised the programme, demanding an immediate execution of war criminal Mohammad Kamaruzzaman.

Jubo league man shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Jubo League man was shot dead by unidentified criminals in the capital's Khilgaon last night.

The deceased Mohammad Arif, 30, was the general secretary of ward no 2 of Khilgaon area unit of Jubo League, and a resident of North Goran area.

Four armed criminals riding on two motorbikes fired several shots at Arif when he was returning home around 8:00pm, said police and witnesses.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 9:30pm. He succumbed to his injuries around 11:50pm, police said.

Arif's family members said he was only involved in different businesses like advertisements in billboards as well as sand and bricks supplying.

Locals and police suspect that Arif might have been killed over a feud centring his businesses or due to intra-party conflict.

"We are investigating into the incident," said Mustafiz Bhuiyan, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police Station.

Nur, 3 Rab officials

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Mohammad, Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana -- allegedly executed the killing mission in exchange for money. Now behind bars, the trio have also been named as top accused.

Sources said 25 of the charge-sheeted accused are Rab men and 10 are civilians. Of the accused, 22, including 17 Rab members, are in jail while 13 on the run.

Nur Hossain bribed the accused Rab men to kill his rival Narayanjanj city panel mayor Nazrul Islam over different enmities and establishing supremacy in Siddhirganj, added the sources citing the charge sheet.

Nazrul, his three aides -- Tajul, Liton and Swapan -- and his driver Jahangir, and senior lawyer Chandan Sarkar and his driver Ibrahim were abducted separately but around the same time in broad daylight in Narayanjanj on April 27 last year.

Investigators said the elite force members killed the six others as well because they had witnessed Nazrul's abduction by the Rab men.

Six bodies were found floating in the Shitalakkhya river on April 30 and the other the following day.

In a stunning allegation on May 4, Nazrul's father-in-law Shahidul Islam said some Rab personnel abducted and killed Nazrul in exchange for Tk 6 crore from ward councillor Nur Hossain and his aides.

The gruesome incident sent a chilling message as Rab's alleged role in the murders was criticised at home and abroad.

The charge sheet, however, does not name five of the six accused, including Haji Yasin, general secretary of Siddhirganj upazila Awami League, who were named in the case filed by Nazrul's widow Selina Islam.

She expressed her frustration over this.

"They planned the killing together and even publicly threatened to kill him [Nazrul] two weeks before the incident," she claimed.

Prosecution counsel Shakhawat Hossain also criticised investigators for dropping their names. He described the charge sheet as incomplete for it was placed without interrogating the prime accused.

"It would have been a complete charge sheet if they quizzed Nur Hossain," he added.

Mamunur Rashid Mandal, inspector of Narayanjanj detectives, also the investigating officer of the case, submitted the charge sheet before Senior Judicial Magistrate Chandni Rupam.

As many as 127 people, including several Rab personnel, gave statements as witness. Investigators submitted 162 pieces of evidence before court.

Briefing journalists at his office in the evening, Khandaker Mohid Uddin, superintendent of Narayanjanj police, said, "No responsible person has been dropped from the case. Also, no one has been implicated unnecessarily. Everything has been done based on evidence and witnesses' accounts."

Asked about the allegation that Rab men took part in the killing for Tk 6 crore, he said, "Money changed hands. But the amount could not be ascertained."

Two days after the murder, three Rab-11 officials were withdrawn from their duties on April 29.

The trio, two of whom were deputed from army and another from navy, were then sent back to their own forces and subsequently fired from job on May 6.

The High Court on May 11 ordered their arrests.

According to the confessional statement of Maj Arif, given before a Narayanjanj magistrate on June 4, Rab teams led by himself and Lt Commander MM Rana abducted and killed the seven and dumped the bod-

ies at the confluence of the Meghna river in the early hours of April 28.

Nur Hossain provided the officers necessary information and ensured that there was no public gathering at Kanchpur Ghat area on that night so that the Rab members could dump the bodies in the river without being seen.

Arif said Tareque assigned him for killing Nazrul during an officers' conference in March, and ordered Narayanjanj camp commander Rana to assist him.

At one point after the abductions, Arif called his CO and told him that Nazrul and six others had been picked up. He sought instructions for the next course of action. In response, Tareque ordered Arif to kill all the seven, saying, "There should be no eyewitnesses."

Finally, before committing the coldblooded murders, Arif informed Tareque that his team was ready to kill and dump the seven. The CO replied, "Ok, go ahead," sources quoted from Arif's statement.

The Rab men injected Nazrul and the six others with anaesthetics and then smothered them to death with plastic bags. The bodies were loaded on the trawler waiting there around 1:00am and the Rab members steered off to the Meghna confluence from Kanchpur.

Apart from the three Rab officials, the Rab men who are behind bars are Sub-inspector Purnendu Bala, Assistant Sub-inspectors Bazlur Rahman and Abul Kalam Azad, Habildars Emdadul Haq and Nasiruddin, Constables Sihabuddin, Babul Hasan and Arif Hossain, Lance Nayeks Hira Mia, Belal Hossain and Ruhul Amin and Sepoys Abu Tayeb, Nuruzzaman and Asaduzzaman Nur.

The accused civilians in jail are Martuza Zaman Churchill, Ali Mohammad, Mizanur Rahman Dipu, Raham Ali and Abul Bashar.

[Our Narayanjanj correspondent contributed to the story.]