

KILLING OF SYLHET BOY

Dhaka Interpol moves to bring back Kamrul

Two more arrested; Moyna Mia on 7-day remand

STAR REPORT

Jeddah police yesterday received a letter from the Interpol's Dhaka office on initiating the procedures to send back migrant Kamrul Islam, one of the main culprits in beating dead 13-year-old Rajon in Sylhet last week.

Altaf Hossain, first secretary at Bangladesh Consulate in Jeddah of Saudi Arabia, confirmed this to The Daily Star.

Now the Saudi interior ministry would send the letter, which the Interpol sent a couple of days earlier, to the Royal King for his approval to send Kamrul home, he said.

As the Saudi government offices would remain closed till Tuesday for Eid, Kamrul's repatriation might have to wait till the offices reopen, he said.

"The Jeddah police sent Kamrul to jail today [yesterday] from their custody after completing official procedures," the first secretary added.

On Monday, Kamrul was caught in Jeddah by some Bangladeshi migrants, who had tracked him down after a video clip of the brutal incident went viral on the social media, sparking widespread outrage at home and abroad. They later handed him to the Bangladesh consulate.

Sheikh Md Samiul Alam Rajon was beaten to death in Kumargaon Bus Stand area of Sylhet on the morning of July 8. One of the culprits filmed the brutal beating and shared it on Facebook.

Kamrul was seen hitting the boy with a stick in the feet, joints of the legs and the shoulders, and the head.

MORE ARRESTS

Two more arrests have been made in the Rajon killing case.

Nur Miah, who allegedly videotaped the torture and killing of Rajon, has been arrested. He had gone into hiding after the gruesome killing.

Nur's father M Nizamuddin with the help of local people handed over his son to police yesterday after he returned home, Officer-in-Charge Akhtar Hossain of Jalalabad Police Station told The Daily Star.

The other arrestee was Dulal. He was held from Sheikhpara of Sylhet Sadar upazila.

"Dulal's name was not mentioned in the case. But he was identified from the footage of the incident," said OC Akhtar.

With these, five arrests have so far been made in the sensational case.

In another development, a Sylhet court yesterday placed Moyna Mia, a

key accused in Rajon murder case, on a seven-day remand, reports our Moulvibazar correspondent.

The court granted the remand after police pleaded for taking him in custody for 10 days to quiz, said the OC.

The court also ordered the police to transfer case to the Detective Branch of Police, which has been complied with, according to Sylhet Metropolitan Police (SMP) Commissioner Kamrul Ahsan.

CHUMKI FOR SPEEDY TRIAL TRIBUNAL

State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Meher Afroz Chumki yesterday urged the law minister to try Rajon's killers in a speedy trial tribunal.

"The accused are not human beings. They are demons in the shape of humans. They don't deserve to be forgiven," she said while visiting Rajon's family at Badaeli village in Sadar upazila.

Mentioning that she was visiting the family on the prime minister's instruction, she said if required, her ministry would assist the law ministry to ensure speedy trial of the killers.

The state minister handed over a cheque of Tk 1 lakh to the family.

Lawmaker Asmatul Kibria Keya Chowdhury, who was accompanying Chumki, said that she would provide assistance to ensure schooling of Rajon's younger brother.

Sylhet's Deputy Commissioner Joynal Abedin at the time pledged to give the family Tk 2,000 every month from the district administration.

PROBE AGAINST POLICE OFFICER ON

The committee, formed to investigate whether there was any negligence on the part of police in apprehending the culprits, had started working and would submit its report soon, said SMP Commissioner Kamrul Ahsan.

"The probe committee would investigate the allegations against Sub-Inspector (SI) Alamgir Hossain," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Alamgir was accused by Rajon's father Sheikh Md Azizur Rahman of cutting a Tk 12 lakh deal with Kamrul Islam and helping him flee the country after the killing.

Like the previous few days, people staged demonstrations and rallies yesterday as well to protest the savage murder of Rajon.



Not finding room inside, people heading home for Eid holidays get on the roofs of buses in the wet at Savar yesterday. Thousands have started streaming out of the capital towards their homes outside Dhaka as Eid rush gathers momentum.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Highly ominous

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without permission of the government before the charge sheet is accepted by a court.

This will put the civil servants into a special privileged class with a strong legal protection and place them in a category above any other.

No other citizen group of the country enjoys such a protection. Any citizen can be arrested by the police immediately after being sued for any of the criminal charges like corruption, bribe and extortion. Police does not need any permission from anybody to do so.

This discriminatory provision, according to some legal experts, will run counter to article 27 of the constitution. This article, which deals with one of the fundamental rights of citizens, reads: "All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law."

But it seems the government cared little about the constitutional provision this time too. And its latest move is not an isolated one.

In November 2013, the then Awami League-led government was eager to offer the bureaucrats legal protection from graft charges. It had amended the Anti-Corruption Commission Act, 2004 to this effect. It had also introduced a provision that required the ACC to take the government's permission before filing graft cases against public officials.

In amending the ACC law, the government had paid no heed to the growing concern and criticism raised by different non-government organisations working for good governance, and various donor agencies and countries.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, the ACC and even the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry that scrutinised the amendment to the ACC law bill had opposed the government's move to clip the anti-graft body's wings.

In another generous move in February 2013, the government had provided the public servants with a legal shield from contempt of court. By enacting the Contempt of Court ACT 2013, it had curtailed the court's constitutional power to deal with contempt cases.

The law made provisions that the court could not summon any government officials before it in a contempt of court case, and the contempt case against any government official will become ineffective immediately after his/her retirement.

The High Court however has stood on the way on both occasions. It has declared void and unconstitutional both the legal shields the government had given to its officials through amending the ACC law and the Contempt of Court Act as both the provisions were against article 27 of the constitution.

In another recent move, the cabinet on June 22 approved proposals to bring changes in the Mobile Court Act 2009 to empower the executive magistrates to punish an alleged wrongdoer even after he denies the offence.

The existing provision of the 2009 act empowers executive magistrates to punish an alleged offender only after he admits of any wrongdoing.

Once the proposed changes come into effect, their new found judicial clouts will help them in their move to regain the judicial powers they had lost after separation of the judiciary from the executive in 2007.

In another effort to keep the employees happy, the government has announced to implement some proposals in the current fiscal in addition to a new pay scale to go into effect this month.

The finance minister in his budget speech in June proposed setting up a commercial and development bank for the welfare of the government staffs.

According to his proposal, the "Samridhi Sopan Bank" would be owned by public employees and it would operate with an initial paid-up capital of Tk 400 crore.

He also announced that there would be a pension fund for government employees. A Pension Fund Management Authority will administer pension-related activities, and allocate a fund for it to pay for pen-

sions and make investments to implement welfare programmes for the pensioners.

The government also seeks to extend housing facilities.

Moreover, the government in previous years has been quite liberal with promotions to civil servants. The mass promotion has already created imbalance in the administration as the number of officials who have got promotion is much higher than the number of posts existing in the bureaucracy.

Close to the end of its term in 2013, the government did not pay any heed to widespread criticism against its move to amend the ACC law. Its attitude had raised crucial question whether the then ruling AL had planned to return to power banking on the help of the civil bureaucrats.

The AL has retained power by winning the one-sided parliamentary election held on January 5, 2014 boycotted by the BNP-led alliance.

The administration has favoured and helped the then AL-led government to hold the one-sided election. Is the government now obliged to return the favour to the bureaucrats?

If so, then the move to give them legal shield from criminal cases, provide them with more judicial clouts, and a commercial bank, new pay scale and other benefits and mass promotion is a manifestation of a policy of give and take. In such a policy, people do not

Systematic extortion

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"He collects money from buses regularly. He identifies himself as a representative of influential people here, but we don't know who they are," said Abu Sayeed, the helper.

Sayeed and the driver, Bipul, said they had to pay such illegal toll at three to four spots on their way to Motijheel.

Their claim proved true when the bus stopped at Savar bus stop at 10:15am. A youth came and took money from the helper when passengers were getting down and boarding the bus. This time, the amount was higher -- Tk 100.

"The man told me that their leaders asked them to collect money. Besides, he claims that a portion of the money goes to traffic cops so that police would not create any trouble," said the driver.

Contacted, Farhad Hossain, traffic inspector of Savar zone, denied the allegation that his colleagues were involved in this, but warned of tough action if anyone was found to be complicit.

However, the bus drove on and when it stopped at Gabtoli at 11:00am, a man came and quickly took Tk 30 from the helper.

"If we don't pay money at Gabtoli, we can't enter the capital. There have been several incidents when they [toll collectors] vandalised buses for refusing to pay them," the driver said.

By the time the bus reached Motijheel at 1:00pm where this correspondent got down, the helper already paid Tk 160 in extortion on the 65km route.

But this is not about just one bus on a particular route on a particular day. BRTC officials said around 20 of their buses play the Nandan Park-Motijheel route and all the buses had

to pay toll.

The officials added the state-run buses on other routes had the same experience.

BRTC Chairman Mizanur Rahman himself admitted this but expressed his helplessness.

He said they paid the toll for the safety of their buses and staff members. "If we don't pay, they vandalise buses and attack our employees."

Currently, 1,100 BRTC buses operate across the country -- about half of them in the capital and the rest in various districts.

Transport owners say transport workers' unions in different areas with the help of ruling party men are involved in the extortion.

It has reached such a level that even the state-run buses are not spared, they added.

Contacted, Leaders of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity and Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation said extortion was a commonplace across the country and that they were aided by the ruling party men and local influential people.

Asked about the allegation of collecting toll using the names of different workers' associations, Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation General Secretary Osman Ali said they usually took a very small amount of money -- like Tk 20 from each bus or truck daily -- for the welfare of their fellow workers.

"But local politicians are taking a huge amount of money from different transports illegally," Osman alleged.

There is no exact figure, but a transport leader say extortionists collect about Tk 1.5 crore every day from the transport sector across the country.

Absolutely awesome

FROM PAGE 1

though failed to get a hand on the ball, which on any other day would have been grasped by a South African fielder in the deep.

Soumya ended up hammering 13 boundaries and a six for his 90, while Tamim played a rather laid-back half-century of 61 not out to complement the youngster.

Earlier, Hashim Amla found his side in trouble on a slow and low Chittagong track after the visitors elected to bat first.

Once again, it was a disciplined bowling effort that stifled the visitors. It began with the young Mustafizur Rahman uprooting Quinton de Kock's stumps with a fuller delivery in the third over. That was followed with Shakib Al Hasan

removing Faf du Plessis and Hashim Amla.

Shakib used the wicket to perfection and troubled the batsmen with his lighted deliveries. With runs difficult to come by, du Plessis had attempted to sweep Shakib for a boundary but only managed to sky one up in the air.

Amla, who was trying to manoeuvre the innings for his side, edged one to the keeper while attempting to play an inside-out drive and that brought up Shakib's 200th ODI wicket.

After South Africa were four down, the match witnessed a three-hour break due to the incoming showers. As a result, the match was reduced to 40 overs per side.

Ashraf meets prime minister again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday evening at Gono Bhaban.

This was his third meeting with Hasina, also the AL president, since he was removed from the LGRD ministry on July 9 and made a minister without portfolio.

Yesterday, Ashraf went to Gono Bhaban after Ifar and stayed there for some time.

Earlier, he met the premier twice -- on Sunday and Tuesday -- at Gono Bhaban.

Following Ashraf's removal, an

uneasy situation is prevailing within the ruling party as many AL leaders and activists are still frustrated over the decision.

However, no one wanted to talk the media about this as the decision was made by Hasina herself.

Besides, speculation runs rife that the PM may offer Ashraf "something bigger" like the post of the deputy leader of parliament or the foreign minister to pacify him. But none from the government or the party could confirm it.

Ashraf was scheduled to fly to London yesterday to celebrate Eid with his family, but he cancelled it, according to sources, on the PM's request.

India-led project to predict earthquake

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Scientists, Geophysicists, and Seismologists of 27 countries are working under India's leadership on an ambitious project to develop early warning system for earthquakes to predict them some seconds before they occur.

This was stated by Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences of India Dr Shailesh Nayak at a summit on 'Combating Earthquake Disasters' in Kolkata on Tuesday evening.

He said, if the effort is successful and the model is developed, we could reduce the number of human casualties substantially.

Free meals offer comfort to Nepal quake victims

AFP, Bhaktapur

The arrival twice a day of a white van holding the promise of a hot meal provides rare comfort to thousands of homeless quake victims in the Kathmandu valley.

As volunteers unload huge metal containers from the vehicle, hundreds line up to fill empty bowls with rice, lentils and vegetable curry.

"It is good warm food and they are always on time," said Nuchhe Laxmi Prajapati, a tailor who lost her home and livelihood in the April 25 quake, which killed more than 8,800 people in the Himalayan nation.

"This meal is a relief at a time like this," the 40-year-old told AFP.

Nepal, India and Bangladesh had recently been hit by devastating quakes and after shocks, the worst-hit being the Himalayan country where close to 10,000 people perished.

Nayak, according to an official statement issued here, said, before earthquakes, some chemical changes under the earth's surface and some physical displacements on the surface occur and hoped if parameters are developed to observe, study and analyze these changes, quakes can be predicted.

For this purpose, India is going to launch a satellite by 2019 which will send images of surface displacement up to the accuracy of a few centimeters, he