



Five people, including a couple, were killed in a collision between a bus and a human haulier on Dhaka-Mawa highway at Nimtali of Sirajdikhan in Munshiganj yesterday. At least 15 others were injured in the accident.

PHOTO: STAR

REPLY TO NOTICE

Tribunal gives Zafrullah 2 more weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Zafrullah Chowdhury was yesterday given two more weeks to reply on a show cause notice a special tribunal issued to him for his "derogatory" comments over the court and its judges.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 set August 5 as a fresh date for Zafrullah to furnish a reply following a two-week time prayer from his lawyer Abdul Baset Majumder to prepare for it.

Zafrullah, a freedom fighter, appeared before the court yesterday.

On July 12, the tribunal initiated contempt of court proceedings against Zafrullah for his comments over the tribunal and its judges on June 10, when he was found guilty of contempt of court for criticising the punishment of Bangladesh-based UK journalist David Bergman.

On the day, the tribunal also ordered Zafrullah appear before it yesterday (July 22) and to show cause as to why he should not be punished for "scandalising" the tribunal.

On July 6, five individuals - three freedom fighters and two organisers of Gonojagoron Mancha - filed the petition to initiate contempt proceedings against Zafrullah for his June 10 comments.

"Today's contempt of court verdict is proof of the mental illness of the three judges. It proves mental illness of three justices. Ensuring justice is not possible if the judges can't tolerate criticism. When they can't tolerate criticism and lack rationality, they hide themselves under cover of law," said a part of Zafrullah's comment.

This is the third time Zafrullah is facing contempt of court charges for his comments over war crimes tribunals and judges.

Nasir, Hazari

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The Daily Star the accused could not be found guilty of the charge brought against them.

While announcing the verdict, the judge said, some of the prosecution witnesses earlier gave their depositions in the case.

But at the time of cross-examination, they could not give proper reply in support of their depositions.

It appears that the witnesses do not support the prosecution case. They also stated that no such incident had taken place and they had no allegation against the accused.

The judge added that the prosecution had not succeeded in proving the charge brought against the accused.

During cross-examination, Sufian said he did not read the FIR and even did not know who wrote it. He claimed that he was not present at the place of occurrence.

The complainant also said he had no allegation against the accused and he was compelled to sign the FIR upon pressure from the then police administration, said court sources.

Contacted, Sufian said, "Following pressure from the then BNP-led government and police administration, the case was lodged."

The High Court stayed the proceeding of the case in 1994 following a revision case filed by one of the accused, Faruk Ahmed.

An HC bench later vacated the stay order and ordered for recalling eight witnesses to cross-examine them. After receiving the HC order, the prosecution cross-examined all the 15 witnesses and the accused.

Turkey confirms suicide attacker

Prepares new border measures

AFP, Ankara

Turkey yesterday identified the perpetrator of a deadly suicide bombing blamed on Islamic State (IS) extremists as a 20-year-old man from its southeast, as the government prepared new measures to protect the porous border with Syria.

With the country still shaken by Monday's bombing in Suruc, close to the Syrian border, two police were found shot dead in their homes in a nearby town but it was unclear if there was a terror link.

Hundreds rallied in Istanbul and other cities late Tuesday to condemn the bombing and protest at government policies on Syria before being dispersed by police wielding tear gas and water cannon.

The suicide bombing claimed 32 lives, making it one of the deadliest attacks in Turkey in recent years.

It was the first time the government directly blamed IS for a strike inside the country.

Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was later Wednesday to chair a cabinet meeting on an "action plan" to improve security on the border with Syria.

Turkey has long been accused by its Western partners of failing to properly control the 911-kilometre

(566-mile) frontier and even of colluding with IS, allegations it fiercely denies.

"I declare it to our esteemed nation and the entire world once again: Daesh and similar terrorist organisations will never achieve their target," Davutoglu said in a message on Twitter, using a pejorative Arabic acronym for IS.

The victims of the attack were activists, many of them students, who had gone to Suruc to prepare an aid mission for the Syrian town of Kobane just over the border.

According to Turkish press reports the youngest casualty was Okan Pirinc from the Hatay region in southern Turkey, aged 18.

A Turkish official said DNA testing had confirmed a 20-year-old Turkish man reportedly linked to IS militants carried out the suicide bombing.

"As a result of DNA tests, we confirm that the assailant is a 20-year-old man registered in Adiyaman," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity, referring to a province in southeastern Turkey.

Media reports had earlier said the man -- a university student identified by his initials S.A.A. -- had first become involved with IS militants two months ago.

Pak court agrees to hear Christian woman's blasphemy appeal

AFP, Lahore

Pakistan's Supreme Court yesterday agreed to hear an appeal by a Christian woman against her death sentence for blasphemy, lawyers said, in a case that has drawn criticism from rights campaigners.

Asia Bibi, a mother of five, has been on death row since 2010 after being convicted of insulting the Islamic Prophet Mohammed during a row over drinking water with Muslim women with whom she was working in a field.

Blasphemy is a hugely sensitive issue in Pakistan, with even unproven allegations often prompting mob violence, and acquittals in court are rare.

Bibi's death sentence was confirmed in October 2014 by the high court in the eastern city of Lahore, the capital of Punjab province where the incident took place.

She denies the charges against her and in November appealed against the death sentence. A Supreme Court bench sitting in Lahore on Wednesday agreed to consider the appeal in detail -- rejecting the option to dismiss it.

"The Supreme Court today accepted the petition of my client to appeal against death sentence confirmation by the Lahore High Court," Bibi's lawyer Saiful Malook told AFP after the hearing.

The court will fix a date in due course to review the substance of the appeal, Malook said.

Chaudhry Ghulam Mustapha, the lawyer for the complainant against Bibi -- a local Muslim prayer leader -- opposed the petition on the grounds that it had been filed too late.

Justice Saqib Nisar, heading a three-judge Supreme Court bench, said the court would hear this argument in the future proceedings.

Inhuman

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another incident, also early this month, two minor girls of a government orphanage in Barisal were subjected to corporal punishment because they wanted to go home.

The victims in Satkhira are Nasim Tarafder, 9, son of Abdul Hamid Tarafder of Joynagar village, and Yasin Tarafder, 8, son of Ismail Tarafder of the neighbouring house.

Golam Mostafa of the same village is a supplier of labourers.

Locals said the Kashimari Union Council recently constructed a road that connected Mostafa's home. To protect the portion of the road that led to his house from damage, Mostafa erected a fence so that people cannot walk through that portion for the time being.

Around 6:30am on July 16, Nasim, a class four student, and Yasin, a class three student, injured themselves as they tumbled onto the fence made of date palm leaves that have thick, sharp thorns. They then removed the fence, said the victims and witnesses.

Mostafa, aged about 50, instantly caught them, tied their hands with ropes and took them inside his homestead. There, he tied them with ropes and iron shackles and kept them standing from 7:00am to 12:30pm.

"When we felt like some water and wanted it, he [Mostafa] pushed dead snails into their mouths," Nasim told this correspondent yesterday.

"He slapped us whenever we wanted to drink water or requested him to set us free," he added.

Nasim's father Abdul Hamid said they came to know about the incident around 10:30am. Hamid's elderly mother then went to Mostafa's house and pleaded with him to free the boys.

"My mother even accepted that the boys made a mistake. She also told him [Mostafa] that they didn't eat anything since morning. She even promised to fix the fence," said Hamid.

But Mostafa did not pay any heed to her request. Instead, his wife drove her away, beating, added Hamid, who filed a case in this regard yesterday.

Later, Mostafa's son Golam Hossain released the boys following an earnest request of Nasim's mother around 12:30pm, he said.

Before his arrest around 12:30pm yesterday, Mostafa told this correspondent, "These boys removed the fence taking it for a fun. That's why I tied them up. But I didn't beat them."

A correspondent of local newspaper Patradoot said he took photos of the torture on July 16.

The paper published one of those photos yesterday after the Eid vacation.

Enamul Haque, officer-in-charge of Shyamnagar Police Station, said they acted immediately to arrest Mostafa after they came to know of the torture.

Key accused

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police told The Daily Star.

With Muhit's statement, four of the 11 arrestees in the case gave statements confessing to their crime.

Rajon was beaten dead in Kumargaon Bus Stand area of Sylhet on July 8 for "trying to steal a rickshaw". The incident was videotaped and uploaded on the internet, sparking public outrage at home and abroad.

Muhit's brother Kamrul Islam, another key accused in the case, fled to Saudi Arabia after the incident. Some Bangladeshi migrants there identified him after watching the video and caught him. He's now in the custody of Jeddah police.

Suranjith, also the investigating officer of the case, said that on Kamrul's instructions, Muhit and some others put Rajon's body in a microbus to dump it somewhere else.

However, the microbus broke down on the way near Kamargaon Residential Area. Some locals then approached the microbus and discovered Rajon's body inside. They caught Muhit and handed him over to the police. Other culprits managed to flee the scene, he quoted Muhit as saying.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday visited Rajon's family at Bhadeali village in Sylhet Sadar.

There, he told journalists that the government would soon extradite Kamrul from Saudi Arabia.

"They [culprits] will be tried under the Speedy Trial Tribunal Act," Kamal said.

On the allegations of law enforcers' involvement in facilitating Kamrul's travel to Saudi Arabia, the minister said strong actions would be taken against the accused if the accusation was proved.

The three-member committee formed by Sylhet Metropolitan Police to probe the allegations against the police is to submit its report today.

Not enough

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"I've heard that these people were tortured and starved to their deaths," he told this correspondent during the latter's visit to the spot on July 13.

"This is cruelty. Those who tortured and killed these people must be punished," Shafiq said, looking at the gravesite.

Over the recent years, the sea routes -- from the coasts of Bangladesh and Myanmar to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and even Australia -- have been used by traffickers to smuggle people to the countries.

According to the UN Refugee Agency, some 84,000 people took the sea journey from the coasts of Bangladesh and Myanmar between January 2014 and March 2015. Of them, 300 died at sea.

Since May 1 when the cruelty of the modern-day slave trade came to light with the discovery of a mass grave in Thailand's Songkhla province, Thai authorities exhumed 36 bodies from graves in the Southern region while 139 mass graves were found in Malaysia.

Exactly how many bodies were exhumed from those is not known. This correspondent counted 106 graves at Kampong Tualang.

But the locals believe the number of victims would be a lot higher.

Several NGOs -- including Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), Ovivashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (OKUP), Brac and Kuala Lumpur-based CARAM Asia Bhd -- received calls from nearly 600 Bangladeshi families reporting about their near ones who went missing after taking the voyage.

However, the governments in the region are accused of not doing enough to end this trade.

Though most of the human trafficking kingpins of the region were based in Malaysia and Thailand, Malaysia is not working vigorously to punish the culprits, said journal-

ist S Aruldas, who covers the northern region -- Penang, Kedah and Perlis states -- for the Malay Mail.

Nine people have so been arrested in Malaysia in connection with human trafficking.

Thai police have arrested 56 suspects -- including politicians, police and government officials, businessmen and an army general.

On June 22, they concluded "the biggest human trafficking investigation in the history" of Thailand. The country sits at the lowest tier of the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report.

The Human Rights Watch, however, is skeptical of the investigation's effect.

"It is highly likely that if this investigation turns out to just be window dressing to defuse international pressure, then it will have no impact," Sunai Phasuk, Thailand researcher at the HRW, told Reuters.

Dato' M Ramachelvam, chairperson of Migrants, Refugees and Immigration Affairs Committee of Bar Council Malaysia, said they asked the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) on June 17 for convening a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the issue. But the Malaysian home ministry rejected it.

Regional Coordinator Mohammad Harun Al Rashid of CARAM Asia, a regional network of NGOs working on migration, thinks Bangladesh is not doing enough to put an end to this.

"Evidence can be collected from the trafficking survivors. But Bangladesh government is not recording statements from the repatriated survivors," he told The Daily Star.

Six suspected human traffickers were killed in so-called crossfire in Bangladesh, and such acts would make it hard to collect evidence, ASK Director Nur Khan Liton commented.

'Archie' creator

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told The Associated Press on Tuesday. He said his father was diagnosed with throat cancer within the past week and chose not to undergo treatment.

Moore drew Archie Andrews and his friends on and off from 1953 until he retired in the late 1980s. Annual sales of the comic regularly surpassed half a million during the 1960s, according to the El Paso Times.

"I did one comic book a month," Moore told the newspaper in 1996. "I did everything. We always worked six months ahead. I'd be doing Christmas issues in June and beach stories with a foot of snow outside my window."

After the war, Moore used funding available through the GI Bill to attend a school in New York for cartoonists. He studied under "Tarzan" comic strip illustrator Burne Hogarth.

Soon after, Moore signed up with Archie Comics in New York. Bob Montana created "Archie" in 1941, and Moore took over in 1953.

Archie Comics' editor in chief, Victor Gorelick, who has worked at the company for more than 50 years, said Moore "was a cartoonist's cartoonist." He noted that Archie Comics invited Moore back to help revamp Archie's friend, Jughead, and remained with the company until he retired.

"Tom was very funny and had a knack for putting together really great, hilarious gags and special pages when he worked at Archie," Gorelick said. "He was probably best known here for inking our 'Jughead' relaunch decades ago. We're all sad to hear this news and wish his family the very best during

this time."

After retiring, Moore kept tabs on Archie - and disagreed when the comic book company decided to kill off the character.

The El Paso Museum of Art displayed some of Moore's work and his vast comic collection about 20 years ago. "I have enjoyed what I've done and I am pleased that others liked it, too," Moore said at the time.

"I think it's such a kick that my stuff is going to be hanging at the museum. Who knew Archie would have such universal appeal?" Along with his son, Moore and his wife of 63 years, Ruth, also raised a daughter, Holly Mathew. Bujanda-Moore said there will be a celebration of his father's life in coming weeks.

155 more

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"We will record their statements to know how they took the sea route illegally. They will be asked to give details of the traffickers," the police official said.

He hoped that the victims would return to their homes today.

Around 2,000 Bangladeshis have been rescued in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar in the last two months after the issue of human trafficking through the Bay of Bengal got international media's attention.

Of them, more than 700 Bangladeshis returned home from those countries since June. Several thousand Bangladeshis, who had allegedly left home for jobs in Malaysia, still remain missing.

One of oldest 'Quran

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the lifetime of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) or shortly afterwards," said David Thomas, professor of Christianity and Islam.

Describing it as a "startling result", he added that the text is "very similar indeed to the Quran as have it today".

"This tends to support the view that the Quran that we now have is... very close indeed to the Quran as it was brought together in the early years of Islam," he said.

The leaves, held in the university's Mingana Collection, contain parts of chapters 18 to 20, written with ink in an early form of Arabic script known as Hijazi.

"This is indeed an exciting discovery," said Muhammad Isa Waley, lead curator for Persian and Turkish manuscripts at the British Library in London.

"We know now that these two folios, in a beautiful and surprisingly legible Hijazi hand, almost certainly date from the time of the first three Caliphs.

"According to the classic accounts, it was under the third Caliph, Uthman ibn Affan, that the Quranic text was

compiled and edited in the order of Suras (chapters) familiar today."

For many years the leaves were misbound with similar manuscripts dating from the late seventh century.

They were spotted by an Italian academic, Alba Fedeli, while conducting research for her PhD.

Fedeli said the leaves are from the same codex as a manuscript kept in the Bibliotheque Nationale de France in Paris, although that is currently dated a little later, to within 50 years of the death of the Prophet Mohammad.

Radiocarbon analysis of the Birmingham documents dates them to between 568 AD and 645 AD, with 95.4 percent accuracy.

Mohammad (PBUH) is widely believed to have lived between around 570 AD and 632 AD.

Muhammad Afzal, chairman of Birmingham Central Mosque, said he was "honoured" to read the text, adding: "All the Muslims of the world would love to see this manuscript."

The Quran manuscript will be placed on public display at the university between October 2 and October 25.