

ATTACK ON KHADIZA

Ex-BCL man indicted for murder attempt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet college student Khadiza Begum Nargis' lone attacker Badrul Alam was indicted yesterday by a Sylhet court.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Saifuzzaman Hiru, following the charge framing, set December 5 for the trial to begin by recording depositions, said Mahfuzur Rahman, public prosecutor.

The court also dismissed Badrul's bail petition, he added.

On October 3, Badrul Alam, a fourth-year economics student at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology and also senior assistant secretary of the Sust unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, attacked Khadiza with a machete on the campus of MC



College in Sylhet.

Khadiza, 23, a second-year Bachelor of Arts (pass course) student at Sylhet Government Women's College, went to MC College that day to attend the second exam of her 2nd year final

exams.

Badrul was sent to Sylhet jail by a court the same day when police produced him before it after locals and students caught and handed him over to police.

On October 4, Khadiza's uncle Abdul Quddus filed a case with Shah Paran Police Station, accusing Badrul Alam for the attack on his niece.

The next day, on October 5, Badrul in his confessional statement before the court of Sylhet Additional Chief

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina pays homage to the national heroes of Hungary at Heroes Square in Budapest's City Park yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

767 Bangladeshis detained in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Malaysian immigration police in a drive on November 27 detained around 767 Bangladeshis and 169 nationals from several other countries for violating various rules in the city of Port Dickson under Negeri Sembilan state.

Hapzan Hossaini, Immigration Director of Negeri Sembilan, said the detainees, aged between 20 and 50, were arrested on Sunday from different workplaces and houses for various offences, including falsifying travel documents and overstaying their visas.

They don't have legal documents for

residing in Malaysia, he added.

Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur could not confirm the arrest of the Bangladeshis.

However, a Bangladesh official preferring anonymity told the Daily Star, "We don't have accurate figures of the total Bangladeshis detained or arrested as the Malaysian law enforcers don't inform us of the raids immediately."

Of the detainees, 80 are from Pakistan, 50 from India, 22 from Indonesia, 13 from Sri Lanka, three from Myanmar, and one from Nepal, said New Straits Times Online in a report, quoting Bernama, the state news agency of Malaysia.

Malaysia may hire

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recruiting agent asking not to be identified.

Some other agents have also come up with similar allegations, which are a matter of concern as labour relations between Malaysia and Bangladesh have always been mired in malpractices, labour exploitations and bans.

The latest twist was Malaysia's suspending recruitment of foreign workers from all countries, including Bangladesh, on February 19 this year, a day after Dhaka and Kuala Lumpur had signed a deal over hiring workers.

The previous arrangement, G2G, did not work reportedly for lobbying by powerful syndicates in both the countries. Only some 10,000 workers were sent between 2013 and 2015 for the plantation sector.

Before that, labour recruitment from Bangladesh to Malaysia was banned since 2009 following a spell of two years of recruitment.

During that period, many companies only in papers recruited workers, who paid around Tk 2 lakh each. But thousands of them remained jobless, unpaid or underemployed. Many returned home empty-handed.

Besides, just to make money, workers were recruited and sent to Malaysia beyond the official requirement.

Malaysia in June last year announced a plan to recruit 1.5 million Bangladeshis over the next three years through private sectors. And the syndicates became active.

Malaysian media revealed that some Malaysian private companies like Bestinet, Real Time Networking and Synerflux had been lobbying both Bangladesh and Malaysian governments to win contracts to that end.

The companies -- directly or indirectly -- were owned by relatives of ruling party ministers. The name of Mohd Amin Bin Abdul Nor, a Bangladesh-born Malaysian citizen, came up as an influential figure playing a role behind such syndicates.

Early this year, Bangladesh Association of International

Recruiting Agencies (Baira) and Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur also warned that Malaysia's possible appointment of a company -- Synerflux -- to regulate labour recruitment would establish a monopoly. The IT company appointed by Malaysia was not widely known.

An official of the expatriates' welfare ministry said Malaysian employer's application for recruiting Bangladeshi workers, its approval by the Malaysian home ministry and attestation by the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur -- all would be done online.

The IT company appointed by the Malaysian government would select the recruiting agents in Bangladesh, the official said but could not specify the selection criteria.

"The cartel of 10 agents will play a role here. They will control the selection," said a recruiting agent, wishing anonymity.

Jabed Ahmed, additional secretary to the expatriates' welfare ministry, said they requested Malaysia to distribute the job demands among 745 Bangladeshi recruiting agents, not to any particular syndicate.

"Formation of any syndicate among the recruiting agents will certainly damage the whole process. So, we have been monitoring everything seriously in the recruitment of our people for Malaysian market," he added.

The ministry would hold the agencies accountable if they get complaints from migrants of being charged more than Tk 37,000 as migration cost, he said.

Ruhul Amin, secretary general of Baira, denied existence of any such syndicates.

"Selection of recruiting agencies depends on the Malaysian government. They may choose five or 10 agencies. It never means any syndicate to manipulate the job market," he told The Daily Star.

Ruhul Amin claimed all licensed recruiting agents could be part of this process.

Dhaka, Budapest to boost ties

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Earlier, the two premiers had official talks.

The PM said she discussed with the Hungarian premier the important issues of global concern like countering terrorism and violent extremism.

"Bangladesh maintains a 'zero tolerance' policy against terrorism. We vow to fight this global menace together with the international community."

In his statement, the Hungarian PM said they also have a "zero tolerance" policy like Bangladesh against any terrorist acts.

He said terrorism cannot be connected to any religion, nationality or a civilisation and ethnic identity. "Terrorism is terrorism, no matter what kind of fundamental attachment it is indicating. Terrorism is something that should be prosecuted."

Hasina said both Bangladesh and Hungary yesterday signed three memorandums of understanding in the fields of political consultations, water management and agriculture.

Besides, two chambers of both the countries are set to sign today another MoU which would facilitate collaboration between the business communities.

"Bangladesh and Hungary will share experiences and knowledge on water management. I sought Prime Minister Orbán's active support to my proposal to establish a Global Fund for Water SDG. I want him to lead from the front to build the much-needed global consensus on water-related issues,"

she added.

The PM said they discussed the current global issues like terrorism and violent extremism, migration and refugee crises, climate change, water and the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

She also hoped that Hungary would participate in the 9th Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) to be hosted by Bangladesh in Dhaka in December next.

She said Bangladesh wants to see a world which is free from poverty, hunger, injustice and inequality. "We're obligated to build a peaceful world for our children. Our common resolve is to work together for shared prosperity of our people through mutually beneficial economic cooperation."

Hasina invited her Hungarian counterpart to visit Bangladesh in near future. She also congratulated the government and people of Hungary for organising the Budapest Water Summit very successfully.

Noting that they were keenly observing from a distance how Hungary had become successful in transforming its economy, the PM said, "Today, Hungary is a trade and manufacturing centre for Central and Eastern Europe. It has evolved as an economic powerhouse in the heart of Europe. I take this opportunity to applaud Hungary on the remarkable gains it has made in its political and economic transition over the last 25 years or more."

She gratefully recalled Hungary's recognition of Bangladesh as a sover-

eign state as one of the first European countries its moral and political support during the Liberation War in 1971. "I firmly believe that my visit will provide the much needed impetus to revive our relations to its full potential," she added.

About the bilateral relations, Orbán said there are a lot of potentials which are yet to be explored, citing the field of water management, hi-tech and digital economy as examples.

Appreciating the courage of Hasina and her family as she has been working hard for the people over the last few years, he said Bangladesh played a very important role and gained excellent results in the economic fields.

MEETING WITH BUSINESSMEN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday encouraged Hungarian entrepreneurs to be partners with Bangladesh in investment, trade and innovative businesses for shared prosperity.

"As we strive to achieve our goals by 2021 and 2041, I strongly encourage you, the leaders of Hungarian business and industry, to partner with us in investment, trade and innovative businesses for a shared prosperity. Together, we can bring a change in the lives of millions in both of our countries," she told the concluding ceremony of the Bangladesh-Hungary Business and Economic Forum at Marriott Hotel in Budapest.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, its business and industry leaders and members of the Bangladesh business delegation were present, among others.

Brazilian footballers

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A police commander, Jose Gerardo Acevedo, initially said only five people survived the crash, but Colombian authorities later said a sixth person was found alive, raising hopes there might be other survivors.

"The rescue of a sixth survivor, player Helio Hermito Zampieri Neto, who is in the process of being evacuated, is confirmed. The possibility that other people will be found alive has not been ruled out," Colombia's disaster risk management agency said.

One of the survivors was Alan Ruschel, a 27-year-old defender for the Brazilian team, the head of Colombia's civil aeronautics agency, Alfredo Bocanegra, told reporters.

Radio Caracol said two other players -- Marcos Danilo Padilla and Jackson Follmann -- also survived and were taken to hospitals, along with a flight attendant and a journalist.

'ELECTRICAL FAILURES'
The LAMIA airlines flight originated in Sao Paulo, Brazil and had made a stop in Santa Cruz, Bolivia before continuing on to Rionegro, a city near Medellin.

The airport statement said the plane reported an emergency at 10 pm local time (0300 GMT). "It declared it had electrical failures."

It went down about 50 kilometers

from Medellin, Colombia's second largest city, in an area called Cerro Gordo.

Elkin Ospina, the mayor of the town of La Ceja near the crash site, said the mountainous terrain was some 3,300 meters (10,800 feet) above sea level and very difficult to access.

Rescuers carrying stretchers had to hike for more than half an hour to reach the site.

On its Twitter account, the airport said a plan to use an air force helicopter had to be shelved because of bad weather in the area.

Ospina said authorities were on the scene and hospitals and medical centres were preparing to receive the injured.

But the bad weather forced the search to be suspended in the early hours yesterday, with plans to resume at 6:00 am (1100 GMT).

Colombia's civil aeronautics agency said it had a team at the airport in response to the crash.

Conmebol, the South American football confederation, meanwhile officially called off the Copa Sudamericana final that was to be played between Chapecoense and Atletico Nacional.

"All activities of the confederation are suspended until further notice," Conmebol said.

DASHED DREAMS

Chapecoense and Atletico Nacional were supposed to have faced off in today's first leg of the final of the Copa Sudamericana, the second most prestigious club football tournament in South America after the Copa Libertadores.

Chapecoense had reached the final after completing a victory on away goals last week over Argentinian side San Lorenzo in the semi-finals.

Chapecoense is widely regarded as one of the minnows of Brazilian club football, having been founded relatively recently in 1973 in the city of Chapaco in southern Santa Catarina state.

After decades in the lower divisions, Chapecoense returned to Brazil's top flight Serie A in 2014 for the first time since 1979. The club finished in 14th spot in the 2015 edition of the 20-team championship.

Nine team members did not travel to Colombia.

Two weeks ago, the same plane was used to fly the Argentine national team with Lionel Messi on board to San Juan, Argentina for a World Cup qualifying match.

Atletico Nacional said on its Twitter account it "profoundly laments and expresses solidarity with @chapelcoensereal for the accident that occurred."

N'GANJ CITY POLLS

BNP writes to EC for army deployment

20-party to back

Sakhawat for mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP yesterday submitted a letter to the chief election commissioner, demanding army deployment in Narayanganj ahead of the December 22 city corporation polls.

A BNP delegation, led by party's Senior Joint Secretary General Rizvi Ahmed, handed over the letter to EC Secretary Mohammad Abdullah at its secretariat.

Since the announcement of the Narayanganj City Corporation polls schedule, the BNP has been demanding the EC deploy army to ensure a free and fair election.

Talking to journalists after handing over the letter, Rizvi said his party was

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16,000 flee

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His comments came as the Syrian army advanced deep inside the longtime rebel stronghold of east Aleppo, taking several neighbourhoods from the opposition in an onslaught to recapture the entire city.

Jens Laerke, spokesman for the UN humanitarian agency, told reporters in Geneva Tuesday that a full 10,000 of those fleeing the intense battles in eastern Aleppo have gone to districts held by the government in the west of the city.

As many as 6,000 others had headed to the Kurdish-held Sheikh Maqsd neighbourhood, he said.

O'Brien voiced concern over the "deeply alarming and chilling situation unfolding" across all of Aleppo.

"The parties to the conflict in Syria have shown time and again that they are willing to take any action to secure military advantage even if it means killing, maiming or starving civilians into submission in the process," he said.

'DESCENT INTO HELL'

The situation in eastern Aleppo is dire, with intensified ground fighting and indiscriminate aerial bombardment reportedly killing and injuring many civilians, he said.

"There are no functioning hospitals left, and official food stocks are practically finished."

At the same time, indiscriminate shelling on government-held western Aleppo has killed and injured civilians and has displaced more than 20,000 people in recent weeks, O'Brien said.

The World Food Programme's last warehoused stocks in eastern Aleppo, where some 250,000 civilians have been besieged for months, were distributed on November 13, spokeswoman Bettina Luescher told reporters.

The lack of food is "really dire", she said, warning that the people stuck in the east were in a "slow-motion descent into hell".

The UN human rights office meanwhile voiced alarm at the dangers facing those attempting to flee the fighting.

"Adding to the dangers associated with attempting to flee across an active front-line, we have received reports that opposition groups are preventing civilians from leaving areas under their control," spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani told reporters.

She also voiced concern that civilians believed to have links to armed opposition groups could be detained once they reach government or Kurdish-controlled areas.

She warned that the use of the "terrorist" label "has in the past been used to punish peaceful activists and family members".

O'Brien said the UN and its partners were trying their best to help those displaced by the fighting across the city, and stood ready to bring aid into eastern Aleppo and to carry out medical evacuations if they managed to get access.

More than 300,000 people have been killed and millions displaced since Syria's conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011.

Death race on Dhaka streets

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It all happened in seconds. Neither the driver of the Mazda, nor Ashraf saw a truck plying the road at regular speed. Without slowing down, the Mazda car moved to the side lane from the central lane in order to overtake the truck. It lost control and hit the adjacent footpath -- smashed a few things and turned turtle while retaining the speed.

Ashraf saw it, but he was also not in control. His car went further ahead taking the road below the flyover and hit something with full force. The front of his car was instantly smashed as it turned turtle too.

Ashraf was not wearing any belt -- and his body absorbed the impact of

the accident. He could move his hands -- but his legs felt numb. He was trying to come out of the car -- but did not have the strength to do so.

As luck would have it, another car was passing by. A gentleman and his driver were returning home from a long drive from Netrakona at that time. This gentleman saw the smashed car and noticed Ashraf trying to come out. He came to Ashraf's rescue.

As he approached his window, Ashraf mumbled, "Please help me come out of the car..."

The man and his driver pulled him out of the car. He looked unharmed, but he could not move his legs. Ashraf

asked them, "Would you kindly drop me at a nearby hospital?"

They took him to the United Hospital. The gentleman then took his mobile phone, checked his call list and called the last person Ashraf had conversation with. It was one of his friends. He then broke the news to his friend that he had an accident.

By morning, some of Ashraf's relatives and friends had gathered at the hospital. The doctors there were looking for a guardian for a decision based on X-rays and other checkups.

Ashraf's friend tells me quoting the doctor, "His condition is quite serious. His backbone is broken. One of his critical veins in the backbone is in dangerous situation -- that's why

blood flow to his lower part of body is almost shut. He needs an operation urgently. Otherwise he will forever be paralysed.

"And even if an operation on him is successful, it will take many months for him to recover," the doctor pointed out.

Ashraf was then transferred to Trauma Centre, which is specialised in handling such cases. The doctors operated on him and fixed his backbone with a steel plate with eight screws.

Ashraf can now talk, share his trauma with his friends. But unfortunately he still cannot move his legs. The doctors however assured him that if he regularly takes therapy

after initial recovery -- he may be able to walk within a year. But it's unlikely that he would ever be normal again.

Ashraf's friends later checked out the condition of his car and the other victim. They learnt from the police that the young driver and his friend in the Mazda had almost no injuries -- although their car was badly damaged. Both cars are now in police custody in two separate police stations.

According to a Banglanews24.com report filed on November 25, the two riders of the Mazda car were taken to Apollo Hospital soon after the accident. The accident was noticed by city corporation workers who were there

on city beautification jobs. The two persons were Nakib and Amir and they are both in their twenties.

Ashraf's tale is not quite isolated. Every once in a while, mindless midnight races like these take place in the city roads. There is an "underground" racing community who love modifying cars for racing. They are driven by adrenaline rush. Sometimes nothing happens when they race. Sometimes the drivers get seriously injured or even die. But by morning, to the busy city dwellers -- the streets look the same and everyone forgets what stupid things might have hurt someone last night.

(The name of the victim was withheld on request)