

# 10 Bangladeshi boys return home

*They were at Indian safe home for several years*

STAR REPORT

Indian authorities yesterday handed over 10 Bangladeshi teens to the BGB officials at Hili of Dinajpur. They had been at an Indian safe house for several years.

Officials of both the countries suspect that the boys either went to India looking for work or were victims of human trafficking.

They were detained and kept at Dinajpur Shovayan Home, a shelter for underage children at Balurghat of West Bengal, said Suruj Das, editor of Child Line of India.

Immediately after their return, the BGB handed over seven of the boys to their families.

The other three are waiting for their parents or guardian to arrive and claim them.

According to the police of South Dinajpur district of West Bengal,

India, the boys handed over were: Rawal Hossain of Patuakhali, Sujog Islam of Panchagarh, Rahman Kabir and Muhammad Sujon of Hakimpur in Dinajpur, Mukidul Islam of Thakurgaon, Jewel Kazi of Joypurhat, Sohel Rana, Monjurul Islam and Ausim Akram of Chapainawabganj and Enamul Haq of Pabna.

Aftab Uddin, in-charge of Hili immigration, said the boys had been trafficked to India two to three-and-a-half years ago.

Apart from the BGB and the BSF representatives, other relevant officials of the two countries were present at the time of handing over of the boys.

Suruj Das, Coordinator of Shovayan Home, where the boys were kept, was also present at the time.

*Our Kolkata and Dinajpur correspondents contributed to this report.*



The 10 Bangladeshi boys who were handed over to the BGB by the Indian authorities yesterday at Hili of Dinajpur. They had intruded into India over the last few years and had been kept at a shelter home.

PHOTO: STAR

## Bangladeshi fruit

FROM PAGE 20

strawberry pickers were shot and wounded by foremen wielding shot-guns after demanding delayed pay.

The European case was launched after a Greek court convicted two of the shooting suspects but they were released pending their appeal.

Morsed Chowdury, the lead applicant in the European case, and the human rights watchdog Amnesty International welcomed the decision taken by the court in Strasbourg, France.

"We are very pleased and excited by today's judgment. The Greek court's acquittal of the farmers for the crime of forced labor was a great disappointment to us," Chowdury said.

"We hope that the Greek government will learn from our experiences and recognize our important role in the Greek economy."

The shootings were widely publicized, highlighting the frequent mistreatment of migrant workers in Greek farming jobs.

"Today's judgment is an important vindication for them and their families and will hopefully help prevent future abuse," Amnesty International's Gauri van Gulik told the AP.

"Amnesty has met and interviewed the migrant workers about their exploitation in 2013 just after the incident and saw for ourselves their living conditions."

## Picked up, then found murdered

FROM PAGE 1

injury marks on his body, said Nur Nabi, a sub-inspector of Raozan Police Station.

Family members and local BNP leaders said Nuru, assistant general secretary of JCD, was picked up by 10 people -- five each in police uniform and plain-clothes -- from his rented home in Chandanpura area around 11:30pm Wednesday.

Yesterday morning, some locals noticed a body on the river banks in Thelar Char area and informed police, who recovered and sent it to Chittagong Medical College for autopsy.

Nuru hailed from Raozan upazila. After being informed, his family mem-



Nurul Alam

bers went to the spot and identified his body.

Gazi Sirajullah, president of Chittagong city Chhatra Dal, said Nuru, a follower of BNP Vice-Chairman Gias Uddin Kader Chowdhury, was murdered "in a planned way". The JCD is the pro-

BNP student body.

He announced that they would enforce a half-day hartal in Chittagong division on Sunday, protesting the killing.

Talking to The Daily Star, BNP leader Gias Uddin claimed the family members of the victim identified SI Javed (Sheikh Javed Mia) of Raozan Police Station as one of those who had picked up Nuru.

He said Nuru was accused in several political cases, but was not a criminal. "He was murdered because of his political identity."

SI Sheikh Javed Mia, however, refuted the allegation. "It's not true. I was with my team which was carrying out an anti-militancy drive in Raozan when the Chhatra Dal leader was picked up."

Contacted, Kefayet Ullah, officer-in-charge of Raozan Police Station, claimed no policeman was involved in the incident.

He said Nuru was facing at least four cases, including two for murder. "We are investigating whether he had enmity with anyone."

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police (Rangunia circle) Zahangir Alam said they would look into the matter.

## 7-8 killed

FROM PAGE 1

He said they were pretty sure that "Neo JMB" members were hiding there.

The body parts were sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for autopsies.

Polash Roy, resident medical officer of the hospital, told The Daily Star they primarily found the dead include four children, two women and a middle-aged man.

"We will be able to say the exact number after matching the body parts tomorrow [today]," he added.

During the raid, reporters and locals were not allowed to go near the hide-out. Separately, the district administration clamped Section 144 around 2km radius of the den, prohibiting gathering of more than five people.

Monirul Islam said the counter terrorism officials used a drone to get a picture of the den and found several Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) fitted at the entrance and other strategic points of the house.

The explosives are similar to those seized from the Sitakunda den in Chittagong earlier this month and also the ones found with the man who blew himself up near a police checkpoint close to the Dhaka airport last Friday, he said.

The discovery of the three hideouts in Moulvibazar and Comilla came hot on the heels of the nearly five-day siege at a terror den in Sylhet, where four militants were killed.

This month saw a number of suspected militant attacks and busting of several terror dens in different parts of the country.

CTTC officials primarily thought that one of the dead is Sohel Rana, aged around 32, a top leader of "Neo JMB."

However, there was no official confirmation yet.

The officials came to know about Sohel from two militants -- Jasim and Arjina -- arrested at a Sitakunda hide-out in Chittagong on March 15.

Sohel visited Baishari village in Naikkhanchhari upazila in Bandarban several months ago from Dinajpur. There, he radicalised some people, including Jasim and Arjina, the officials added.

**"OPERATION HIT BACK"**

Monirul said a small team of the counterterrorism unit with the help of Moulvibazar police started working in the area on Tuesday night, tracing links to the two explosions during the army-led raid at Atia Mahal in Sylhet on Saturday night.

Four civilians and two police officers died in the twin explosions, for which Islamic State took credit.

When police cordoned off the Nasirpur den on Wednesday morning, the militants threw grenades and tried to flee, but failed.

Officials of SWAT, bomb disposal unit and other CTTC officials reached the scene on Wednesday afternoon from Dhaka.

"Considering the nature and amount of the explosives the mili-

tants had, it was decided by the higher authorities that mainly SWAT would handle the operation, while other divisions of police, Rab and firefighters would help them," Monirul said.

The actual offensive started on Wednesday evening. Before that, when the den was under siege, there were about 12 explosions. Before launching the operation, SWAT members repeatedly asked the militants through loud-speakers to surrender, he said.

As the SWAT men asked them to surrender, a powerful explosion took place breaking the door and glass windows of the building. The operation was postponed soon as darkness fell. The den remained cordoned off throughout the night. Launching of the operation yesterday was delayed due to bad weather.

Replying to a question, Monirul said the militants at Atia Mahal and Nasirpur dens could be related. "According to information gained from the caretaker, a family with a father-in-law lived here. But we aren't sure."

"It seems the militants at Atia Mahal and those here are all Neo JMB men. Their ideologies are the same. It seems they used the place as a hideout."

He also said the militants didn't seem to be locals. "They didn't leave the house much. People of the neighbourhood didn't know them. They didn't mingle with them. They didn't have jobs. The children didn't go out either. They didn't go to school. Nobody saw them."

Before the bomb disposal team entered the house in the afternoon, explosions and continuous firing were heard after the SWAT team resumed the operation amid rough weather.

The Daily Star correspondents heard the first explosion around 11:15am and a louder one at 12:58pm.

Firing continued at regular intervals since the resumption of the offensive.

Police also fired teargas shells at the house around 1:10pm.

As rain pelted down, the special team of police entered the premises around 10:10am.

Earlier around 5:00am, the team tried to enter the premises but their operation was obstructed due to rainstorm, Mohammad Shahjalal, superintendent of police in Moulvibazar, told The Daily Star.

**DAILY LIFE HAMPERED**  
The last two days had been difficult for locals as schools and shops were shut because of the operation.

"We, especially the children, were frightened. The restriction on free movement has also been inconvenient," said Ramjan Ali of Nasirpur.

Sheikh Akhliah Mia, president of Boro Kapon Government Primary School managing committee, said classes were suspended in his school for security reasons.

"I didn't sell anything in the last two days. So I suffered some losses," said Raisul Ahmed, a furniture store owner.

## CEC claims

FROM PAGE 1

"The elections ended peacefully except for some stray incidents," he added.

Meanwhile, the BNP said the EC failed to hold free and fair elections in Comilla.

The ruling Awami League had a different view on the polls. It said voters exercised their franchise in a festive manner.

The two political archrivals contested the polls for the mayor post.

The CEC said attempts were made to create untoward situations over the elections, but the commission foiled those bids.

He also claimed that all the elections held so far under the new EC were free, fair and peaceful and the Comilla city polls were not an exception.

The Comilla elections were more competitive than others as the candidates of the two major political parties contested it, said Huda. "The Election Commission took huge measures to hold free and fair elections."

Referring to BNP's statement that the Comilla polls would be a tough test for the EC, he said they didn't want to sit any test, rather they wanted to work.

"We have earned 100 percent success in winning everyone's trust through holding the elections fairly."

The incumbent EC assumed office on February 15. It has already conducted a by-election for a parliamentary seat and 18 local government polls.

**BNP CRITICISES EC**

The BNP claimed that the EC failed to resist violence and irregularities by the ruling party men.

"Since morning, Awami League cadres and law enforcers forced BNP leaders and the party candidate's polling agents out of most of the polling centres. Since noon, they blasted cock-tails, occupied polling centres and started stuffing ballot boxes," BNP's Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi told journalists at the party's Nayapaltna central office.

He briefed the media thrice since morning. He alleged that the EC failed to carry out its duties.

Asked whether his party would accept the polls results, the BNP leader said they just informed the media of whatever information they had.

**AL BRIEFING**

Mahbubul Alam Hanif, joint general secretary of AL, alleged that the BNP was trying to make the Comilla elections controversial sensing its defeat.

"Without coming up with any facts and figures, the BNP said the Election Commission failed to hold free and fair elections. The BNP always talks negatively about polls," he told reporters at the party chief's Dhanmondi office.

He claimed that voters cast their votes in a festive mood. "Awami League believes in the politics of ballots and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is determined to hold fair elections," he added.

## Graft, loan scam batter banks

FROM PAGE 1

with politically influential people, people in the administration and businessmen.

"To fight it [collusive corruption], firm political stance against corruption is required," he said, adding that without political will, it was not possible to curb corruption.

He suggested that the ACC address the ineptness and dishonesty of some of its officials to earn people's trust.

Iftekharruzzaman praised the ACC for its corruption preventive programmes but said the ACC should not spend most of its energy and resources on preventive measures.

"The main mandate of the ACC is to bring the corrupt to book. We don't

want to see an ACC that is more focused on preventive measures instead of punitive ones."

Echoing Iftekharuzzaman, Supernumerary Prof Syed Anwar Husain of the department of history in Dhaka University said, "There won't be any benefit if the ACC declares war on corruption when the government keeps on indulging in graft."

Md Golam Rahman, chief information commissioner, said a corruption-free system could not be expected if the rules were faulty.

"Corruption is bound to drop, if the RTI [Right to Information] was applied properly," he said.

Former adviser to a caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, former

BNP lawmaker Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder, eminent columnist Md Jahangir, Professor of the department of public administration in Dhaka University Zarina Rahman Khan spoke among others.

Shafi-ul-Alam, former national consultant of National Integrity Strategy Support Project, gave the keynote presentation.

Dissolving the anti-corruption bureau, the ACC was formed in 2004. Since its formation, it went through various controversies. During the caretaker government rule in 2007, the commission was hyperactive.

Iqbal joined the ACC in March last year.



Members of a bomb disposal unit of the army from Sylhet's Jalalabad Cantonment inspect an object in Shahi Eidgah area of the city yesterday. The object caused a bomb scare in the area.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Uniforms, caps, not dry fish

FROM PAGE 20

Trading brought in the items from Myanmar under the false declaration of dry fish and pickles. However, those were seized on Wednesday evening, said Mosharrarf Hossain Selim, a customs official at the port.

It was immediately not clear why those clothes and the other items were being smuggled in.

The seizure list, prepared by customs officials, says the owner of AR Trading imported the consignment with the assistance of C&F Agent Rahman Trading.

The office of AR Trading is on Teknaf's Link Road while the office of C&F Agent Rahman Trading at Chhoto Haji Market in the same upazila.

Contacted, Lt Col Abuzar Al Jahid, commanding officer of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Battalion-2 in Teknaf, said a youth named Bhu Aung Chakma was detained in this connection.

Customs sources said Bhu Aung is the owner of AR Trading. BGB detained him in Teknaf Sadar in a raid on Wednesday night.

The department was preparing for taking legal actions against C&F Agent Rahman Trading and AR Trading, added the sources.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday evening, Main Uddin Khan, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Model Police Station, said BGB was yet to hand over anyone detained over the incident to them.

The seized items were kept at the warehouse of the land port.

Members of BGB along with different intelligence and law enforcement agencies visited the port.

## Shut down, then report by Apr 9

FROM PAGE 20

petitions till April 9.

The petitions were filed with the SC seeking stay on a High Court order that asked 154 tanners to pay Tk 30.85 crore into government coffers. The petitioners also sought review of the HC order that directed each tannery owner to pay Tk 10,000 per day as compensation for damaging and polluting the environment.

Yesterday, tanners' counsels told the SC that their clients were in a financial crisis as their units were facing closure following snapping of their gas and power connections.

The HC on March 2 directed 154 tannery owners to pay Tk 30.85 crore to the government in two weeks and warned that they would face serious consequences unless they paid the money.

The HC passed the order following a contempt petition moved by advocate Manzill Murshid on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh.

Earlier in July last year, the Appellate Division ruled that every tannery must pay Tk 10,000 per day for damaging and polluting the environment and also ordered the owners to relocate their factories to the Tannery Industrial Estate

in Savar.

The tanners in the same year filed a petition with the SC seeking review of its order, tanners' counsel Mehedi Hasan Chowdhury told The Daily Star.

Following another petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, the HC on March 6 this year directed the director general of the Department of Environment to immediately shut the tanneries and snap their utility service connections, including gas, power and water, as they were damaging the environment violating its earlier directives.