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Fortune seekers trapped in Libya

Victims confined, tortured, sometimes even sold to other gangs

PORIMOL PALMA

Luring Bangladeshis with lucrative jobs abroad, transnational human trafficking gangs are taking hundreds of people to war-torn Libya, and are holding them hostage there for ransom, torturing them, and using them as slaves.

The gangs get tourist visas of Sudan, Dubai or Egypt for the victims and then fly them to Libya with fake visas from the countries, according to survivors and officials concerned.

The migrants are then held hostage and tortured for ransom. Those wishing to go to Italy are made to pay hefty sums and put on rickety boats in the Libyan coast.

The others are just sold to other criminal gangs or are left there in the country that has been in anarchy since Muammar Gaddafi was ousted.

Transnational trafficking gangs active in Libya

Traffickers realise Tk 2.5 to 3 lakh promising jobs abroad

Many of them held hostage in Libya for ransom

Around 20,000 Bangladeshis are living there

The IOM so far repatriated 95 Bangladeshi victims

Their ordeal does not end there. Many of them get kidnapped by gangs and are handed over to their Bangladeshi cohorts who again collect ransom for their release.

Lt Col Tuhin Mohammad Masud, commanding officer of Rab-3 that is probing human trafficking cases, said traffickers realise Tk 2.5 to 3 lakh for jobs in Libya. Once the victims reach Libya, criminals hold them hostage for ransom, which ranges between Tk 4 lakh and Tk 10 lakh.

"If they fail to pay the amounts, they are sold again to other criminal groups," Masud said.

HOW IT HAPPENS

Mohammad Ilias, 45, of Kahalu in Bogra, said a broker promised him a job in Sudan in exchange for Tk 4 lakh.

But early June last year, he was flown to

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The DND canal adjoining Dhaka-Chittagong highway in Narayanganj's Shimrail is being choked to death, as a group of unscrupulous traders continue to build illegal structures, encroaching on the water body. There is hardly any initiative by the authorities to free the canal from the clutches of the grabbers.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



No state organ should accuse another: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for maintaining an understanding between the state's three organs -- legislature, judiciary and executive -- to run the country successfully.

"A state could never be run properly if one of these [organs] accuses another... everyone should remain alert to this," she said.

The PM was addressing a function marking the National Legal Aid Day in the capital's Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

The Day was observed across the country aiming to make people aware of the legal assistance provided by the government to the poor and insolvent justice seekers.

Hasina said every branch has power as the legislative frames laws, the judiciary implements those and the executive ensures enforcement of laws.

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Waiting for help

Thousands of haor people yet to get any relief; distribution may start in full swing on Sunday



DWOHA CHOWDHURY and MINTU DESHWARA

Tens of thousands of haor people are still waiting for food and other relief items to reach them.

The early flash flood first hit the country's north-eastern region late last month and continued to inundate more and more areas till last week, destroying almost all of the region's Boro crop.

In response, the government last week announced a relief programme for 100 days in the affected areas.

According to the Relief and Rehabilitation Department of Sunamganj, the Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) programme will cover 1,50,000 families in the district. Each household is to get 30kgs of rice and Tk 500 per month.

However, the district administration is yet to finalise the list of the families, let alone start distributing the relief among all the affected people.

"They [authorities] are taking too long to start the distribution even as the flood victims are waiting for government support," said Bindu Talukdar, member secretary of Haor Bachao Sunamganj Bachao Andolon, a platform that campaigns for the rights of the haor people.

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RAID ON CHAPAINAWABGANJ DEN 3 dead 'militants' still unidentified

Three bodies found with splinters, one with bullets

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Three of the four slain militant suspects at a Chapainawabganj hideout were killed in suicide blasts and the other died from bullet wounds, according to one of the doctors who conducted autopsies on them.

"We have found splinters in three bodies and bullet injuries in the chest and belly of the other," Dr Shafiqul Islam, medical officer of Chapainawabganj Sadar Hospital, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Based on the condition of the bodies, the doctors reached the conclusion that the three blew themselves up, he said.

The three were killed at least 48 hours before they were brought to the hospital. Their bodies had already started rotting and their faces were not recognisable, he mentioned.

The other suspect, who was hit by bullets, might have died within 24 hours, the physician pointed out.

The bullet-hit man was identified as Rafiqul Islam alias Abu, an operative of terror outfit "Neo JMB". The identity of the other three was yet to be known, said police sources.

"We have collected DNA samples from the three unidentified bodies to ascertain their identity," Wares Ali,

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