

He just couldn't take his eyes off foreigners' bags

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-six-year-old Rubel used to attend different events in Dhaka. Always sharply dressed, the former pick-up van drivers' intentions could not be guessed by his clothes.

Rubel was a handbag thief, one who preyed especially on foreigners, in a bid to make some easy money.

During his "career", he was arrested a number of times but after receiving bail, he would go back to his old ways.

Yesterday, Detective branch (DB) of police arrested Rubel on the charge of theft of a Norwegian citizen's bag from the Shiplakha Academy on October 26.

Md Shahidullah, deputy commissioner of Dhakulpur union, told The Daily Star that some Norwegian guest dramatists took part in a stage drama in Shiplakha Academy on October 26. During the performance, Norwegian citizen Stina Therese Loras's handbag was stolen.

Rubel was previously arrested for the theft of the Netherlands Ambassador's handbag on November 21, last year.

locked in a class. At one point the glass of their admirah broke and punctured Rubel's skin, Akbar Arafat Lenin, Assistant Commissioner of DB police said.

Rubel was then admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital to receive treatment.

On information of the theft, DB started investigating the case and identified Rubel after analysing the academy's CCTV footage.

They reached out to his first wife who told them that he was admitted to DMCH. Rubel was then picked up from the hospital by the law enforcers.

The DB team also recovered Stina Therese Loras's laptop and passport, returning them to her before she flew back to her country yesterday evening.

During interrogation, Rubel told investigators that he used to steal foreigners' bags as they carried valuable like dollars and laptops.

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Rohingya refugee children wait in line for permission from the Bangladesh authorities to continue their journey after crossing the Myanmar-Bangladesh border in Teknar of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Chaos in Feni, again

FROM PAGE 1

of the pro-UNIP union of Chhatra Dal, of Fazlur-UNIP student body.

The owner of one of the buses is Sramik League leader Md Milon alias Hatau Milon, said the SP. It could not be ascertained whether the other bus.

Around 9:00pm, Khaleeda reached her Gulshan house in Dhaka safe and sound.

In a statement, she blamed the ruling Awami League for the arson and said, "The Awami League is not a modern political party. It's a shelter for criminals."

She added that Feni town had also become a haven for thugs who did not hesitate to carry out attack on her motorcade to stop her from providing humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees.

The BNP chief demanded arrest and punishment of the culprits.

Contacted, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fahdul Islam Alangir alleged that Khaleeda's arson was deliberate, aimed at disrupting Khaleeda Zia's safe return to Dhaka after her successful visit to Cox's Bazar.

places.

Khaleeda left Chittagong Circuit House at 12:15pm for Dhaka after circulating her four-day visit to see the plight of Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar.

Hundreds of activists on motorcycles welcomed her as she entered Feni from Mirsarai upazila of Chittagong, said BNP Vice Chairman Abdul Awaft Lenin.

Mintoo joined the motorcade there and his car was the fourth after Khaleeda's. While passing through Mohajir intersection, he saw some four to five youths leaving one of the two buses.

Then there was a bang and the bus was ablaze. The other bus caught fire in no time, said the senior BNP leader.

Kabir Hossain, senior station officer of Feni Fire Service and Civil Defence, said firefighters rushed to the spot on information.

"No one was hurt as the bus was empty," Kabir said. However, he declined to comment about the source of the fire.

In Saturday's attack, at least 45 people were injured and some 30 cars, including several media vehicles, were damaged as well as buildings with iron rods and sticks swooped on the community.

Nearly 15 journalists were assaulted even after they disclosed their professional identities.

The BNP and its archival Awami League have since been pointing fingers at each other. BNP leaders claimed to have identified some of the men who attacked Khaleeda's motorcade that day.

After analysing the video footage of the incident, they said three of the attackers were local leaders of the Awami League, said a BNP spokesman. The Daily Star could not verify the claim independently.

Meanwhile Chhatra Dal announced a countryside demonstration for today.

Yesterday evening, police detained several young men when they vandalised public vehicles in the capital's Paltan area, said police.

Stop using landmines

FROM PAGE 1

Also, on October 20, two ethnic Ta'ang civilians died from injuries sustained by landmines, Kachin Independence Army (KIA), an ethnic armed-group operating in Kachin State and parts of Shan State, told Fortify Rights. They also added the KIA uses antipersonnel landmines as well.

In September 2016, the rights group said Myanmar's Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Myint Nwe, admitted its army continued to use landmines in armed conflicts in the country.

Myanmar leaders say they use landmines to safeguard the life and property of people and in self-defence.

In April 2016, the United Nations Secretary General attributed half of the child casualties of war in Myanmar to landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

"Landmines are indiscriminate and dangerous, during and after armed conflict," said Matthew Smith.

"Armed groups should listen to the communities they claim to be protecting and stop using these weapons."

Myanmar, KIA, and other ethnic armed-groups are bound by customary international humanitarian law to avoid indiscriminate attacks on civilians.

"Displaced communities can't return home until the peace process improves and they can't do it safely until mines are cleared," Matthew Smith said.

PRESSURE ASKS UN TO MOUNT PRESSURE ON MYANMAR

Describing the Rohingya influx as a major humanitarian crisis, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the President Abdul Hamid yesterday urged the UN and other international agencies to continue mounting pressure on Myanmar to take back the forcefully displaced people from Bangladesh, reports UNW.

"The Rohingya crisis is a big problem for Bangladesh as it's one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Over one million forcefully displaced Rohingyas from Myanmar are now staying here and it's a big burden for us," he told outgoing UN Resident Coordinator to Bangladesh, Robert D Watkins, as he met the President at the Bangabhaban.

The President's Press Secretary Joyal Abedin briefed reporters after the meeting.

President Hamid said Myanmar's support from them to repatriate the displaced Rohingyas with dignity.

He thanked the UN for helping Bangladesh achieve its Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs) targets and hoped that it will continue supporting the country in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.

Robert D Watkins assured that the UN will continue its support to Bangladesh.

He also hailed the role of Bangladesh after the Rohingya issue and assured UNDP will provide all support, including technical assistance, to the Election Commission of Bangladesh to strengthen its capacity.

FOUR ROHINGYA DIED

The four Rohingyas died after a boat carrying a group of Rohingya fleeing violence in Myanmar capsized in the Bay of Bengal early yesterday, reports our correspondent in Cox's Bazar.

The deceased are Enamul Hasan, 4, Minara Begum, 5, Jahura Begum 6 and Sirajul Islam, 19.

The boat capsized at Baillakhali point of Rajapaloni union in Ukhiya in Cox's Bazar at around 6:00am, said Ukhiya Union UIC Officer Md Nikaruzzaman.

Members of police, coast guard, fire service and district administration jointly rescued 33 passengers of the boat. Ten of the injured survivors were sent to local hospitals for treatment, while 23 others to Kutupalong

Rohingya settlement.

Survivor Omtambor Ali, 19, said he left his home at Yong Chong village of Butthaidang on the eastern side of Naf River of Myanmar two days back. He boarded the Bangladeshi fishing trawler with around 40 other Rohingyas at 2:00 am Tuesday.

He claimed that just before reaching the shore, the boatman sank the trawler into the river. Another survivor Mujibor Rahman, 18, said the boat capsized due to big waves of the river.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Ukhiya Nikaruzzaman said they buried four bodies yesterday following the direction of higher authorities.

WATER, SANITATION REMAINS MAJOR CHALLENGE

UN Migration Agency, IOM, said the Rohingya settlements are dangerously congested and overcrowded, while the pressure on sources of clean drinking water and basic sanitation are enormous.

"All of the spontaneous and makeshift sites where the Rohingyas have sought shelter are in urgent need of water, sanitation and hygiene support to prevent diseases and to restore basic human dignity," says Antonio Torres, IOM's expert on water, sanitation and hygiene.

"Existing WASH facilities are not yet sufficient to cope with this number of people."

Of an estimated 750,000 people initially targeted for WASH assistance, some 530,000 have now been reached. Over the next six months, some 1.166 million people in Cox's Bazar settlements and host communities will need assistance.

EU COMMISSIONER VISITS ROHINGYA CAMP

European Union Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, Christos Stylianides, while here, began a two-day visit to Bangladesh, particularly to assess the

situation in the Rohingya settlement.

"Here in Bangladesh, the scale of this emergency is painfully clear to see; this is the fastest-growing refugee crisis in the world," he said in a statement after visiting Kutupalong Rohingya settlements.

"The Rohingyas people are not alone in these difficult times... European Union continues to insist on full aid access in Myanmar and is working to address the situation in Northern Rakhine," said Stylianides.

It is crucial that every refugee is registered properly and that Myanmar takes all necessary steps to allow them a voluntary and dignified return in secure conditions, said Commissioner Stylianides.

EU and its member countries pledged more than 50 percent of the USD 344 million funding raised at the international Conference in Geneva recently, he said.

Australia, meanwhile, yesterday announced a further 10 million Australian dollars to support the humanitarian needs of the Rohingyas, bringing the total Australian fund for the Rohingyas to 30 million Australian dollars.

US DELEGATION ARRIVES TODAY

Simon Henshaw, acting assistant secretary of US State for the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, is leading a delegation to Bangladesh today to discuss ways to address the humanitarian situation stemming from the Rakhine state crisis.

The delegation visited Myanmar from October 29. During Henshaw's visit to Bangladesh until November 4, he will meet senior government officials, donors, and humanitarian agencies.

The delegation will also visit affected communities in Cox's Bazar to assess the impact of the emergency humanitarian response, identify gaps in assistance, and advise on ways to improve the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

claiming that the incident occurred right before the eyes of law enforcers, Fakhrul said, "It is now clear who carried out the attack... I believe law enforcers will not have difficulties in identifying the attackers."

The ruling AL, however, blamed it on the BNP itself.

"Khaleeda Zia is trying to create an issue and that's why the party is doing these types of activities," said AL Organising Secretary Md Nurul Hossain.

Hurling petrol bombs is the characteristic of BNP, he said, adding that the two Cox's Bazar and back - are dramas staged by her party.

There were less than a dozen people in an attack like the one that took place in Mohammad Ali Bazar area of Feni on Saturday afternoon.

That's why hundreds of party activists and supporters gathered on roadsides and in public places in the capital.

Law enforcers were also present in

places.

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He further claimed that Sabir, Sultana and their relative Asif had taken Bayah (oath of allegiance) from Sarwar Jahan.

According to the Rab official, Sultana used to provide financial support to Abdullah while Asif used to collect and supply different types of chemical to Abdullah for making bombs, he said, adding that the tea stall owner, Alam, also had "close links with Abdullah".

Inspired by militant attacks in the USA, France and Germany, Abdullah had planned to drive a truck into a police establishment before the last Ramadan. He was trying to have the truck with the help of Asif, he said.

The Rab official further claimed that Sabir had refused to fly aircraft following the anti-militancy drive in his house.

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'BLACKMAILED, RAPED'

Cops let evidence degrade: victim

12-YEAR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A 22-year-old man of Gazipur allegedly used the intimate footage of his relationship with a teenager to blackmail and rape her.

The girl, 17, filed a complaint with the Saradar Police Station on October 25 but police took the case into cognizance four days later during which evidence was lost, the victim claimed.

She said she filed the complaint against Rubel, 22, and his friend Rayhan, 21, for raping her. Rubel and Rubel's father Shahjahan, 45, for aiding and abetting.

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He plotted to fly plane into VIP houses

Wishing anonymity, a CTCF official said, "We had information about Abdullah, but we never raided his house as we were told that he had severed all his ties with IJM."

During the press conference at the Rab media centre in Karwan Bazar, Mufti Mahmood said, "Sabir had made the plans along with Abdullah and Sarwar Jahan alias Manik before and after the Gulshan café attack last year." Except Sultana, the three arrested were paraded before the media on October 30, for their alleged links with militancy.

They were caught in raids in different areas of Mirpur between 2:00am and 11:00am, Mufti Mahmood said.

"During primary interrogation, Sabir admitted making the plans to come to know about the plans from the confidential statement of IJM man Bilal Hossain, who was arrested in Narayanganj on October 26," he said.

Replying to a query, the Rab official claimed that Bilal was a close associate of Abdullah. He came to know about Sabir and his planning through the suspected militant killed in that raid.

Although Rab claimed that Abdullah was a top leader of Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, DMP's counterterrorism sources said the man, widely known as Kabutar Abdullah, had cut ties with the

time, said the official.

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After 7 years

FROM PAGE 1

That would exempt admission seekers from time, costs and travels required to take separate admission tests. At present, only the medical colleges have uniform entrance tests.

Some public universities have been offering an idea as its implementation would cut the income of the universities and teachers from the sale of admission forms, invigilation and checking of answer scripts, said sources at the ministry and the UGC.

Mannan said, "We are hopeful that this system would be introduced. If we succeed in introducing it at the agricultural universities, we will talk to the authorities of engineering universities for introducing it there."

Then the system would be introduced at the public universities gradually as separate tests are implemented.

Out of the total 40 public universities, the number of agricultural universities is four while there are five engineering universities.

Every year admission seekers face hassle and pressure when they prepare for separate tests for separate universities.

The candidates buy many admission forms from different universities and spend a lot of time and money for travel and accommodation. They often travel with parents or guardians around the country and sometimes have to check in hotels for overnight stays.

There are cases when candidates even take separate tests for seats in separate faculties, even separate departments, in one university. Sometimes the dates of admission tests of different universities coincide.

"We want an end to this hassle. We have seen several hundred students separate admission tests at Rajarata and Chittagong universities last week," Mannan said.

President Abdul Hamid talked about the issue several times. At a programme of the UGC in November last year, he asked the public universities to hold admission tests centrally to reduce the hassle of admission seekers and their guardians, the UGC chairman recalled.

A meeting was supposed to be held at Bangabhaban to this end, but that did not take place this year and the universities have already started holding admission tests.

Mannan further said they had been informed by the president's office that a meeting would soon be convened with all vice-chancellors regarding the matter.

A student having scored at least GPA-3.5 fulfills the eligibility criterion for admission to a public university.

Seats at all public universities add up to 60,000. As many as 8.01 lakh students - 4.22 lakh boys and 3.79 lakh girls - passed the Higher Secondary Certificate and its equivalent exams this year.

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On October 24, Rubel called her for aiding and abetting.