

Migrants occupy Athens rail station in border passage bid

AFP, Athens

Dozens of asylum seekers occupied the main railway station in Athens yesterday in a burgeoning protest demanding access to the border and passage to other EU states.

The protest has shut down Larissis Station, the main hub connecting Athens to the north, and unfolded hours after a similar move at the migrant camp of Diavata near Thessaloniki, where clashes erupted.

Authorities said the Athens demonstration was sparked by anonymous calls on social media over recent days, telling asylum seekers that human rights groups will assist them in crossing into North Macedonia and on to other EU states.

Both the government and the UN refugee agency have stressed that no such possibility exists.

In Athens, the migrants shouted "Saloniki" (Thessaloniki) and "Germany", an AFP reporter at the station said.

At the Diavata camp, skirmishes broke out between migrants and riot police on Thursday and yesterday, with the security forces making sporadic use of tear gas.

A senior migration ministry official said yesterday the demonstration was intended as a "message" to the European Union.

"It's a message that Europe must understand that this is a problem demanding a European solution," Miltiadis Klapas, general secretary of the migration ministry, told reporters at the station.

"But it cannot be imposed like this," he added, referring to the station shutdown.

More than 70,000 refugees and migrants are believed to live in Greece in the wake of a mass influx beginning in 2015, mainly fuelled by the Syrian civil war.

In 2016, a sprawling tent city formed at the border town of Idomeni, bottleneck where 8,000 people mainly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan were stranded after other EU countries began shutting their borders.

The improvised camp was eventually cleared by Greek authorities and the migrants and refugees were relocated to organised facilities around the country.

German far-right MP could be 'controlled' by Russia: report

AFP, Berlin

A German far-right member of parliament, Markus Frohnaier, could become "absolutely controlled" by Russia and act in Moscow's interests, media reported yesterday.

The BBC conducted a joint investigation into Russian documents together with the German magazine Der Spiegel, the German TV channel ZDF and the Italian newspaper La Repubblica.

The documents dating from 2017 indicate that close allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin believed that Frohnaier, elected to the Bundestag lower house in September that year, was very partial to their strategic interests.

They were sent by email on April 3, 2017 to a high-ranking aide in Putin's administration calling for concrete "support" for Frohnaier, 28.

The analysis describes Frohnaier's chance of being elected as "high" and an assessment of his potential value to Moscow: "We will have our own absolutely controlled MP in the Bundestag."

Cops making

FROM PAGE 2 anti-narcotics drive last year. Rahman was also trying to contact police for surrender.

Accused in at least six cases, Bhutto is another top narcotics dealer in the district. His three-storey building in Teknaf's Nazirpara area was damaged by locals.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Cox's Bazar Superintendent of Police ABM Masud Hossain said they had already started the process of organising the second surrender programme.

"We are now trying to communicate with the narcotics traders directly and also through some intermediaries," he added.

Meanwhile, the district police have taken an initiative to form anti-narcotics committees in Teknaf's five unions, sources said.

Each of the committee will be comprised of 20 local people who would perform their activities under the supervision of police and using information from the top narcotics traders who have already surrendered.



PHOTO: REUTERS

A man reacts after police disperse migrants and refugees from a field near the town of Diavata in northern Greece, yesterday. Greek police fired tear gas yesterday to disperse them who had gathered in a field near the country's border with Northern Macedonia in the hope of making their way illegally up through the Balkans towards northern Europe.

Philippines' Duterte warns China to back off disputed island

AFP, Manila

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has warned Beijing to back off from a disputed island in the South China Sea, warning of possible military action if China "touches" it amid rising tensions over the key waterway.

Duterte, aiming to attract trade and investment from the Asian superpower, has mostly withheld his early criticism of Beijing's expansive claims to the sea - a point of regional contention because trillions of dollars of goods pass through it.

But as the Philippine military warned this week that hundreds of Chinese coast guard and fishing vessels had "swarmed" the Manila-held Pag-asa island, also known as Thitu, the Philippine president spoke out late Thursday.

"I will not plead or beg, but I am just telling you that lay off the Pag-asa because I have soldiers there," Duterte said in speech to prosecutors.

"If you touch it, that's another story. Then I will tell my soldiers 'prepare for suicide missions,'" he added.

Duterte has repeatedly said war with China would be futile and that the Philippines would lose and suffer heavily in the process.

His words came after his Department of Foreign Affairs issued a statement calling the Chinese ships' presence an "illegal" violation of Philippine sovereignty.

China, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam have all staked claims to various islands and reefs as well as waterways in the sea, with rich petroleum reserves thought to sit deep beneath the waters.

In a major victory for Manila, an international maritime tribunal ruled early in Duterte's presidency in 2016 that China's claims to the area have no legal basis.

However, he has largely set aside that ruling and backed off on their once tense territorial dispute over the sea.

He has been criticised at home for taking too soft a stance on China and getting little of the billions of dollars in investment promised by Chinese President Xi Jinping.

For its part, Beijing has downplayed the rising tension over Pag-asa, saying on Thursday that both sides had "exchanged views frankly, amicably and constructively" on the issue.

The United States, long-time Philippines ally and former colonial master, has moved to oppose any Chinese expansion in the sea.

For the first time, the US said in March that it would come to Manila's aid in case of an "armed attack" in the South China Sea.

The US navy has also forcefully asserted its right to freedom of navigation in the area, repeatedly sailing close to the man-made islands and drawing Chinese protests.

Two 'robbers'

FROM PAGE 1 them, forcing them to retaliate, Mohiuddin claimed.

The two sustained bullet injuries during the "shootout" and were pronounced dead after being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH), he added.

The bodies were kept at the DMC morgue for autopsies.

Rab seized the vehicle and recovered a firearm, two sharp weapons and several bullets from the scene.

Mohiuddin claimed the gang stole the lorry from Dhaka's Rayerbazar area on March 10.

The gang has been active in the city and nearby areas for a couple of years, Rab officials said.

The Daily Star, however, could not independently verify the Rab's claims.

Bus owner arrested

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After the accident, the bus was parked by a road there. Bus conductor Yasin Arafat then informed Gopal of the matter over phone and said agitated locals might torch the bus. Gopal told him to take the vehicle to a safer place.

As instructed, Yasin, who had no driving licence, took the wheel and the bus ran over Abrar near the gate of Bashundhara Residential Area, police said.

Gopal had been on the run since the accident happened. A DB team arrested him around 6:30pm on Thursday, said Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A bus owner's primary responsibility is to ensure immediate treatment of victims after an accident takes place, Masudur said. But without doing so, Gopal committed an offence by asking the conductor to flee the spot immediately along with the bus.

The second accident that killed Abrar, a first-year honours student at Bangladesh University of Professionals, would have been averted, if Gopal acted responsibly, the police official added.

DB officials said in primary interrogation, Gopal admitted that driver Sirajul began his trip from Sadarghat area around 5:45am and hit Synthia Islam Mukta, 20, a student of Mirpur Ideal Girls' Laboratory Institute, at

Banshitala in Shahjadpur.

Gopal also confessed that he had been operating the bus on Sadarghat-Gazipur route illegally though the vehicle had the permission to ply on Dhaka-Brahmanbaria road, said the DB official, adding that Gopal did not change the ownership of the vehicle even after he bought it two and a half years ago.

Rejecting his bail petition, Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Baki Billah placed Gopal on a three-day remand after DB Inspector Kazi Shariful Islam, also investigation officer of the case, produced him before the court with a three-day remand appeal.

Earlier, detectives arrested conductor Yasin and bus helper Md Ibrahim from separate places on March 27, a week after Abrar's father Brig Gen (retd) Arif Ahmed Chowdhury filed a case with Gulshan Police Station.

115 Rohingyas

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27 Rohingyas from Teknaf while they were attempting to leave for Malaysia.

The following day, police rescued seven Malaysia-bound Rohingyas from Moheshkhali.

On March 30, members of Bangladesh Coast Guard arrested three alleged traffickers and rescued 32 Rohingyas from the St Martin's Island while they were leaving for Malaysia.

Bus race costs

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Witnesses said two buses of Ramzan Paribahan and Swadhin Paribahan were racing towards Rampura at that time. The bus of Ramzan Paribahan hit Iram's bicycle and dragged him around 10 yards, they added.

"When the buses were trying to overtake each other, one made room for the bicycle while another knocked it down," said Harez Mia, a witness.

In protest, fellow students and locals blocked the intersection after Juma prayers for two and a half hours. They put up barricades on the road with burning tyres, halting vehicular movement.

Around 15 vehicles were vandalised during the road blockade while the agitating people demanded justice for recent road accidents and construction of foot bridges and speed breakers in the area.

The blockade was removed around 4:30pm after the police high-ups assured the protesters of action. After the accident, authorities were seen constructing a speed breaker on the spot.

Earlier on July 29 last year, two college students were killed during a race between two buses in Shewra area on Airport Road in the capital, touching off a wave of protests actively participated by students of almost all educational institutions. The agitations lasted for more than a week and put Dhaka on a standstill.

ANGER, FRUSTRATION

Iram's father Delwar Hossain expressed frustration over the spate of road accidents cutting the young lives short.

"What will happen if I file a case? There would be no action and such accidents will continue..." said Delwar, a ready-made garment trader in Dhaka's New Market area.

One of the protesters said, "Whenever a road accident happens or someone is killed, a footbridge or speed breaker is constructed. Is this how we want to ensure road safety?"

The relatives of Iram want stern punishment of people responsible for his untimely death.

Iram's cousin Masudur Rahman said their another cousin Imran, 28, lost his life under the wheels of a speeding bus at the same place, just three months back.

Khokon Mia, a vendor, said Iram's body was lying on the road for an hour when a patrol team of Khilgaon police was seen nearby. When locals told them to take the body to hospital, they said the area was under Demra police and they had nothing to do about it.

Police said they seized the bus of Ramzan Paribahan and also detained its driver and helper.

COLLISION CLAIMS 2 LIVES

Two persons were killed and 14 others injured in a collision between a truck and a bus on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj's Shibaloy upazila yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known immediately.

A Patura-bound bus of Rabeya Paribahan collided head-on with an onion-laden truck in Mushuria area around 4:30pm, said Yamin-ud Daula, in-charge of Barail Highway Police Outpost.

The truck driver was killed on the spot while another passenger of the bus died while being taken to hospital. Fourteen passengers of the bus sustained injuries in the accident, the OC said.

The injured were rushed to Upazila Health Complex and then transferred to Manikganj District Hospital.

Four of the injured were shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated, said Dr Lutfur Rahman, resident medical officer of the district hospital.

ANOTHER STUDENT KILLED

A student of Netrakona Government College, Bijoy Rabid Das, 22, was killed on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj Road in Mymensingh's Gouripur upazila around 10:15pm on Thursday.

Abdullah Al Mamun, officer-in-charge of Gouripur Police Station, said a truck and a human haulier collided head-on, leaving Bijoy dead on the spot.

Police seized the human haulier but the truck driver managed to flee with his vehicle, the OC added.

Bijoy was a former cadet corporal of BNCC at Gouripur Government College unit in 2015-2016 sessions. He passed his SSC and HSC with GPA-5 from Nurul Amin Khan High School and Gouripur Government College respectively.

TWO TEENAGERS KILLED

Two teenagers were killed in a motorcycle accident on Khilgaon flyover in the capital yesterday. They are Tajuddin Hossain Tuhin, 17, and Abdullah Al Noman, 16.

Sohrab Hossain, officer-in-charge of Sabujbagh Police Station, said the two were riding a motorcycle on the flyover around 3:00pm. Their motorcycle was at a speed of over 100kph.

"Noman was driving the bike. He lost control over the bike when he tried to change lane on the flyover and got

Quader

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On March 3, the minister was admitted to BSMMU's coronary care unit. Later, he was diagnosed with three blocks in his coronary arteries.

The next day, a Mount Elizabeth Hospital's air ambulance flew Quader to Singapore for better treatment as advised by doctors, including famous Indian cardiologist Devi Shetty.

On March 20, the minister's bypass surgery was conducted successfully at the hospital.

With the gradual improvement, he was shifted to the hospital's cabin from the ICU on March 26.

"Climate change is undoubtedly increasing the number of children who are pushed into the workplace, where they miss out on an education and are terribly exposed to violence and abuse," Wesslund said.

on the south side," the OC said.

At one point, the motorbike hit a road divider and fell down from the flyover. Later, when they were rushed to a nearby hospital, doctors declared them dead, the OC added.

None of them was wearing helmet, the OC said, adding both of the teenagers were residents of Wahab Colony in Bashabo.

The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsies.

BOY KILLED IN PANCHAGARH

A 12-year-old deaf boy was killed as a truck hit his bicycle on Debiganj-Domar Road in Panchagarh's Debiganj upazila around noon yesterday.

The dead is Monir Mukit, son of

Monirul Rahman.

Mukit was crossing the road riding his bicycle as he wanted to go to a nearby playground. At that time, the truck hit Mukit, leaving him dead on the spot, said witnesses.

Rabiul Hossain, officer-in-charge of Debiganj Police Station, said the body was handed over to the family yesterday evening.

The truck driver fled the scene with his vehicle, the OC added.

RICKSHAW PULLER KILLED IN CUMILLA