

EXPLOITATION, FRAUDULENCE ABROAD

200 return home with nothing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 200 Bangladeshis, who had either been victims of trafficking, fraudulence or exploitation in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran, Oman and Libya, arrived home yesterday empty-handed.

The Bangladeshis, mostly Muslims, were hungry and given iftar at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

In a Facebook post, Shariful Hasan, head of Brac's migration programme, said, "I requested my staff to immediately arrange the iftar. They did it in no time."

Airport Police Battalion and Immigration Police arranged the paper works. The Expatriates Welfare

Desk contributed to preparing the food, he said.

The Bangladeshis had gone abroad with a high hopes of earning and changing their fortune, but returned with nothing, he added.

Brac, which along with the Expatriates' Welfare Desk of the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, provides instant help to such Bangladeshis arriving at the airport, said several hundred migrants were returning every week following deportation mainly from the Middle Eastern countries.

The returnees were still at the immigration when this report was filed around 11:00pm. Immigration police were verifying their identities and taking statements from them.

UK PM rejects calls for exit timetable

AFP, London

Prime Minister Theresa May's spokesman yesterday rejected demands from within her party to clarify when she might quit, saying that she would stay until the divorce deal is finalised.

"She is here to deliver Brexit in phase one and then she will leave to make way for new leadership for phase two," he told reporters.

May is under increasing pressure from MPs and activists in her Conservative party unhappy over Brexit, which was due to take place on March 29 but has been delayed twice.

In March, she vowed to take Britain out of the European Union but then to hand over to another leader to negotiate future bilateral ties with the bloc.

But her critics fear that with Brexit

now delayed to October 31, she might stay in office for many more months.

Anger at her leadership has flared up following last week's dismal local election results, and the chairman of the 1922 committee of Conservative MPs, Graham Brady, met May on Tuesday to relay their concerns.

Earlier yesterday, May was confronted in the House of Commons by a Brexit-backing Conservative MP, Andrea Jenkyns, who said: "The public no longer trust her to run Brexit negotiations."

May responded by noting that she had agreed a deal with the EU to leave, but MPs had rejected it three times.

"This is not an issue about me and it's not an issue about her. If it were an issue about me and the way I vote, we would already have left the EU," she said.



Jute mill workers holding sticks occupy a road near Sultana Kamal Bridge in the capital's Demra yesterday. They were demonstrating for a set of demands, including payment of arrears.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Countrywide road, rail blockade from May 13

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Shah Mohammad Nasim said they were trying to meet the workers' demands.

"Things are on right track. We have written to the government, asking for money."

"Production at mills is being hampered because of the ongoing protest, which will ultimately affect the workers," he added.

An additional secretary of the jute and textile ministry also said they sought allocations from the finance

ministry to clear the workers' dues.

"We will be able to pay them if we get the money," he told The Daily Star last night, requesting anonymity.

THE PROTEST

In Demra, workers blocked the Staff Quarter intersection, Demra-Rampura road and Demra-Narayanganj road, creating tailbacks.

Hundreds of workers of Latif Bawany Jute Mills and Karim Jute Mills took position on the streets at 6:00am and their protest continued till 5:00pm.

Some workers also set fire to tree logs and bamboo sticks on the road, witnesses said.

Vehicles were seen taking alternative routes to avoid congestion.

Mohammad Ali, CBA President of Latif Bawany Jute Mills, said workers abstained from work and held a peaceful protest.

At Latif Bawany, six weeks' wages and two months' salaries are due, he said.

In Khulna, workers of all the nine state-owned jute mills blocked

Dhaka-Khulna highway at Notunrasta intersection from 4:00pm to 7:00pm.

No workers of Daulatpur Jute Mills, Khalishpur Jute Mills, Star Jute Mills, Crescent Jute Mills and Platinum Jute Mills joined work.

Workers also blocked the rail lines, forcing at least three trains to remain stranded for hours, officials said.

"It is inhuman to not pay the workers whose only source of money is wages. The government should buy poison for us," said Putul Begum, a worker of Crescent Jute Mills.

'GUNFIGHT' WITH RAB 'Drug dealer' killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in the capital's Agargaon early yesterday.

The dead, Ashraf Ali, 35, stood accused in seven to eight drug-related cases filed with different police stations, said Lt Col Ashique Billah, commanding officer of Rab-2.

Following a lead that a consignment of Phensedyl syrup was being smuggled into the capital from Chuadanga, Rab had beefed up surveillance in the city, he said.

Around 2:00am, a car tried to dodge a Rab checkpoint at Gabtoli, leading the Rab men to chase it. At one stage, the vehicle crashed into a road divider in front of Copyright Office Bangladesh in Agargaon, he said.

The Rab official claimed that they had to shoot bullets as the armed drug peddlers opened fire when the law enforcers tried to nab them.

Ashraf was hit by bullets while two others, including the driver, fled the scene. He was declared dead after being taken to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital.

The Rab claimed to have recovered 500 bottles of Phensedyl, a pistol and four bullets from the car.

Biman crash

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passengers and crew members to Dhaka.

The plane was expected to return at 6:00am today with the 19 who were hospitalised.

Shakil said Biman was providing assistance to the passengers in Yangon. "Families of passengers on board flight BG-060 are requested to contact us on +88028901530 for further assistance," he added.

Representatives from Myanmar's Department of Civil Aviation (DCA) and Aircraft Accident Investigation Branch (AIIB) went to the crash site last night.

In a similar incident, a Boeing 737 skidded off the runway and went into the Florida river on Friday after landing at a military base in Jacksonville during a thunderstorm. The 136 passengers and seven crew members on board evacuated the plane. No fatalities were reported.

On March 12 last year, a US-Bangla Bombardier Dash-8 Q400, the same make and model involved in yesterday incident, crashed on a football pitch near the runway of Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu, killing 51 of the 71 people on board.

Lead, bacteria in milk, curd

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The Food Safety Authority said among the 30 samples of fodder, harmful levels of chromium were found in 16 samples, aflatoxin in four samples, tetracycline in 22 samples, enrofloxacin in 26 samples, ciprofloxacin in 30 samples, and pesticide (endosulfan) in two samples.

In the report, the Food Safety Authority said it had formed a 16-member committee to find those behind the adulteration of milk, curd, and fodder.

After receiving the report from Food Safety Authority lawyer Mohammad Faridul Islam, the HC ordered the authority to submit a report on the companies and individuals responsible for the adulteration of milk, curd and fodder to the court by May 15.

The bench of Justice Md Nazrul

Islam Talukder and Justice KM Hafizul Alam passed the order during hearing on a suo moto rule issued by it on February 11, Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik told The Daily Star.

He also said the bench fixed May 15 for passing further orders on this issue.

Meanwhile, Anti-Corruption Commission lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan appealed to the court for adjournment of hearing on the rule for a week as the commission's assigned lawyer Syed Mamun Mahbub could not appear before it yesterday due to illness.

The HC on February 11 directed the ACC to enquire about the adulteration of milk, curd, and fodder and take legal action against those responsible.

The court also ordered the Food Safety Authority to form a probe

committee to identify in three months the individuals and businesses involved in adulteration of dairy products and fodder.

The HC then issued a rule asking the respondents, including chairmen of Food Safety Authority, members of Central Food Safety Management Coordination Committee and chairman of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution, to explain why their inaction and failure in preventing adulteration and taking appropriate legal steps against it should not be declared illegal.

The court asked them to show causes as to why the production, carrying, and preservation of adulterated milk, curd, and fodder in shops, departmental stores, and the open market should not be declared illegal.

The rule asked the respondents

to explain why they should not be directed to remove those and bring people responsible to book and to prosecute them.

The HC bench came up with the order and rule following reports on adulteration published in The Daily Star, the Prothom Alo, and the Kaler Kantha on February 11.

According to The Daily Star report, a government study found in raw cow milk excessive levels of lead, regular consumption of which is harmful.

Conducted by the National Food Safety Laboratory of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the study also detected high levels of chromium in fodder.

Besides, it found excessive presence of pesticide, antibiotics, and bacteria in raw cow milk, according to The Daily Star report.

Student killed in US school shooting

AFP, Highlands Ranch

A teenaged student was fatally shot and multiple others were wounded Tuesday in a school shooting by fellow pupils in the US state of Colorado, across town from one of the worst gun massacres in the country's modern history.

"It is with extreme sadness that we can confirm that 1 student at the STEM School was killed," the Douglas County Sheriff's Office said on Twitter, putting the deceased victim's age at 18.

Sheriff Tony Spurlock had earlier said several of the wounded students -- of whom there were a total of eight -- were in critical condition, including some in surgery. No staff or teachers were known to be hurt. The youngest injured student was 15.

Constable

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that he had gone to Chattogram for a court hearing.

But the Rab official found that his police ID did not match his rank on the uniform which made the company commander suspicious. When Rab officials wanted to search his bag, Mahfuz showed another ID card that has him mentioned as a constable.

"Rab searched his bag in presence of local police and found the yaba pills and Tk 31,800," said the Rab CO.

Mahfuz joined Bangladesh police as a constable in 2011 and was posted at Sonadanga Police Station under KMP. He was suspended in 2016 for being accused in a criminal case filed by his father, Rab said.

Rab said Mahfuz used to go to Cox's Bazar and Teknaf twice or thrice a month in plainclothes. He would contact the yaba dealer he met in jail over phone. "He [Mahfuz] would get 20,000 to 30,000 pills each time and transport those to Khulna via Dhaka wearing police uniform to dodge law enforcers," the Rab official said, adding that Mahfuz transported pills this way at least six times before.

He was paid Tk 20,000 to Tk 50,000 for each trip he made.

Rab did not disclose the name of the yaba dealer in question.

During primary interrogation, Mahfuz admitted that he got involved in the narcotics trade after "losing his job".

Momtazul Haq, officer-in-charge of Sonadanga Police Station, said he did not know about Mahfuz and could not recall any incidents of a constable at his police station being sacked.

In recent times, members of different law enforcement agencies were arrested for their involvement in yaba trafficking.

Autopsy finds proof of gang rape, murder

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her head. It might be the cause of her death," Habibur told The Daily Star.

Early Tuesday, police arrested five people, including the bus driver Md Nuruzzaman, 39, and his helper Lalon Mia, 33, for their alleged involvement in the incident, said Khalilur Rahman Patwari, officer-in-charge of Bajitpur Police Station.

Yesterday, police produced the arrestees before a Kishoreganj court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Al Mamun with a 10-day remand prayer for each of them.

But the court placed them on an eight-day remand each. Later, they were sent to jail, said Taufiq Ahmed, court inspector of Kishoreganj.

On Tuesday night, the victim's father Gias Uddin filed a murder

and rape case with Bajitpur Police Station, naming four, including the driver and the helper, and some unknown people as accused.

Police and family sources said Tania had boarded a Swarnalata Paribahan bus from the capital's Mohakhali to go to her home in Lohajury in Katiadi around 3:00pm on Monday.

On her way, she spoke with her father and brother Suján Mia several times over phone. The bus reached Katiadi around 8:00pm where 16 of the 19 passengers got down. Two others got down at Ujanchar, said Shafiqul Islam, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Katiadi Police Station, quoting the victim's family members.

She was the only passenger when the bus was heading towards Pirijpur, from where her home is

a 10-minutes rickshaw ride away, they said.

While her family was waiting for her, she had called Suján upon reaching Katiadi, saying she would reach Pirijpur shortly.

When more than an hour passed, the family members called her but found her phone switched off. Anxious, they then rushed to the Pirijpur bus station, but learned that no SwarnalataParibahan bus reached the station around that time.

Later around 11:00pm, they received a call from the KatiadiUpazila Health Complex and learned that Tania died.

After her body was found, her family alleged she was killed after rape.

But the bus driver and helper, during primary interrogation,

claimed that the girl jumped off the running bus through the window and died, although they could not explain why she would do that, police said.

Tania was the youngest among six siblings and had been in service for two years. She lost her mother to cancer in December last year, said family members.

"We had to spend around Tk 15 lakh for the treatment [of our mother], taking loan on interest. Tania was a source of financial support for our family, said Sabuj Mia, Tania's elder brother, while talking to The Daily Star

Tania's death sparked outrage in Kishoreganj.

Locals formed a human chain in Pirijpur Bazar area yesterday, demanding exemplary punishment to those involved in her killing.