

39 found dead in Essex lorry were Chinese

Say UK police

AFP, Grays

British police said yesterday that 39 people found dead in a truck near London were all believed to be Chinese nationals, in a case that has triggered national outrage over the people trafficking business.

Emergency workers discovered the bodies early Wednesday inside the refrigerated container of a truck parked in an industrial area east of London, shortly after it had arrived on a ferry from Belgium.

Police are conducting the country's largest murder probe in more than a decade into what Prime Minister Boris Johnson described as an "unimaginable tragedy".

The local police force, who have arrested the truck's driver, said in a statement that eight of the dead were women and 31 were men.

"All are believed to be Chinese nationals," Essex Police said.

China's foreign ministry said its embassy staff in London were heading to the scene "to verify this situation".

An embassy spokesperson said Chinese authorities had read the reports with a "heavy heart" and were in close contact with police "to seek clarification and confirmation".

The deaths echoed the discovery of 58 Chinese immigrants hidden in a Dutch truck in the English port of Dover in 2000. Only two people had survived.

'SUBSTANTIAL OPERATION' With the help of immigration officials and the National Crime Agency (NCA), Essex Police are leading the biggest murder probe in Britain since the 2005 London terror attacks that killed 52 people.

The force confirmed officers had searched three properties in Northern Ireland overnight in connection with the investigation.

The addresses are believed to be linked to the arrested truck driver, a 25-year-old man from the province.

Police said a coroner would try to establish the cause of death of the 39 victims, before investigators then attempt to identify each individual.

Officials moved the truck

Wednesday to a "secure location" at nearby Tilbury docks, "to give the utmost dignity to those within the trailer as we prepare for a coroner's post-mortem examination", Essex Police said.

ROUTE FROM ZEEBRUGGE

The container section came by ferry from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge into Purfleet on the River Thames estuary -- a crossing that takes nine to 12 hours.

The vessel docked there at around 12:30 am Wednesday (2330 GMT Tuesday) and the truck left the port area about half an hour later.

Police were called to the Waterglade Industrial Park in nearby Grays at around 1:40 am.

Prosecutors in Belgium have launched their own probe and confirmed yesterday the container had on Tuesday passed through Zeebrugge, one of the world's busiest ports for cargo on trucks.

"It is not yet clear when the victims were placed in the container and whether this happened in Belgium," the federal prosecutor's office said.

It added that its investigation "will focus on the organisers of and all other parties involved" and be carried out in close cooperation with Britain.

Essex Police revealed the tractor unit of the truck entered Britain on Sunday on a ferry from Dublin to the Welsh port of Holyhead.

They had earlier said they believed the tractor originated in Northern Ireland.

The vehicle had licence plates issued in Bulgaria after it was registered there in 2017 by an Irish citizen, according to Prime Minister Boyko Borisov.

He said the unit had not entered Bulgarian territory since and there was "no connection with us".

In another incident Wednesday, police in Kent in southeast England said they had discovered nine people stowed away inside another truck, after stopping the vehicle on a motorway.

After precautionary medical checks, they were passed to immigration officials.

We will start

FROM PAGE 20 though the demand was made before him repeatedly.

Shaikat claimed that the university failed to make its place in the ranking of world's top 1,000 universities because of students' sufferings caused by severe accommodation crisis.

On October 1, he issued a 15-day ultimatum for the university authorities to resolve the accommodation crisis.

Shaikat, who has been elected to Dhaka University Central Students' Union from the BCL panel, has been staying with some first-year students in a *gono room* of Kabi Jasimuddin Hall since September 1, leaving his allocated room as he failed to give any solution to the crisis.

Shaikat, a final-year student of theatre and performance studies, also promised to stay in the *gono room* unless the university authorities take visible steps to address the accommodation crisis.

Rumour of pir's arrest brought on hell

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The Daily Star visited seven mosques in Borhanuddin municipality area and six other mosques at Maniker Haat, Baro Manika and Khayerhat villages in the upazila and spoke to all the imams.

All of them said that no one had contacted them to make the announcement about the postponement.

Sarbastorer Tawhidi Janata convener and Bhatamara pir Muhib Ullah said, "We postponed the rally at the request of the administration at the meeting with them on Saturday night. So, I did not join the rally."

Muhib Ullah said that people from the administration said there were some risks involved in holding the rally as this was a "sensitive issue" and any untoward incident could occur any time.

He said, "At this, I agreed to postpone the rally."

He added that it was also decided that the news of postponement would be communicated to everyone so that mosque authorities could announce it through loud speakers.

He claimed that the postponement news had reached some places of his locality. "But people were so aggrieved that they came to join the rally on their own."

He added, "Many people were also not informed about postponement

due to careless implementation of the decision."

Two rally organisers -- Borhanuddin Bazar Mosque Imam Mizanur Rahman and Eidgah Mosque Imam Jalal Uddin -- said that a decision to postpone the rally was made, but there was still a discussion in this regard as they believed it would be impossible for them to give the announcement to all in such a short time.

"We had decided to hold a brief rally to inform everyone about the postponement," said Mizanur.

At the meeting with the DC and the SP, Borhanuddin upazila chairman and two vice-chairmen, Imam Mizanur Rahman and Khatib of Uttar Bus Stand Jam-e-Masjid Moulana Faizullah were present.

Mizan and Faizullah had also failed to make the announcement from their mosques.

Asked why, Faizullah said, "I forgot to announce the postponement of the rally."

PREPARATION WAS STILL ON

Organisers continued calling on the people to join the rally through loud speakers even after the meeting with the DC and SP had ended. They demanded capital punishment of Biplob even after midnight.

A key organiser of the rally, who attended the meeting with the administration, rented mikes for the rally and erected a podium.

In some places, including Maniker Haat area, people on October 20 were urged through loud speakers to join the scheduled rally at 11:00am, locals alleged.

They added that 17 mikes, supplied by Star Mike Service in Borhanuddin Sadar upazila, were set up at the venue early in the morning.

Owner of the Star Mike Service Zakir Hossain said Mizanur Rahman called him over phone on Saturday around midnight and ordered for the mikes. "I got Tk 6,500 for the 17 mikes."

Mizanur, however, said Zakir was present at a meeting, regarding the rally, held at his mosque on Saturday evening where he agreed to provide the mikes.

He also said devotees, irrespective of party affiliation, attended the meeting that decided to organise the protest rally.

The Bazar Committee secretary, who is a local Awami League leader, was also present there, he added.

Imam Jalal Uddin said they set up so many mikes so that the announcement of postponing the rally could be heard from far.

As police came to know about the preparation of the rally on Sunday morning, top police officials and the upazila nirbahi officer went to the venue with a small police force around 10:00am, when around a thousand

people had already gathered.

Police asked the organisers to end the rally quickly.

RUMOURS LED TO ATTACK

At least three witnesses said that a huge number of people started to come to the Eidgah Maidan even after the rally was called off around 10:20am on Sunday.

"The sudden calling off of the rally made them angry. Two processions from Bhatamara and Borhanganj reached the venue just after the postponement and, at one stage, a rumour spread that Bhatamara pir Muhib Ullah was arrested, which led to the attack on police," said a local businessman, preferring anonymity.

Muhib Ullah said he heard that there were rumours of his arrest, which angered the people and resulted in the clash.

Many people who reached the venue just before the clash thought that police had dismantled the stage and some raised the issue of why the rally was cancelled before 11:00am, he added.

The police officials and the UNO took shelter in the first floor of the Eidgah mosque.

At one stage, police opened fire in retaliation after being shot at during the attack.

The clash left four people killed and over 100 others injured.

Postpone Rohingya relocation plan

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She said the United States was Bangladesh's leading partner in responding to the humanitarian crisis with more than USD 669 million in assistance provided since August 2017.

"As we have met the immediate emergency response, we maintain

that Burma [Myanmar] must create the conditions for the Rohingya's voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable repatriation and guarantee their rights as recommended by the Annan Commission recommendations," Wells said.

She said Prime Minister Sheikh

Hasina has repeatedly reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to voluntary repatriation.

Bangladesh remains a "key Indo-Pacific partner" of the United States in regional stability, counterterrorism, two-way trade, development, and poverty reduction, as well as the

hosting of 700,000 Rohingyas.

"We have emphasised that fully respecting democratic rights and improving transparency and accountability will contribute directly to Bangladesh's aspirations for economic growth and development" Wells said.

Out-of-court settlement suffers delay

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be refundable or adjustable after the carriers to realise the money but Grameenphone won the two-month injunction in court on October 17. The government appealed against the injunction on Sunday.

Following a meeting at the Gono Bhaban between Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeb Wazed Joy and all stakeholders on Sunday, the move for out-of-court settlement was initiated.

The finance ministry consulting the NBR drafted two agreements and gave them to the telecom division on Wednesday.

The drafts kept a provision for forming two committee to review the audit reports that claimed the carriers owed the state Tk 13,447 crore.

The documents said Grameenphone would have to deposit Tk 100 crore while Robi Tk 25 crore which would

crore, of which Tk 2,300 crore is principal amount and the rest are late fees, VAT etc.

"We were ready to sign the MoUs but now we decided to wait for the court's verdict in the appeal," Mustafa Jabbar, telecom minister, told The Daily Star yesterday evening.

Jabbar declined to share details of the MoUs.

It was decided in the Gono Bhaban meeting that the carriers would withdraw cases they had filed against the regulator with the lower court and the High Court after the out-of-court settlement.

In a statement, Grameenphone yesterday said the Appellate Division adjourned the hearing until next Thursday and the injunction passed by the High Court was still in effect.

"We urge the BTRC to act in good

faith and fully comply with the current stay order. We expect the BTRC to take the necessary actions to process and allow the release of our equipment from customs, import equipment for network expansion, and offer products and services to customers.

"We reaffirm our commitment to reaching a transparent and amicable resolution to the disputed BTRC audit claim through constructive dialogue."

Robi had also sought an injunction on the BTRC move to realise Tk 867.23 crore from it. The verdict delivery on the petition was yesterday deferred until November 3.

BTRC Chairman Md Jahurul Haque claimed that the court had upheld their claim and had asked Grameenphone to pay some money. "We always welcome amicable solutions but public money must be paid."

Inspiration

FROM PAGE 1

Nusrat, an Alim examinee, was sexually harassed by madrasa principal Siraj Ud Doula, now sacked, on March 27.

While many girls and young women in the country opt to keep their experiences of sexual harassment or abuse secret, Nusrat spoke up and sought justice.

For the victims, the path of seeking justice is not smooth either.

After the incident, Nusrat's mother filed a case against Siraj, who was later arrested and sent to jail.

Being called by Moazzem Hossain,

then officer-in-charge of Sonagazi Model Police Station, Nusrat shared her traumatic experience with the OC. The official recorded her statement on his mobile phone without her consent and circulated the video clip on social media. The OC, now suspended, is facing trial in a case filed under the Digital Security Act.

Since Siraj's arrest, his associates were threatening Nusrat's family to withdraw the case. But the family did not do so.

On April 6, Nusrat, along with her brother, went to the madrasa to sit for an Alim examination. But her brother

was not allowed in.

A fellow female student took her to the roof of the madrasa, saying one of her friends was being beaten up.

As Nusrat reached the roof, the four people surrounded her and pressed her to withdraw the case against the principal.

As she refused to comply, they poured kerosene on her and set her on fire. About 80 percent of her body was burnt.

After fighting for her life for four days, Nusrat died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital on April 10.

Pankaj barred from council activities

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When Nasim became an organising secretary of the elected AL in 2009, the then vice president Molla Abu Kawser was made the volunteer organisation's acting president and subsequently president.

The second council was held on July 11, 2012, where Kawser and Pankaj were then made president and general secretary respectively.

Pankaj was elected as lawmaker from Barishal-4 in the 2014 national election and then was reelected from the same constituency in the last parliamentary polls.

Pankaj's absence from the council

will come at a time when wholesale changes are being made to the elected AL's power structures. The Chhatra League president and general secretary were both relieved from their posts in recent times.

Jubo League Chairman Omar Faruk Chowdhury was also relieved from his post. Ismail Chowdhury Samrat, president of Jubo League Dhaka (south) city unit, and Khalid Mahmud Bhuiyan, organising secretary of the unit, were also relieved from their posts for their controversial roles.

On 2007, Pankaj was jailed for 13

years for amassing illegal wealth and suppressing details about his income and assets following a case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission. The current status of the case could not be known immediately.

Pankaj engaged in the transport business in 2009. He is the chairman of Bihongo Paribahan, a minibus service company. The AL is also a member of Dhaka Road Transport Owners Association.

His company owns around 50 minibuses. Those are operated on Mirpur-Sayedabad, Mirpur-Azimpur and Mirpur-12 to Banani routes.

China detains journo who covered HK protests: sources

AFP, Beijing

A Chinese journalist who covered democracy protests in Hong Kong has been detained after returning to the mainland, sources with direct knowledge of the situation told AFP yesterday.

Huang Xueqin, who became known for her support of the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment in China last year, had travelled to Hong Kong this summer.

She had written at least two reports about the protests that have plunged the semi-autonomous city into crisis for nearly five months.

When Huang returned to the mainland, authorities in the southeastern city of Guangzhou summoned her to a meeting and confiscated her travel documents, the sources said.

Then, Huang was told she could go and collect her documents on October 17.

Instead, the sources said she was arrested under the charge of "making trouble and picking quarrels" -- a vague accusation often levelled against critics of the mainland government.

The detention centre in Guangzhou referred questions to city police, who did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Huang's lawyer and friend, Wan Miaoyan, declined to comment on the case.

Explain remarks

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elected in the election, I am testifying that people couldn't cast their votes in that election. They couldn't vote in the union parishad and upazila parishad polls," he said while addressing a conference of the party's Barishal district unit in Barishal city.

After the statement, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, also AL general secretary, asked whether Menon would ask this question if he were a minister.

Menon, who was a minister in the last cabinet of Hasina, later said his remarks were presented partially and that sent a wrong message to the politics of the national and 14-party alliance.

Mixed fate

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In Haryana however, BJP chief Subash Barala -- who was trailing by more than 30,000 votes in his own constituency -- quit his post yesterday after early results showed the party struggling to carve out a lead, the Press Trust of India reported.

Analysts said the results were a warning for the BJP, which trumpeted its muscular brand of nationalism and aggressive foreign policy towards arch-rival Pakistan in its push to voters.

Political commentator Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay said while Modi's personal popularity had bolstered the party's appeal, the diminished majorities showed "the BJP's political narrative has its limits."

"The... government has to take its economics more seriously. It cannot bluff its way past. Voters are not buying it," he told AFP.

Modi is under mounting pressure to kick-start the economy, which has endured five consecutive quarters of slowing growth, causing India to lose its status as the fastest-growing major economy to China.

The slump has hit automakers particularly hard, with sagging demand forcing companies to halt production, slash prices and cut jobs in a once-booming industry that employs millions, including at major plants in Haryana and Maharashtra.

Exit polls had predicted wins for the BJP, but said the party would have to depend on its allies to form a majority and establish a coalition government in both states.

A return to power by the BJP -- even as part of a coalition -- would be yet another blow to the Congress party, which has struggled to strike a chord with frustrated voters after dominating Indian politics for decades.

Monkeys learn

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Like humans, marmosets raise their offspring with the help of the entire group, which could be another reason why they need "language skills", according to scientists from the University of Zurich.

Senior author Dr Judith Burkart told The Independent: "It's rather like what you in England call accents. All the calls are high pitched so for the human ear it's hard to hear these differences but using acoustic analysis we could locate these calls to distinct areas."

"The ear of the marmoset is much more in tune to these calls so the differences are clearly audible to them."

Scientists already knew marmoset calls varied from one region to the next but they didn't know why. They thought it could be caused by genetic differences, environmental factors or learnt through social learning.

To answer this, they analysed the calls of common marmosets -- which normally travel around in groups of between three and 15 individuals -- before and after they moved to a new colony.

They looked at captive marmosets in three colonies in Spain, Italy and Switzerland. Each group did not have direct contact with the new group but they still adapted their calls in as little as a few weeks.

"We could clearly show that the dialects of common marmosets are learned socially," said the first author of the study, Yvonne Zurcher, from the University of Zurich.

"If their dialects were genetically determined, moving to a new place wouldn't cause any change in calls. The changes can't be explained by differences in the environment either," she said.

Marmoset males remain in their group until they are adults at which point they leave to find breeding females. One of their defining social behaviours is their cooperative breeding and infant care systems with siblings and offspring caring for young ones.

Dr Burkart said: "It's like with humans -- when you move to a new place you accommodate new accents."

Next researchers want to look at how accents change when monkeys socially interact.

No case filed

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killed in the hills [CHT] never get justice, and that is why we have decided not to file any case," victim's younger brother Uttaran Talukder told The Daily Star.

Police yesterday said they were trying to find out the killers.

"We are investigating into the incident and trying to identify the killers within the shortest possible time," said Mofojol Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Rajasthali Police Station.

Police recovered the body of Dipamoy, 45, with a bullet wound to head from a bush in Zero Mile area on early Wednesday, around 16 hours after he was abducted.

A group of unidentified people allegedly abducted him from the same area on Tuesday afternoon, police said quoting locals.

Dipamoy was the vice-president of Rangamati's Rajasthali upazila BNP and the headman of Gilachhari Mauja in the upazila.

He left behind his wife