

39 DEAD IN LORRY

UK trucker charged with manslaughter

AFP, London

British police investigating the deaths of 39 people in a refrigerated truck charged the driver yesterday with manslaughter and people trafficking, as families in Vietnam expressed fear their loved ones were among the dead.

Maurice Robinson was arrested shortly after the bodies of eight women and 31 men were discovered in the truck in an industrial zone in Grays in Essex, south-east England.

The 25-year-old from Northern Ireland was "charged with 39 counts of manslaughter, conspiracy to traffic people, conspiracy to assist unlawful immigration and money laundering", Essex police said.

Three more people are in custody in Britain over the investigation, the country's largest murder probe since

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YOUNG SCIENTIST AWARD

Bangladeshi first non-Japanese in 61 years to win

UNB, Rajshahi



Arif Hossain, a Bangladeshi national doing his PhD in Japan, has been recognised as the best young scientist of the far-eastern country.

Japanese Society for Inherited Metabolic Diseases (JSIMD) has awarded Arif with the Best Young Scientist Award on Thursday for his innovation of mechanism and treatment of Lysosomal diseases.

He is the first non-Japanese in JSIMD's 61 years' history to receive the award.

Born at Bhatipara in Kashiani upazila of Gopalganj district, Arif is the youngest of his eleven siblings.

On completion of his HSC from Government Bangla College in the capital's Mirpur area, he obtained his MBBS degree from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital and did post-graduation from the same institution.

He then went to Osaka University in Japan for his PhD. He currently works as a senior researcher of neurometabolic diseases in Japan.

Finalise it

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of the BBIN agreement for movement of goods and passengers between the member countries who are willing and ready; or to work towards an India-Bangladesh motor vehicles agreement.

PALESTINE FM MEETS HASINA

Palestine has decided to name a road in Hebron after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Maliki said this when he met Hasina at the Baku Congress Centre.

He also invited the PM to formally unveil the name plaque of the road.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Secretary Shahidul said the Palestinian minister urged the PM to strengthen the trade and diplomatic relations between the two countries.

He thanked Hasina for strongly raising the Palestine issue in various international fora.

DHAKA, BAKU INK DEAL

Bangladesh yesterday signed an agreement with Azerbaijan to boost cultural ties between the two countries.

The deal was signed after a bilateral meeting between Hasina and Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev at the Presidential Palace in Baku.

Bangladesh State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid and Azerbaijan Cultural and Tourism Minister Abulbas Garayev inked the deal on behalf of their respective sides. Hasina and Ilham Aliyev witnessed the deal-signing ceremony.

During the bilateral meeting, Bangladesh and Azerbaijan agreed to strengthen their relations in future.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Ambassador concurrent of Bangladesh to Azerbaijan Allama Siddiki said the two leaders discussed the historical and cultural ties between the two countries.

Hasina recalled with profound respect the support of Azerbaijan, as part of the then Soviet Union, to Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971.

The Azerbaijan president remembered Bangladesh's support to his country as a new state in 1992.

The PM thanked Azerbaijan for extending its support to Bangladesh over the Rohingya issue.

The two leaders hoped that export of Bangladeshi manpower to Azerbaijan would be expanded further.

Hasina invited Ilham Aliyev to visit Bangladesh and the invitation was accepted.

PM JOINS GENERAL DEBATE

Hasina joined the general debate of the 18th NAM Summit at the Baku Congress Centre on the second day of the summit yesterday, reports BSS.

The heads of the states and governments as well as representatives of the NAM member countries will adopt Baku declaration.

Meanwhile, the PM is expected to return home today, wrapping up her four-day official visit to Azerbaijan.



LUCKY SAVE: The family was having a good time on Kuakata beach yesterday. But a moment's distraction for the parents could have easily resulted in a tragedy. Thankfully though, the parents noticed on time that the toddler had fallen facedown into the water. No harm done. The child was shaken but alright.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Shipbuilder making wooden bench!

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recommended giving Tk 26.25 crore in advance to KSY.

Following his recommendation, the accounts office prepared three cheques approved by Nasiruddin. After deducting the vat, income tax and security money, KSY was given about Tk 19.44 crore.

University rules make it clear that all projects must be passed by the Board of Regents, an independent government body that oversees a state's public colleges and universities.

But no meeting of the board has been held this year, its members told The Daily Star recently.

Dr Syed Shamsul Alam, a member of the Board of Regents, and also a professor at the chemistry department of Shahjalal University of Science

The note sheet was undersigned by BSMRSTU's Deputy Project Director Tuhin Mahmud and former project director Prof MA Sattar, also a contractual teacher and chairman of the university's agriculture department.

It was then produced before Nasiruddin for approval, which was given that very day.

Another memo, dated June 30, reveals that the KSY demanded Tk 28 crore in advance for supply of the goods.

"Khulna Shipyard has sent a letter (memo no Project- 439/1672), demanding advance against the work orders. Taking the letter into cognisance, the note is produced as per the verbal instruction of the vice-chancellor to take necessary action to give Khulna Shipyard Tk 28 crore in advance," reads the memo.

Sattar resigned as the project director even before the advance payment could be made. Contacted, he told The Daily Star earlier this month, "I could sense that something was not right. I'll be blamed in the end."

"I resigned from the post of PD. If they had not accepted my resignation, I would have resigned from professorship as well."

The project should have been developed after a discussion with the engineering department. "But, here, that did not happen. Things were run by Tuhin."

He added, "I asked Tuhin several times about the legality of the project, but he kept telling me that there were instances of giving direct contract."

After his resignation, Nasiruddin appointed Proctor Mohammad Ashikuzzaman Bhuiyan as the project director. On July 24, Ashikuzzaman

The university did not have any urgent need for these materials either.

Under the project, it ordered about 2,000 six-feet long benches made of Mahogany wood. The unit price of each bench was fixed at Tk 11,100.

As a point of reference, The Daily Star contacted Wahidul Islam, manager of Eastern Wood Works, operated by Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC).

The BFIDC is a state-run organisation that produces furniture and supplies to different organisations, including government ones.

He said the government rate for a six-feet long bench of A-class wood is fixed at Tk 10,670. A-class wood includes timber of Mahogany, Gamari and Rubber trees. In other words, the university could have saved at least Tk 8.6 lakh on furniture alone, if it had opted for an open tender.

Visiting the campus recently, this correspondent saw a huge number



Excess classroom benches piled up inside a building of Gopalganj university. The photo was taken on September 26.

PHOTO: STAR

and Technology, said, "As far as I can recall, no meeting of the board of regents took place this year."

A meeting was scheduled for September 27 but it was later postponed, he added. "I don't know how the projects got approval."

Another member of the board, Prof Abdur Rahim Khan, also the dean of the science faculty at BSMRSTU, said, "Many development projects have been undertaken at the university. But none of those were discussed at any board of regents meeting in the last two or three years."

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These projects are being funded by the university's Tk 250.56 crore Further Development Project, which was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) on October 2, 2018.

A criterion of Ecnec is that all relevant rules in public procurement be followed in use of the funds allocated.

The allocation was for extension of the academic and administration building in Gopalganj, and construction of an auditorium, amphitheatre, Shahid Minar Complex and a mural of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Contacted, Tuhin said Khulna Shipyard showed them their experience in supplying these items to other organisations. "We gave the contract cent percent legally."

Some of those are centrifuge with rotor, disintegration test apparatus, microprocessor dissolution rate test apparatus, automatic water distillation plant, melting point apparatus digital, tablet hardness tester, kymograph high speed and single channel micropipette of different volumes.

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