

Dread builds in Vietnam over fate of missing UK migrants

AFP, Nghi An

Dread mounted across Vietnam yesterday as relatives of migrants feared to be among 39 people found dead in a truck in Britain revealed new heart-wrenching details of their last contact with their loved ones.

The driver of the refrigerated trailer discovered in an industrial park on Wednesday has been charged with 39 counts of manslaughter and people trafficking in a case that has shocked Britain and cast light on the extreme dangers facing illegal migrants seeking better lives in Europe.

The 31 men and eight women were initially believed to be Chinese, but several Vietnamese families have now come forward with fears their relatives are among the dead.

Many are believed to have come from impoverished villages in central Vietnam, where some families now fear the worst.

Le Minh Tuan has not heard from his son Le Van Ha since a message over Facebook around a week ago saying "I'm about to board a car to Britain. I will contact the family when I arrive in England, Dad."

That was two days before the refrigerated trailer stuffed with bodies was discovered in Essex, east of London.

Two killed

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said Mokarram Hossain, in-charge of Fire Service and Civil Defence station in Phulbari.

The bodies were sent to M Abdur Rahim Medical College Hospital in Dinajpur for autopsy.

Mostafa Kamal, director (admin) of Petrobangla, told The Daily Star that CMC-XMC Consortium, a Chinese company, was the contractor firm building the generator room, and one Ruhul Amin of Phulbari upazila was the sub-contractor.

The officials of the Chinese firm, which also oversees coal production and manages the coalmine site, were not available for comments.

Khaled

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terror in Motijheel, Arambagh, Fakirapool, Shahjahanpur, Mugda, Kamalapur, Rampura and Sabujbagh.

Khaled also used to extort money from public transport companies and cattle and fish markets in the areas.

His firm Bhuiyan and Bhuiyan controlled tender in government offices including the Rajuk, Dhaka South City Corporation, Krira Parishad, Water Development Board, WASA's Fakirapool zone, Jubo Bhaban and Krishi Bhaban, the charge sheet added.

He has a large armed gang to control the illegal businesses, it added.

In the charge sheet submitted to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka, the investigator listed 15 people as prosecution witnesses.

Jubo League, the youth wing of ruling Awami League, expelled Khaled on September 20 for breaching the organisation's discipline and his involvement in anti-social activities.

Why no baby care

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petitioner, as all citizens of the country are allowed to file a writ.

Earlier on October 24, the HC bench granted her the permission.

The writ petition said that mothers feel uneasy to feed their children at workplaces and other public places as there is no specific breastfeeding and baby care corner.

It further stated that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2009 had directed the authorities concerned to establish breastfeeding corners and day care centres at all public and private workplaces in order to ensure safe motherhood and that children are raised in a healthy environment.

But the directives of the PM are yet to be fully implemented, the petition said.

The petitioners prayed to the HC to pass necessary orders in this regard.

Appearing for the petitioners, Barrister Md Abdul Halim told the HC that protection of right to life has been ensured by Article 32 of the constitution and breastfeeding is a fundamental right of children.

Children, however, are being deprived of this right as there are no breast feeding and baby care corners in most of public places, including shopping malls, airports, bus stops and railway stations, he said, adding that there are smoking zones in those places, which is discriminatory.

'Robber' killed

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taken to Araihazar Health Complex where doctors declared him dead on arrival, the OC claimed, adding that the body was sent to Narayanganj General Hospital Morgue for an autopsy.

Police recovered a pistol from the spot, said Nazrul, adding that four policemen were also injured during the incident.



A Syrian man clears debris at the site of helicopter gunfire which reportedly killed nine people near the northwestern Syrian village of Barisha in the Idlib province along the border with Turkey yesterday. The helicopters targeted a home and a car on the outskirts of Barisha, said, after US media said IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was believed to be dead following a US military raid in the same province.

PHOTO: AFP

Dogs with a nose for archaeology

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Zadar in Croatia.

"Many archaeologists are looking for burial sites of settlements," she said. "I think dogs can solve their problems."

After previously discovering tombs in an ancient cemetery in the Drvica hillfort, Professor Glavaš contacted dog trainer Andrea Pintar, with the hope of being able to find out more, according to The Guardian.

Pintar brought three Belgian Malinois and one German Shepherd to the site - the dogs had previously been working to sniff out graves for criminal investigations.

All the canines were able to discover

the location of all three graves that had already been located by a human team, even though the graves had been removed of human remains and artefacts.

Professor Glavaš said the dogs were likely to have detected the aroma of decomposed bodies, which had likely been absorbed by the porous rock around the excavated soil.

Even more impressively, the dogs accurately identified six new tombs that Professor Glavaš was then able to excavate.

The newly discovered tombs consist of small stone burial chests, each containing small bones from human fingers and feet, as well as artefacts such as buckles.

The ancient inhabitants of the hilltop fort of Drvica most likely died impoverished, due to the windy conditions and the difficulty of growing crops.

While dogs are frequently used to detect human remains in criminal investigations, their potential as four-legged archaeologists is yet to be fully explored.

Dogs also provide a cheaper and less destructive method of uncovering fragile burial sites than high-tech methods such as ground-penetrating radar (GPR), electrical resistivity, and remote sensing.

The study was published in the Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory.

UK opposition parties

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work together to bring forward an election this year," said SNP leader Ian Blackford.

He and Lib Dem leader Jo Swinson have laid out their offer in a letter to European Council president Donald Tusk.

Johnson has proposed an election on December 12, but only if parliament ratifies his Brexit deal before then.

The SNP and Lib Dems -- who both strongly oppose Brexit -- want an election on December 9.

A source at Johnson's Downing Street office said the prime minister would do all he can to force an election to "get Brexit done", including considering options offered by other opposition parties.

Johnson late Saturday accused MPs of holding Britain "hostage" by refusing to back an election or a

Brexit deal, reported AFP.

"Millions of businesses and people cannot plan their futures, this paralysis is causing real damage and the country must move on in 2020," he said in a statement.

His culture minister, Nicky Morgan, doubled down on the message yesterday, warning lawmakers that Thursday was still "the default leaving date".

"So that should focus minds," she told Sky News.

LABOUR WAITS

Last week, Johnson called for a general election on December 12, offering parliament until November 6 to ratify his Brexit deal - the first time Britain's prime minister had conceded he would not meet his October 31 deadline.

It is his third attempt to get the required backing in parliament, where he needs the support of two-

thirds of its 650 lawmakers for a new election, reported Reuters.

The easiest path for the governing Conservatives would be if the prime minister's move was supported by the Labour Party, which so far has said it needs to see what kind of delay the EU would offer before making a decision.

The EU has agreed there should be an extension but has set no departure date, saying it would wait to see how parliament voted on Johnson's call for an early election.

"Of course we want a general election but we've got to make sure that we get those absolute reassurances that Boris Johnson won't use a general election and the campaign to crush us out of the European Union with a disastrous no-deal Brexit," said Jon Ashworth, Labour's health policy chief.

"That is what we're waiting for."

'Bar, casino' in Aziz M Bhai's house

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Shisha, three shishas and 200gms of marijuana, along with some valuables.

Fazlur further said the house had a mini bar and a group of people would go there to gamble and drink.

The DNC detained two caretakers of the buildings, Nabin Mandal and Meer Md Parvez, for interrogation.

Nabin told The Daily Star that he has been working as a caretaker of the house for the last seven years, but he had never seen Aziz Mohammad Bhai.

Fazlur said two cases would be filed against the caretakers with Gulshan police station tomorrow and the DNC will pray for remand to investigate who else was involved in bringing the gambling equipment and liquor, adding, "We will interrogate the two again to find Aziz Mohammad's links in this regard and then take further steps."

Quoting the two detainees, Khurshid Alam, assistant director of Dhaka North DNC, said Aziz Mohammad has not been in the country since 2007, adding that his wife had come to

Bangladesh for a few days and left for Thailand two days ago.

Parvez told this newspaper that he was in charge of taking care of the third floor, but has never entered the room in which the liquor was found.

The drive came amid an ongoing government crackdown on illegal gambling, extortion, contract-grabbing, and other forms of corruption and illicit activities.

Since September 18, Rab and police have raided different places, including some casinos inside sporting clubs, and arrested a number of leaders of the ruling party and its affiliated bodies.

The list includes expelled Dhaka South Jabo League president Ismail Chowdhury Samrat, his accomplice Arman, expelled organising secretary of Jabo League's Dhaka south unit Khalid Mahmud, Kalabagan Krira Chakra President and ex-Krishak League leader Shafiqul Alam Firoz, Jabo League leader and businessman GK Shamim and Mohammedan Sporting Club's Director-in-Charge Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan.

According to sources, Aziz is a lifetime member of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce, owner of the Olympic Industries Ltd, Ambee Pharmaceuticals, and Ambee Films. He also runs hotel and resort businesses in different countries.

Aziz is now staying in Thailand with his family. He runs his businesses from there, sources said.

Errant agents will face music

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"We will have zero tolerance against any irregularities," Imran told journalists at a press conference in the ministry's conference hall yesterday.

Asked about the presence of powerful lobbies and manpower brokers involved in visa trading in both Bangladesh and countries abroad, Imran admitted it was true, but said there was a lack of information about them.

"If I get information, I can act promptly against the errant brokers or agents. Our embassies and officials from the ministry are working towards this end," he said.

"Our executive magistrates are on standby. If there is information, we [will] take action. I hope those involved in illegal activities will be careful now," the minister said.

The lawmaker said illegal activities by the brokers are a major factor that leads to closures of labour markets. However, the government is working towards rectifying the malpractices and reopen the labour markets in Malaysia and the UAE, while exploring new markets, he added.

Also, countries like the UAE and Saudi Arabia are prioritising recruitment of locals, he added.

The United Arab Emirates, which restricted recruitment back in 2012, maintains restrictions for the general workers from Bangladesh and only hires domestic workers from the country.

The latest market that has been reopened to Bangladeshi workers is Seychelles, which currently employs some 2,500 Bangladeshi. It froze recruitment in October last year

on allegations of private sector irregularities.

On October 21, Bangladesh and Seychelles signed an agreement on labour cooperation. Under the deal, Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Limited, the state-run recruiting agent, and the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) will manage the whole recruitment.

"The cost of recruitment in Seychelles will be minimal," said Selim Reza, secretary at the expatriates' welfare ministry.

Seychelles has also opened its market for Bangladesh and the aspirants are being recruited. He asked those wishing to go to Japan not to pay any money to any agency or broker as it's the Japanese employers who would bear the cost.

None of the accused was held

Baghdadi dead

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in the past proved resilient, continuing to mount or inspire attacks in the region and beyond despite losing most of its territory in recent years.

Baghdadi had long been sought by the United States - which offered a \$25 million reward for his capture - as leader of a jihadist group that at one point controlled large areas of Syria and Iraq, where it declared a caliphate.

Islamic State has carried out atrocities against religious minorities and attacks on five continents in the name of an ultra-fanatic version of Islam that horrified mainstream Muslims.

"Baghdadis' death represents a huge blow to the organisations capacity to swell its ranks, mobilise its existing supporters and develop the momentum that could restore it to its past glories," said Ranj Alaldin, a fellow at Brookings Institution in Doha focused on Iraq.

"That said, ISIS (Islamic State)

was not finished. "Al-Baghdadi's death is a hard blow against Islamic State, but it is just a stage," he said. France's interior minister called for increased vigilance in case of acts of revenge by extremists.

Longtime US foe Iran, which accuses the United States and its allies of creating Islamic State, was dismissive. Information Minister Mohammad Javad Azari-Jahromi, tweeted: "Not a big deal. You just killed your creature."

Irqi analyst Hisham al-Hashemi, an expert on jihadist groups, said Baghdadis' death was likely to lead to a split within Islamic State.

"The split in IS is inevitable, it always happens when any radical religious group loses a charismatic leader," he said.

In the hours before Trump's announcement, sources in the region had described the raid on a compound in the village of Barisha, in Idlib province bordering Turkey, in the early hours of Sunday.

Iraqi state television broadcast night-time footage of an explosion and daytime images of a crater in the ground and what it said was the aftermath of the raid, including torn and blood-stained clothes.

Iraq's military said later in a statement that its intelligence services had located Baghdadis' whereabouts and had passed the information to the United States.

Trump said eight helicopters carried the US special forces troops to the compound where Baghdadi was hiding, where they were met with gunfire before blasting their way in through the walls to avoid a booby-trapped main door.

The US forces spent around two hours in the compound, he said, adding that they had taken away "highly sensitive material and information".

Russia "treated us great" by opening up airspace it controlled for the raid and Kurdish allies gave some helpful information, according to Trump. The Russian defence ministry, however, said it was not aware of any assistance to US forces.

The president said he watched the operation unfold in the Situation Room of the White House.

The military named the operation against Baghdadi after US aid worker and hostage Kayla Mueller, US national security adviser Robert O'Brien told NBC's "Meet the Press". In 2015, US officials told Reuters that Mueller had been repeatedly raped by Baghdadi himself before she died in Islamic State custody earlier that year.

At the height of its power, Islamic State ruled over millions of people in territory running from northern Syria through towns and villages along the Tigris and Euphrates valleys to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital Baghdad. Thousands of civilians were killed by the group as it mounted what the United Nations called a genocidal campaign against Iraq's Yazidi minority. It also caused worldwide revulsion by beheading foreign nationals from countries including the United States, Britain and Japan.

Bus owners blame

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Bus owners in the capital used to get route permit from owners' association, but the last BNP-led government introduced the company-based route permit system, he said.

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