

# It can't be a Razakars' list

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The prime minister said this while delivering her opening speech at the meeting of Bangladesh Awami League Central Working Committee at her official residence Gono Bhaban.

Sheikh Hasina urged the aggrieved families of freedom fighters to see the matter with compassion and forgiveness.

"I would like to tell those who got hurt to be calm and see the matter with forgiveness...they [freedom fighters] can never be in the list of Razakars...they can rest assured," she said.

The prime minister said confusion was created as the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs published the list on the website without scrutinising it.

Hasina said she earlier directed the Liberation War Ministry to publish

the list following proper scrutiny, but the ministry did it in hurriedly ahead of the Victory Day.

"It [the list] is no way the list of Razakars," she said, adding that there were separate lists of Razakars, Al-Badr and Al-Shams that had been published in the gazettes.

She said a list of terrors had been prepared during the Pakistan period where the names of freedom fighters were incorporated.

Following the August 15 massacre, military dictators Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, and even Khaleda Zia used the list.

"There has been confusion between the list of terrors and the list of Razakars. Hadn't Ziaur Rahman, Ershad or Khaleda Zia used the list, the problem would not have appeared," said the prime minister.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina attending a parade of the Border Guard Bangladesh at its headquarters in the capital's Pilkhana yesterday morning, marking the BGB Day 2019. PHOTO: PID

# Cop held for giving info to Indian police

UNB, Dhaka

A suspended constable of Benapole Port Police Station was arrested in the capital's Mirpur area on Tuesday for reportedly giving confidential information.

Prasad Saha, who hails from Terokhada upazila in Khulna, previously worked at Benapole Immigration Check Post and was transferred to the police station last month, police said.

Officer-in-charge of Benapole Police Station Mamun Khan said a sedition case had been filed against Prasad.

The detainee was produced before a court yesterday by police who were

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# Is this man top terror Joy?

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with their whereabouts unknown.

The National Central Bureau (NCB) Dhaka presumed Joy was in Australia and on November 8 last year had requested its counterpart in Canberra to trace and locate him.

NCB-Canberra replied the following day that there was no trace of entry by Joy to Australia, according to Mohiul Islam, assistant inspector general at Police Headquarters and Bangladesh's contact person for Interpol.

"The subject decidedly tops the list of most-wanted fugitives," he said.

In a six-month-long investigation that started in June and traversed three countries, The Daily Star and Canada's Global News traced down a man who bears a striking resemblance to Joy.

**DOPPELGÄNGER IN CANADA**

Md. Tarekh Rana, an Indian national hailing from Kolkata, wasted no time in making a name for himself since moving to Canada five years ago.

He set up a real estate company in Ajax, a town east of Toronto, and homed in towards an image of a politically-connected global entrepreneur and philanthropist.

His designs brought him civic awards, including Ajax's 2018 Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year.

He has photographed alongside a gallery of Canadian politicians, including Ahmed Hussien, when he was the immigration minister. He looked a lot like Joy in all of them.

Curiously, Rana and Joy have the same date of birth, the same height, the same health problems and most likely attended the same high school.

"I'm not this guy," he told Global News when shown the Interpol photo of Joy, who is also 52, at his office in Ajax in July.

But he acknowledged he looked like the fugitive wanted man and said the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had raised the same concern.

"It's a very similar face. But I really struggle for 2-1/2 years because my face looks similar to this guy."

**PUTTING DOWN ROOTS IN KOLKATA**

Joy reportedly fled to Malaysia soon after his name cropped up in the most wanted list in Bangladesh. But sometime in 2003 he landed in Kolkata, as reported in The Daily Star on June 10, 2003.

He hoped to settle down there, and went on to buy three flats and set up a clothing business, as per a file obtained from the Calcutta High Court pertaining to the arrest of a man named Md. Tarekh Rana.

And his criminal activities in Dhaka, it just became more brazen and dramatic.

For instance, on April 18, 2006 Mohammad Shahabuddin, managing director of Turki Associate, a manpower recruitment agency, received a phone call from Singapore from a man claiming to be Joy.

Coincidentally, Rana's passport entries, which the joint investigation got hold of, show he arrived at Singapore on April 18, 2006.

The caller sought Tk 50 lakh within a week -- a demand Shahabuddin refused to entertain, as per the general diary (GD) filed by Turki Associate with the Ramna Police Station on May 15, 2006. The joint investigation obtained a copy of the file.

A few days later, the man called again from the same number and raised the toll amount to Tk 5 crore. Shahabuddin remained defiant.

Then on May 14, 2006, goons claiming to be Joy's men stormed into the office of Turki Associate in capital's Hatirpool and fired indiscriminately, killing two and gravely wounding four more.

Within five minutes of the attack Shahabuddin received another call. Terming the bullet shower as a mere rehearsal, Joy threatened to kill Shahabuddin's family and employees if he did not pay Tk 5 crore at the earliest, as per the case file.

Shahabuddin also said Joy told him that his men made a similar attack on Orbit International in Gulshan 10 days earlier, as reported in The Daily Star on May 16, 2006.

The case against Joy is still pending.

Then on April 28, 2007, two of Joy's men were arrested as they were fleeing following another round of shooting at God Gift International Recruiting Agency's office in Gulshan 2, as reported in The Daily Star on April 29, 2007.

Joy was allegedly calling the agency's owner from Kolkata in the past couple of months demanding Tk 5 crore.

Like Shahabuddin before him, he refused to pay up, and on March 18, 2007 the company had filed a GD with Gulshan Police Station regarding the demand for toll.

To intimidate him, Joy sent four of his goons to God Gift's office. His men fired twice at the security guard.

Hearing the gunshots locals screamed out for help and a nearby police patrol chased the criminals. The police caught up with the assailants near Road 43 and nabbed two of them loaded with firearms.

Their two other cohorts however managed to dodge arrest.

Both the arrestees confessed that they had carried out the attack under instructions of one Sabbir, who ran criminal activities in Dhaka for Joy, then based in Kolkata, according to the report in The Daily Star.

Until 2007, Joy targeted many such overseas manpower recruitment agencies and demanded Tk 5 crore by calling from Kolkata, Malaysia and Singapore, according to DMP. Not all his victims filed GDs for fear of further threats and attacks.

Joy was also allegedly involved in the 2006 murder of Aftab Ahmed, a Dhaka University teacher and a former vice-chancellor of National University.

On September 23, 2006, three unidentified youths broke into his Fuller Road residence and shot at him, as per the attempt to murder case filed by Ahmed's wife Noorjahan Akhter the following day with Shahbagh Police Station.

He succumbed to his injuries four days later.

Akhter did not name any suspects involved in the murder.

Then in March 2008 police put in remand notorious criminal Sanjibul Hassan Emon -- who had gone into hiding in India in 2001, was nabbed by the neighbouring country's police and handed over to Bangladesh on March 7, 2008 -- in connection with the murder.

On April 10, 2008 Emon made a confessional statement before a magistrate in Dhaka stating that the three youths conducted the hit job upon Joy's order.

Subsequently, Joy became wanted by the DMP, as per the case files obtained by the joint investigation. The case is still pending.

**ARREST IN KOLKATA**

On March 17, 2007, West Bengal Police arrested six Bangladeshi men at the Kasba Petrol Pump in Kolkata.

The officers seized three dubious Indian passports from the men, who admitted they had entered India through a clandestine route and without any valid documents.

But that wasn't all they told police. They also disclosed that a Seven-Star leader was in the city and had taken "shelter with the support of forged documents", according to court records.

Indian police made their move on May 5, 2007, according to court and police records.

"We requested the West Bengal Police to do it," Abdullah Aref, then additional superintendent of Criminal Investigation Department and in-charge of the team tasked with bringing back criminals from India, told The Daily Star.

He also said Joy walked with a noticeable limp, which was his identifying feature.

When the police arrived at his residence in Kolkata's Rajarhat, they found a man recovering from leg surgery and unable to walk.

Suffering from acute arthritis, doctors had inserted pins in his legs, the court records said. Police arrested him but took him to MR Bangur Hospital, and a judge ordered him to be brought before the court once doctors pronounced him well enough.

A report by West Bengal Police said "serious incriminating materials" supported the allegations against him.

The arrest was widely reported in the Indian and Bangladeshi press. The Daily Star reported on May 8, 2007 that Bangladesh had sent a letter to India's foreign ministry requesting Joy's handover. But, it was in vain.

He was still in hospital three months later, when his lawyers filed a petition in the Calcutta High Court claiming he was "absolutely innocent" and had been falsely implicated "due to some grudge".

The joint investigation acquired a copy of the court case.

A photo allegedly taken following the 2007 arrest of the suspect alleged to be Joy shows a man strongly resembling Rana.

Insisting he was a taxpaying Indian garment dealer, he gave the court his IDs and business documents naming him as Md. Tarekh Rana, the proprietor of Gaus Fashion and Zee Fashion. The files did not cover the period prior to 2004.

He also filed an Indian driver's licence issued in 2004 in the name Tarekh Rana and an Indian passport issued in 2005 that showed visits to Singapore and exchanges of US dollars to Thai baht, Malaysian ringgit and Singaporean dollar.

Curiously, the arrested man's date of birth is March 3, 1967 -- which is the same as Joy's. Ontario property records show the man whom Global News approached in his Ajax office was also born on that day.

His place of birth listed on the Indian passport is Narayanpur in West Bengal.

Indian media reporting at the time of the arrest indicated the man who was apprehended was using the alias Rana and operated a clothing store in the Rajarhat district.

Rana mentioned Gaus Fashion as the name of his business in Kolkata that he sold off to move to Canada. Gaus Fashion was located in Chinar Park, Rajarhat.

The press accounts also said the arrested man was in his 40s, owned "flats" in Malaysia and had undergone surgery on both legs that January.

Rana would have been 40 at the time, owns "13" condos in Malaysia and underwent surgery on both legs that January. He is still suffering from a severe case of arthritis and walks with a limp.

The arrested man's father was named as Sohail Rana. Rana, who vehemently maintains that he has never been arrested in Kolkata or anywhere else, said that was his father's name.

At the Calcutta High Court, his lawyers claimed he was wrongfully

to India and applied to come back to Canada on an investor visa. His application was turned down due to his lack of formal education, he said.

Coincidentally, Joy had studied up to class-10 and did not have any high school certificate, as per Bangladesh's CID.

Rana's immigration records suggest otherwise: he did not apply for investor visa again in 2012 but a ten-year visitor visa at the Canadian High Commission in Singapore.

Curiously, on November 28, 2012 Times of India reported that Joy was in Canada.

Rana's visa was issued on December 13, 2012.

He flew into Toronto 15 days later and straightaway set about putting down his roots in Durham Region, located east of Toronto. He bought a house in Pickering and founded a company whose corporate slogan brimmed with optimism: "You dream it, we build it!"

A glowing profile in Millionaire Mindset, a local magazine, quoted Rana as attributing his arrival in Canada to love: a Bangladeshi woman he met in Kolkata immigrated to Canada and he followed her.

"So mesmerised and in love was Rana that he named his Canadian company after her initials, and her year of birth," it said. (Rana denied giving an on-the-record interview to the magazine, but the author, Shaun Michael Samaroo, said otherwise.)

Ontario corporate records show that SJ71 Ltd. was registered with the provincial government on Feb. 21, 2013 by two directors, Rana and -- Shohana Ajmee. The address for the two was the same Pickering one.

Ajmees told Global News she never agreed to be on the SJ71 board of directors. When she found out, she said

database.

"I know that he has escaped from Bangladesh," he said of the fugitive Joy. "That's what I know. That's why I've been facing this problem."

**HANGING OUT IN CANADA'S POLITICAL CIRCLE**

In 2016, Rana turned to the constituency office of the Liberal MP for Ajax, Mark Holland, for help with his work permit application, said Holland's spokesperson Michael Radoslav.

As per his immigration records, Rana has applied for work permit multiple times between 2012 and 2017 but was rejected each time on various grounds -- including criminality.

Holland's office "conducted standard inquiries" about Rana's work permit file with Immigration Refugee and Citizenship Canada, but had no knowledge of his past, Radoslav said.

Rana's immigration records suggest Holland did write a letter on October 17, 2016 in support of his work permit application, and his office appear to have followed up on the status of the application.

A couple of other politicians also wrote letters supporting Rana's work permit application, his immigration file shows.

In Canada, he hovered around politicians and made donations to candidates of both Liberal and National Democratic Party and also to local causes.

Rana told Global News if he really had a criminal background, he could have made a refugee claim in Canada "which would be so easy", but he had not done so. Instead, he said he had invested a "handsome amount of money" in Canada, created jobs and paid taxes.

Rana's tenacity did pay off as in December last year his work permit did come through.

"They took my facial recognition, they took my fingerprint, everything, RCMP and all those thing, and then they cleared and finally after 2-1/2 years I got it. This work permit took 2-1/2 years."

He said he had received a clean criminal record check from police in Kolkata as part of his pending application to become a permanent resident of Canada. "If I would be arrested how would I get it?"

When prodded why the signature in the Kolkata court file of the arrested Rana was identical to his, he said he has been a victim of identity theft.

"I am now really shocked because for some reason someone is using my passport and picture," he said in an email last month from Malaysia, where he said he was trying to secure funds for his struggling Ajax business.

At the time of writing the report, his company, which repurposes already existing buildings, has been evicted from his headquarters in a two-storied office complex over unpaid rent amounting to \$21,470.

SJ71's crown jewel, G Centre, a state-of-the-art co-working space, is now being operated by a property management firm appointed by the building's owner over claims of unpaid bills.

Rana acknowledged in his last email he owes about \$7-million, but claimed he has "close to \$26-million" in assets.

"Businesses go trough [sic] stages. Within next two weeks two million dollar will be paid to my trades, Contractors & creditors with late fees, penalties & compensation, Inshallah," he wrote.

**IRREFUTABLE LINKS WITH BANGLADESH**

On his Facebook page Rana often posted photos with a young woman and a child, whom he referred to as his daughter and grandson respectively. He mentioned she had been widowed in March this year.

The joint investigation tracked down the young woman. She resides in Dhaka and is a lecturer at a private university. Her husband, indeed, was killed in a road accident earlier this year. And in his application for work permit Rana proposed setting up a new venture whose name is the same as the young woman's.

The young woman's mother, who also resides in Dhaka, is a director of a jute mill and has a son who resides in Australia.

And in the bank documents produced before the Calcutta High Court, a woman is listed as a co-signee -- whose name is phonetically like her.



detained because he had never been brought before a judge. The court dismissed the argument, ruling he couldn't be arraigned because he was hospitalised.

The joint investigation was unable to find any record of what happened to the case. There is no indication he was ever convicted. An Indian lawyer said he had represented Rana over a "human rights violation" and the arrest was overturned.

An Indian police officer who worked on the case told the joint investigation Rana had confessed he was Joy, was freed and allowed to leave the country. The Times of India reported he was released in June 2008 and went missing that December, prompting his family to blame police.

Over in Dhaka, reports of Joy's reign of terror dried up, too.

**CAMPING IN CANADA**

Rana's passport entries indicate he left Kolkata for Malaysia, where he has residency status since 2006 under the country's 'My Second Home' programme.

The joint investigation got hold of documents detailing Rana's Canadian immigration history from a confidential source. The documents contain copies of every stamped page of Rana's passport, which he furnished as part of his visa applications.

On November 4, 2008 he applied for an entrepreneur visa at the Canadian High Commission in Delhi but his application was unsuccessful.

But he did succeed in getting a single entry tourist visa three years later from the Canadian High Commission in Malaysia after mentioning he was visiting a "family friend". The name of the friend was Shohana Ajmee Ahsan.

Rana told Global News he first came to Canada on Christmas eve in 2011 on a one-year tourist visa, after recovering from his leg-shortening surgeries in Kolkata and working on "projects" in Thailand, Malaysia and Australia.

He stayed for six months, returned

she confronted Rana about it and he agreed to replace her.

The directorship at least served a practical purpose: Ontario companies must have at least one director who is a resident of Canada. As a visitor, Rana would not have qualified, but Ajmee did.

Records show that Ajmee was replaced in 2014 by an entrepreneur who had once sought a federal Liberal nomination. Rana did not respond to questions about Ajmee.

His criminal past seemed to have caught up with him in 2015: when returning from a destination wedding in Mexico he was pulled aside at Toronto's Pearson International Airport and questioned by immigration authorities over his similarities to Joy, Rana told Global News.

His immigration records indicate that incident did happen.

"Tarekh Rana has been confirmed, through facial recognition, as being one and same as Tanveer Islam Khandakar," read the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) notes.

The photo they cross-checked was the one on the Bangladesh Police website.

It appears the immigration officer wanted to proceed with a case against him. "He acquired his visa without disclosing his true identity of Tanveer Islam Khandakar, who is one of the Bangladesh Police's most wanted criminals," the notes read.

Rana though was able to convince the immigration official that he was not Joy and allowed to enter Canada.

This incident became an issue the following year when Rana applied for work permit.

But Rana and his lawyers were able to sidestep this by presenting fingerprints that RCMP failed to associate with any criminal record anywhere.

Bangladesh introduced biometric registration in 2009, eight years after Joy had fled Bangladesh, and DMP do not have any biometric of the fugitive in its

THE BALL IS IN CANADA'S COURT

Islam of NCB Dhaka said they contacted their counterpart in Ottawa.

"At first NCB Ottawa seemed enthusiastic -- we were so hopeful. So when we wanted to initiate the formal process their interest cooled off. They then told us we have to go through so many hoops that go outside the jurisdiction of the police. We've to go through the judicial process there."

For cases like Joy's, if the countries communicate through the diplomatic channel and the embassies cooperate, it becomes easier to catch the criminal.

But if they do not want to cooperate the only window left is the Interpol, which is not a legally binding obligation between the 194 countries, he said.

"If the country does not want to give us any information, if they do not want to cooperate, we cannot do anything about it."

So before the Bangladesh authorities set the ball rolling through the diplomatic channel, it wants to hear what the NCB Ottawa has to say.

"They have not replied to us yet," he added.

The joint investigation contacted CBSA, RCMP, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Durham Police, all of whom declined citing privacy restrictions.

At the time of filing, 'Malaysia My Second Home' authorities did not respond to an email requesting comment on the matter.

**5 killed**

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passengers had asked him to slow down, but he did not pay heed to them, he said.

Rajbari civil surgeon Mahfujur Rahman said 10 of the injured were shifted to Faridpur Medical College Hospital from Rajbari General Hospital.

Saidur Rahaman, officer-in-charge of Mandimara Highway Police Station, said they seized both the vehicles, but did not find any of the drivers.

Identity of only one of the dead was confirmed immediately. He was Farman Ali Mandal, 70, of Majgram village in Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila.