

Stowaway found again in ship heading for Singapore

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Another incident of someone trying to leave the country by hiding in a container shipped from Chattogram Port has raised security concerns.

Liton Molla, a 23-year-old truck driver, got onboard a Singapore-bound vessel from the port jetty and hid in an empty container. He was caught by the crew members mid-ocean when he came out of the container to look for food. He was brought back home and handed over to the port authority on Thursday night.

CPA Security Department Inspector Nasir Uddin Ahmed filed a case against Molla with Bandar Police Station on Friday and handed him over to the police.

Over the last 12 years, there have been at least six such incidents, three of which happened in the last one year.

In January this year, a young boy reached Malaysia after having survived four days in an empty container on a ship.

In the previous incidents, the stowaways managed to sneak into empty containers before they were loaded onto ships.

However, this is the first time a person has managed to get on board a ship and then hide himself in a container.

Sources in the CPA and the shipping agent said that Molla waited till all the containers were loaded and then for low tide to get on board. During low tide, a loaded ship's deck and the jetty become almost the same height, and anyone can climb the railing without using the staircase.

Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association Chairman Syed Md Arif said that even with several layers of security, from the entry points to the port yard and jetty areas, such an incident is unfortunate.

Bangladesh Freight Forwarders Association Vice-President Khairul Alam Suzan urged the authorities to be more cautious and take effective measures to stop the recurrence of such incidents.

CPA Secretary Md Omar Faruk said, "There is usually a crowd of berth operators, workers, and truck and prime mover drivers at the jetties during the loading of containers on a ship. Before the departure of a ship, its chief officer usually does thorough checks for any potential stowaways onboard. The culprit managed to evade the check somehow."



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina using the country's first travelator, also known as moving walkway, during the partial inauguration of the much-anticipated Terminal-3 of Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday. After the soft launch and a speech, she toured the terminal building to observe its various state-of-the-art facilities and attended the cultural programme organised on the special occasion.

PHOTO: PTD

Potato, onion prices soar

Wholesalers blame dishonest suppliers, inadequate imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of potato and onion in the capital's kitchen markets have gone up by at least Tk 3 to Tk 10 per kilogram in the last four days, dealing a further blow to consumers, especially those from low- and middle-income families.

Traders blamed the price hikes by suppliers amid torrential rain in the last few days for the rise in potato prices. They also claimed that there was a shortage of onion supplies to the markets.

Consumers, however, raised questions about the government's market monitoring mechanism as it could not enforce the retail prices of onion, potato and egg.

The government on September 14 fixed the retail price of onion at Tk 64-65 per kg, potato at Tk 35-36 a kg and egg at Tk 12 each.

Retailers at Karwan Bazar, Kazipara, and Shewrapara kitchen markets sold potato for Tk 50 per kg yesterday, up from Tk 45 on Tuesday.

Besides, locally produced good quality onion was sold for Tk 90 to Tk 100 per kg, up from Tk 80 to Tk 90 four days ago.

Yusuf Bepari, one of the owners of Bikrampur Bhandar at Karwan Bazar, said they sold potato at a wholesale price of Tk 39 to Tk 42 per kg yesterday.

According to him, the price came down to Tk 36 from Tk 39 per kg last week.

Yusuf said the price of potato went up as suppliers hiked the price after knowing that the potato seeds of many farmers, especially in the country's northern region, were damaged during the recent heavy rains.

Besides, the next potato crop will not hit the markets for at least another month. This could be another reason behind the increase in the tuber price, he said.

Shafiqul Islam, a self-employed person, went to Karwan Bazar from the Begunbari area yesterday to buy some essentials for his five-member family.

He said the price of five kg potato went up by Tk 20 compared to last week.

"It has become very difficult for me to cope with the soaring prices of essentials," he added.

Onion trader Shajib Sheikh, proprietor of Matri Bhandar wholesale shop at Karwan Bazar, said there is a shortage of onion supplies from Faridpur and Pabna, the country's two major onion-producing districts.

Also, the import of onion has fallen in the last few days and the next onion crop will not be available in two to three months. These could be the other reasons for the recent increase in onion price, he said.

Yesterday, ginger was sold for Tk 320 to Tk 350 per kg at Karwan Bazar, up by Tk 20 to Tk 30 from Tuesday.

US pre-polls assessment mission arrives

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The six-member US pre-election assessment mission yesterday arrived in Dhaka on a six-day visit to determine whether to send a limited election observation mission for the upcoming general election in Bangladesh.

The delegation comprises of Karl F Inderfurth, former assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs; Bonnie Glick, former deputy USAID administrator; Maria Chin Abdullah, former member of the Malaysia House of Representatives; Jamil Jaffer, former associate counsel to the president; Manpreet Singh Anand, regional director for Asia-Pacific at National Democratic Institute; and Johanna Kao, IRI senior director, Asia-Pacific Division.

Today, the delegation is scheduled to hold meeting with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, diplomatic sources said.

On Monday, it is likely to meet the ruling Awami League, opposition BNP and Jatiya Party.

ON Tuesday, the delegation will hold meeting with the Election Commission, law ministry officials and Human Rights Commission and civil society groups, the sources said.

Teen gets juvie for pelting stones at train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A Rajbari court yesterday sent a 13-year-old to Gazipur Juvenile Development Centre for pelting stones at a train in Kalikapur Bridge area of Faridpur's Pangsha upazila.

The Rajbari Women and Children Repression Tribunal ordered to send the eighth grader from Shatajitpur village to the correction facility till the hearing of the case, said Muminul Islam, court inspector of Rajbari.

"When the train was coming from Ishwardi Friday morning, a child threw two stones at the train while the train was crossing the Panshar Kalikapur Bridge area," said Somnath Basu, officer-in-charge of Rajbari Railway Police Station.

"A stone fell under the train, and another one hit the glass door of an AC compartment, cracking it. After the incident, Railway Police identified the child and arrested him Friday evening," he added.

The train, of Ishwardi-Mawa route, is supposed to ferry the prime minister to Faridpur on the day of the inauguration of the Padma Bridge Rail Project on October 10

Prime accused held over teen's gang rape

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Rab early yesterday arrested the prime accused in a case filed over the gang rape of a 14-year-old girl in Bagerhat's Rampal.

Rahmat Ali, 20, was arrested from Gazipur's Chowrasta area, said Rampal Police Station Officer-in-Charge SM Ashrafur Alam.

Rab later handed Rahmat over to Rampal Police Station in the afternoon, he added.

Earlier, two remaining accused Sheikh Russell Hossen, 24, and Rakib Hossain Sajol, 26 were also arrested.

According to the case statement, on the evening of September 29, Rahmat and Russell abducted the girl from the Ronsen intersection area beside the Khulna-Mongla highway and took her to an isolated place where Rakib was staying. Later, the three raped her.

Around 7:00pm the same day, they freed the girl on condition that she would remain silent.

OC SM Ashrafur said, on September 30, the girl's uncle filed a rape case with Rampal Police Station, accusing the three.

Later, on the same night, police arrested Russell and Rakib from Zero Point and Foila areas of the upazila.

Inmate dies at Kashimpur jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

An inmate died yesterday around 5:00pm at the Kashimpur Central Jail in Gazipur.

The deceased prisoner was identified as Ratan Mia, 45, son of Sirajul Mridha of Tongi Bank field area of Gazipur metropolis.

Amirul Islam, superintendent of Kashimpur Jail 2, said, "When Ratan fell sick around 8:00am, I immediately sent him to Gazipur Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital. There, the body doctor declared him dead at 10:10am."

The duty of the deceased has been handed over to the family. He was in jail in a narcotics case filed with Tongi Police Station.

Israel 'at war' after Hamas offensive Next int'l aviation hub will be here

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aimed as far as Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, some bypassing the Iron Dome defence system and hitting buildings.

In southern Israel near Gaza, bodies of Israeli civilians lay strewn across a highway in Sderot, surrounded by broken glass. A woman and a man were sprawled out dead across the front seats of a car. A military vehicle drove past the bodies of another woman and a man in a pool of blood behind another car.

Israeli security forces said there were 21 active scenes of gunbattles with infiltrators, and its navy had killed dozens more Palestinians attempting to infiltrate by sea.

In Gaza, black smoke and orange flames billowed into the evening sky from a high rise tower hit by an Israeli retaliatory strike. Crowds of mourners carried the bodies of freshly killed militants through the streets, wrapped in green Hamas flags.

Israeli planes also bombed the house of Hamas Gaza chief Yehya Al-Sinwar in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip, Hamas media said, with no reports of casualties.

Israeli army Major General Ghasan Alyan warned Hamas had "opened the gates of hell" and would "pay for its deeds".

The army said its forces were battling Palestinian militants on the ground in several locations near the Gaza Strip, in an operation labelled "Swords of Iron".

Hamas deputy chief Saleh al-Arouri told Al Jazeera that the group was holding a large number of Israeli captives, including senior officials. He said Hamas had enough captives to make Israel free all Palestinians in its jails.

The military confirmed Israelis were being held captive in Gaza and soldiers have been killed, according to N12 and Reshet 13 news outlets.

The escalation follows months of rising bloodshed, mostly in the occupied West Bank, and tensions around Gaza's border and at contested holy sites in Jerusalem.

"This is the day of the greatest battle to end the last occupation on earth," Hamas military commander Mohammad Deif said, announcing the start of the operation in a broadcast on Hamas media.

Hamas labelled its attack Operation Al-Aqsa Flood and called on "resistance fighters in the West Bank" as well as in "Arab and Islamic nations" to join the battle.

It claimed to have fired more than 5,000 rockets. Army spokesman Richard Hecht said Israel had counted at least 2,200 rockets aimed at its territory.

Air raid sirens wailed across southern and central Israel, as well as in Jerusalem, where AFP journalists heard multiple rockets being intercepted by air defence systems.

In Tel Aviv, an AFP photographer saw a gaping hole in a building, with residents boarding a bus to seek safety in a hotel.

Rocket impacts left cars burning beneath residential buildings in the Israeli city of Ashkelon, north of Gaza.

Netanyahu vowed that the Israeli response would be of "a magnitude that the enemy has not known".

Hamas took control of Gaza in 2007, leading to Israel's crippling blockade of the impoverished enclave of 2.3 million people.

Israel and Hamas have since fought several wars. The last major military exchange, in May, killed 34 Palestinians and one Israeli.

In Gaza, people rushed to buy supplies in anticipation of days of conflict ahead. Some living near the Israeli border evacuated their homes and headed for shelters.

At Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital, an AFP journalist saw eight bodies in the morgue, while another

reporter witnessed the funeral of a ninth person killed in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza.

In Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, some Palestinian residents cheered and blew their car horns as sirens blared.

Western capitals roundly condemned the attacks by Hamas, which the European Union, United States and Israel consider a terrorist group.

UN Security Council chair Brazil said it would call an emergency meeting today.

But Hamas drew support from other foes of Israel, with Iran's supreme leader declaring he was "proud" of the Hamas action.

Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which fought a devastating war against Israel in 2006, hailed the "heroic operation on a grand scale".

US President Joe Biden was briefed on the "appalling Hamas terrorist attacks," said the White House, stressing that Washington would ensure Israel has the means to defend itself.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called the attack "terrorism in its most despicable form".

UN Middle East peace envoy Tor Wennesland said the assault had led to "a dangerous precipice" and called for all sides to "pull back from the brink".

Violence between Israel and the Palestinians has been surging since early last year.

Before yesterday's clashes, at least 247 Palestinians, 32 Israelis and two foreigners had been killed so far this year, including combatants and civilians on both sides, according to Israeli and Palestinian officials.

The vast majority of fatalities have occurred in the West Bank, which has been occupied by Israel since the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

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will have a floor space of 230,000 square metres, housing 115 check-in counters, 66 departure immigration desks, 59 arrival immigration desks and three VIP immigration desks.

The third terminal will be fully operational for passengers' use at the end of next year after completion of systems integration and calibration.

Its 12 boarding gates, with double entry bridges, will be operational by next year, while an additional 14 boarding bridges are expected to be installed afterwards.

Saying Bangladesh would soon become the international aviation hub through the upgradation of the country's aviation sector, the PM in her speech said, "Once Hong Kong was the international aviation hub and then Singapore took its place. Now, Dubai has become the new hub ... I believe Bangladesh will be the new hub as it is in between air routes of the East and West."

"The foreign airlines will land either at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport or Cox's Bazar International Airport for refueling."

Hasina added that all the major airports -- in Dhaka, Cox's Bazar, Sylhet and Chattogram -- are being expanded and modernised.

"The government has also taken measures to strengthen inter-district air connectivity for tourism to flourish."

"Besides, steps have been taken to install pipelines to bring jet fuel directly to the Dhaka airport, which will save time and money while also protecting the environment."

The premier further said the government, with the assistance of France, is going to set up a modern radar system to ensure air communication security.

"The government will also build a

second runway at the Dhaka airport," she said.

Meanwhile, she said, a masterplan has been prepared to ensure improved services at the airports for which consultants have also already been appointed.

Amid applause, she further said Bangladesh will one day step onto the moon like its neighbouring countries.

"The government had established the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University [BSMRAU] in Lalmonirhat to help achieve it."

After her speech, Hasina toured the terminal while being briefed about the various international-standard facilities of the establishment.

She also took part in a mock check-in at the immigration and was also given a boarding pass after checking in her luggage.

Speaking at the event, CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman said Terminal-3 was completed amid myriad obstacles and adversities and yesterday the dream finally came true.

However, 10 percent of the project work, including integration, calibration, functional test of all the equipment to make the third terminal building operational, still remains to be completed.

Once the full-fledged operation of the terminal begins, Dhaka airport's annual passenger and cargo handling capacity is expected to double.

Designed to enable passengers to enter and exit the airport smoothly, the third terminal will have a multimodal transport system.

The entire terminal is expected to be operated and maintained by a Japanese company under a public-

private partnership.

The opening of the terminal at HSA is a milestone initiative to not only help turn Bangladesh into a global aviation hub, but also to help flourish the national economy through a boost in tourism.

CAAB officials said around 15 foreign airlines have shown interest to operate from HSA, which is expected to play a great role in further advancing the country's aviation sector.

Tigers shrug off Afghan challenge

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we bowled," said Shakib during the post-match presentation ceremony yesterday.

Going back to Miraz, the right-hander once again stood up to a new challenge when he was sent to bat at No.3 for the first time in his ODI career.

Soon after he got to the middle, Bangladesh lost their second wicket and were down to 27 for two chasing 157.

But the in-form Miraz along with Najmul Hossain Shanto added 97 runs for the third wicket. The latter also struck a fifty and eventually remained unbeaten on 59 off 83 balls, setting Bangladesh on course to complete a comfortable victory.

Miraz was dismissed after scoring 57 off 73 balls, laced with five boundaries, when he was caught brilliantly by Rahmat Shah in mid-off off the bowling of Naveen-ul-Haq.

Bangladesh will next face defending champions England at the same venue on October 10.