

Expat shot dead in South Africa

A CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A Bangladeshi businessman was shot dead by armed robbers in South Africa on Thursday night.

Kamrul Islam, 33, was from Karmullahpur in Feni.

The incident occurred around 9:00pm (local time) in Vepener, a town in the Free State Province, said Kamruzzaman, elder brother of Kamrul, while talking to reporters.

Kamruzzaman said Kamrul moved to South Africa 12 years ago. He was planning to return to Bangladesh after Eid for his wedding.

Quoting relatives in South Africa, he said two robbers stormed into Kamrul's shop, and looted cash and valuables before forcing Kamrul outside. They then shot him in the chest, leaving him dead.

Kamruzzaman said preparations are underway to bring his body back home. He also sought the government's cooperation.

Daganbhuiyan UNO SM Azharul Islam said he is aware of the incident and that efforts are being made to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the matter.

Buet students

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accused, as they are influential individuals.

The protesters vowed to continue their movement until justice is served.

"Our peaceful protests and democratic programs will continue until the entire incident is thoroughly investigated and justice is ensured," said one of the protesting students.

Expressing frustration, the deceased's father Masud Mia told The Daily Star, "My son was killed by a reckless, unlicensed driver while standing near the footpath. Section 302 should be included in the case."

Advocate Mohammad Noor Hossain echoed the sentiment, saying, "Sections 98, 99, and 105 have been applied, which is unexpected."



A local casts a net into the river to catch fish. Villagers near the Sundarbans rely on fishing for their livelihood, venturing out daily during high tide to catch fish, which they sell in local markets for Tk 250-400 per day. The photo was taken from the Kalabagi Sutarkhali River in Dakop upazila, Khulna yesterday.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Student leaders first reached out to Yunus on Aug 1

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what greater duty could I have than to stand beside them?" Yunus wrote, referring to his initial reluctance to take on a leadership role.

At the time, Yunus was in Paris, attending the 2024 Summer Olympics as a special guest on the invitation of the Olympic Committee. He later underwent a minor medical procedure in France.

Following their conversation with Yunus, Nahid Islam, alongside Asif, released a video message on Facebook at around 4:00am on August 6, declaring: "We have spoken with Dr Yunus, and he has agreed to take on this great responsibility at the call of the student community and to save the country... We urge the President to form the interim government as soon as possible."

In the foreward, Yunus reflects on the events of July and August 2024,

saying, "The youth of Bangladesh have achieved an impossible feat for the country. When all hope of freeing the country from 16 years of autocracy was extinguished, they surprised everyone and liberated the nation completely."

He particularly praised the strategic planning of the student leaders. "They started the movement demanding quota reform but eventually brought down the dictator with their exceptional ability. Asif is one of those few youths who have brought the whole nation to the light of a new day with boundless courage."

Yunus revealed that Asif and other student leaders had persistently tried to contact him through various people, with the first attempts beginning on August 1. His colleagues kept him informed about their proposals, but he initially expressed reluctance.

"The students had only one message—'Sir, we will surely ensure the fall of Hasina. But after that, you have to take responsibility'," Yunus wrote.

In his book, Asif, also an adviser to the Youth and Sports ministry, wrote that the protesters established communication with Yunus through his team at the beginning of August. While initial outreach was met with uncertainty, student leaders Nahid Islam and Asif remained persistent, believing Yunus was the ideal figure to lead a transition after Hasina's downfall.

By August 3, the protesters could not yet predict the government's imminent collapse, but they had begun drafting contingency plans, convinced that Hasina's downfall was inevitable. "We need to have an emergency preparation keeping in mind the situation following the fall of Hasina. I informed Nahid

Islam that communication with Yunus has been established," Asif wrote in the book.

The first phone conversation between the student leaders and Yunus took place on the evening of August 5, just before Yunus was due to be taken into the operating room for surgery at a French hospital.

"We spoke to him with the phone on loudspeaker. He had his first talk with Nahid Islam that day. I said to Professor Yunus, 'Sir, the government has collapsed. Now is the time to make a decision.'"

Shojib and Nahid explained their vision of a national unity government, ensuring it would not resemble the military-backed interim administration of 2007–08.

"Professor Yunus was cautious that he would not take charge of a government that resembled the 'One-

Eleven' situation. The government would have to run according to his vision. If someone else ran the government, he would not stay in power. We told Professor Yunus we shared the same opinion – we would not accept a military-backed government," Asif wrote. Yunus advised the student leaders to discuss the matter with the army. According to Asif, Nahid responded, saying, "If we ask them not to intervene, it would expose our weakness. Instead, we could convey the idea of staying away from power while emphasising the unity of the uprising and the strength of the people in the field."

Following this discussion, Yunus agreed to take on the role, and the announcement was made through a video message on Facebook, confirming his acceptance as the Chief Adviser of the interim government.

Residents suffer

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unusable," said Sabina, a resident of ward 3.

Echoing her, Monirul Haque of ward 7 said, "We never get clean water from the municipal supply. The water stinks and is unclean, and hence we can't use it for consumption."

Abed Ali, another resident, shared similar ordeal.

They demanded urgent intervention from the authorities concerned to resolve the crisis, and ensure stable supply of clean water to the residents through overhauling the existing infrastructure, including distribution network, and regular cleaning up of the water tanks.

Riyaz Sheikh, a junior worker at the Dashani Water Department, said the new water tank is not yet operational at present. Once it is functional, it could help mitigate the crisis, he added.

Contacted, TM Rezaul Haque Rizvi, assistant engineer of the municipality, acknowledged that the aging pipes have

been causing leakage and contamination, and said immediate action is taken to repair leaks whenever reported, but the problem remains unresolved for.

He also informed that a Tk 40 crore project had been initiated to improve water supply and sanitation in the area. However, due to administrative delays, water from the proposed Panchadighi source has not yet been made available. As such, despite completion of the necessary infrastructure, water extraction has not commenced yet.

"The new water supply system includes around 45 kilometres of pipeline, five production tubewells, public toilets, a drainage system, a reservoir, a water treatment plant, an overhead reservoir, and three pump stations," he said.

Rizvi estimated that once the treatment plant becomes operational, daily water supply would increase by about 2 lakh gallons, benefiting a significant portion of the residents.

Set up 200

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It also pointed out that the tribunals lack sufficient supporting staff, making it difficult for them to function effectively. "To ensure the safety of women and children and expedite case disposal, it is essential to establish more tribunals with adequate personnel. Given the backlog and urgency, BJSa urges the authorities to set up at least 200 more tribunals immediately," the statement added.

The BJSa leaders noted that the government

enacted the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000, and formed special tribunals to prevent violence against women and ensure speedy trials.

"But even after 25 years, the law's objectives have not been fully realised. Several recent rape cases across the country have deeply shocked us. Conscious students and citizens have demanded maximum punishment for rapists. BJSa strongly condemns the recurrence of such heinous crimes," the statement said.

Yunus for transparency

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purpose, the entire effort becomes meaningless."

"For a long time, rampant corruption has taken place. Those who were supposed to benefit were deprived, while certain preferred individuals were given access. Financial transactions were also

involved. But those who had rightful claims did not receive their due," he added.

"This mistake cannot be repeated. The process must be transparent to prevent any form of corruption. Proper oversight is necessary, and everyone's responsibilities must be clearly defined," he also said.

Workers' migration drops

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ineffective decisions could further slow the flow of workers to the country.

He also called on the government to work towards reopening major job markets like Malaysia, which are closed now, and exploring new opportunities.

According to BMET statistics, out of the total migration this year, 1,20,876 workers, or 75.4 percent, have gone to Saudi Arabia, which remains the primary destination for low-paid Bangladeshi workers.

However, migration to Saudi Arabia fell sharply in February, with only 44,258 workers heading there, compared to 76,618 in January.

Qatar was the second-highest destination for

Bangladeshi workers last month, with 7,150 migrating there, followed by Singapore (3,735), Kuwait (2,084), and Jordan (873).

Continued restrictions on hiring new workers from Bangladesh in key destinations like Oman and Malaysia also contributed to the overall decline in worker migration last month.

Oman has maintained restrictions on the migration of fresh low-paid workers from Bangladesh since October 2023, while Malaysia implemented a similar restriction on all labour-sourcing countries, including Bangladesh, in June last year.

However, BMET data shows that 301 workers migrated to Malaysia in February and 1,286 in January, as the country,

according to the Bangladesh government, has been hiring Bangladeshi workers only for its plantation sector in recent months.

Similarly, six workers migrated to Oman in February, following 18 in January.

According to government officials, Bangladesh sends workers to more than 160 countries worldwide. However, the majority migrate to a handful of destinations – the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Although Bangladeshi workers migrate under various categories, such as professionals and skilled labourers, most seek employment as low-paid workers.

Tk 54cr road repair

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In December last year, the Narayanganj RHD office attempted to stop movement of overloaded trucks with assistance from police, and tried to redirect them to another route or reduce the loads, but had to back down facing resistance from transport workers.

"This regional highway is not designed for overloaded heavy vehicles. We have repeatedly urged cement companies and transport associations to comply with weight limits, but they have ignored our requests," said an engineer of RHD in Narayanganj, wishing anonymity.

He said it is urgent to repair the road before monsoon, but warned that a mere asphalt overlay would not be enough.

"Unless a substantial budget is allocated, the road will return to its current state soon after repairs," he added.

Aslam Sarkar, president of Char Syedpur Transport Owners' Association, claimed they were not responsible for the problem.

"We only rent out the vehicles. Those who hire the vehicles run those overloaded across the country. Unless the government enforces strict rules, this practice will continue," he said.

"To mitigate transportation costs, we sometimes have to overload our trucks. It's a widespread practice across all industries. We know this road was not designed for such heavy loads, but we have no alternative route. Once the Panchaboti-Moktarpur road is completed, no heavy vehicles, including ours, will need to use this road," said Manir Uddin Ahmed, senior manager of road transport

operations at Shah Cement Industries Ltd.

He added that cement companies were willing to contribute to road repairs if necessary.

Contacted, Abdur Rahim, executive engineer at Narayanganj RHD office, admitted that the department was struggling to control movement of overloaded vehicles on the road.

"We are now considering interim repairs, but a long-term plan is necessary. A plan to expand the road to a six-lane highway was submitted to the ministry concerned during the previous government's tenure.

However, there hasn't been any progress under the new administration," he added.

Rohingya

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crisis, but a crisis of political will. The UN and international community must ensure sustained support and invest in long-term solutions," said Hasina Rahman, country director of International Rescue Committee.

ActionAid Bangladesh Country Director Farah Kabir said, "Without immediate and decisive action, we risk allowing the Rohingya crisis to become a forgotten tragedy. A people-centred approach, ensuring livelihood, skills, and education opportunities, is the way forward."

Ashish Damle, country director of Oxfam in Bangladesh, said, "Given the prolonged nature of this crisis, we urge global stakeholders to consider a structured and dedicated mission to drive sustainable response."

Traffic chaos at JnU gate puts

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they did nothing except giving assurances," he said.

Buses from several companies, including Azmeri Glory, Savar Paribahan, Bihanga, Victor Classic, and Bahadur Shah Paribahan, regularly stop near the main gate, bringing traffic to a standstill. For students commuting from distant areas, the congestion causes significant delays.

"Since I travel from Gazipur, these local buses make it difficult for me to reach classes on time. Sometimes, even when other roads are clear, this stretch alone can cause an hour-long delay," said Sumaiya Afrin, a student of the Mass Communication

and Journalism department.

"I have also been hit by rickshaws multiple times because of the traffic mess," she added.

Helal Uddin, a student of the Finance department, shared similar experiences. "We often struggle to reach our classes on time because of the severe congestion in front of the main gate. The noise from honking makes it difficult to concentrate in class," he said.

He said crossing the road, particularly in the afternoon, had become extremely difficult. "Getting bumped by vehicles is a common occurrence. The risk of accidents is always present."

Lesser Whistling Duck

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major reasons for their decline. Without duckweed, the lake lost its ability to sustain these migratory species," said Professor Jamal Uddin, chairman of JU's environmental science department.

To address this issue, Auritro Sattar, an Environmental Science major at JU, initiated an ecological restoration project in early February under Prof. Jamal's guidance, with support from the JU administration. He collected duckweed from various locations and reintroduced it into Transport Lake.

"Duckweed grows rapidly, and within weeks, the lake became a rich feeding ground again. In addition to being a vital food source, duckweed acts as a natural filter, absorbing pollutants such as ammonium, nitrate, and phosphorus,

which contribute to water pollution and eutrophication. Once these pollutants were reduced, the lake became more habitable for migratory birds," Auritro explained.

The intervention yielded remarkable results. Within a month, on March 6, researchers using the point counting method observed around 280 Lesser Whistling Ducks at Transport Lake – their first recorded visit this season after previously abandoning the site. Over the following days, their numbers grew to nearly 350. The birds gathered in areas rich with duckweed and water lilies, while some rested on bamboo platforms installed to attract them.

This conservation success underscores the potential of ecological interventions in restoring JU's lakes as thriving habitats for migratory birds. Auritro emphasised that continued

restoration and pollution control efforts are essential to ensuring these lakes remain safe stopovers for migratory species in the future.

Former DU

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Prof Siddique, who served as the vice chancellor of DU for two consecutive terms, passed away at 10:45pm on Thursday at the Neuro-Intensive Care Unit of Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital. He was 72.

On March 6, Prof Siddique, also a former teacher of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, suddenly collapsed at Dhaka Club and was hospitalised.

After initial treatment, he was moved to the ICU and placed on life support. Despite the doctors' best efforts, his condition remained unstable until his passing.

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