

Human trafficking leader held in city

Staff Reporter

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members have arrested the ringleader of a human trafficking gang from Khilbarirtek of Shahadatpur area in the city early Monday in connection with the killing of 26 Bangladeshis in Libya.

The arrestee was identified as Kamal Hossain alias Hazi Kamal, 55.

Some human traffickers killed 30 migrant workers, including 26 Bangladeshi nationals, in Libya on Thursday. The tragedy occurred in a smuggling warehouse in Mezda, near the city of Gharyan, southwest of Tripoli.

Based on secret information, a team of Rab-3 battalion conducted a drive at Khilbarirtek of Boroitola Bazar at Shahadatpur around 5:00 am and arrested Hazi Kamal.

Briefing reporters at the Rab-3 Tikatoli battalion headquarters in the afternoon, its Commanding Officer (CO) Rafibul Hasan said arrested Hazi Kamal is a tiles contractor.

As a number of tiles workers work under him, he used to allure them to send them to Libya and different Middle East countries where they can earn more money.

“He used to tell the tiles labors that they do not need to pay Tk 5-6 lakh at a time, they will only pay Tk 50,000- Tk 100,000 first and then they will pay the rest amount after reaching their destinations,” the Rab-3 CO said quoting Hazi Kamal.

“After selecting a group 10-15 people, the human traffickers send them to Libya using routes-- Dhaka-Kolkata-Mumbai-Dubai and then Benghazi of Libya. It needed 10-15 days to reach Libya,” he said.

When they (fortune seekers) reached Libya, the human traffickers used to collect money from the victims' family members in Bangladesh keeping them hostage, Lt Col Rakibul Hasan said.

There were some victims among the 26 Bangladeshis whom Kamal had sent, he said.

Sources at the Rab-3 battalion headquarters said most of the victims in Libya hailed from Madaripur, Faridpur, Kishrjonj and Magura districts. A Rab Intelligence team has already found information about several human trafficking syndicates who were involved in sending people to Libya illegally.

Hazi Kamal was involved in sending around 400 Bangladeshis to Libya illegally in the last 10-12 years.

All 26 Bangladeshi nationals, who were killed in a gun attack in Libya on Thursday, were buried at Mizdah in Libya.

On Saturday, Bangladesh released names of 23 of those killed.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with information from Bangladesh Embassy in Tripoli, also provided the identities of the injured.

The 23 deceased are -- Sujan and Kamrul from Gopalganj; Jakir Hossain, Jewel, Firuz, Jewel-2, Manik, Asadul, Aynal Mollah, Monir, Sajib, Shaheen, and Shamim from Madaripur; Arfan from Dhaka; Lal Chand from Magura; Rajon, Rahim, Shakil, Sakib, Akash, Shohag and Muhammad Ali from Kishoreganj; and Rakibul from Jashore.