



RMMRU Press Release

Detention of returnee migrants

High Court demands explanation from police and Chief Metropolitan Magistrate

The High Court today directed the Investigating Officer of Turag Thana to appear before it on 29 October 2020 explain why 219 returnees from three Gulf states were detained under Section 54. The bench comprised of Mr. Justice M. Enayetur Rahim and Mr. Justice Mustafizur Rahman also directed the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate to show cause why General Diary under Section 54 is still under consideration by the magistrate. The plaintiff sought relief under Section 561A of the Code of Criminal Procedure that empowers "the High Court Division to make such orders as may be necessary ... to prevent abuse of the process of any Court and otherwise secure the ends of justice".

Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua made the submission on behalf of one Mr. Shahin Alam a returnee from Bahrain. Under the stewardship of the legal counsel Barrister Jyotirmoy Barua and his team, the case was facilitated by academic activist Rezaur Rahman Lenin and Dr. C R Abrar of RMMRU.

It may be noted that these 219 migrants were detained following their quarantine period under Section 54. They were detained for suspicious activities while in quarantine. The police also accused them of "tarnishing the image of the country" and "hatching conspiracy against the government and the state". On police plea the detention period was extended quite a few times. Subsequently another group of 83 returnee migrants from Vietnam were detained under similar charges who were essentially victims of trafficking. A third group of 32 returnee migrants from Lebanon were again detained after they finished their quarantine period. This group returned on September 13. A number of migrants from the first two groups were subsequently released on bail subsequently. Applications for quashing cases against three groups of migrants have been filed in the High Court on similar grounds.

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