

Two jailed for human smuggling

Teens found guilty of trafficking migrants to serve three year sentences

By G.C.TAN
north@thestar.com.my

KANGAR: Myanmar teenager Mohd Belal went through a harrowing experience in his quest to work in Malaysia.

Along the way, he saw fellow migrants die either from sickness or beatings.

The 15-year-old, who was promised a job in Malaysia but did not have a passport, was cramped in a boat with 700 other migrants for a month during the journey from Myanmar to Phuket, from where he was transferred to a smaller boat with 100 others and dropped off at a riverbank.

They were then taken to a pick-up spot called Palu in Thailand, where they stayed for a night before walking for 13 hours through the jungle the next day.

Each had to lug a 10kg pack of rice to a migrant camp in Bukit Wang Burma in Wang Kelian on the Malaysian side of the border.

During his detention at the camp from August 2014 to March 10, 2015, Belal saw fellow migrants die due to sickness or from beatings. The bodies were buried in the camp.

Belal's experience was part of the statement of facts read out to two of his fellow countrymen who pleaded guilty in the High Court here to

smuggling him at Bukit Wang Burma at about 5.30am between August 2014 and March 10 last year.

Shahidullah @ Syahidullah, 18, and Momotin @ Dus Mohamad, 19, had earlier claimed trial but changed their pleas yesterday and were jailed three years each.

The teenagers, who were both unrepresented, said they understood the charge and facts of case, which were read to them in Rohingya language by an interpreter.

Judicial Commissioner Abu Bakar Katar ordered them to serve the three-year jail term from the date of their arrest on May 2 this year.

Shahidullah and Momotin were charged under Section 26A of the Anti-Trafficking In Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007, which carries a jail sentence of up to 15 years and a possible fine.

The statement of the facts also related how Shahidullah had beaten Belal's back with a rotan during his detention.

In mitigation, Shahidullah said he was 16 at the time of the offence and that he had worked with migrant smuggling agents.

They forced him to carry out tasks like providing drinks and food to migrants.

He claimed he would be beaten

up if he did not follow their orders.

Momotin said he ran away from Myanmar without a passport due to ill-treatment of Rohingyas by the government.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Afzainizam Abdul Aziz, who prosecuted with fellow DPPs Mohamad Abazafree Mohd Abbas and Nadia Zulkefli, said the two accused had committed a serious offence and urged the court to impose an appropriate sentence.

On June 9, the High Court here jailed Bangladeshi Nurul Islam 10 years each on three counts of smuggling a fellow countryman each at Bukit Genting Perah and Bukit Wang Burma in Wang Kelian between 2014 and last year.

Nurul, 32, who pleaded guilty to all three charges, will however only be imprisoned for 10 years as the court ordered him to serve the jail terms concurrently.

In May last year, police unearthed 139 graves containing skeletal remains of 106 bodies scattered around 28 migrant smuggling transit camps in Wang Kelian near the border with Thailand.

The camps were believed to have been abandoned by migrant smuggling syndicates.



Young traffickers: Shahidullah (left) and Momotin being led away from the Kangar High Court after sentencing.

Watch the video
thestartv.com 