

Deport illegal 'Bangladeshis' quickly

Court orders Delhi

AFP, New Delhi

A New Delhi court yesterday ordered the city to speed up the deportation of 'Bangladeshis' who live illegally in the Indian capital.

A two-judge bench of the Delhi High Court gave the city government three weeks to show it was deporting illegal immigrants and asked for monthly reports on its progress.

The court was ruling on a petition by a New Delhi-based lawyer who claimed that 2.8 million 'Bangladeshis' lived illegally in the city, taking government benefits meant for "real" Indian citizens.

The petition said some illegal immigrants had been given voter cards and could impact elections. New Delhi is due to hold polls for its local assembly on December 1.

The judges complained the city had been slow to act since the same court on September 24 ordered authorities to deport illegal Bangladeshis.

The bench of Chief Justice BC Patel and Justice AK Sikri said the city was initiating 300 to 400 deportation cases against 'Bangladeshis' a month, down from the 100 a day that was the target in a plan presented to the court in September.

Indian Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani in January announced a drive to deport 'three million Bangladeshis' he said were in the country illegally and could pose a security threat.

The drive enraged Bangladesh, which has traditionally had warm ties with India and denied there was any illegal emigration to its larger neighbour.

Iran nukes

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covert attempts to develop nuclear weapons in violation of international agreements, US officials said.

In addition, he was seeking beefed up EU backing for US plans to accelerate the return to self-rule in Iraq, a subject that drove deep wedges between Washington and many of its traditional European allies earlier this year.

Other issues on the table at the day of talks, after which Powell flies to London to join President George W. Bush on a state visit to Britain, include a simmering dispute over EU defence plans and a spat over US steel tariffs.

But with the European Union generally satisfied with the new US plans for Iraq -- forced into fruition by worsening violence and instability -- the Iran issue appeared set to take the center stage.

In fact, Powell's first meeting here was not with a European official but rather with visiting Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, whose country regards Iran and its nuclear ambitions as the greatest threats to its security.

While the United States -- whose president has labelled Iran part of an "axis of evil" -- and its main Middle East ally,

Israel, are firmly convinced of the threat posed by Tehran, Europe has taken a softer line.

The EU's so-called "big three" -- Britain, France and Germany -- have proposed a resolution critical of Iran to be considered at a meeting this Thursday of the International Atomic Energy Agency's governing board.

But, according to diplomats, it falls well short of US demands.

Amendments to Bar Council Order challenged in High Court

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to show cause in three weeks why the amendments to the Bar Council Order should not be declared illegal.

The rule came upon a writ filed by two advocates challenging the amendments made in September to the Bar Council Order 1972.

The amendments barred election to the Bar Council of anyone for two consecutive terms. These provide for mandatory submission of its annual audit report for scrutiny to the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee and inclusion of Supreme Court judges in the enrolment committee.

50 lakh female students get stipends

BSS, Dhaka

A total of 50 lakh female students up to higher secondary level are getting government stipends across the country.

Education Minister Dr Osman Farooq revealed the statistics at the parliament yesterday. Replying to a call attention notice brought by BNP lawmaker Shamsuddin Ahmed, Dr Farooq said the government is providing the stipends as part of its initiatives to promote girls education in the country.

In his notice, Shamsuddin alleged that under the existing system, only the students enrolled in the board affiliated schools and colleges were getting the stipend while the institutions which were just allowed to teach the students remained beyond the government programme.

Although the students of higher secondary level schools are not covered under the programme, female students in such institutions are getting stipends up to class nine, the minister said.

The existing system does not allow colleges without board affiliation to have the facility, he added.

Judiciary

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judges through the Public Service Commission illegal. It requested the court to suggest the way the government should recruit new judges.

The Appellate Division said the government would be able to form a judicial service commission to recruit new judges through implementing the 12-point directive.

The Appellate Division full bench of Chief Justice KM Hasan, Justice Ruhul Amin, Justice Mohammed Fazlul Karim, Justice Syed JR Muddassir Husain, Justice Hamidul Haque and Justice Tafazzul Islam heard the petitions, while Attorney General AF Hasan Arief appeared for the government.

Since the 1999 directives, the Awami League government took seven extensions, the caretaker government three and the present BNP government five.

The caretaker government in early October 2001 was all set to implement the directives, but it left the job for the new government after the BNP won the elections.

During the last election campaign, the BNP promised that it would separate the judiciary if voted into office.

AL slates 'propaganda' against Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday protested 'propaganda' against its President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina by the ruling BNP.

On its failure to govern the country properly, the ruling alliance is trying to put the blame on the opposition, said an AL statement issued by Deputy Office Secretary BM Mozammel Haq.

Instead of standing beside the Monga-affected people of the northern districts, leaders of the BNP are engaged in a propaganda campaign against Sheikh Hasina, who is now in the Monga-stricken areas to observe the situation and distribute relief, the statement added.

It said the government did not take any precautionary measure to save people ahead of the Monga (a near-famine situation) and has failed to provide relief among them.

The statement shot down the prime minister's visit to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah, saying that her 10-day visit is not for religious activities, but a luxurious trip with family members.

When people are dying of starvation, she (prime minister) is spending her days abroad, it alleged.

On the contrary, the AL chief always stands beside the people in every national disaster whether she is in government or in opposition, it added.

Judgement on Sergeant Ahad murder today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court in Dhaka delivers judgement in the sensational Sergeant Abdul Ahad murder case today.

Judge Hossain Shahid Ahmad of the Court of Second Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge will pronounce the verdict at noon, court sources said.

Proceedings of the case were completed on November 3 after recording statement of 36 prosecution witnesses.

Sub-inspector Mesbahuddin filed a murder case with Motijheel Police Station on October 28, 1999, the same day when a gang of muggers allegedly killed on-duty Sergeant Ahad at Shapla Chattar in the city's Motijheel area.

Motijheel police pressed charges against 13 persons on June 13, 2001. The court framed charges against the accused on March 19 last year and trial in the case began two months later on May 18.

Of the 13 accused, 11 including Zakir alias Kargali Zakir are now in police custody while Abu Taleb Rana is on bail and Abdur Rouf absconding.

Kargali Zakir confessed his guilt to a metropolitan magistrate and disclosed names of other killers, police said.

Tender on subway feasibility study next month

UNB, Dhaka

International tender will be floated next month for feasibility study on underground metro railway in the capital city, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said yesterday.

The minister sought technical assistance from Moscow when Russian Ambassador Oleg S Malginov called on him at his office.

In response, Malginov said private investing institutions of his country and the government would like to support infrastructure development in Bangladesh through a consortium.

Huda informed the ambassador that underground metro train lines would be constructed on the basis of BOT (build, operate and transfer).

The ambassador welcomed the plan and assured the minister of his country's possible assistance to implement it.

JS passes 2 days

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yesterday was interrupted while he was replying to lawmakers' queries because of excessive noise created by the lawmakers. He urged the speaker to reintroduce headphones in the House.

The 8th parliament began its journey amid the absence of the main opposition Awami League. But the other three opposition parties -- Jatiya Party led by Ershad, Jatiya Party led by Monju and Krishak Samik Janata League led by Kader Siddiqui -- attended the session. Awami League rejoined parliament proceedings on June 24 last year and again began boycotting the session since June 26 this year.

Following the footsteps of the main opposition Awami League, the Jatiya Party led by Ershad started to boycott parliament proceedings since last Monday. On Monday and yesterday the two other opposition parties also remained absent in the House.

Internet telephony

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including the Middle East and Saarc. The BTBT offers a 25 percent off-charge during the off-peak hours, starting from 8:00pm to 8:00am.

The BTBT will also reduce the incoming call charge of overseas operators to 3.5 cents for Dhaka and 6.25 cents for elsewhere after the benchmark calls. The BTBT regards certain number of calls made by overseas operators as benchmark calls, current rate of which is 14.2 cents a minute.

"This will help the BTBT to remain competitive after the emergence of the internet telephony in the private sector," said a senior BTBT official.

The BTBT plans to handle the fresh surge of calls through a special alternative gateway through which it will re-route phone calls without terminating the link to its International Trunk Exchange (ITX), he said.

"We would also be able to offer better voice quality through a managed network compared to the VoIP operators, who will for sure struggle to manage

network," he said.

On BTBT's using VoIP technology, he said it can use the internet gateway without obtaining licence as per the country's telecoms act.

Cellphone operators meanwhile said the telecoms market regulator -- Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) -- should frame modalities for both private and public operators before awarding licence for internet telephony.

Private and public operators will set their own criteria to terminate and generate calls through VoIP from day one, an official with a leading cellphone operators said.

He said the market regulator should ensure a level playing field for both public and private operators.

Leaders of the Internet Service Providers Association (ISPA) termed the BTBT call charge reduction a move to hinder the growth of the information and communication technology in the private sector.

Launch ticket

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tickets one or two days before Eid at an exorbitant rate. But the staffs denied such allegation.

Among the luxury launches Parabat, Sagor, Rajdoot and Surovi, Parabat-4 was charging Tk 475 against Tk 250 for a single cabin and Tk 900 against Tk 500 for a double cabin for a one-way trip to Bhandaria though 80 per cent of their cabins have been sold out. Akram, a staff, said.

But staffs of another launch Parabat-7 said advance booking for Barisal till November 25 has been completed. They charged Tk 400 for a single and Tk 700 for a double cabin, they said.

Ticket sellers of Surovi-6 said all the cabin tickets have been booked. They charged Tk 300 for a single and Tk 500 for a double cabin, the staffs claimed.

Several launches of Overseas Gulf Navigation Company titled Sagor have charged Tk 400 for a single and Tk 1,000 for a double cabin ticket to Patuakhali. The countermen are still selling advance cabin tickets at the terminal.

The rush of passengers increased at the Sadarghat terminal yesterday. Launch operators were still charging normal fare from the passengers, while the rate would be increased from November 20, launch staffs said.

"We are charging a reduced rate of Tk 60 for Barisal but it would soon be Tk 100 to Tk 110 by November 20," said a staff of a launch, adding that they were not following the government fare chart to be competitive.

Yesterday afternoon, most of the

launches were found anchored in the midstream and the passengers were seen boarding those on boats.

However, the shipping ministry recently issued a directive to the transport authorities not to charge extra from the passengers prior to the Eid festival. According to sources, a monitoring team would check overloading at the terminal from November 20.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) has decided to arrange extra launches on 17 routes from November 20 to 30 to reduce the pressure on river transports.

Special launches would run on routes from Dhaka to Bhola, Barisal, Barguna, Chandpur, Ichuli, Madaripur, Kalajaya, Borhanuddin, Patuakhali, Amtali and from Narayanganj to Chandpur-Ichuli, Taltola, Ramchandrapur, Machuakhali, Sureshwar, Torikand Matlab.

The BIWTA would also press into action ro-ro ferry service for transporting homebound passengers during Eid.

Besides, Bangladesh Railway was selling advance tickets since November 16 for Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna and Rajshahi, which would continue till November 20. Passengers collected tickets at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation, as part of its Eid special service, inaugurated a special Dhaka-Chittagong-Raozan bus service yesterday.

Baghdad darkness

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supply, but crashes on the national grid regularly affect distribution across the city.

Even when the grid is fully operational, demand still massively outstrips supply, prompting Iraq's US-installed interim leadership to seek additional supplies from abroad until generator capacity can be increased.

Jordanian Energy Minister Azmi Khreissat said in statements published Monday that Iraq will be linked to Jordan's electricity grid as part of the kingdom's efforts to contribute to the reconstruction of its war-wrecked neighbour.

Khreissat told the pro-government Al Rai newspaper that he reached an agreement to this effect in talks Saturday with Iraq's interim Electricity Minister Ayham al-Samarrai, who visited Amman on his way to the United States.

"It was agreed to carry out an electricity link-up between the two countries through the Risha power plant and to carry out the necessary studies concern-

ing this," Khreissat told Al Rai.

Khreissat did not give further details but he said that a team of Iraqi experts will visit Jordan soon to discuss "technical details concerning the project".

The Risha power plant is located near the northeastern Jordanian town of Ruweished, close to the border with Iraq.

Pneumonia

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deaths, 583 in Mymensingh with 22 deaths, 700 in Meherpur with 17 deaths, 33,000 in Chandpur with 17 deaths and 538 in Cox's Bazar.

Seven people reportedly died of pneumonia in Magura with 78 affected, six died in Bandarban with 40 affected, one died in Jessore with 100 affected, 15 died in Dinajpur with 200 affected and seven died in Narail with 288 affected till yesterday.

Moreover, 138 pneumonia patients were treated at Dhaka Shishu Hospital till yesterday.

Bush, Blair close ranks

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suicide bombings in Istanbul adding to the tensions.

British commentators say the visit will be uncomfortable for Blair -- under fire at home over Iraq, especially within his own left-leaning Labour Party.

But Blair has remained steadfast. In a key foreign affairs speech last week he said critics of the war should accept that Iraqis were better off without Saddam, and denounced what he called a "propaganda monster about America."

Foreign Secretary Jack Straw took up the theme on Tuesday, writing in the Wall Street Journal of a "parody of America that almost demonises its power and its purpose and seeks to put the ills of the world at its door."

Despite much talk in the media about how unpopular Bush is, a poll in the left-leaning Guardian newspaper showed more British voters welcome the visit than reject it, and that 62 percent think America "a force for good, not evil, in the world."

Bush and Blair are expected to hammer out details of plans discussed last week for speeding up the transfer of sovereignty in Iraq to an interim government.

Blair will hope to clinch a deal on British detainees at the U.S. camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There are now 10 Britons among more than 600 prisoners there, and London has complained about plans to try some under special military tribunals.

35 secretaries appointed on contract basis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has so far appointed 35 secretaries out of 55 in the civil administration on contract basis since November 2001.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque, who is also in charge of establishment ministry in the parliament, disclosed the list of contractual government appointment at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

Responding to a question raised by Awami League lawmaker Kazi Sirajul Islam, the minister said the government signed a total of 195 officials including secretary, secretary-in-charge, additional secretary-in-charge and others officials on contract since November, 2001.

According to the list submitted before the parliament, 27 secretaries, eight secretaries-in-charge, four additional secretaries-in-charge and other officials were appointed to various government posts.

BCL man shot dead in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Armed youths shot dead a former Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader at Guadandi in Patiya yesterday.

Four armed youths fired at Shah Alam alias Rinku, a student of Chittagong Law College and former leader of Patiya College unit BCL, from a CNG three-wheeler when he was standing by the road after iftar, witnesses said.

Doctors at Patiya health complex declared him dead. Local Jubo Dal cadres killed Rinku, alleged a leader of local Awami League.

The BCL brought out a protest procession and marched different streets of Patiya, sources said.

Charges pressed against Nasim, 19 others in murder case

BSS, Pabna

Charges were pressed yesterday against former home minister Mohammad Nasim and 19 others in Advocate Shaikh Shahidullah Bachu murder case.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of police submitted the charge sheet to a court here, implicating Mohammad Nasim and 18 other leaders of the district units of the Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party.

Bacchu, a former chairman of Pabna Poursava, was killed on the night of April 4, 1997. His body was found in his car at Tebunia Agriculture Farm, 7 km off Pabna town, the following day.

The other accused are Awami League leader and incumbent Pabna Poursava Chairman Mosharrif Hossain, former poursava chairman and Vice President of District BNP Zahurul Islam Bishu, Organising Secretary Qamrul Hasan Mintu, General Secretary of District Jatiya Party Azizur Rahman Arzu, Chairman of Latif Real Estate Alhaj Abul Latif Biswas, Ward Commissioner and Awami League leader Sairur Rahman Ekram, former Commissioners Faridul Islam Dalu, Shaiful Islam Mona and Anwar Hossain Surja, Jubo league leaders Motaahar Hossain Mutai, Masud Ahmed, Firoj Hossain and Helal Uddin, Poura Awami League leaders Abdul Bari Baki, Jubo league leaders Motaahar Hossain Mutai, Masud Ahmed, Firoj Hossain and Helal Uddin, Poura Awami League Leaders Abdul Bari Baki, Abdur Razzak, Razaul Karim Chapal, Abdul Mannan, Mohammad Abul Quasem Fazlul Haque and Mozammel Haque Biswas.

DGFI DD

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his office room. But she did not go there and was waiting at the passengers service desk. After a while, Mostafa came there, frisked her and took her duty pass away.

Later, she went to his office at around 10:00am to get her duty pass back. The DD did not return it, instead he made an attempt to violate her. She somehow saved herself, the complainant said.

Later, she went to Airport Police Station to file case against the two. But police refused to take the case against them, as they are influential persons, she added.

After a hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mamun-Al-Rashid took the case into cognizance and directed the officer-in-charge of Airport Police Station to register the complaint as first information report.

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BNP MP

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Kabir also criticised the commerce secretary, who asked him to file a written allegation.

However, Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar suggested him to give a notice to the parliament so that he (the speaker) could ask the minister concerned for a reply.

US official

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International Development (USAID), who is on a visit to see the progress of USAID-funded projects.

"Outsiders can show the way and share ideas ... but it is really up to the people and the political parties to make parliament work," Schieck said while talking to a group of journalists at the US Embassy.

Referring to the country's successful holding of three elections, he said fair election alone does not mean fully-fledged democracy unless other democratic institutions develop.

"Without political will, democracy will not get institutional shape," he added.

Commenting on the country's energy scenario, Schieck said export of excess gas could be an interesting opportunity for Bangladesh, which has a large natural gas reserve.

Countries all around the world are exporting their excess gas, he said, and observed that Bangladesh could use the proceeds from export of its additional gas for the social sector.

Schieck lauded Bangladesh's progress in agricultural sector and food production. Recalling his visit to

Bangladesh 20 years ago, he said the country since then has made tremendous progress in agriculture and food production has gone up to help raise living standards.

He, however, expressed concern at the high growth rate of population, and gave assurance that USAID will continue to support the family planning programmes.

Schieck suggested that development partners should initiate a dialogue on how to make Bangladesh an attractive place for more private foreign investments.

He said the government cannot provide jobs for all and should create a favourable investment climate to help create jobs.

Elaborating on USAID-aided projects, USAID Bangladesh Mission Director Gene V. George said the agency helps establish links between local and US universities and is assisting shrimp growers in obtaining a quality seal to help sustain the export market.

Replying to a question, he said law and order and state of individual rights remain a big concern here.

The American Centre Director Karl Fritz and USAID Chief of Programs Caryle Cammissa were present.

JP (Ershad)

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The ministers heard their demands and assured them of taking necessary steps.

Lawmakers of the JP staged a walkout from the Sangsad on Monday protesting a deputy minister's remarks against legislators from Rangpur and alleged anomalies in relief distribution in the monga-hit areas. The JP demanded that the minister apologise for his remarks.

After the meeting yesterday, JP lawmakers hinted that Mannan Bhuiyan will urge them from the House today to return to it. He will also say sorry on behalf of the deputy minister.

"If the government does so, we will return to the House tomorrow (Wednesday)." JP legislator GM Quader said at a press briefing at the Sangsad Bhaban.

At the meeting yesterday, the JP also raised allegations of indecent remarks by State Minister for Housing and Public Works Alamgir Kabir against the party lawmakers from northern districts.

12,000 species

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threatened.

There and on the islands of the Galapagos archipelago, snails are under threat, from other snails or from aliens like goats, pigs and fire ants.

Achim Steiner said: "Places such as the Galapagos, Hawaii and the Seychelles are famed for their beauty, which owes itself to the diversity of plants, animals and ecosystems."

"The Red List tells us that human activities are leading to a swathe of extinctions that could make these islands ecologically and aesthetically barren."

Continental species are also in trouble: the Mexican black howler monkey, the variegated spider monkey and the pied tamarin are all upgraded to higher risk categories.

In Asia the giant catfish of the Mekong basin, which can grow to three metres (10 feet), is now listed as critically endangered, because of overfishing, habitat loss and the obstruction of its migration routes by dam-building.

Its numbers have fallen by more than 80 per cent since 1990. South Africa's riverine

rabbit, also uplisted to critically endangered status