

JOB IN MALAYSIA

# Govt clears 300 visas for workers

PORIMOL PALMA

The government yesterday cleared about 300 calling visas, final document for workers' entry into Malaysia, after a week's delay over the recruiting agencies' alleged overcharging the workers.

Sources in the Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment ministry said the clearance followed applications of workers (who got calling visas) submitted by three recruiting agencies -- Surma International Agencies, Orbital Enterprise and Orchard International.

Earlier on Wednesday, the ministry issued a show cause notice asking Baira (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies) to explain how it has rented an office in Kuala Lumpur without government permission.

Lumpur without government permission.

State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad at a meeting on October 16 had also warned Baira leaders against overcharging the aspirant migrant workers. In such a situation, the government level deals will be made with Malaysia in managing migration, he said.

Blaming Baira and issuing show cause notice on it and also issuing clearance of calling visas have raised questions as to how the government is handling manpower employment in Malaysia.

A number of recruiting agencies said this is a 'hide and seek game' by the expatriates welfare ministry and even some key leaders of Baira.

After withdrawal of the ban on hiring workers from Bangladesh after a decade, Malaysia entrusted Baira with managing the migration issue and asked it to open an office in Kuala Lumpur.

Baira President MAH Salim then opened an office with 10 per cent share held by Baira and the rest by three Malaysians.

The state minister also went to Malaysia last month and inaugurated the computer system in the office.

Meanwhile, there are allegations that Baira is charging at least Ringgit 18,000 or Tk 36,000 more than the fixed rate, raising the migration cost to Tk 1.2 to 2 lakh. Some ministers also allegedly demanded a share of the extra money.

But, as Malaysia imposed a

## PM sends Hasina Eid greetings

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has sent an Eid greeting card to Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina.

The prime minister has also invited the opposition leader to an Eid reception at Pradhanmantri Bhaban at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on the Eid Day.

Prime Minister's Assistant Press Secretary Mohiuddin Khan Mohan yesterday took the cards to the opposition leader's Sudha Sadan residence in Dhanmondi at around 3:30pm. Hasina's Personal Officer Iqbal Hossain Mintu received the cards.

Both the prime minister and the opposition leader are now away from the country--Khaleda Zia in Saudi Arabia and Sheikh Hasina in the United States.

The prime minister is scheduled to return home on October 21 and Sheikh Hasina on October 23.

## 5 of a family trampled to death by wild elephants in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Wild elephants trampled to death five of a family and damaged three houses at Adarshagram of Banskhal upazila in Chittagong early yesterday.

The victims were Tejendra Nath, 60, his wife Pratima Nath, 48, daughter-in-law Rika Nath, 27, his granddaughter Shimul Nath, 5, and grandson Nayan Nath, 1.

Sources said a herd of wild elephants around midnight destroyed the house of Tejendra. The five victims were sleeping in the house when they attacked. The elephants also damaged two adjoining houses.

Police rushed to the spot and fired blank shots. Locals also lit torches and with their joint efforts, they were able to scare the elephants away.

Police recovered the bodies of the victims and sent those to

Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Elephants frequently damage property and crops in northeastern India and Bangladesh where loss of their natural habitat due to population encroachment brings them into conflict with humans, reports AFP.

According to a recent survey, at least 200 people in Bangladesh have been killed by elephants since 1996.

Three-quarters of the attacks took place in the forest areas of the Chittagong hill tracts, with most of the others recorded in the northern hill areas of Mymensingh.

The study found that there were around 800 elephants, including 350 wild ones, in the country.

## US, UN warn N Korea against further N-test

AFP, Seoul

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her South Korean counterpart Ban Ki-Moon yesterday warned of "more grave consequences" for North Korea if it stages a second nuclear test.

"As to a possible North Korean second nuclear test, we agreed that it would aggravate the current situation and that it should never take place," Ban told a joint press conference.

"We agreed that in case it happens, there should be more grave consequences."

Rice said her visit aimed to reconfirm the US commitment to defending South Korea. "The alliance between the United States and South Korea is one of the firm pillars for security in the Korean peninsula and in the region," she said.

"The United States takes its obligations under our defence arrangement very seriously and will act on those obligations."

Rice is on the second leg of a four-country trip aimed at encouraging North Korea's neighbours strictly

to enforce UN sanctions imposed on the communist state after its October 9 nuclear test.

Pyongyang has hinted it may conduct a repeat test.

The UN resolution imposes weapons-related and financial sanctions and authorises inspections of cargo to and from North Korea -- a prospect, which makes China and South Korea uneasy.

But Rice said Washington had no desire to do anything to escalate tensions.

"We want to leave open the path of negotiation, we don't want the situation to escalate," she said.

"As soon as North Korea will choose to come back to the table and take up the very good September 19 framework agreement, it will be to the benefit of everyone."

North Korea agreed at a six-nation forum in September 2005 to scrap its nuclear programmes in exchange for energy aid and security benefits.

But it boycotted the forum two

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**Sehri, Iftar timing**

Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
26	20	4-39	5-32
27	21	4-39	5-31
28	22	4-39	5-30

**Prayer Timing**

October 20

	Asan	
Fajr	4-38	4-48
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	5-32	5-52
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



A tailor's eight-year-old son assisting his father in repairing torn up clothes near Tongi railway station yesterday. The Eid-ul-Fitr brings no joys of shopping for either the little boy or his hard up customers.



### Court order on Shaniram's bail prayer Oct 22

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will pass an order on October 22 on the bail petition of Shaniram Mondol, an accused in the Shazneen murder case, even though its proceedings were earlier stayed on an order of the High Court (HC).

After the hearing from the defence lawyers, Judge SM Mujibur Rahman of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set the date for order on the issue.

Moving the petition, the defence lawyers argued that an HC Death Reference bench had earlier acquitted Shaniram in connection with the case filed under the Women and Children Repression

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