

Political situation stalls manpower export

91 out of 400 workers go to Malaysia so far

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manpower export to Malaysia has come to a stagnation due to the transition of power and suspension of the executive committee (EC) of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira).

Only 91 workers were sent to Malaysia on October 23 though Kuala Lumpur issued about 400 calling visas (final entry document) and about 30,000 job demand letters for hiring workers from Bangladesh.

The stagnation began as the expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry in a letter to the commerce ministry on October 22 asked it to suspend the executive committee of Baira, accusing it of overcharging aspirant migrant

workers and renting an office in Kuala Lumpur without government permission.

The expatriates welfare ministry recommended appointment of an administrator for smooth continuation of overseas employment as long as the Baira committee remains suspended.

The ministry also sent a letter to the prime minister the same day seeking permission to form a high-powered committee headed by a joint secretary of the home ministry and with representatives of the expatriates ministry, foreign ministry, Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and Baira to investigate how Baira rented an office in Kuala Lumpur and overcharged aspirant migrant workers.

It suggested giving the proposed

committee a time limit of 30 days for submitting its report.

Both the letters said the ministry has both intelligence reports and media reports that Baira has been overcharging workers applying for migration to Malaysia. It also rented an office in Kuala Lumpur without government permission.

Though the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) instantly (on October 22) approved formation of the probe committee and it was formed, it failed to hold any meeting until yesterday.

The commerce ministry also did not appoint any administrator, Baira sources said.

"The Malaysian authorities are now waiting for the government's next step. If the probe committee

Call to make all contractual, political appointees OSD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Civil Service Samannoy Committee yesterday demanded that the chief of the caretaker government make OSD in 24 hours all the officials appointed on contractual basis and those who were involved in the 'politicisation' process.

The committee also demanded transfer in a day all deputy commissioners (DCs), superintendents of police (SPs), assistant superintendents of police (ASPs), upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) and officers-in-charge (OCs) of police stations to free the administration of politicisation.

Until withdrawal of all the officials in the administration who were appointed on political considerations, the administration cannot be neutral, which is necessary for a free and fair election, said a press release of the Samannoy Committee.

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PHOTO: PID

President and Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Prof Iajuddin Ahmed chairs the first meeting of the advisers at the Bangabhaban in the capital yesterday.

US envoy hails Khaleda's role for restraint

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Patricia Butenis yesterday met BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at her cantonment residence and stressed the importance of neutral and nonpartisan role of the caretaker government to ensure free and fair elections with participation of all political parties.

"We discussed current political situation and I was very reassured that Khaleda Zia called her party members to maintain restraint," Butenis told reporters after nearly an hour-long meeting with the immediate-past prime minister in the evening.

"Violence never could be an option," the US envoy said and called for nonpartisan and

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PHOTO: STAR

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Patricia Butenis meets BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at the latter's residence in the capital yesterday.

Verdict in 3 cases not delivered

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday could not deliver the verdict of the three cases filed ten years ago against Lt Colonel (dismissed) Syed Farukur Rahman — also condemned in the Bangabandhu murder case — as one of the key witnesses appeared before the court to give his statement on the day of the verdict.

Judge Monzurul Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court recorded statement of witness Sub-Inspector Subrata and fixed November 21 for delivery of the judgment.

Earlier on October 9, the court heard the arguments from the

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Home secy given clean chit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Establishment Secretary AFM Solaiman Chowdhury yesterday ruled out the widespread allegations against the present home secretary SM Jahirul Islam of being loyal to any particular political party.

"The government will respond immediately if there is any specific allegation against any official," AFM Solaiman Chowdhury told reporters at his office.

AFM Solaiman Chowdhury is also allegedly a Jamaat loyalist and has been appointed to the present position at the twelfth hour of the four-party alliance government's tenure.

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AL mounts pressure on president with impossible demands

BNP rally told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday alleged that the Awami League (AL)-led 14-party combine is trying to mount pressure on the president by placing demands that are impossible to fulfill even in three years.

"It appears 14-party combine wants chaos not elections, as it knows it will lose in the upcoming general elections," he said at a rally organised by four-party alliance in front of the BNP's central office at Naya Paltan yesterday evening.

The rally was organised to protest the "anarchy and terrorism" during the handing over of power to the caretaker government.

He urged the president, who is also the chief adviser to the caretaker government, not to be enticed by anybody. "Don't bow to any pressure, people are behind you and you should do everything as per the law of the country," he said.

"Take preparations to hold the election neutrally and do everything that will be good for the country," he urged the caretaker chief.

He also accused the 14-party combine of creating obstacles to holding the next general elections

and said, "Helping the caretaker government is our responsibility, not to oppose it... those who oppose it, do not want the elections."

Ruling out the allegation that the president himself took the post of the chief adviser to the caretaker government bypassing other available options in the constitution, he said, "The president saved the nation by taking the post of the chief adviser constitutionally."

Blasting the 14-party combine, he said it created "anarchy" in the country that led to riots and deaths of 22 people. "They don't want the elections and that's why they are creating anarchy to foil the elections," he added.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, also urged the president not to bow to the demands made by the 14-party combine.

BNP Standing Committee Member Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said, "There is nothing to prove to Sheikh Hasina or Abdul Jalil...you [the president] are holding a constitutional post."

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BSF kills 1

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader and injured another on Ghiba border under Shersha upazila of the district yesterday morning.

The dead is Shimul, 30, of Ghiba village. The injured, Shahidul, Islam, 27, of the same village is now undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

Police quoted the local people as saying that the Indian border guards of Chhutia camp opened fire on the two cattle traders while they were crossing the border at around 5:00am.

The BSF men took Shimul's body to their camp, but did not return as of 6:00pm yesterday.

When contacted, BDR confirmed the incident.

Citizens' group urges CA to remain neutral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing deep concern over the volatile political set-up in the country, a group of eminent citizens yesterday urged the caretaker government chief, who is also the President of Bangladesh, to manifest his unbiased and neutral attitude towards people.

The 'Constitutionally non-transparent' and 'questionable' step of President Iajuddin Ahmed's assuming office of the chief of the caretaker government has created doubt in public mind about the caretaker government chief's being non-partisan and neutral, they said in a press release.

They demanded formation of a completely independent and impartial election commission through removing the chief election commissioner and three other commissioners, formulation of an up-to-date voter list free from fake

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Family members of ex-BNP MP Wadud made voters twice

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Family members of former BNP lawmaker Wadud Bhuiyan have been put on the present voter list twice with the district election officer, a relative of Wadud, failing to explain this.

Six members of the former legislator's family were first listed as voters on March 3 this year in Kalabagan Collectorate area of Sadar upazila. And on March 20, they were again included in the voter list in Ramgarh Bazar of Ramgour upazila, according to records at the district election office.

The six persons listed twice are Daudul Islam Bhuiyan, Shahidul Islam Bhuiyan, Shariful Islam Bhuiyan, Saiful Islam Bhuiyan, Majedul Islam Bhuiyan and Wahidul Islam Bhuiyan.

Asked about this, Daudul Islam said, "I got listed as a voter from Ramgarh but I do not know how I was included in the voter list for the

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Focus on Paltan rally as 14-party readies to declare final stance

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The Awami League-led 14-party combine is setting the stage for tomorrow's rally at Paltan Maidan in the capital from where it is going to make its "final" stance on the caretaker government.

So far, the 14-party is observing the activities of President Iajuddin Ahmed since he was sworn in as the chief adviser to the caretaker government on October 29.

Tomorrow's rally has already stimulated curiosity in the country's political arena and among the general public. People of all walks of life are now waiting to see whether the 14-party goes tough with the caretaker government or welcome it.

A 14-party delegation led by AL President Sheikh Hasina met President Iajuddin Ahmed on October 30 and handed him over an 11-point immediate task to prove his neutrality by tomorrow.

Soon after the meeting, the 14-

party postponed its countrywide blockade programme saying it would announce fresh programmes, if need be, at tomorrow's rally.

After a press briefing, the AL has begun observing closely the activities of the chief adviser, who has already brought reshuffles in police and civil administration in the last two days.

But terming the shakeup eye-wash, the 14-party demanded that the chief adviser should bring a drastic change in both the administration to create a level-playing field.

Sources said the 14-party has plans to welcome the caretaker government at the Paltan rally if their demands for electoral reforms were met. But if the interim government does not meet the demands to create an atmosphere for a free and fair election, they

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Jamaat, Jukta Front meet chief adviser

UNB, Dhaka

President and Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday sought cooperation of all concerned to hold a free and fair election.

"The caretaker government has already undertaken steps to hold a free, fair and neutral parliamentary election," the president told the Jamaat and Jukta Front leaders when they met him separately at Bangabhaban.

The Jamaat leaders, led by their Ameer Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami, assured the chief adviser of the caretaker government of their party's all out support for holding a free and fair election.

They welcomed the president for assuming the office of chief adviser to the caretaker government and thanked him for appointing 10 advisers.

They also called for necessary measures to ensure security of the party leaders, said a Bangabhaban release.

Other Jamaat leaders, who called on the president, are Makbul

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7 Palestinians killed in Israel's Gaza raid

AFP, Gaza City

Seven Palestinians and an Israeli soldier were killed in Gaza yesterday when Israeli infantry backed by tanks seized control of a town in a major operation in the battered territory.

Moderate Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Prime Minister Ismail Haniya, who heads an Islamist-led government boycotted by the West, displayed a rare show of agreement to condemn what they branded an Israeli "massacre".

Medics said at least seven Palestinians, five of them militants, were killed and 40 wounded in the town that witnesses said was surrounded by some 60 Israeli tanks and armoured vehicles.

The ruling Hamas group said four of the dead were members of its military wing while Islamic Jihad said one of its fighters was also killed.

Israeli forces were also partially reoccupying the nearby refugee camp of Jabalya and the northern town of Beit Lahiya.

Soldiers, hunkered down on rooftops, exchanged fire with militants in Beit Hanun as helicopters and drones flew overhead. Israeli bulldozers razed three houses in the town and another dozen homes

were hit by tank shells.

The army said a soldier was killed by Palestinian fire in Beit Hanun, after the armed wings of Hamas and Islamic Jihad said they had killed an enemy serviceman in the besieged town.

Militants also fired two rockets into Israel, one exploding near a public library in the southern town of Sderot, lightly wounding one man and causing a small fire. The other struck in the town's industrial zone, the army said.

Meeting against the backdrop of

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Pro-BNP doctors get bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to 70 pro-BNP doctors including its Secretary General AZM Zahid Hossain in five cases filed against them for attacking the pro-Awami League (AL) doctors and ransacking and torching biochemistry department and library of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) on October 28.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Rafiqul Islam passed the order after Zahid and others appeared before the court and sought bail in the cases filed on behalf of Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad with Shabbagh Police

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LDP offers to disclose assets

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Executive President Col (ret'd) Oli Ahmed yesterday said that all LDP candidates and their relatives will disclose accounts of their assets publicly before the next election for the sake of transparency.

He also urged the caretaker government to take stern actions against corrupt candidates so that they cannot contest the polls.

"LDP has declared war against corruption and we will unite with any party that is ready to fight corruption," Oli said. He was addressing a meeting at LDP's Baridhara office when 14 ex-BNP leaders, including former legislators from Kishorganj-6 Amir Uddin and Rajshahi-4 Abdus Sattar, joined LDP formally.

He also said that Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) should be removed if it fails to identify the corrupt people who

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PHOTO: STAR

Twisted metals are all that remain of a minibus. It collided head-on with a Panchagarh-bound coach at Godaipur intersection on Dhaka-Bogra highway in Sirajganj yesterday leaving 21 people dead.



Prayer Timing		
November 2		
	Azan	
Fajr	4-55	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-34
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation