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Malaysia's hiring workers uncertain

Mahathir's resignation forces his minister to leave Dhaka without talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The resumption of Malaysia hiring Bangladeshi workers has become uncertain amid recent political development of the Southeast Asian country.

The two countries were scheduled to hold the 4th joint working group meeting in Dhaka today to discuss important issues regarding reopening of Malaysia's labour market for Bangladeshi workers.

But the meeting has been called off at the last moment after Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad resigned and was appointed as the interim PM on Monday.

The move came at a time when a Malaysian delegation, led by the now dissolved Malaysian cabinet's human resources minister M Kula Segaran, was visiting Bangladesh to discuss the issue.

Joint Secretary Fazlul Karim of the expatriates' welfare ministry said after the latest political development in Malaysia, the visiting Malaysian officials verbally informed them that they were unwilling to hold the meeting for the time being.

Asked about a new date, he told The Daily Star yesterday over phone that this could be known after Malaysia's political situation normalised.

An official of the expatriates' welfare ministry said Segaran and other Malaysian officials flew back home on Monday night.

On Sunday, Segaran paid a courtesy call on Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad at his ministry office.

After the meeting, Imran told reporters that they reached a consensus with Malaysia over reopening its labour market for Bangladeshi workers soon.

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Members of three services salute the army officials killed in the 2009 BDR mutiny yesterday. *Inset*, family members of the slain officers offer prayers at the Military Graveyard in the capital's Banani.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Pilkhana carnage anniversary observed

UNB, Dhaka

The 11th anniversary of the carnage at the BDR headquarters in the capital was observed yesterday.

A total of 74 people, including 57 army officers, were killed in the carnage beginning on this day in 2009.

To observe the day, Border Guard Bangladesh organised Quran Khwani, doa, and milad mahfil at its all regions, sectors, institutions, and units, including the Pilkhana headquarters.

In the morning, floral wreaths were placed at the graves of the slain army officers at the Military Graveyard in the capital's Banani on behalf of President Abdul Hamid and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, BGB Director General Maj Gen Md Shafeenul Islam and relatives of the slain officers also paid their tributes to the dead.

On February 25, 2009, several hundred Bangladesh Rifles (now BGB) men rose up in an armed revolt at the Darbar Hall of the force's

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Ousted Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak dies

REUTERS, Cairo

Former President Hosni Mubarak, who ruled Egypt for 30 years, died yesterday at the age of 91 after undergoing treatment in intensive care following surgery.

The former air force officer will be buried in a military funeral but the timing was still unclear, a military source told Reuters.

Mubarak's son Alaa said in a Twitter post that included images of his late father that he had died yesterday morning.

Mubarak was ousted following mass protests in 2011. He was arrested two months later and spent several years in prison and military hospitals.

He was sentenced to life in prison for conspiring to murder 239 demonstrators during the 18-day revolt, but was freed in 2017 after being cleared of the charges.

He was however convicted in 2015 along with his two sons of diverting public funds and using the money to upgrade family properties. They were sentenced to three years in jail.

In an early reaction, the United Arab Emirates' minister of state for foreign



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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'The game is over now'



Bangabandhu speaking at a mammoth gathering in Pabna on February 26, 1972.

FEBRUARY 26, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU CALLS FOR AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION

Bangabandhu calls for agricultural revolution to make the country self-sufficient in food production. He asks the people, particularly youths, to participate in the national reconstruction and make the country's independence meaningful. Bangabandhu, in his forty-minute address, reviews the country's economy, shattered by the Pakistan army during the war of liberation and outlines the present task of the people in rebuilding the country. The PM says that with the recognition given by 46 countries to Bangladesh, the 'chess game' of Pakistani leaders is over now. He asks them to accept the reality of the new nation.

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Declare March 7 National Historic Day

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to declare March 7 as "National Historic Day" since Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman delivered his historic speech on March 7, 1971, inspiring the nation to go for the Liberation War.

In the speech, at the then Race-course Maidan (now Suhrawardy Udyan), Bangabandhu called on the freedom-loving Bengalis to wage a decisive struggle against the Pakistani rulers.

While hearing a writ petition, the HC ordered the cabinet secretary to issue a gazette notification in a month in this regard.

It also asked the authorities concerned to set up murals of Bangabandhu in all upazilas and districts

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Bangladesh air worst in world

Says 2019 World Air Quality Report

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Air quality in Bangladesh was the worst in the world last year and Dhaka was the 21st most polluted city, according to 2019 World Air Quality Report.

However, Dhaka was second worst among capital cities. "Using a weighted population average, Bangladesh emerges as the most polluted country, based on available data," said the report released yesterday.

Taking population into account, Bangladesh emerged as the country with the worst particulate matter (PM) 2.5 pollution, followed by Pakistan, Mongolia, Afghanistan and India, said the report jointly released by IQAir Group and Greenpeace.

It said the Bahamas, US Virgin Islands, Iceland, Finland, and Estonia were the top countries in terms of healthy air.

The report said air pollution would pose one of the biggest threats to human health, with 90 percent of the global population breathing unsafe air.

Bangladesh's air quality was the worst in the world also in 2018.

Speaking to The Daily Star on condition of anonymity, several officials of the Department of Environment yesterday said there was no doubt that air quality in Dhaka was bad. They, however, expressed doubt over terming Bangladesh's air the worst as air quality data was collected using only a few machine.

Particulate matter of 2.5 microns or less in diameter -- roughly 1/30 the width of a human hair -- is the most dangerous type of airborne pollution.

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Woman dies in custody

Police say she fell sick; family claims foul play

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman died in police custody early yesterday, hours after she was picked up from the city's Mohammadpur area.

The dead, Kalpana Begum, 38, was a mother of two and used to reside in Kamrangir Char area. Her husband, Md Selim, 40, is a pickup truck driver.

Though police said the victim died after being taken to the hospital, her family alleged that she was

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:15 12:45 4:30 6:05 7:30
JAMAAT 5:50 1:15 4:45 6:10 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Truck drivers on a road near the closed Pakistan-Iran border in Taftan yesterday as fears over the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus escalate following an outbreak in neighbouring Iran.

PHOTO: AFP

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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK Rising cases raise fears of pandemic

S Korea, Italy, Iran report sharp rise in deaths; Croatia confirms first case

AFP, Beijing

Fresh deaths and a surge in new coronavirus cases in Iran, Japan and South Korea yesterday fuelled fears of a pandemic, as the disease took root in some of the world's poorest -- and worst-equipped -- countries.

The rapid spread abroad came as the World Health Organization announced that the epidemic had peaked at its epicentre in China and that it has killed more than 2,700 people and infected over 80,000 others in 34 countries.

But the situation has worsened elsewhere with nearly 2,700 other cases and more than 40 deaths globally, prompting restrictions on travellers from infected nations, the cancellation of football matches and national efforts to isolate suspected patients.

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