

Over 700 OP-1 lottery winners plan agitation

By Asiuzzaman

More than 700 US OP-1 immigration lottery winners, not issued visas, plan to start fresh agitation to get the visas. Convener of the OP-1 Winners Association said Sunday.

The agitation, to start at the end of this month, would include demonstrations in front of the US Embassy in Dhaka, the Prime Minister's office, the Foreign Ministry, and the President's House. Memorandums will be submitted at those offices.

"If our demonstrations and memoranda yield nothing we will finally start a 'hunger strike' unto death in front of the US Embassy at Baridhara," Arman Hossain, convener of the 11-member OP-1 Winners Association told The Daily Star.

Under the OP-1 programme a total of 20,000 peoples were selected through lottery from all over the world for migration to America during 1990 and 1991.

Some 30 lakh applications were submitted after the programme was announced in 1989.

A total of 4,974 Bangladeshis won the lottery among the 20,000 winners.

According to the announcement, the winners, his or her wife or husband and children below the age of 21 would be entitled for migration.

The US Embassy in Dhaka issued 6,324 visas to the winners and their relatives until August 20, 1991 and then announced the programme suspended when some 730 winners were still waiting for visas.

Following the suspension of the programme the affected winners started agitations that continued for about four months.

All their campaigns were futile. The association then started appealing to the US law-makers and authorities including President George Bush and his wife Barbara Bush.

Shamir Bose said that they did not get any response from President Bush, but one Senator and Barbara Bush

replied to their letters. A letter dated March 6, 1992 written from the White House by Barbara Bush's Director of Correspondence Joan C Decan on her behalf said that "We are forwarding your letter to the Department of State for further review."

Upon the appeal from the Bangladeshi winners, Senator Howard M Metzenbaum inquired into the matter and is reported to have discussed it with the US State Department on October 31, 1991.

The State Department in a letter to the Senator gave an explanation similar to that of the Embassy in Dhaka following the suspension of issuing visas.

The US Embassy here in a statement said that the OP-1 programme was "a great success for Bangladesh" and that 31 per cent of all the special visas went to the Bangladeshi applicants.

The Embassy statement had said that there were only 20,000 visas available world wide and when those 20,000 had been issued, the programme was absolutely stopped.

The State Department letter to Senator Metzenbaum, a copy of which was forwarded to the association said that the total number of visas issued to Bangladeshis was 6,571 but the US Embassy here had said that 6,324 Bangladeshis received immigrant visas under the OP-1 programme.

The association members raised the question as to whom were 247 visas issued? He also alleged that a section of Embassy officials was involved in corruption during the issuance of visas. The allegations were also conveyed to the US authorities in Washington, he added.

Bose showed a bunch of papers containing the formalities they had completed upon the directive of the US Embassy. He said that even after medical examinations and payments of necessary fees the Embassy authorities declined to issue them visas.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a public meeting organised by Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday.

3 arms factories unearthed in Cox's Bazar in 3 weeks

From Staff Correspondent

COX'S BAZAR, Aug 16 : Operation August '92 is going on in full swing all over Cox's Bazar district.

During the last fortnight, Cox's Bazar police unearthed three illegal firearms manufacturing factories at Ramu and Moheshkhali thana and recovered 56 unauthorised country-made arms and 46 rounds of ammunition.

Cox's Bazar police said that they arrested 609 persons against whom different cases had been filed earlier while some of them had been convicted for murder, hijacking, rape and the like. Acting on secret information, Ramu police, in collaboration with the Chittagong Range Reserve Police, raided another illegal arms manufacturing factory at Kudalia Kata Forests in the hilly region under Idgor union at Ramu.

Police recovered one country-made gun and huge quantity of arms manufacturing equipments. Three miscreants managed to escape before the arrival of police.

A case has been lodged with Ramu Police Station in this connection. Another illegal arms manufacturing factory at Khoralia Mura was raided by police.

Moheshkhali police recovered four SBBL guns, two pipe guns and huge quantity of explosives after raiding an illegal arms producing factory from Puthijire Hill of Bora Moheshkhali.

Police arrested six persons in this connection.

15 killed in Punjab violence

CHANDIGARH, Aug 16:

Fifteen people, including three militants and two policemen were killed as militants continued their vendetta against the security forces by kidnapping four members of a home guard's family in Punjab since last night, reports PTI.

Saudi market

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Saudi Arabia enjoys an extremely favourable balance of trade with Bangladesh. In 1990-91 Dhaka's exports amounted to 6.48 million US dollars while its imports from the kingdom amounted to the tune of 78 million US dollars.

The Saudi Charge de Affairs, assuring support from his government to boost Dhaka's trade efforts, said genuine local businessmen having recommendations from recognized chambers here will henceforth readily get visa to visit Saudi Arabia.

He also proposed to create posts of commercial attache in the embassies of the two countries.

The envoy, however, had no words on preferential treatment on tariff issue. To improve bilateral trade relations, the DCCI President suggested to form a joint chamber between Dhaka Chamber and the chambers of Saudi Arabia.

Judiciary: Hasina

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The Awami League President alleged that the government was dilly-dallying as regards the scrapping of the Indemnity Ordinance, a law that bars the trial of the killers of Sheikh Mujib.

Presided over by the convener of the Dhaka city unit of the parishad, Matur Rahman, the meeting was addressed among others by Awami League General Secretary Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, party leaders Amir Hossain Amu and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya. Parishad leaders Col (Retd) Shawkat Ali, Advocate Syed Ahmed, Habibur Rahman Milon, Shomi Kaiser and Golam Mustafa Khan also spoke at the condolence meeting.

Hasina said that the government had failed to respond satisfactorily to the nine allegations brought in the no-confidence motion in Parliament. "BNP managed to overcome the crisis with the support of Jamaat," she said.

"I wonder how the wife of a freedom fighter protects the killers of the Liberation War in

EBL officials hopeful about its success

By Inam Ahmed

High officials of the newly floated Eastern Bank Limited (EBL) and those involved in the formulation of its restructuring scheme Sunday expressed optimism on the future course of the bank.

Exchanging views with The Daily Star, Giasuddin Ahmed, the Managing Director of the bank that started its operations Sunday, hoped that the depositors would repose their confidence in the EBL as the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister themselves had assured the depositors of its smooth functioning.

The chief of the BCCI cell that formulated the scheme, Giasuddin Ahmed, said that the EBL had already filed in the forms to claim the foreign assets of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) and sent them to the International Liquidator.

The EBL was restructured from the remnants of the BCCI after the bank was suspended July 6 following world-wide charges of corruption against it.

The chief of the cell said that though the International Liquidator had given the green signal to start the EBL, it had refused to entertain Bangladesh's claim on foreign assets. On the other hand, Bangladesh has also decided not to give back similar claims from outside branches of the BCCI.

Giasuddin Ahmed said that the EBL inherits a Taka 100-crore claim to foreign BCCI branches while they have a claim of about Taka 30 crore to the EBL.

He said that the outstanding loan of the EBL stands at Taka 475 crore and its assets stand at Taka 200 crore.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the EBL, Nurul Hussain Khan told The Daily Star that the immediate consideration of the bank would be to realise its loans.

The chairman said that the rate of interest on new accounts of the EBL would soon be fixed by its Board of Directors.

On the issue of cuts in deposits, the MD of the bank said that if the BCCI had gone into liquidation the depositors would not have got more than 12 per cent of their money.

He said that even with the high cut in the last slab of deposit, the percentage receivable by the depositors was very high on international standard.

When asked to comment on the same issue, the first adviser of the ex-BCCI Depositors Association, Kaiser Md Qatun said that most depositors were content with the proposed cut in deposit.

Another depositor, Khondokar Tariqul Islam, told The Daily Star that the cut was the "better of the worst." He said that he would continue transacting with EBL now that it had started functioning.

Eastern Bank opens

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As the Prime Minister arrived the depositors carrying placards and banners chanted slogans demanding refund of their money deposited with BCI.

The launching ceremony of EBL was held under a huge pandal erected on the road in front of the Jiban Bima Bhaban.

Financial institutions are the main source for investment," the Prime Minister said, "we are determined to create a congenial environment for investment."

Begum Zia pointed out that the government had already undertaken an extensive reform programme in the financial sector.

She stated that the operations of EBL would not only be confined to returning money to the BCCI depositors, but would play a dynamic role in the country's economic affairs.

With the comment that democracy and free market economy were supplementary to each other, the Prime Minister said the government had taken measures to activate the capital market to provide incentive to investment.

Begum Zia further pointed out that the reduction of interest rates and restricting role of the public sector to supportive measures will induce greater investment.

She stated that steps like setting up a land bank for providing credit to small and marginal farmers would accelerate the green revolution and the programmes for achieving self-sufficiency in food.

The inaugural ceremony was also addressed, among others, by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, State Minister for Finance, Mojibur Rahman, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of EBL, Nurul Hussain Khan.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in his speech said strict measures were being formulated along with the existing banking company laws to deal indiscipline and corruption in the banking sector.

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The clash was a sequel to an earlier clash on Friday last between the two groups over a dispute of family property between half brothers - Bhutto of Al and younger Babu of JCD. Friday's clash left at least 40 people injured, seven of them seriously.

UN staff leave Kabul

From Page 1 Col 5

sition and will not remain president," retaliated a Hezb spokesman in Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar.

The Peshawar accord signed between the various Mujahideen in that town as Kabul fell to the guerrillas at the end of April outlined procedures for the interim government with government positions allotted to each group.

Hezbollah-Islami would fight the "unholy alliance" in Kabul until all its demands were met, the spokesman said.

The rebel Chieftain was believed to be entrenched south of Kabul from where he has directed the assault on the city.

Diplomats met Rabbani to discuss evacuating foreigners. He warned diplomats they could become a target for rocket attacks. Hekmatyar has offered to hold his fire for one hour to allow foreigners to fly out, but insisted no other planes should use the airport, closed for 10 days.

State-run Kabul radio said bombers had killed 57 Hezb fighters, including two senior commanders, and wounded 16.

Three UN and international committee of the Red Cross trucks reached Kabul late on Friday bringing medicines to its beleaguered and crowded hospitals. The Red Cross hospital said it had admitted 604 people between Monday and Friday.

Two members of the leadership council and formerly communist Uzbek militia leader General Rashid Dostum asked the UN to intervene.

US, allies plan

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Times quoted officials as saying the bombing could continue through a list of nine targets.

It quoted an unnamed official saying, "we are going to stage an incident" that related less to the importance of any documents than to the conviction that the steps would provoke a confrontation that would serve as a pretext for military action and to help get the President re-elected."

A UN team arrived in Baghdad two weeks ago to search for arms after Iraq declared its ministries off-limits to the inspectors. Bush vowed then that Iraq would be forced to comply with Gulf war ceasefire terms.

A US Defence Department spokeswoman told Reuters Lieutenant General Michael Nelson, the new commander of the US central command air force component in the Middle East, and about 30 members of his staff left on Thursday to visit the command area.

He had gone to establish military to military coordination... and observe US forces in the region, she said, but declined to say what country Nelson was in.

Meanwhile, Iraqi Information Minister Hamed Yousef

Hummati had said Iraq would fight to the last if it was attacked.

But he told the German weekly Der Spiegel in an interview the United States was too cowardly to engage in a land battle.

Hummati did not exclude the possibility of another Iraqi attack on Kuwait, saying Baghdad's claim to the Emirate had a historical base.

The interview was released on Sunday, ahead of publication tomorrow.

Asked if Baghdad was preparing for another military conflict following the 1991 Gulf war against US-led allied forces seeking to oust Iraqi troops from Kuwait, Hummati replied, "if we are attacked, then we will fight to the last man without regard for the consequences."

Hummati said that with cruise missiles the United States was more than a match for Iraq.

"But they would not stand a land battle against us," he said. "America is far too cowardly to tangle with the Iraqi army."

He said Iraq would maintain its claim on Kuwait. Asked if this meant using force, he replied, "that is a question which depends on possibilities on offer. Everything is imaginable."

He suggested that to bridge widening trade gap between Riyadh and Dhaka, Saudi Arabia could import various items other than jute - like frozen food, vegetables, ceramic wares, footwear, toiletries, tea and readymade garments.

Some exporters requested the Saudi envoy for arranging regular cargo flights between Bangladesh and Saudi Arabia to help boost Dhaka's trade promotion efforts in the kingdom.

Editor: S. M. Ali
Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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The Midnight File

Algeria decrees closure of newspapers, mosques

ALGIERS, Aug 16: The Algerian authorities have issued a decree permitting closure of newspapers and mosques for up to six months if they are held to threaten public security, the official news agency APS said. APS said the measure filled a loophole in legislation which instituted a state of emergency on February 9 after clashes between Muslim fundamentalists and security forces, reports Reuter.

Rao's remarks on Kashmir unfortunate: Pindi

ISLAMABAD, Aug 16: Pakistan reprimanded Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao today for saying at the weekend that disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir was an integral part of India and no force on earth could alienate it. A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman, quoted by the official APP news agency, called Rao's remarks "unfortunate and unhelpful," reports Reuter.

Robbers loot Tk 3.5 lakh from two city shops

By Staff Correspondent

Robbers in two separate incidents looted cash and goods worth about Taka 3.5 lakh from two shops at Uttara and Roy Shaheb Bazar in the city Sunday.

Three miscreants stormed into 'Eye Vision' - a doctor's chamber as well as a spectacles shop at Uttara Bhaban, Uttara, Sunday noon and looted cash, machinery and spectacles worth about Taka 1.5 lakh at gun point, sources said.

An employee of the shop said, the miscreants stormed into the shop, held all the employees captive in the doctor's chamber and decamped with cash and goods by an auto-rickshaw parked outside.

Uttara police said, a case was registered with them but they were yet to arrest any one in this connection.

In another incident, a group of muggers numbering 12 stormed into a timber-shop at Roy Shaheb Bazar at around 10:30 am yesterday, beat its owner Shamsu and fled with Taka two lakh in cash.

Kotwali police said, the shop owner lodged a case with them but no one was arrested so far.

One killed, 5 injured in road mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

At least one person was killed and five others were injured in two separate road accidents at Matuail and Mirpur in the city during last two days.

A collision between an auto-rickshaw and a passenger-bus left one person dead and another one injured at Matuail under Demra police station Saturday evening.

An employee of Janata Bank, Farid Uddin, sustained serious injuries and was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he succumbed to injuries at around 9 pm Saturday. His companion in the auto-rickshaw was also admitted to the same hospital.

In another accident, four persons were injured when a minibus bumped against a traffic-island at Kazipara, Mirpur Sunday morning.

The injured passengers are Anwarullah, 40, Shawpon, 20, Montu, 22, and Mohiuddin, 18. They were all admitted to the DMCH.

Indo-Pak talks begin today

NEW DELHI, Aug 16 : Pakistan Foreign Secretary Shahryar Khan arrived here today for talks on bilateral matters, including Kashmir, the main outstanding issue between the two neighbour, reports AFP.

Khan said he looked forward to "serious and meaningful" discussions with his Indian counterpart, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, at the sixth round of talks beginning Monday.

Sweetmeat shops

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has a yearly VAT due of about Taka 38.5 lakhs on an annual sales of some Taka 2.4 crore while Bombay Sweetmeat & Chanachur also of Chawk Circular Road has a VAT due of Taka 19.5 lakhs on an annual sales of about Taka 1.2 crore, the source pointed out.

Similarly, Maran Chand of Purana Paltan has outstanding VAT dues of Taka 28.5 lakhs and the Ambala Sweetmeat shop at Muhammadpur has dues of Taka 11.5 lakhs.

The sweetmeat shop owners had filed and lost a writ Petition against imposition of VAT, in the High Court recently. The deadline of the final notice for compliance expired on August 9.

RU: Show cause

From Page 1 Col 8

August 1, expired Saturday (Aug 15).

Campus sources said tension was prevailing there following a clash Friday night between Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal and the Chhatra Moitry.

At today's meeting, organised by the Chhatra Otdkya, speakers condemned the Friday night's incident and accused the university authorities of conspiracy against them.

Presided over by Chhatra Moitry university unit president Sadakat Hossain Khan, the meeting was addressed, among others, by RUCSU OS Ruhul Kuddus Babu, Chhatra Moitry GS Ragib Ahsan Munna and Kader Sarker.

Rajshahi University Teachers' Association, in a statement signed by its Secretary Rysul Islam Faruki, also condemned the Friday night's incident on the campus.

Kashmir violence takes 40 lives in three days

SRINAGAR, Aug 16 : At least 40 people have died in separatist-linked violence in Kashmir in the last three days, while two townships have been placed under an indefinite curfew, officials said today, reports AFP.

The renewed violence erupted when Muslim militants went ahead with their plans to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day across the Kashmir valley on Friday and launch protests on Saturday, India's independence anniversary.

Police and hospital officials here in the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir state said today that 40 people had died in the three days of violence,

14 hurt as family dispute turns political clash

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 16:

At least 14 people were injured when activists of Jatityabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Awami League clashed again at Malaspara area in the town today, reports UNB.

The clash was a sequel to an earlier clash on Friday last between the two groups over a dispute of family property between half brothers - Bhutto of Al and younger Babu of JCD.

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