

31 Filipino maids flee 'abusive' Kuwaitis

MANILA, Aug 19 - A group of 31 Filipino housemaids returned to the Philippines from Kuwait today accusing their employers of sexual assault and other abuses, reports Reuter.

Officials who met the women at the airport said they included one who had been abducted and raped, and two alleged victims of battery whom they described as insane as a result of their ordeal.

The two appeared to be in a state of shock and refused to answer reporters' questions.

My employers often slapped me and their children spat on my face, said 53-year-old Felipa Caguiat, who said she broke her hip when she was jumped from the second floor of a building to escape from her employers last month.

Violeta Nunez, 43, said she fled to the Philippine embassy in Kuwait after her employer tried to rape her in May. He has become increasingly violent after the failed attempt. I had to run away, she told reporters at Manila Airport.

David Corpin, administrator of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, said Manila had hired a lawyer to help prosecute two unidentified Kuwaitis who had abducted and raped a 21-year-old housemaid.

The maid said she was forced into a car the night she escaped from her employer, whom she accused of starving her. Corpin said a ban on sending housemaids to Kuwait after the Gulf war was still in place because of frequent reports of abuse. But many disregarded the ban and evaded the law.

"We cannot give them protection because in the first place, they are unregistered," Corpin said.

An average of 20 Filipino housemaids a day seek refuge at the Philippine Embassy in Kuwait, he said.

About half a million Filipinos, including engineers, medical personnel, labourers and maids, work in the Middle East, tens of thousands more are employed as dancers, singers or maids in Japan and other Asian countries.

Officials said a number of them had no work permits and were vulnerable to abuse by unscrupulous recruiters and employers. On Tuesday, a Philippine human rights group gave details of three cases in which it said Filipino women working in the Middle East had been abused and killed.



Nirmal Sen addressing a public meeting organised by Nirmal Committee at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday. — Star photo



The newly-completed section of the National Heart Foundation at Mirpur. — Star photo

Heart Foundation Hospital First phase of construction work completed

By Staff Correspondent

The first phase of construction work on the National Heart Foundation's 300-bed hospital for cardio-vascular diseases in Mirpur has been completed at a cost of Taka 27 lakh.

In this phase 26-bed facilities have been completed and the hospital has already started providing outdoor services, informed Justice ATM Masud, president of the foundation.

Eminent cardiologists of the country have volunteered their services and the hospital will begin providing full in-house services to patients soon, he added.

Set up on a 270 decimal piece of land donated by the government the construction work was done primarily with the donation from late Khan Bahadur M A Khaleque and Ansh Bari Trust and a lumpsum grant from the government.

Established in 1978, the National Heart Foundation is a non-profit organisation and plans to keep at least 50 per cent of the hospital beds reserved for poor patients free of cost while the rest would be paying beds.

Noting that the institute of cardiovascular diseases in the capital is rendering a commendable service to heart patients, Justice Masud, however said that the existing facilities in the country were quite inadequate as the number of people suffering from heart ailments were increasing at an 'alarming rate'.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), he pointed out, heart diseases were the number one killer disease in the Western countries and third among the developing nations like Bangladesh.

He lauded recent government steps to set up coronary care units at the Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research and at different medical college hospitals around the country.

However, government efforts alone are not sufficient to meet the total requirements to fight heart diseases in the country, he said. "Non-government organisations should also come forward to supplement the government efforts."

Justice Masud pointed out that it was often found that ignorance about heart diseases was responsible for the fatal consequences in many cases. "People should be educated about the prevention and control of heart diseases," he added.

With branches in many district towns, the foundation is also a member of the Geneva-based International Society and Federation of Cardiology.

Anyone can become a member of the foundation and all donations are accepted, Justice Masud said. Donations, which are tax exempted, for specific purposes such as naming a hospital bed or ward is also accepted.

He added that donations of Taka one lakh each has already been committed for setting up two additional hospital beds.

Teenager slain in Jessore

MANIRAMPUR (Jessore), Aug 19: A 10-year-old boy, while sleeping with his father, was brutally slaughtered by unknown assailants at midnight at a village in Manirampur thana, reports UNB.

Police said the assailants slit the throat of Hafizur Rahman, the boy, with a sharp knife while he and his father were sleeping at the verandah of their home at village Ratan-dia.

In an editorial Wednesday in a Baghdad newspaper, Saddam's press secretary accused President Bush of seeking to deflect attention from the "economic crisis" at home and suggested he seek psychiatric help.

"Bush imagines the existence of a very dangerous situation and assumes the existence of a crashing battle going on," Abdul Jabbar Mohsen wrote in the government daily

'Foil conspiracies of fascist forces'

By Staff Correspondent

Leaders of different opposition political organisations at a meeting Wednesday called for a unity of pro-Liberation forces against the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Freedom Party.

They demanded that the government combat terrorism and improve the law and order situation in the country.

Central Coordinating Council for the Realisation of the Spirit of the Liberation War and Resistance to the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 organised the meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital to protest the attempt on Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon.

Presided over by Council Convenor Jahanara Imam, the meeting was addressed by Awami League leaders Abdur Razzak, MP, and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, CPB General Secretary Nurul Islam Nahid, Krishak Sramik Samajbadi Dal leader Nirmal Sen, JSD leaders Mirza Sultan Raja and Kazi Aref Ahmed, Workers' Party leader Bimal Biswas, Ganatantri Party leader Saiful Islam, Muktiyoddha Sangsad leaders Abdul Ahad Chowdhury and Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Sanskriti Jote leaders Fais Ahmed, Badaruddin Umar and Council leaders Syed Hasan Imam and Saidek Ahmed Khan.

Jahanara Imam in her address said, "the fascist forces of the Jamaat and the Freedom Party have begun killings." We have to fail their conspiracies that are aimed at enslaving the people of the country, she added.

Abdur Razzak accused the government of supporting the killers of 1971 saying that the government was aiding the Jubo Command with BNP activists.

The attack on Menon was one with a political motive. He called for a common platform of all pro-Independence forces to launch social resistance against the Jamaat.

Kazi Aref Ahmed called on the people to identify the strongholds of the Jamaat and the Freedom Party in Dhaka and to start breaking those.

Syed Hasan Imam urged the people to identify the Jamaat and Jubo Command activists across the country and to do whatever they wanted after issuing warnings.

He resented government support to the workers of Jamaat and Freedom Party in carrying out their plots.

Mirza Sultan Raja said that the present government would be forced to quit if it failed to take action against the Jamaat and the Shibir.

People rose to their feet when Muktiyoddha Sangsad leader Abdul Ahad Chowdhury went to the rostrum to address the meeting.

They demanded Ahad's removal from the rostrum alleging his connection with the ruling party.

They were pacified by the other leaders.

Later, a torch procession paraded several streets of the capital. Several vehicles were brickedbatted by the marchers after they were obstructed by the police.

The Central Coordinating Council for Realisation of the Spirit of the Liberation War and Resistance to the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 will lay siege to the DC office August 23, organisers said.

JU Dean, Senate polls results

By JU Correspondent

SAVAR, Aug 19: Professors Ataur Rahman Khan, Mirza Mozammel Haque and Amir Hossain Khan have been elected deans of three faculties in the Jahangirnagar University yesterday.

According to JU Election Commission sources, Dr Ataur Rahman of the History Department, Professor Mirza Mozammel Haque of Economic Department and Professor Amir Hossain Khan of the Physics Department have been elected deans of the Arts, Social Science and Science faculties respectively.

The election was contested by nominees from two panels, one backed by Vice Chancellor Kazi Saleh Ahmed and the other supported by his opponents.

Apart from winning the posts of deans of the Arts and Social Science faculties, the VC-backed panel won six posts in the Senate. The Panel opposing the VC bagged 27 posts of teachers' representatives to the Senate other than that of the Science Faculty Dean.

US-led allies draw up deadline

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France and the United States, described by diplomatic sources on Tuesday, comes as tensions rise over difficulties Iraq has given UN weapons inspectors and reports of a stepped-up Iraq campaign against the Shi'ite rebels.

A series of attacks on Westerners working in the safe haven established for ethnic Kurds in northern Iraq, including the wounding of a UN guard this week, has also angered the allies.

Citing reports of napalm attacks, Prime Minister John Major of Britain on Tuesday accused Saddam of "systematic murder."

He said he supports setting up a safe haven such as the one established for the Kurds in northern Iraq by the nations that defeated Saddam's forces last year in the war over the Iraqi president's seizure of Kuwait.

"We will instruct the Iraqis not to fly in that area, Major said in London. "They will be attacked if they fly in the area that is prescribed."

Pro-Saddam forces crushed Kurd and Shi'ite uprisings immediately after the war.

In an editorial Wednesday in a Baghdad newspaper, Saddam's press secretary accused President Bush of seeking to deflect attention from the "economic crisis" at home and suggested he seek psychiatric help.

"Bush imagines the existence of a very dangerous situation and assumes the existence of a crashing battle going on," Abdul Jabbar Mohsen wrote in the government daily

Al-Jumhuriya. "He creates between Iraq and the UN incidents and disputes which in reality do not exist."

A UN source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the ultimatum could be delivered to al-Anbari or by American commanders meeting with Iraqi commanders in Zakho, northern Iraq.

The source said scores of US planes based in Saudi Arabia would enforce a safety zone for the Shi'ites in southern Iraq. The United States also has about 90 warplanes aboard the USS Independence in the Persian Gulf.

In London, a government official said Britain would contribute six aircraft to the allied force that would patrol southern Iraqi skies.

The prohibition would de-

The Midnight File

Bush formally nominated for second term

HOUSTON, Aug 19: Republicans formally nominated George Bush for a second four-year term as president Wednesday night, a prelude to the 10-week finale of the campaign for America's November 3 general election. The party was sending Bush into the autumn struggle with speeches at its national convention by his wife and No. 1 fan, Barbara Bush, and by Mrs. Marilyn Quayle, wife of vice presidential running mate Dan Quayle, reports AP.

Floods, landslide claim 111 in China

BEIJING, Aug 19: Floods and landslides in two of China's poorest provinces have killed at least 111 people and left 10 missing, while thousands of others were left homeless, official reports today said. Torrential rains produced drought-hit Shaanxi and Gansu provinces, northern China, from August 8 to 13, touching off massive landslides and flooding, the reports said, reports APF.

Tragic! Jamaat urges govt to deal troublemakers with iron hand

A student of Ahmed Bawani High School drowned in river Buriganga while playing with friends Wednesday afternoon, reports UNB.

Mohsin Hossain (16), a student of class , was rushed to the Mitford Medical College Hospital but doctors on duty declared him dead.

Police said Mohsin was pushed into the river playfully by one of his friends. They left the hospital soon after the news of Mohsin's death.

Mohsin was the only survivor among his seven brothers born, family sources said.

The government must carry out its responsibilities boldly, said a resolution adopted in the party working committee meeting yesterday.

The resolution said an identified quarter is engaged in heinous conspiracy to use as political weapon the attack on the life of Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon. They thus want to fish in troubled water, it said in an oblique reference to Awami League.

Awami League and its allies have blamed Jamaat-Shibir for the attack on Menon and publicly called for finding out and listing Jamaat-Shibir elements for elimination.

The Jamaat meeting apprehended that the attack on Menon was part of a "blueprint given by their alien master to destabilise Bangladesh."

2 killed, 50 hurt in road mishaps

SAVAR, Aug 19: A BRTC bus skidded off the Dhaka Aricha highway and plunged into a roadside ditch today, killing two persons and injuring 30, reports UNB.

Only hours later, another accident on the same road left 20 injured, police and witnesses said.

The first accident occurred at about 6 am when the Dhaka-bound state-run bus from Khulna tumbled into a brimming ditch near the Dhamrai thana road after its driver had lost control, the sources said.

Press Note

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Camp at Ukhiya expressed their desire to return home voluntarily, another group, unwilling to return, resisted the former. Some unruly refugees, reluctant to return, became furious when the officer in charge of the camp was holding discussion to avert clashes between the two groups.

At one stage, the troubleshooters became organised and fell on the refugee camp with sticks and sharp weapons. They turned more violent and tried to snatch away arms from the police and the ansars and set ablaze the camp. The police had to lathicharge to bring the situation under control and resist their unruly activities. As the unruly refugees did not refrain from their harmful activities despite repeated warning of the officer in charge of the camp, the police were compelled to open fire in self-defence and to bring the situation under control as well as to safeguard the government properties and also lives and properties of the refugees. Three refugees were killed and three others injured.

The officer in charge of the camp received head injury and three ansars and one police were seriously injured in the armed attack of the unruly refugees.

The police arrested five persons for their involvement in the terrorist activities.

AL, allies

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Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote, which attended the first day meeting on Tuesday, did not attend the meeting on Wednesday. The Jote was criticised for distributing a leaflet branding AL, BNP, Jamaat, Freedom Party and Jatiya Party as representing the same class. The Oiktya Prakria representatives were also absent from the meeting Wednesday.

The source said that the AL insisted on using the phrase "movement against the killers of '71 and '75" but a number of parties had reservations on the terminology.

The leaders present at the meeting were Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury, Matiya Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan, Abdur Razzak, Tofael Ahmed and Amir Hossain Anu of AL, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and Nurul Islam Nahid of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Nirmal Biswas of National Awami Party (NAP), Alhaj Abdus Samad and Hafez Mohammad Dantol of Gana Azadi League, Dilip Barua of Shamiyabadi Dal, Suranjit Sengupta and Aminul Islam Badsha of Ganatantri Party, Kazi Aref Ahmed of JSD (Inu), Khalequzzaman of BSD (Khaleq), Moinuddin Khan Badal of BSD (Mabbub), Haider Akbar Khan Rono and Bimal Biswas of Workers Party, Nirmal Sen of Sramik Krishak Samajbadi Dal and Shajahan Straj of JSD (Shajahan).

Democratic Forum suggests forming action body against terrorism

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Democratic Forum suggested Tuesday the immediate formation of a special action committee (SAC) to combat terrorism and re-establish rule of law in the country.

The forum, at an emergency meeting in the city, adopted a six-point resolution which called for national initiative to improve the law and order situation for consolidating democracy, said a statement of the forum signed by its Convenor, Dr Kamal Hossain.

The resolution suggested that a special action committee (SAC) be formed to advise and assist the Prime Minister for eradicating terrorism to ensure security of the people as per the provisions of Constitution.

The resolution called for the SAC to be constituted of personages who enjoy the confidence of all sections of people. They are to deal with complaints and reports from all quarters regarding terrorism.

The members of SAC would also assist the Prime Minister in monitoring and supervising the "anti-terrorist programme."

A control room operating round the clock, would be set up to receive reports of terrorist activities and advise as to what kind of action should be taken as suggested by the SAC.

Card pay phones from next month

By Staff Correspondent

Dhaka city dwellers will get the facility to use card pay phones from next month.

Telephone Shilpa Sangstha (TSS) will introduce this phone system for better telephone services to the people of the city.

Two kinds of cards will be available — one of Taka 50 for 25 call units and the other of Taka 200 for 100 call units. Through this pay phone, local, national and international calls can be made.

Initially ten such phones will be installed in Dhaka City, but in time 90 more will be set up in Dhaka and in other cities. In the beginning, a person from the TSS will be available at each pay phone booth to serve the public.

The TSS man will also sell cards.

The card user will have to insert his card in the pay phone and he will at once see the number of call units in the display unit of pay phone. The user will then have to lift the receiver and dial the calling number.

When the caller lifts the receiver, the time zone meter will start functioning.

In case of local calls one call unit will be deducted from the card every six minutes.

But in case of national and international calls, call units will be deducted in accordance with time and distance.

Attempt on Menon part of conspiracy to destroy democracy: JCD

By Staff Correspondent

The leaders of the Jatiyatadbadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) Wednesday said that "the attempt on Menon was a partial exposure of a conspiracy to destroy democracy by a certain quarter who had lost the elections."

The JCD leaders were addressing a rally held to protest the attempt on Menon and the JCD leader Nasrudin Pintu in front of the National Press Club.

Presided over by Abul Khayer Bhuyyan, the rally was addressed by Kamruzzaman Ratan, Muniruzzaman Munir, Nazimuddin Alam, Fazlul Haq Milon and Kazi Azizul Hakim.

Urging a strong social resistance against terrorism, Bhuyyan said that the government was determined to punish those who attacked Menon.

Milon said that quarter even exploited the sentiments of the people Tuesday by spreading rumours.

He said "people expect unity for the development of democracy, but the Awami League, Jamaat, Freedom Party, and Jubo Command are fighting each other to destroy democracy."

The JCD leaders, promising to fight the enemies of democracy also said, "No political ideal can be based upon the killing of the people, thus the killers will always fail to reach their objectives."

Dhaka, Delhi

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of this month to discuss the water dispute.

The Joint Secretary of the Indian Home Ministry, VS Ailawadi, will meet the acting Home Secretary to discuss consular affairs. Detained Bangladesh trawlers and fishermen will figure in the talks, official sources said.

A Foreign Office press release issued yesterday said that the talks were "part of the regular annual bilateral consultations established at the level of foreign secretaries."

Dixit leaves for home Sunday noon.

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