

Manpower export to Malaysia 'Unscrupulous agents to face tough action'

By Staff Correspondent

The government will take tough action against illegal export of manpower to Malaysia, warned a Foreign Office spokesman yesterday.

Speaking at a press briefing, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan said that 32 Bangladeshis have died in the Malaysian detention camps.

Another 2,259 who entered that country illegally are currently being held in the camps.

The Foreign Secretary held talks on the issue with the Malaysian authorities during a recent visit to Kuala Lumpur to attend the OIC contact group meeting on Bosnia.

Farooq Sobhan said that the demand for workers in Malaysia was unlimited. "But they are willing to take more people through the front door" and added that "government to government level contact will now be strengthened."

He said there was need for massive publicity among the intending job seekers to go through proper channels avoiding "unscrupulous agents."

Responding to a volley of questions from newsmen, the Foreign Secretary said the unfortunate deaths were not due to maltreatment but because of ailments and malnourishment due to "rigorous travel through difficult terrain by the illegals."

He said that the Malaysians have denied that the conditions in the camps were deplorable and that the incidents of torture were not true.

"It is true we have previously faced problems regarding access by High Commission officials to the different camps. But now Kuala Lumpur has given unlimited access and 95 visits by embassy officials have taken place since 1993," he said.

The Foreign Secretary noted that nearly 90 per cent of the deaths in the eight detention camps involved Bangladeshis. The number of Indonesians detained was almost twice, but the number of deaths involving them were far less, as "the cir-

cumstances of travel by their illegal immigrants are not the same or as rigorous as those from Bangladesh."

Most of the people who have been detained in the camps are "people who have entered Malaysia illegally."

The Kuala Lumpur authorities have informed that thousands of Bangladeshis illegals enter Malaysia with the help of "irresponsible recruiting agents" through southern Thailand. They often spent a month in the jungles waiting to be transported across the border.

"These people are spotted through the jungles of south Thailand and have to face tremendous ordeals. These rigorous travels lead to diseases like beri-beri, gastric and severe malnutrition."

The Foreign Secretary said that there are an estimated 40,000 Bangladeshis waiting in the jungles of Thailand to cross into Malaysia.

The Foreign Secretary said the government has asked the Malaysian authorities to provide access to Bangladeshi doctors in the detention camps regularly.

Giving further details, Farooq Sobhan said some 26,240 illegal Bangladeshis have been detained by the Kuala Lumpur authorities between 1993 and June 95. The majority of them, he said, had been released by the Malaysian authorities.

An appeal has also been made by the Bangladesh Foreign Minister to the Malaysian authorities to regularise the 2,259 illegal workers who are currently detained, the Foreign Secretary informed.

According to the figures conveyed by the Malaysian authorities presently there are some 1,61,000 Bangladeshis working legally. But there is a higher figure with our High Commission," the Foreign Secretary pointed out.

Asked what could be the number of illegal Bangladeshis in that country, the Foreign Secretary said it ranged between 60,000 to 70,000.

Dhaka didn't need BOP support from IMF in '94-95

In a major shift from its traditional rigid lending approach, the International Monetary Fund now focuses also on social issues in member countries, apart from monetary matters, reports UNB.

Briefing on the IMF Annual Report 1995 here yesterday, a Fund official said social issues were being brought into consideration to derive broad-based support from society to the IMF programmes and objectives.

The report was released worldwide on September 14. Bangladesh did not receive any loan from IMF last year because, the Fund official here said, the country "did not have any balance-of-payment (BOP) problem."

IMF is traditionally a watchdog of global monetary system, and its lending programmes are usually restricted to short-term balance-of-payment support to member countries.

Beginning its new functional approach, IMF funded a programme in the former Soviet republic of Georgia for financial benefits to pensioners, and a refugee resettlement programme in Mozambique in 1994-95.

"The Fund is now stressing on quality growth... we are emphasising more on broadly focused objectives," the IMF official said.

3 killed

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One Jahanara Begum, 28, was killed by her step brothers at Muradnagar under Rangunia thana this morning, police said.

In another incident, a minor boy, Tajul Islam, died on the spot at Hathazari road when he was hit by a speeding truck in the morning.

PM : UN session

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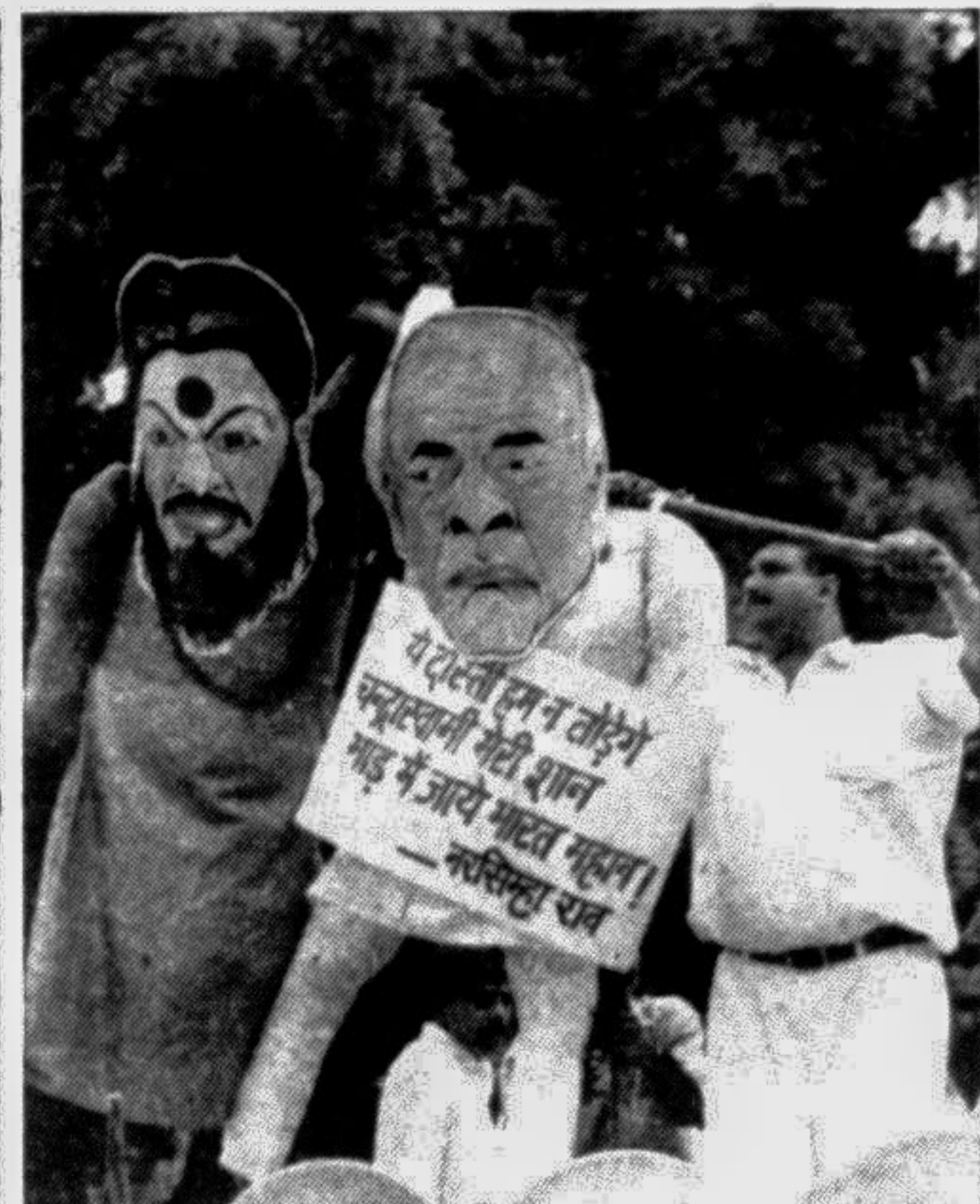
A formal announcement will be made shortly, he said. Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Foreign Minister who underwent a surgery at a New York hospital is now recovering well and is expected to be out of the hospital in 'a day or two,' Farooq Sobhan said.

The Foreign Secretary said that some 115 heads of state and government are likely to attend the 50th anniversary celebrations. The United Nations which began with 51 members, has now a strength of 185 member-nations.

Replying to a question if the Farakka issue would be raised at the United Nations, Farooq Sobhan replied, "It is a bilateral matter and we will continue to hold bilateral discussions with India. However, it does not preclude raising the issue at global forums to sensitize the people about the issue."

Asked about the proposed Joint River Commission (JRC) talks, the Foreign Secretary expressed his optimism and said that both countries were trying to "find a mutually acceptable date."



Indian opposition activists perform a mock hanging of Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao and Chandraswamy, a controversial godman, in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP/UNB photo

Hasina : Constitution

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their lists in support.

Hasina further said the government was always taking plea of the Constitution regarding the Opposition demand but it did not hold by-elections on schedule and kept mum when the Speaker violated the Constitution by rejecting resignation of Opposition MPs.

This government is staying in power by force and running the country in an autocratic style although the people have expressed their "no-confidence" against it and gave a clear mandate for the elections under a neutral caretaker government, she said.

Referring to the PM's speech in Madaripur on Monday, Hasina, the former Leader of Opposition in Parliament, said, on November 6, 1990, she (Hasina) gave the outline for appointment of a vice-president for Ershad's resignation as per Article 51 and 55 of the Constitution.

Khaleda Zia at her public meeting at Shibchar in Madaripur said, in 1990, when the Ershad government was toppled in a mass movement, there was constitutional provision for appointing an unelected person as vice-president.

Gaddafi's fear

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TUNIS, Sept 19: Libya and Iran will be the next targets for NATO air strikes after the Serbs in Bosnia, Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi said in a speech to Sufi Muslims, reports AFP.

"NATO's military operations in Bosnia are to test arms... to prepare for attack on Muslims," Gaddafi said in a speech carried by the Libyan news agency Jana on Sunday night.

"We are hearing the drumbeat of NATO attacks against us... they are massing their arms for attacks against us," he added in his speech in the coastal town of Misurata.

RU reopens today

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 19: Rajshahi University will reopen tomorrow.

The university was closed after clashes between the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and the Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) on July 22 in which over 50 students were injured.

All residential halls reopened this evening. Meanwhile, the university authorities have asked all students to carry their identity cards with them on the campus. The students were also advised to enter the halls by 10 pm.

All kinds of processions and rallies are prohibited on the campus for the last two years.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof M Eusuf Ali, at a press conference at his residence this evening sought cooperation of all quarters for maintaining peaceful and congenial atmosphere on the campus.

Dhaka backs Japan

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actively involved with functions of the United Nations. "Bangladesh is one of the top four countries which have contributed troops to the United Nations peace keeping operations," the Foreign Secretary added.

Jatiya Party

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ple for observing the 72-hour hartal and called for intensifying the movement to realise elections under caretaker government.

Chowdhury also demanded the release of former President H M Ershad. Top leaders of JP Kazi Zafar Ahmed, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Moudud Ahmed and general secretary Anwar Hossain Manju were present in the meeting but could not address the people as the meeting was hurriedly called off due to rains.

The meeting presided over by the JP city president Col (Retd) A Malik was addressed by Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, Shamim al Manun and other leaders of the party's city unit and front organizations.

Jamaat

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in the afternoon. Khan congratulated the people for the observance of the 72-hour hartal ending yesterday morning, supporting the opposition demand for caretaker administration to conduct national polls.

Jamaat Secretary General Matjur Rahman Nizam! accused the Prime Minister of 'double standard in leadership,' saying that she had supported the caretaker government idea before going to power, but was now rejecting it.

"Democracy will flourish if the nation gets rid of such leadership," he said, blaming the present government for blocking the way of free and fair elections for petty party interest.

The Midnight File

Govt-MQM talks resume

ISLAMABAD, Sept 19: Talks between the government and opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) on stemming the prolonged violence in Pakistan's largest city of Karachi resumed here today. "Our main concern is to bring peace to Karachi as soon as possible," the government's chief negotiator, law minister Nabi Dad Khan, told reporters before the meeting, reports AFP.

WB asks govt to reduce role in labour market

The government intervention to determine wages and other working conditions in the formal sector has politicised industrial relations and often led to inefficient and inequitable results, reports UNB.

Observing this, the World Bank in a recent report suggested that the government reduce its role in the country's formal sector labour market of about 12 per cent of the estimated total 59 million workforce.

The labour force is growing by about 3 per cent or 1.8 million every year, the Bank pointed out in its report on "Labour Market Policies for Higher Employment."

Of the total workforce, renowned economist Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud said, 90 per cent labourers are in informal sector including the agriculture and small industries. Their wage determination in the informal sector is not directly affected by any policy intervention.

Dr Mahmud, Chairman of the Economics Department of the Dhaka University, said it is in the formal sector that government wage setting may have direct and indirect effect. Public sector enterprises may account for one third to half of the formal sector employment.

Mrs Huq said the reports published by certain newspapers regarding her return to the country on September 10 was unfortunate. Refuting the allegations that the Dinajpur district administration had been enjoying certain facilities under her patronage, she said all these reports were motivated.

She said some people with a view to achieving their political motives had been trying to mislead the people by making false propaganda against her and trying to impair her personal dignity.

Mrs Huq described the newspapers as the conscience of the nation and expressed the hope that the newspapers would not publish such news items instigated by others. She said it is expected that like in the past the writups of the journalists would help maintain the process of democracy.

She referred to the reports published in a section of the press regarding her absence from the Prime Minister's entourage of Dinajpur on September 12 and said after her return from Beijing on September 11 night, she was feeling tired and unwell and that was why she could not accompany the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahmud, Chairman of the Economics Department of the Dhaka University, said it is in the formal sector that government wage setting may have direct and indirect effect. Public sector enterprises may account for one third to half of the formal sector employment.

The Detective Branch police arrested Alam from Shahbagh area in the evening Saturday. A case has been filed with the Ramna thana in this connection Monday.

Commentary : Stop it

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wholesale denouncing of this act and extending an apology to the victim. We feel that there is still time for such a course of action. The opposition parties can greatly regain their public esteem by following it.

There is another, and more practical, reason as to why we should condemn this incident immediately. We must put a stop to it before it spreads. Already there have been reports that several female garments workers in Shyamoli area of the city had their 'orna' removed for trying to go to work during hartal. One woman was physically pushed around till on-lookers came to her rescue. We have earlier mentioned about commissioner Kabir. Can we not imagine the possible repercussions for our society as a whole if we do not immediately put a stop to this kind of public behavior? There are enough miscarents out there to take full advantage of such a situation.

I urge our political leaders to calm down and think things through. This particular movement is neither the beginning of a new dawn, nor the end of all our miseries. We will have to live with our misfortunes and struggles — and of course hartals. There have been hartals in the past, and there will be hartals in the future — even if the current opposition should come to power. So do not destroy some basic social and cultural norms. Do not hand over your movement to the indecent elements. Political struggles are a part of the democratic process and, through trials and errors we have come a long way. Do not be shortsighted. It is easy to start indiscipline, but far more difficult to contain it. The indecency that is targeted at your 'enemy' today, may rebound to you tomorrow.

There is also the point of democratic practice. If one has a right to do 'hartal', then another should, and must have the right not to take part in it. Talks of becoming victims of 'public agitation' or 'public wrath' is nothing more than intimidation of the general mass. And political leaders know more than many of us that intimidations do not work in gaining public support. In fact it works in the very opposite direction. While political parties agitate and speak out, public reacts in silence. Nobody really can gauge how much people's sentiment has been hurt by the public humiliation of one of them.

Some of my friends from the opposition will no doubt say that we are making too much out of a single incident. After all thousands of picketers were involved in this three-day countrywide strike, and only in one case did the "stripping" occur. In reply we can only remind them of a song that inspired us so much during our Liberation War. "Amora ekti phoolkey banchabo bole juddo kori" (To save even one single flower of our land, we wage this war). Democracy is as much about the masses, as it is about individuals. When one of us suffers indignity, we are all lowered as a nation. Let us not turn decency and indecency into a numbers game, which is to be counted in averages. One act of indignity directed to one single individual dishonours us all.

Eye hospital

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'faulty' cataract operation due to 'negligence' by doctors that led to the fungal infection and loss of the eye of Moniruddin, 72, said his elder son Kamaluddin.

The lawsuit was filed by Mokhdood Ali, the younger son of Moniruddin.

Kamaluddin told this correspondent yesterday, "I was taken to the hospital Director's room where four doctors pressed me to withdraw the lawsuit and threatened with dire consequences for non-compliance. They assured free treatment for my father if I withdraw the lawsuit."

Moniruddin, who remains admitted in Bed No 16, Ward No 2 at the hospital, said: "Three nurses attempted to take my thumb print while I was asleep and my sons were out."

Opposition

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Bangabandhu Avenue. Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Jamaat acting ameer Abbas Ali Khan announced the programme for their rallies in front of the Jatiya Press Club and the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque respectively.

The programme of Jatiya Party and Jamaat also includes mass contact throughout the country from September 22 to 24.

DUCSU reunion tomorrow

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the new constitution, the Union was renamed as the Dacca University Central Students Union (DUCSU).

Under the new constitution, the Vice Chancellor was made the ex-officio president of the DUCSU. The executive council of the union was to be composed of the president (VC), treasurer (a teacher) and 16 student representatives elected by the hall unions. Ten office-bearers of the union were elected from among them.

The DUCSU started functioning from the 1953-54 academic session. Again in 1960, the constitution of the DUCSU was amended. The executive council was renamed as the executive committee and the number of its members was increased to 18. The number of representatives from each hall union for any particular session would be determined by the VC in consultation with the Provosts. The offices of the DUCSU would also be distributed by the VC in the same manner but no hall should have both the offices of VP and GS. The treasurer of the union would be nominated by the VC from among the teachers.

In 1970, a very important clause was added to the DUCSU constitution providing that nine office-bearers and nine members of its executive committee, except the president and the treasurer, were to be directly elected by the members of the union.

After the independence of Bangladesh, the first DUCSU election was held on May 20, 1972. In 1973, some minor changes were brought to the constitution under which the number of office bearers was raised to 10 from 9.

The constitution and activities of the student union remained suspended till 1978 as some untoward incidents took place during the DUCSU election in 1974. In the 1978-79 session, the DUCSU resumed functioning under the amended constitution. The DUCSU election for the session 1979-80 was held on November 17, 1980. A F M Mahrudur Rahman (Manna) and Akhtaruzzaman were elected VP and GS respectively.

The DUCSU election was held as scheduled in the 1980-81 and 1982-83 sessions. But for some reasons, the DUCSU elections were not held till 1988. The election was held again in 1989-90 session. The last DUCSU election was held on June 6, 1990.

The term of the present DUCSU expired on June 8, 1991. Most of the members of the present DUCSU have also completed their studies in the university.

Though the university authorities had twice tried to hold the DUCSU elections, they could not do it because of the opposition of some student fronts.

কিশোরগঞ্জের কুলিয়ারচরে

৯০১ তম শাখা উদ্বোধন

অগ্রণী ব্যাংক অফিসের আর একটি ফাল্গুন

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ডি.এফ.সি. ২২৬২২/১৭/৯

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