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PM tells recruiting agents Make sure workers are not harassed in jobs abroad

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the recruiting agents yesterday to see that their recruits are not made victims while doing jobs in foreign countries, reports UNB.

"In many cases, our workers face harassment and fraud by way of fake documents and unscrupulous companies. The recruiting agencies must take care of the interest of poor workers before sending them abroad with jobs," she said.

The prime minister gave the instruction when a delegation of other newly elected executive committee of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) led by its president Noor Ali and general secretary Golam Mostafa met her at the PM's office in the afternoon.

Hasina said many Bangladeshi workers are forced to live a subhuman life while doing jobs abroad. Some foreign companies and their local agents cheat at minimum wages and other terms and conditions of employment.

The prime minister said after assuming power, she took personal initiatives for regularizing nearly 1.5 lakh unauthorised workers in Malaysia.

Talks are on at the government level to recruit more workers from Bangladesh for Malaysia. She assured the government will continue efforts to export manpower to other friendly countries including Kuwait.

About services of Biman for

Bangladeshi expatriate, Hasina said the national airlines suffered due to various anomalies and wrong decisions of previous government.

She said ministers concerned of the past government received kickbacks amounting to USD 20 million to buy two Airbus for Biman. Besides, Biman's ticket agents in New York and Japan looted crores of taka from selling tickets during the past regimes.

The prime minister appreciated idea of issuing employment passports for expatriate workers to BAIRA's cops with fake passports.

Hasina said she had instructed the Labour and Manpower Ministry to spend the money from labour welfare trust to set up vocational institute for training unskilled and semi-skilled labourers so that they could get better jobs abroad.

Besides, Bangladeshi missions abroad has been asked to set up temporary offices in major cities of foreign countries and look into the problems faced by expatriated Bangladeshi nationals.

The BAIRA president said nearly 50 lakh Bangladeshi workers are engaged in jobs in different countries, mainly in Middle East and South East Asia, earning about Tk 9,000 crore annually. He said the association plans to increase the wage earning to Tk 36,000 crore annually.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad discuss with Jamaat-Islami chief Golam Azam and other top Four-Party Alliance leaders (not in picture) the Opposition's reply to the Prime Minister's letter inviting the Leader of the Opposition in parliament to talks on appointing a chief election commissioner.

Hundi trader Kazal arrested, given detention

From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, May 9: Hundi trader Feroque Ahmed Kazal was given one month's detention by a court here today.

People who deposited money with Kotchandpur 'Syndicate Bank,' caught Kazal last night and handed him over to the police.

Meanwhile, Mohespur police arrested two Indian nationals on Monday night for their alleged involvement in killing two hundi agents — Sariful Islam and Jamir Hossain on Sunday.

The arrested are Shambu Nath of village Ranaghat under Nadia district and Rajib of village Charpara under 24 Pargana district.

Police also recovered two pistols and eight bullets from their possession.

People who invested money with Kazal and his agents, got agitated Monday afternoon after waiting for months to get their money back.

They set houses of Kazal's three agents on fire and looted 14 shops owned by other agents at Kotchandpur thana headquarters.

Murder of 2 brothers Victims' family warned 'not to proceed too far'

By Staff Correspondent

Detectives investigating Friday's double murder case in the city said yesterday they are not getting "sufficient cooperation" from the victims' family.

Abdul Hannan Khan, DC of the Detective Branch of Police, told the Daily Star that they made little headway into the case since the traumatised family is reluctant to talk about the murder.

Kamal Pasha, the main accused, is still at large, the DC said, adding that they plan to take Mahbub on fresh remand today. Police arrested Mahbub, driver of the vehicle used during the killing, following the incident and remanded him for three days.

The victims' family, however, said they are "being warned by some local people not to proceed too far."

Amjad Hossain, father of Ashfaq Hossain Jewel, 28, and Mohammad Ali Rebel, 24, said Pasha was accused of the killings in the draft FIR, which was changed later. "Some people of the locality pursued me to change the FIR," he said.

The FIR registered with Mohammedpur thana said Kamal Pasha called the two brothers out of their second floor flat at

Situation at DEPZ still tense

By Staff Correspondent

Tension still prevails at the Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) in Savar following an untoward incident at a factory in which two people were killed and several others injured on May 2.

According to sources, negotiation is going on and full production in the factory — Ring Shine Textile — is likely to resume on Saturday next. The management of the factory agreed to compensate the victims of the incident, the sources added.

Out of 1100 workers of the factory around 800 applied for leave for five days when they came to join the following day. The company granted them four days leave, sources said.

Family members of the officials at the BEPZA Savar office also left the EPZ compound following the incident. Police and BDR are still guarding the DEPZ.

Duty officer at Savar thana last night told The Daily Star that there was no further incident at the DEPZ and the factory already resumed operation.

A high official at the BEPZA said the company terminated the workers according to the BEPZA rule. But a section of workers at the factory provoked the workers to agitate without informing the BEPZA, he added.

Out of 33 workers terminated by the company 22 had received arrears and all dues and only 11 refused to take money and started agitation leading to death of two innocent people, he said.

Ctg mass killing: 8 policemen indicted

CHITTAGONG, May 9: The Chittagong Metropolitan First Additional Sessions Judge A M M Sayeed today indicted 8 police personnel in Chittagong Mass Killing Case, reports UNB.

Thirty people were killed and more than 200 injured in police firing on January 24, 1988 when Awami League president Sheikh Hasina was leading a procession towards Lalghighi Maidan.

Those charged with the killing are former CMP Commissioner Mirza Rakibul Huda, Police Patrol Inspector J C Mondol (absconding), constables Prodip Barua, Momtazuddin, Shahi Mohammad Abdullah, Basiruddin, Mostafizur Rahman, and Abdus Salam.

Ctg mass killing: 8 policemen indicted

CHITTAGONG, May 9: The Chittagong Dock Bandar Sramik Karmochary Oikya Parishad — an alliance of 22 Trade Union (TU) bodies of Chittagong port — called off its tomorrow's 24-hour strike.

The work abstention was called off at an emergency meeting of the Parishad this noon in view of the government's decision to withdraw the decision to take Tk 150 crore from CPA.

MPs to get 200 suites at NAM village

The 200 suites of international standard in the Non-Aligned Meeting (NAM) village which are now under construction in the city areas would be allotted to Members of Parliament at the end of the NAM summit, reports BSS.

Another 684 apartments which are also being constructed here would be allotted to government officers, an official handout said yesterday.

It said 884 apartments and suites are being constructed at a cost of Tk 245 crore at Section 13 of Mirpur, Nakhla and Manik Mian Avenue for accommodating 3000 foreign guests who are expected to join, the NAM conference likely to be held here next year.

The construction work of the NAM village apartments and suites are going on in full swing and is expected to be completed by June, 2001.

Housing and Works Minister Engineer Mosharrif Hossain yesterday visited the under-construction sites of the village at Mirpur and Manik Mian avenue.



Students of Eden University College stage a sit-in demonstration on the road in front of the college yesterday demanding that the examinations be deferred.

Loan rescheduling Writ challenging BB action dismissed

By Staff Correspondent

A High Court Division Bench yesterday dismissed a writ challenging Bangladesh Bank's 'no objection certificate' (NOC) allowing rescheduling loans of Islam group from IFIC Bank.

The court order came weeks after the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry termed the central bank action illegal and summoned its officials to discuss the issue.

A shareholder of IFIC Bank filed the writ after it allowed new rescheduling of Islam Group's loans, extending the repayment period and reducing the loans to about Tk 151 crore.

Following the shareholder's petition, the HC had stayed operation of the new rescheduling and issued a rule asking the respondents — Bangladesh Bank, the government, IFIC Bank and Chairman of IFIC — to explain why their decision should not be declared to have been made unlawfully and with no legal effect.

Lawyers of the respondents argued that Islam Group had no outstanding loan and it did not default in repaying the rescheduled amounts but sought extension of repayment period with reduced amounts in instalments.

The court vacated the order and the rule after hearing yesterday.

Trouble: Biman's NY flight returns home

By Special Correspondent

Bangladesh Biman's New York flight on Monday night returned to Dhaka early Tuesday due to technical trouble.

Biman sources said the DC-10-30 aircraft left Dhaka at 11:45 p.m. on Monday. The aircraft developed trouble in its radar, forcing the Captain to return to Dhaka.

The passengers who were in the aircraft till 7 a.m. got agitated and reportedly assaulted some crew. Biman arranged their hotel accommodation later.

The flight left for New York at 2:30 p.m. after repair, the sources said.

JBIC appraisal mission in city

A 14-member appraisal mission of Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), led by Yasushi Negishi, Director, Development Assistance Division in charge of Bangladesh, arrived here yesterday, reports UNB.

The appraisal mission came following the April 25-26 bilateral Yen Loan Consultations between the governments of Japan and Bangladesh, said a JBIC press release.

The mission will have meetings with the Economic Relations Division (ERD) and other concerned authorities on May 11 to start the appraisal of the following projects:

- Creating Faridpur Infrastructure Development Project to be implemented by Local Government Engineering Department;
- Rupsha Bridge Construction Project to be implemented by Roads and Highways Department; and
- Area coverage Rural Electrification Project to be implemented by Rural Electrification Board.

The mission will intensively discuss with the project authorities and other government departments and obtain detailed information on the projects, besides visiting the project sites during their two-week stay in Bangladesh.

Upon completion of the appraisal, the mission will report to the Japanese government for possible assistance to these projects.

Another JBIC mission will be dispatched to collect detailed information on the Kaptai Hydro-power Project (6&7 units).

Court to hear Sharif's appeal from May 22

KARACHI, May 9: A Pakistani court said today it would begin hearing an appeal by deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif on May 22 against his hijacking and terrorism convictions, reports AFP.

The court also said it would hear appeals on the same day from prosecutors who want Sharif's two concurrent life terms changed to a death sentence and the acquittals of his six co-accused overturned.

"From the 22nd, it will be a day-to-day hearing and no further extension will be given," Sindh High Court Chief Justice Syed Saad Ashad said.

Ashad also ordered authorities to allow Sharif and his fellow accused to meet their lawyers.

Sharif, ousted in a military coup in October, was convicted of hijacking and terrorism and sentenced to life imprisonment by an anti-terrorism court in Karachi on April 6.

But the trial court judge Rehmat Hussain Jatoi acquitted six co-accused, including his brother Shahbaz.

All seven were in court when the proceedings opened amid tight security.

The defendants acquitted by Jatoi remain in jail on corruption charges and on Sunday were shifted from the Attock Fort interrogation centre near Islamabad to join Sharif in Karachi's Landhi jail.

Adjourning the proceedings at the request from Shahbaz and the other five so they could consult family members and hire a lawyer, the judge said the court would simultaneously hear the two prosecution appeals, and an appeal by Sharif against his conviction.

The panel includes judges Sarmad Jalal Usmani and Wahid Bakhsh Brohi.

Sharif was convicted for attempting to prevent a commercial plane carrying army chief General Pervez Musharraf and 198 passengers from landing at Karachi on October 12.

The plane landed after the army took control of the airport and Musharraf whom Sharif had sacked hours earlier, seized power and arrested the then prime minister.

Those acquitted last month also included Sharif's former advisor Syed Ghaus Ali Shah, former accountability bureau chief Saifur Rehman, ex-Sindh police chief Rana Maqbool, former Pakistan International Airline chief Khakan Abbasi and Sharif's ex-principal secretary Saad Mehdi.

Hasina invited to attend OIC summit

Special envoy to the Ameer of Qatar Dr Sheikh Mohamed bin Eid Al-Thani yesterday met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and handed over an invitation letter to her to attend the forthcoming OIC Summit in Doha, reports UNB.

The three-day summit beginning November 13 will be attended by heads of state and government of the OIC member states.

The Prime Minister accepted the invitation and conveyed her thanks to the Ameer of Qatar.

During the meeting at the PM office, the envoy also apprised Sheikh Hasina of the preparation for the summit. The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction over the summit preparations.

OC of Khulna GRP transferred

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, May 9: The officer-in-charge of GRP, Khulna Tasiqul Alam has been transferred to Syedpur following allegations against him for harbouring drug traffickers in railway colonies adjacent to Skid Ghat.


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Pak-WI Test drawn

GEORGETOWN, May 9: West Indies and Pakistan drew the first Test of their three-match series today when the final day's play was abandoned due to an unplayable pitch.

West Indies were 222 for seven in reply to Pakistan's first innings total of 288 all out.

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