



Pro-vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Professor Yusuf Haider faces protest from a fellow teacher as he arrives at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday to meet hunger-striking students (left) while journalists with black clothes covering their mouths bring out a rally to protest police attack on newsmen the day before.

PHOTO: STAR

Behind bars away from home

Over 5,000 Bangladeshi workers in jails overseas

RAFIQ HASAN

Over five thousand expatriates are languishing in jails, detention camps and deportation centres in at least 20 countries.

More than half the Bangladeshis have been sent to jail for their alleged involvement in criminal offences.

According to a recent government survey, as many as 4,650 Bangladeshis are in foreign jails.

Sources said the survey did not cover several hundred others.

Recruiting sources said many Bangladeshis took various transit routes to reach developed countries, mainly in Europe and North America, in the hope of employment.

Some are arrested on reaching their destinations, while others are sent to jails from different border posts in countries of transit, due to the lack of necessary documents like visas and prior permission from the government of the concerned countries.

The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment has taken an initiative to bail the Bangladeshis out of foreign jails and bring them home.

The government has approached the International Organisation of Migrations (IOM), to repatriate them.

"It would be very difficult to release those Bangladeshis who had been sent to jail for criminal offences," said the State Minister for Expatriate Welfare and Employment Mohammad Quamrul Islam.

It would be easier to release those Bangladeshi prisoners who were caught for not having proper passports, visas or necessary documents, he said.

The state minister said Bangladesh missions abroad would take the initiative to release the prisoners. The IOM would assist to release those prisoners where no Bangladesh missions or offices existed, the minister said.

Quamrul observed that many of the Bangladeshi prisoners may have gone to the countries for visits or business purposes, and not just for employment.

The government however, will try to secure the release of all Bangladeshi prisoners, he said.

There are 2,311 Bangladeshis in the jails of Saudi Arabia, which is the highest, followed by 616 in Malaysia.

The numbers of Bangladeshi prisoners in other countries are,

The United Arab Emirates (UAE)-478, Singapore-3

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JCD men still threaten students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders and activists of the ruling BNP-backed Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) are still moving freely on the Dhaka University (DU) campus in the presence of hundreds of security personnel who included armed police, paramilitary BDR and members of intelligence agencies.

The JCD men, mainly stationed at the Madhu's canteen, continued

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Hasina supports agitating DU students

UNB, Dhaka

Opposition Leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for intensifying the current student agitation until "the fall of BNP-Jamaat government".

She strongly condemned fresh police attacks on teachers, students and journalists at Dhaka University on Monday

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 31		6-43 pm
Aug 1	5-27 am	

Prayer Timings		
July 31		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-30	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

BTTB blocks dubious payment to Alcatel

ABU SAEED KHAN

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) has scrapped a dubious payment of Tk 1.20 crore in a telephone deal with Alcatel.

With a report published in The Daily Star on January 7, 2002, the higher authorities forced the BTTB to scrap the payment of 205,345 euro (Tk 1.20 crore) to Alcatel on installation of 27,500 telephone lines in Dhaka.

Moreover, the French telecom vendor has been asked to install 5,120 extra lines with the recovered funds.

With that, the number of telephone lines under the project totalled 32,620; of them 9,200 telephones will be installed in Chittagong.

On December 27, 2001, the BTTB awarded a contract of 1,735,686 euro (Tk 10.18 crore) to Alcatel on

installation of 27,500 telephones in Dhaka. But a provision for paying 205,345 euro in the name of "Engineering in France" was dubiously stipulated in the deal.

Besides expanding its existing exchanges, the BTTB illegally allowed Alcatel to install a new exchange in Uttara.

With the scandalous deal exposed, both the BTTB and Alcatel protested The Daily Star report.

The BTTB, when asked by the Prime Minister's Office, failed to justify the payment in the name of "Engineering in France".

Catherine Soubise, area sales manager of Alcatel, officially apologised to the government and admitted that the nomenclature of "Engineering in France" was totally illegal.

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Musharraf places wreath at Zia's grave

BSS, Dhaka

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf placed wreath at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar yesterday.

After placing wreaths, President Musharraf stood in solemn silence. Later he offered munajat.

Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister and Secretary General of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas received the distinguished guest in Crescent Lake area.

Pakistan Commerce Minister Abdul Razzak Dawood, Information

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Judicial body to record students' statements Aug 1-2

BSS, Dhaka

The judicial commission, formed to investigate the police raid on Shamsunnahar Hall, has fixed three days from August 1 to record the statements of female students of the hall, policemen and Dhaka University authorities.

The one-member commission with Justice M Tafazzal Islam will record the statements of the female students on August 1 and 2 at its makeshift office at National Academy for Education Management (NAEM) near Dhaka College, an official handout said yesterday.

The policemen concerned will also testify before the commission

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Hartal puts brakes on normal life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal yesterday put brakes on public life and economic activities.

The Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student front of the Awami League, sponsored the general strike, protesting last week's police attacks on female students of the Dhaka University and demanding resignation of its vice-chancellor.

No major trouble was reported from any part of the country during the 12-hour hartal. But police clubbing left dozens of pro-strike activists injured in Dhaka.

The hartal coincided with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's visit, but it did not hamper his official programmes.

The hartal was observed almost spontaneously, for its causes have already gathered popular support.

Police and paramilitary troops were deployed at vulnerable points of the city to fend off troubles.

In the capital, police cordoned off the Awami League headquarters on the Bangabandhu Avenue, which also houses the BCL office.

Witnesses said riot police intercepted a group of female protesters when

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DUTA meet on campus incident today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) will hold an emergency meeting at the University Club at 5pm today to discuss the prevailing campus situation following Wednesday's police brutality on the female students of Shamsunnahar Hall.

The meeting will discuss Monday's police action and harassment of some teachers of the university in a series of events that followed the July 23 incident, said a press release.

DUTA general secretary Prof Sharif Ullah Bhuiyan has requested

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PHOTO: STAR

A policewoman drags away an Awami League activist as she tries to enter the party's central office on the Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday during the dawn-to-dusk hartal.



PHOTO: STAR

Farms in city grange

DAN GREENWOOD

Bangladesh is probably most renowned for its fertile soil and high population density.

With Dhaka having one of the most highly concentrated city populations, it would seem least plausible for farmers to etch out their living within the city limits. A walk through

some of the urban slums reveals at least a handful of farmers tending to their small fields.

Spinach is the primary choice crop for its rapid growth rate and also for its ability to grow just about anywhere regardless of the soil conditions. Locally called shak, spinach provides an accompaniment to many Bangladeshi dishes.

Found virtually throughout all markets in Bangladesh, spinach provides high levels of iron to many impoverished people who lack regular access to meat. While tended primarily in plots of farmland,

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