

The Daily Star

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People's Right to Know

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Ripping off the jobless

Shady companies offer huge, lucrative jobs and then ask for money

PORIMOL PALMA

Landing a job could never have been so easy for Manik. All he had to do is to be interviewed, if being asked for his parents' names and address can be called an interview, and then be offered the job. Well, not quite that. Like the small-lettered conditions in any mind-boggling advertisement, the company asked him to deposit Tk 20,000 as 'security' if he wanted the position.

Manik did not want it any more. "Why should I have to pay the company to get a job? I had a feeling that it was just not right. There was something fishy about the whole affair. I walked out," said Manik.

But there are many others who are too desperate to get a job and are being entrapped by some shady companies making millions by ripping off the unemployed.

The method of cheating these companies follow is quite simple.

They advertise for a large number of posts, offering attractive salaries and facilities including festival bonuses, increment, provident funds, life insurance, gratuities, pension, house rent, medical and dining allowances and transport.

But each candidate has to deposit a bank draft or cash of Tk 100-200, non-refundable, with the application. And once the candidate passes the interview, which they inevitably will be as no-one is ever rejected, the company will ask

them to deposit the 'security' money.

One such company, Association for Social Economic Development (ASED), advertised on August 29 this year in the Daily Ittefaq to recruit 301 staff. The Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) calculated that this organisation netted Tk 34,300 from 'interview fees' and at least Tk 15 lakh in security money, the total sum of Tk 5,000 from each of the 301 selected candidates.

Justice Abedin gets gunman

More security may soon follow

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Concerned about the security of Justice Joynul Abedin although it has not gone public with the finds of the one-man judicial inquiry commission he headed on the August 21 carnage, the government has provided him with a gunman.

Authorities made the move after going through the report which the commission handed the government on October 2, sources said. Justice Abedin did not ask for security, the government decided on it, they added.

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GM crops on cards

Four types of crops selected as starter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Land-strapped Bangladesh is set to grow genetically modified (GM) crops to augment food production to meet the growing demand of a growing population.

To start with, four types of crops would be developed soon by applying biotechnology under the National Agriculture Research System (NARS). These are drought- and saline-tolerant rice, late blight resistant potato, fruit and shoot borer resistant eggplant and pod borer resistant chickpea.

Steps will soon be taken to set up 'containment facilities' -- a safety infrastructure to prevent any jumping of modified genes to nature -- at particular NARS institutes such as Bangladesh Rice Research Institute and Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute. It will take at least two years for commercialisation of the seeds developed at these institutes.

Agricultural Biotechnology Support Project II (ABSP-II), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will support the

endeavour. Cornell University of the USA is managing the project.

A donor-aided workshop on agricultural biotechnology yesterday revealed the plan under which genetic modification would be carried out to gain special disease-fighting traits in crops.

Welcoming the country's graduation from subsistence farming to technology-aided commercial farming, government representatives informed the two-day workshop that after preparation of a biosafety guideline four years back

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HC sends mass arrests case to regular bench

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A vacation bench of the High Court (HC) yesterday referred the mass arrests case to the regular bench of the HC for hearing on October 26, two days after the court reopens at the end of a 50-day annual vacation.

The bench comprising Justice Awlad Ali and Justice AFM A Rahman sent the case to the regular bench observing that the vacation bench had no scope for long hearing on the petition filed by some rights groups.

As a result of the court order, the September 29 HC injunction on blanket arrests under Section 86 of

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AL may join JS bodies

Mulls to be present at defence ministry committee meet to discuss grenade attacks

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The main opposition Awami League (AL) is likely to start joining parliamentary committees on different ministries next week by attending a House body meet to discuss the issue of linking the army to the August 21 grenade attack at an Awami League rally, sources said.

The parliamentary standing committee on the defence ministry included the issue in its agenda of October 9 meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

AL policymakers sounded very much positive on joining the meeting, the sources said.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil

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Manmohan offers Khaleda cooperation

India extends 100cr rupee relief assistance

UNB, Dhaka

India will give 100 crore rupees in relief assistance to Bangladesh to help recoup the losses incurred in devastating floods, according to an offer made by the Indian prime minister in a letter to his counterpart.

Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri called on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday and delivered Manmohan Singh's letter, also offering cooperation in mutually beneficial fields.

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PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia takes a look at yarns after opening Batexpo-2004 at Pan-Pacific Sonargaon Hotel in Dhaka yesterday.

PM vows to work hard for duty-free access to US

Batexpo opens in city

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government will intensify its efforts to obtain duty-free market access to the US to sustain Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) market there during the quota-free regime.

The country's exports to Canada and Australia have risen significantly after getting duty-free access

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3 YEARS OF COALITION RULE

Poor governance stymies poverty-cut efforts

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

The GDP growth rate in the three years of the coalition government clocks 5 percent on average because of poor governance although it needs to grow at 7 percent if poverty is to be cut down to below 25 percent in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

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HOW DID THE ECONOMY FARE?

BETTER

Reserves

Exports

Remittance

Budget deficit



WORSE

Inflation

Investment

Employment

Safta meet ends with 'fruitful' discussions

Major issues to be settled by June 2005

MONJUR MAHMUD

The South Asian nations yesterday wrapped up the fifth expert committee negotiation in Dhaka with a hope to settle four major issues related to the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) by June next year before it comes into being in 2006.

The experts discussed the crucial negative listing of products, rules of origin (ROO), revenue compensation mechanism and technical assistance for the least developed countries (LDCs) within

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc).

"We have discussed all these issues and made good progress. We have a target to settle these by June 30, 2005. We hope we'll be able to meet the deadline," SS Kapur, leader of the Indian delegation, told journalists at the end of the three-day talks.

Kapur however said it was not very easy to bridge the differences on such complicated issues. "We had lot of discussions. Now we need

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10 more gunned down in Assam

Manmohan seeks help from 'friendly neighbours'

AFP, Bombay

India's northeast was gripped by fear yesterday following the slaughter of more villagers by rebels, as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh claimed the militants behind the bloodletting were sheltering in Bangladesh.

"The region is turning into a killing field and it is quite natural to be shaken by the violence," said Apurba Das, a doctor in Assam's main city of Guwahati, hours after

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BNP moves to revamp party, face AL actions

REZAUL KARIM

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) will embark on a set of organisational programmes in the month of Ramadan to put its house in order and face probable anti-government agitation by the main opposition Awami League (AL).

Dogged by intra-party squabbles and growing frustration over top leaders' indifference to party affairs, the BNP will hold 34 more district unit conferences ahead of its national council likely to be held sometime in January next year, party sources said.

The last national council of the party was held in 1993 and an extended meeting in 1996.

"The conferences in districts and thanas will infuse dynamism and forge greater unity in the party ending sluggishness and long-running feuds among its ranks," said a top BNP leader.

The party leadership had earlier fixed August 30 last year as deadline for completing formation of 75 organisational district committees but the leaders assigned to implement it failed to do so.

Pressed by the party high

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MOSQUE CAPTURE
THREAT

Ahmadiyya leaders demand arrest of zealots

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Bangladesh yesterday appealed to the government to act immediately to resist religious fanatics who threatened to capture an Ahmadiyya mosque in Narayanganj town tomorrow.

Some 2,000 Ahmadiyyas living in the port city are passing their days amidst utter insecurity as fundamentalists under the banner of Aamra Dhakabashi and K h a t m e

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"O" AND "A" LEVEL AWARD CEREMONY POSTPONED

The Daily Star **regrettably announces the postponement of its annual "O" and "A" level Award Ceremony scheduled to be held on Friday, 8th October, 2004 due to unavoidable circumstances.**

We deeply regret the inconvenience and disappointment caused to the students, parents and teachers. --Editor