



UK minister due Dec 11

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UK Secretary of State for International Development Hilary Benn MP will arrive in Dhaka on December 11 on a two-day visit to Bangladesh to see the progress in

KEPZ shocked at unilateral Bol decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ) authorities yesterday expressed its surprise at the latest government move to halve the land

UK to allow seasonal Bangladeshi workers

Asks for guarantee of return on expiry of job contract

RAFIQ HASAN

The United Kingdom (UK) has agreed to allow temporary seasonal workers from Bangladesh provided they return after the expiry of their one year tenure, according to expatriates welfare ministry sources.

Assuring a satisfactory arrangement for the return of the workers is a precondition of joining the UK government's working holiday makers (WHM) scheme, the sources said.

There are around 10,000 Bangladeshi restaurants in the UK, all of which badly need workers. But Bangladeshi workers can not go there as the UK did not issue workers visas. If this type of arrangement is made, the Bangladeshi workers can go there in large numbers not only for restaurant work but also for agriculture and service sector job, the official said.

The Bangladesh embassy in London pursued the UK government and convinced them to allow Bangladeshi workers under the programme. The embassy forwarded the UK government's opin-

ion and wanted to know whether Bangladesh agrees.

Under the programme, the workers are allowed to go to United Kingdom and work for one year in the agriculture and service sectors.

An inter-ministerial meeting in the Ministry of Home Affairs yesterday discussed the matter and agreed on principle to send temporary workers and give assurance of their proper return.

Now a formal memorandum of understanding (MoU) would be signed between the two governments.

The embassy also forwarded a draft of an MoU to be signed to the government for consideration.

The Ministry of Expatriates Welfare is also examining the proposal and discussing with persons concerned whether it would be beneficial for the country because the workers would have to spend significant sums of money to go to the Kingdom.

Normally, workers from other European countries go to UK for such seasonal work. The countries are along the UK borders and the

travel cost is very low. On the other hand Bangladesh is far away and travel cost for a worker would not be less than Tk one lakh.

Most of their earnings would be lost if they are supposed to come back after just one year, said a high official of the ministry. But there might be some provisions of bearing a portion of travel cost by the host country, he observed.

The final decision would be taken at today's inter-ministerial meeting, he said.

The UK government, however, said that if any Bangladeshi nationals are found to be in breach of the UK's immigration laws, they would be returned to Bangladesh within three months at the cost of UK government.

The expatriates welfare ministry official also sees a great opportunity for the Bangladeshi workers under the scheme. According to him, thousands of workers can avail the opportunity and send large amounts of remittances for the country.

Grameen Bank Chairman Dr Muhammad Yunus is seen with his two daughters in front of Nabayuga Tebhaga Khamar in Chittagong from where the bank's microcredit programme started.



PHOTO: STAR

Gold, cash worth 30 lakh stolen from market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thieves heisted valuables from six shops, including two jewellers, worth about Tk 30 lakh from Pallabi Shopping Centre at Mirpur in the city on Tuesday night.

The thieves stole Tk 23,000 in cash and 200 tolas of gold jewellery valued about Tk 22 lakh from

Rajuk skirts HC order

Continues approving plans for 8-storey buildings

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Violating a High Court order, Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) continues approving plans for eight-storey buildings along the avenues in Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara, claiming it has not received the order yet.

The controversy began when Shirin Shila, a resident of Gulshan, filed a writ petition against a government decision.

The Ministry of Housing and Public Works in October 2004 issued a notification to allow eight-storey buildings along the

Trial in chaos as Saddam boycotts hearing

REUTERS, Baghdad

Saddam Hussein refused to attend his trial for crimes against humanity yesterday, throwing the sometimes chaotic proceedings into further confusion.

Defence lawyers spent the morning in discussions with judges and the 68-year-old ousted dictator about what to do next, a source in the heavily fortified Baghdad courthouse said.

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COMPENSATION Niko wants amicable settlement

UNB, Dhaka

Niko in a letter to Petrobangla yesterday said it wants to settle the compensation issue in an 'amicable way and equitable manner with satisfaction of all parties'.

Niko Resources, in a reply letter,

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PHOTO: STAR

Teachers and students of Chittagong University form a human chain at Sholoshahar in the port city yesterday protesting bomb attacks in different parts of the country.

Go for UN investigation to tackle terrorism

Hasina asks govt, tells of terror-patrons 'inside cabinet'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for a United Nations (UN) probe into all the killings and bomb blasts, including the recent suicide bomb attacks claiming lives, in the country since the BNP-led coalition came to power.

"I also urge the government to take steps to bring a UN team to investigate the killings. I know they

(government) will not do this as the alliance government is solely responsible for all the killings and bomb attacks in the country," said Hasina, also president of the main opposition Awami League (AL).

She said this while exchanging views with professionals on the 'Rise of Militancy: Endangered Bangladesh -- possible ways to solve the crisis' at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in the capital.

The AL chief also urged the professional bodies and its members to contact UN officials for sending an investigation team to Bangladesh to trace those responsible for the killings and bomb blasts and attacks.

On the government-proposed dialogue with the opposition parties on combating religious militancy, Hasina said the initiative is a farce. "There are militants within

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EC pledges euro 150m for poverty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Commission (EC) has committed 150 million euros to Bangladesh in the current fiscal year with the larger part of it as grants.

EC Ambassador to Bangladesh Dr Stefan Frowein called on Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday at the latter's secretariat office and handed over the proposal

letter of the monetary aid.

Frowein, however, pointed out that the release of the amount will depend on Bangladesh government's ability to implement the projects for which the aids are meant.

Following the meeting, Saifur told reporters that the EC ambassador said, "There is an idea here that some are big and some are small

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Jamaat should help cops arrest terror-involved Shibir men

Says religious affairs minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shajahan at a seminar yesterday said Jamaat-Islami should help the law-enforcers to arrest the activists of its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir, if they are found to be involved in terrorist activities.

"Jamaat should not only expel those Shibir activists if they are

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Prayer Timing		
December 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-19	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation