

Manpower export low as ME demand drops

Govt fails to explore new market

PORIMOL PALMA

High cost of migration coupled with failure to explore new markets and the country's foreign missions' apathy towards emigrant workers are thwarting the promotion of manpower export and bringing reduction in benefits for the workers abroad, experts observe.

The government has not taken any significant initiative to explore new markets while manpower export to traditional markets like the Middle Eastern countries is declining and an unhealthy competition

among the recruiting agencies is increasing the cost of migration.

A worker now pays Tk 2 to 2.3 lakh for a job of a cleaner in Saudi Arabia at a salary of 350 Riyal (Tk 5,600) whereas the cost was Tk 1.4 to 1.7 lakh only a few months ago, said sources in the Bangladesh Association for International Recruiting Agencies (Baira).

The crises have been aggravated as the importing countries are now encouraging the employers to hire their own unemployed youths coining the terms like Saudiaization, Omanization, Emiratisation, etc. of

their workforces.

According to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), the KSA alone employed almost 72.48 percent of total manpower exported from Bangladesh in 2002, the number came down to 35.60 percent during January to September this year.

The massive decline in Saudi demand has pushed down overall manpower export 15.45 percent in 2005 compared to 2004.

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Babar denies rumour of JMB chief's capture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday rejected the "rumour" about Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman's capture or his being under government watch.

"It is for sure that he is not in SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Legal notice on govt to stop filling of flood flow zones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) on December 14 served a legal notice on the government demanding action against real estate developers and individuals, who are flouting SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

LDCs form G14+1 group to protect their textiles

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce ministers from a group of least developed countries (LDCs) plus Sri Lanka yesterday agreed in principle to form a G14+1 group to protect and promote the SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing		
December 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



BNP holds Victory Day procession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP yesterday brought out a huge colourful procession in the capital in observance of the 35th Victory Day with the party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan calling for a national unity to resist the spate of bomb attacks.

Hundreds leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations marched the city streets carrying the portraits of party founder and chairperson and sheaves of paddy, BNP's election symbol, and gathered in front of the party central office around 3:00pm.

Wearing colourful clothes, they danced to the drumbeats and flute, sang patriotic and folk songs, and chanted slogans against the SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Ruling BNP and its front organisations take out a colourful procession in the capital yesterday to celebrate the Victory Day.

Proper leadership by politicians needed to root out militancy

Consultation meeting told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a consultation meeting yesterday stressed the need for able political leadership to organise the people to root out communal militant forces who have endangered national security, and challenged the independence of the country by defiling the spirit of the Liberation War.

The speakers comprising politicians, lawyers, academicians, businessmen and economists said due to some mistakes made by the pro-liberation forces and division among them, the defeated anti-liberation communal forces have been rejuvenated and are conspiring to capture state power with recurring rampant bomb attacks across the

country.

Left leaning 11-party coalition organised the meeting on "Secular foundation of the Liberation War; Militancy; and the National Security" in the Multi Purpose Centre of the Institute of Diploma Engineers of Bangladesh in the capital.

Gono Forum President Dr. Kamal Hossain presided over the meeting where the leaders of Awami League (AL) led 14-party opposition coalition also spoke.

AL presidium members Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta MP, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haq Inu and Workers Party (WP) President Rashed Khan were among the SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Height limits ignored by high-rise builders

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Strict height limits throughout the city, particularly in Dhanmondi and Lalmatia, are silently being undermined by builders, causing frustration to residents and confusion among Rajuk officials.

According to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, nobody is allowed to construct above six storeys in residential areas throughout the city. Despite tremendous pressure from the landowners, especially on the four declared commercial roads of Road-2, Satmasjid Road, Sheikh Kamal Avenue and Mirpur Road, the ministry had remained firm about the height limit in both the areas.

The ministerial notification on the height limit was served on the basis that if the height limit goes up, the density of population would be too much for the existing amenities such as water, gas, electricity, telephone, sewerage and road

communication.

But recently things have silently changed. In Lalmatia, Rajuk has approved an unspecified number of nine to twelve storey buildings. And every day more high-rise buildings are in the offing throughout the city in violation of the existing policy.

To the 'frustration' of other landowners and residents of Satmasjid Road and Lalmatia, Rajuk has approved, for the first time, a nine-storey structure on Satmasjid Road for a 150-bed hospital called City Hospital. The structure, on the fringe of Block-E of Lalmatia but situated on the Satmasjid Road, is fast nearing completion. The Managing Director of the City Hospital Habibullah told The Daily Star that they had obtained approval from "sixteen different" departments of the government including that of

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Global experts gather in Ctg to help save elephants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Wildlife experts and officials from home and abroad meet at an international conference beginning in the port city tomorrow aimed at building necessary ecosystem management and institutional capacity to protect the largest and SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



A herd of endangered wild elephants grazing in Chunti Sanctuary in Chittagong.

First successful artificial ear implantation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of doctors affiliated to the Society for Assistance to Hearing Impaired Children (SAHIC) have successfully implanted an artificial cochlea in a 21-year-old woman's ear for the first time in the country. SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

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