

November 18, 2006

31 women held at ZIA on way to Libya with fake papers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Immigration police yesterday morning held 31 women at Zia International Airport (ZIA) when they were preparing to board a Libya-bound plane with fake work permits and detained four officials of expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry for their alleged involvement in the matter.

Rescued from the trafficking attempt, the women and their families are now eyeing uncertain future as most of them had to sell their properties and last belongings in a desperate bid to go abroad for a 'better' future.

They had paid Tk 45,000 to 1 lakh to the brokers to go to Libya and were scheduled to fly by a Gulf Air flight at 7:45am yesterday, they said.

Following the instructions of their brokers, they gathered at a

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150-yr-old building goes down for high-rise

TAWFIQUE ALI

Jagannath University authorities have arbitrarily started demolishing a monumental building along with an ancient garden to make room for a high-rise building.

The two-storyed stately building is nearly 150-year-old and once housed an Indian bank during British era. In July 1884, the building started being used as the library of the erstwhile Jagannath College.

Leading architects and environmentalists of the country expressed grave concern over what they called 'thoughtless act' of the authorities.

"The building must not be demolished in this manner because it is old, historic and of immense architectural value," said

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Press owners won't print faulty voters' list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Printing press owners have decided not to print the faulty voter list, which the Election Commission (EC) has prepared, alleging that the controversial Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz has hatched a plot to embezzle the taxpayers' money.

The decision was made at a joint meeting of more than a hundred members of Bangladesh Printing Industry Samity and Bangladesh Printing and Marketing Samity held at the latter's office on Thursday, says a press release.

The speakers in the meeting claimed that the CEC awarded the work order to print the voter roll to a number of printing presses of which only five to seven are genuine printing presses and the rest are suppliers and institutions only on paper without any printing machines.

They said the printing of the

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BSF kills 1 in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) gunned down a Bangladeshi cattle trader at Tarali under Swapnagar Police Station of 24 Parganas district on Thursday night.

The victim was identified as Altaf Hossain, 22, son of Anisuddin of Faizullahpur village in Kolaria upazila.

According to Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) sources, the Indian border guards of Tarali camp opened fire on Altaf when he was returning home after buying cows from a bazaar in 24 Parganas district.

Altaf received bullets in the head and chest and died instantly, according to a report received from the killing.

Immediately after the killing, BDR sent a letter to the BSF authorities protesting the killing and asked its Indian counterpart to return the body.

When contacted, Major Kamrul Hasan of 41 Rifles Battalion, confirmed the incident.

The BSF did not hand over the body of the cattle trader as of 6:00pm yesterday.

No solution to crisis as deadline nears

CA to meet advisory council Monday after 4-day gap

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The country is veering towards a deep uncertainty again as President Iajuddin Ahmed has yet to find a solution to the current political crisis while the third deadline for meeting the 11-point demand of 14-party coalition is set to expire tomorrow.

The penchant of the president-cum-chief adviser to the caretaker government (CG) for keeping the council of advisers in the dark on crucial issues is making the present political crisis more complex, which might push the country towards confrontations, many former advisers to caretaker governments fear.

The chief adviser (CA) will possibly sit with other advisers of the council on Monday, but so far

he did not show any interest for discussing possible reconstitution of the EC with them even after they had held dialogues on the issue with political parties, sources said.

The delegation of advisers, tasked with holding the dialogues, however tried to have meetings with the CA several times, the sources added.

Meanwhile, BNP-led four-party alliance is taking preparations for participating in the next election without 14-party coalition, BNP sources said.

The EC is also preparing to announce the election schedule, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MAAziz said on Thursday.

"The activities of the president are highly questionable and ill-intentioned. He is working under

the direction of some quarters as there is a huge gap in communication between him and his advisers," Hafiz Uddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The crisis will deepen if the election schedule is declared before solving the present political impasse," he said, adding that everyone except four-party alliance want to see a reconstituted EC.

"The caretaker government shouldn't do anything which could create misunderstandings. Electoral reforms should be its highest priority. It will also have to accomplish a lot of other tasks like illegal arms recovery and preparing

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European parliament members for recasting EC
UNB, Dhaka

Members of European Parliament (MEPs) have called for recasting the Election Commission in Bangladesh so that it (EC) could work in a truly neutral manner.

The MEPs wish to see "a strong and decisive caretaker government". They also urged President Iajuddin Ahmed's interim administration to reconstitute the Election Commission so as "to ensure that the latter can perform its work in a truly neutral manner".

The appeal to the caretaker government was made in a resolution adopted at the plenary session in Strasbourg on November 16 on the situation in Bangladesh ahead of the elections scheduled for early 2007, according to a release of EU parliament.

The MEPs said the government should "create a climate in which

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PHOTO: STAR

Students of Vigarunnisa Noon School and College at Dhanmondi in the capital go to attend classes as the institution was kept open on Friday to make up for the loss of school days during the 14-party blockade.



This 19th century building of Jagannath University in the capital is being demolished to make way for a multi-storey building ignoring the historical and architectural value of this monumental structure.

CA pushing country to confrontation

14-party says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party alliance yesterday alleged that President and Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed is pushing the country towards confrontation and uncertainty by keeping the advisers in the dark and turning the Bhabanababu into a place of conspiracy of the BNP-Jamaat coalition.

"To implement Khaleda Zia's conspiracy to hold another blue-print election as on 15 February, 1996, Iajuddin held secret meeting with the election commissioners over declaring election schedule by keeping the advisers in the dark," 14-party Coordinator Abdul Jalil

said.

All political parties--except BNP and its allies--the civil society and people from all walks of life have demanded for reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC), but the president has ignored the demand, Jalil told at a press conference at the Awami League (AL) Dhanmondi office.

"The president held the meeting with the controversial chief election commissioner (CEC) and three other election commissioners to discuss the election preparation as per BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's direction," he said.

The AL general secretary also said a conspiracy is going on for declaring the election schedule keeping the 1.40 crore fake voters in

the voter roll and thousands of eligible voters out of it and even before publishing the list.

Jalil said people will resist any bid to declare the election schedule without EC reconstitution, removal of the CEC and three election commissioners, updating the voter list correctly, and publishing that list.

"We want a free and fair election and people will not allow holding of any blue-print election to bring back the BNP-Jamaat coalition in power," he said.

Jalil asked the president to quit the office of chief adviser if he fails to act neutrally and take decision independently. "There is still time-hand over the charge of chief

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Nagorik Committee to meet CA tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-member team of Nagorik Committee will meet President-cum-Chief Adviser to the Caretaker Government Iajuddin Ahmed on Sunday.

They will discuss three key issues with the president--reformation of the Election Commission (EC), conducting a free and fair election, and amending the Representation of the People Order (RPO) 1972.

The team will be led by Prof Rehman Sobhan, convener of Nagorik Committee. It will also include co-conveners of the committee M Syeduzzaman and Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, its member-secretary Debabriya Bhattacharya, and two other members Syed Monjur Elahi and MMujibul Haque.

One dies in 'robbery' in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One person died and three of a family were critically injured in a robbery incident in the capital's Badda area in the early hours of yesterday.

Police however brushed away the allegation of robbery and said there must be some other reasons behind the incident.

Manik Sarkar, 20, died after being rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while his father Sunil Sarkar, 45, along with their neighbours Akther Hussain, 50, his wife Rahima Begum, 42, and their son, Sujon, 8, were admitted to the hospital with severe injuries.

The incident occurred at Ardiartek Hindupara near Baloor Math area in Bashundhara around 1:00am when a group of more than 20 robbers wearing masks robbed around ten houses in the neighbourhood.

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Commentary

Chief Adviser's inexplicable behaviour

Four days' delay is difficult to accept

MAHFUZ ANAM

When the country is facing such an uncertain future, when every citizen is worried about the political conflict that more and more threats to disrupt everyone's personal and professional life, when every businessman is frustrated with what is happening, when every parent is worried about whether or not to send their wards to school the next morning, the pace at which the caretaker government, especially the President/Chief Advisor (CA) is working appears totally unacceptable. The nonchalance and laidback approach gives the impression that the President/CA seems to have all

the time in the world.

Take the latest instance. The President/CA himself set up a four-member committee of advisors to work out a solution to the political problem acceptable to all parties. The committee worked as fast as was possible, met all the political parties and has finalised its report. Throughout Thursday the committee members frantically tried to meet Prof. Iajuddin to give him their final report and seek his decision for future action. The President did not have time for them. Instead the issue is now to be discussed in the regular cabinet meeting scheduled for Monday--a good four days later. Why? Is the political impasse such a

low priority that the President/CA can take four days just to look at it? Meanwhile, he had time, on Thursday (the day when the Committee was desperately trying to squeeze in a moment to meet him) to meet Jamaat, a group of Ulama, and hold a nearly two-hour unscheduled meeting with the Election Commission.

The President/CA's delay becomes all the more inexplicable in view of the four-day deadline, finishing Sunday night, that the 14-party has given before it resumes its political programme. We agree

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Renegade Barrister Zia says BNP loyalists tried to kidnap him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The press conference held at LDP presidium office at Baridhara was also addressed by party President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Executive President Col (Retd) Oli Ahmed and party leader Maj (Retd) Abdul Mannan.

"They (BNP men) forcibly tried to take me to Hawa Bhaban to blackmail me. They also gathered some newsmen there by giving them false information about my return to BNP," Zia said.

Referring to laying of siege to renegade Zia's residence by BNP men from Dhamrai on Thursday, the LDP leaders said it was a 'sign of nervousness' within BNP.

Zia made it clear that he now belongs to the LDP and will remain with it.

The former legislator from Dhamrai in Manikganj quit BNP recently and joined the newly formed Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

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50 years.

But one male hog-deer was found from the jungle near Alutila of Khagrachhari a couple of years ago, said wildlife specialist and Dulahajra Safari Park Project Director Dr Tapan Kumar Dey.

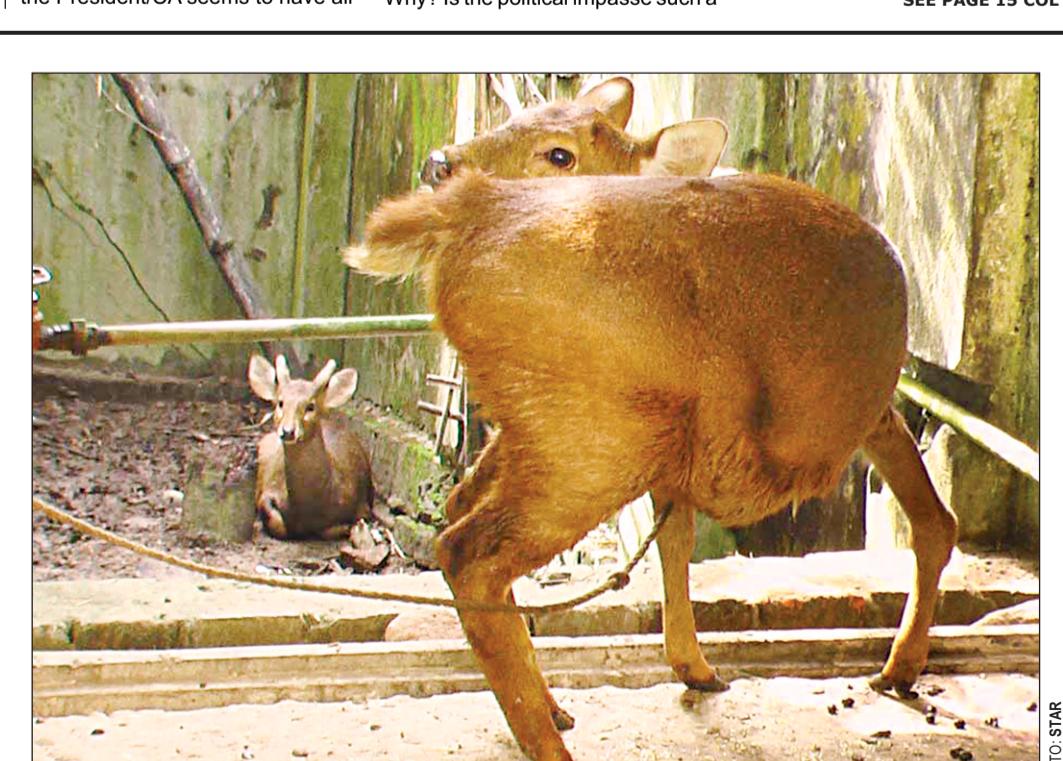
Since then officials of the safari park had been looking for at least one female so that the species could multiply, he said.

The hog-deer, however, available in Tripura and Kaziranga forests of Assam, wildlife experts told The Daily Star.

And Anwar's family has had one pair for the last eight years.

Anwar said he brought the pair of hog-deer from a Tipra indigenous family eight years ago. His family members have taken care of the pair and the

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A family in Khagrachhari single-handedly prevents probable extinction of hog-deer as they raise the number of the species from two to six in eight years.