

RAID ON RECRUITING AGENCY

Forged passports, documents seized, four officials arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police in a drive arrested four officials of a recruiting-cum-travel agency at Fakirapool in the city and seized several hundred forged passports and documents, including emigration clearance and fake medical certificates, yesterday.

The arrestees are Manager Belayet Hossain, Assistant Manager MA Masud, Accountant Mizanur Rahman and Office Assistant Humayun of Win International.

A team of police of the Special Branch (SB) and Immigration led by Special Superintendent (Immigration) Shah Alam launched the drive at around 7:00pm in connection with a case filed with Airport Police Station on November 17 after the immigration police rounded up 31 women workers who were about to fly to Lebanon with fake documents.

The seized documents include composed copies of emigration clearance certificates and a number of

formats for medical certificates, which were prepared by the agency illegally, said Shah Alam.

The officials also could not provide any satisfactory answers with regard to the passports and documents, he told reporters.

Many passports also do not have the security features, which are mandatory for the passports to be genuine, he added.

More than 200 passports were marked with departure seals, but no marks of arrival seals were found in those passports, which proves that the passport holders dodged the immigration police in the airport, he added.

Such agencies extort the workers both at home and abroad, Shah Alam said, adding that the amount they realise from each worker is much greater than that fixed by the government and they also collect money from the workers in the foreign lands before their deportation.

The police also showed a number of papers on agreement between the

aspirant migrant workers and the agency, which states that the agency cannot be held responsible if the workers fail to go abroad for any reasons. In such cases, the workers will also not get back the money they paid to the agency, the paper reads.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment suspended the four officials of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) who were detained by the police following the November 17 incident.

BMET Director (immigration) Manjur Rahman was also made OSD (official on special duty) for his alleged involvement in issuing emigration clearance certificates to the 31 women.

A committee led by the BMET additional director general was formed on November 19 to investigate the case. The committee is expected to submit its report in three days, according to an official handout.

Chinese envoy discusses election issue with CA

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Chai Xi paid a courtesy call on President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed at the CA's office here yesterday and discussed various issues, including the coming elections in Bangladesh.

The Chinese envoy greeted the president for assuming office of the Chief Adviser of the non-party caretaker government and assured of his government's support and cooperation in this regard.

Iajuddin told the Chinese envoy that he was trying his best to hold a peaceful and violence-free election in the country.

The president underscored the need for establishment of Chittagong-Kunming-Myanmar road link.

The envoy informed the president/CA that the Chinese government has already taken initiatives to introduce air link between Bangladesh and China, and hoped that Bangladesh would take initiatives to establish road link between the countries.

The president/CA said China could import increased quantity of goods from Bangladesh and told the envoy that ceramics, melamine and leather goods of Bangladesh are good in quality and cheap in rate.

Both of them underscored the need for enhancing cooperation between the two countries in transport, business and tourism sectors.

Issues relating to women empowerment, girl education and micro-credit also came up at the meeting for discussion.

2 graft cases

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and October 30 showing "personal reasons."

On the other hand, the prosecution could not produce witnesses except one since the charges were framed against Ershad on April 3, 1995 and April 18, 2003, court sources said.

In the first case filed with Tejgaon police station, it was alleged that Ershad, while in power, directed the authorities concerned to purchase electronic news gathering equipment worth about Tk 2.93 crore for use of his wife Rawshan and himself, though all types of broadcasting facilities were available in his secretariat.

Later, Ershad directed the authorities to set up the equipment in his secretariat and create eight new posts for the purpose, the prosecution said.

An official of the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC) filed the case against Ershad on February 29, 1992 and the investigation officer (IO) pressed charges against him on September 15, 1994.

According to the second case filed with the same police station, Ershad directed the authorities concerned to accept donation from France instead of Finland for setting up microwave telephone lines in 49 upazilas in 1989 that caused delay in release of the funds.

Due to the delay, work on setting up of the lines could not be implemented and the government had to pay Tk 28 crore interests to France from the date of receiving the money.

Upendra Chandra Das, an official of BAC, filed the case against Ershad and two others on September 5, 1992. The IO pressed charges against him and six others on July 31, 1995.

Earlier, Ershad was acquitted in four graft cases in a month when he announced that he might join the BNP-led four-party alliance.

MIDAS training for retrenched RMG workers

With financial assistance from the European Commission under the Small Projects Facility (SPF) Programme, MIDAS has been implementing a one-year programme to impart Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Training to retrenched women RMG workers in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna divisions, says a press release.

Under the programme, MIDAS has been organising a series of two-week training for 520 participants in 26 batches. Each training course comprises two parts: (a) Entrepreneurship development training for six days and (b) Skill development training for six days focusing on tailoring.

The main objective of the programme is to encourage and help retrenched women workers to set up and run businesses on their own, thereby creating employment opportunities for themselves and others.

The 16th training course concluded at the Training Hall of MIDAS in Dhaka on November 16. Abdul Karim, managing director, MIDAS, was present at the closing session and awarded certificates to the participants.

Two more courses will be held in Chittagong and Rajshahi this month.



PHOTO: STAR

14-party alliance activists block a road at Kanchpur yesterday as part of countrywide blockade programme.

Remove corrupt elements from politics

Speakers tell BBC's Bangladesh Sanglap

BSS, Dhaka

Participants in BBC's "Bangladesh Sanglap" said corrupt and dishonest elements should be removed from politics.

"Politicians must be honest, accountable and transparent," said Rajshahi district BNP publicity secretary Advocate AKM Mizanur Rahman.

Fazle Hossain Badsha, a central leader of Worker's Party, said politicians would never achieve credibility if parties do not stop recruiting corrupt people. He condemned what he called ever-growing trend of politicians vying for power and undue influence.

He admitted there were elements even in his 14-party alliance who are holders of black money.

Another panellist Shawkat Ara, a professor of psychology of Rajshahi University, said politicians are not to blame only, "voters should be more careful in exercising their franchise".

She urged voters to reject corrupt people and black money holders.

Gholam Rabbani, leader of the movement for electricity in Kansat, said mass awareness was key to removing corruption from politics.

Referring to the Kansat movement, he said had the people of the country been aware of their legitimate rights as their fellow citizens did in Kansat, the politicians would have been more accountable.

The panellists also discussed issues, including crisis over the question of Chief Election Commissioner, government officials joining politics after retirement and

the issue of extremist politics in Rajshahi.

Moderated by Shakeel Anwar of BBC Bengali Service, the 10th edition of "Bangladesh Sanglap" was recorded at Nanking Darbar Hall in Rajshahi on November 18.

The programme was broadcast on the BBC Bengali Service Radio on Sunday and telecast on Channel-i at 8.00 last night.

Minor girl burnt to death in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

A minor girl was burnt to death and two houses and properties worth Tk 2 lakh were gutted in a fire in Chittagong early yesterday.

The victim was identified as Priyanka Das, 11, daughter of Ratan Das of Paltiya upazila.

She had been working as a domestic help at the house of one Paresh Kumar Shil at Sholoshahar area.

The fire broke out at around 12:30am.

Priyanka got trapped into the house as she was sleeping and burnt alive, sources said.

Four fire fighting units from different fire stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the fire after a two-hour efforts.

The fire originated from an electric short circuit.

Electronic goods worth Tk 1.5cr seized at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Air Freight Customs Authority yesterday seized electronic goods worth Tk 1.5 crore when an organised gang tried to offload the goods with fake documents after dodging the taxes.

The seized goods included 163 pieces of DVD players, 52 pieces of CCTV camera, 952 pieces of MP3 with camera and 352 pieces of MP4 with camera, said a press release of the Air Freight Unit.

The goods were carried in five cartons by Dragon Air from Hong Kong to Dhaka on September 9.

According to Bangladesh Biman Authority, C & F agent Mary Shipping Lines took the delivery of the goods on last Sunday, but the customs authority recovered the same from the cargo complex yesterday.

Nur Mohammad relieved of BJP membership

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP-Nazir) has relieved Nur Mohammad Khan, former adviser and secretary general of the party, of its membership and all other organisational responsibilities, says a press release.

He was issued a showcase notice on November 11 asking him to explain within seven days why punitive actions would not be taken against him for his alleged anti-organisational activities.

BNP to protest AL's blockade today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led four-party alliance will hold rallies and bring out processions today in the capital and in all district and upzila headquarters protesting blockade of Awami League-led 14-party.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday called upon all leaders and activists of four-party alliance to make the programme a success.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khandakar Abu Taher, former lawmaker of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), passed away due to old age complications at his residence at Dhanmondi in the city on Friday at the age of 76, says a press release.

He was buried at the Intellectuals Graveyard in Mirpur after a namaz-e-janaza at Dhanmondi Baitul Mamur Mosque on Saturday.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter to mourn his death.

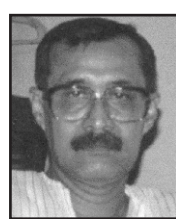
He was elected a member of the parliament as a BNP candidate in Tangail-6 (Nagorpur) in the fifth parliamentary election in 1991.

His quikhwani will be held at his residence after Maghrib prayers on November 24.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday in a condolence message expressed his deep shock at the death of Taher.

Kazi Nuruddin Jahangir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



says a press release.

He was the most popular actor of the then Pakistan Radio during the period from 1959 to 1968. He was highly acclaimed for his roles in radio dramas "Raktakarabi", "Raja" and "Oedipus".

He left behind his wife, two sons, eight brothers and sisters and a host of admirers to mourn his death. He was buried at Banani graveyard.

His quikhwani will be held at the residence of his brother Kazi Shahabuddin Shahjahan at House # 5, Road # 104, Gulshan # 2 after Asr prayers on November 24.

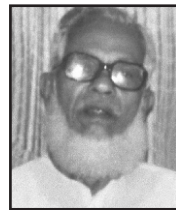
Dr Asadur Rahman

Dr Asadur Rahman, adviser to the president of Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) and a former parliament member, yesterday passed away due to cardiac arrest at a city hospital at the age of 65, says a press release.

Asad, also sister-in-law of JP Chairman Ershad, left behind his wife, one daughter, one son and a host of relatives.

In a condolence message, Ershad expressed deep shock and sorrow at his death. JP Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawladar also expressed deep shock at the death.

Death anniversary



Today is the 1st death anniversary of Syed Noor Hossain of Dhulia in Baulal in Patuakhali district, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held today.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the programme.

People lost trust

FROM PAGE 1
Barbara Richardson of Canada and Douglas Foskett of Australia.

Adviser CM Shafi Sami was also present during the hour-long meeting held at the finance ministry office at the secretariat.

Quoting the envoys, Akbar Ali Khan said the election would be credible abroad if there were a big shakeout in the EC.

The envoys welcomed the caretaker government's latest move to have an understanding with Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) MA Aziz with a view to resolving the ongoing crisis. They pledged continuing support for the interim government.

"The ambassadors also said they are ready to extend all cooperation, if need be, to ensure a free and fair conduct of the forthcoming polls," added the finance adviser.

Asked about the result of the caretaker government's latest efforts to reconstitute the EC, Akbar said, "I am cautiously optimistic that I might give you a good news by the next 24 or 48 hours. However, we won't go beyond the constitution," he added.

Referring to the BNP-Jamaat led alliance's call for an immediate announcement of the election schedule, the veteran bureaucrat said, "I don't think the election schedule will be announced before resolving the present crisis."

Both Patricia A Butenis and Anwar Choudhury told the reporters that the meeting was a routine one. They praised the caretaker government's initiative to break the deadlock.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka addresses a protest rally organised by BNP-led four-party alliance in front of the BNP office at Naya Paltan in the city yesterday.

Justice Ruhul Amin acting CJ

BSS, Dhaka

Senior most Judge of the Appellate Division of Supreme Court Justice Md. Ruhul Amin will act as Chief Justice in absence of Chief Justice JR Mudassir Hossain from November 22 to 28.

According to a notification of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, the President gave the responsibility to Justice Ruhul Amin under the power vested upon him as per Article 97 of the Constitution, an official handout said.

The notification further said Justice Ruhul Amin will act as the Chief Justice until JR Mudassir takes over the charge.

4 members of a family injured in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Four members of a family, including a child, were seriously injured in a fire at their house at Kaliganj in Jhenidah yesterday.

The injured are Sabita Ghose, Sumon, Maya and two-year-old Kabya.

The fire broke out at 2:00pm when Sabita tried to light a gas stove close to a burning oven in the kitchen.

The blaze spread rapidly, leaving Sabita and Kabya, who was playing nearby, badly burnt.

Hearing their scream, Sumon and Maya rushed to the kitchen room to save them but they also sustained burn injuries.

All the injured are now undergoing treatment at the Modern Clinic in the town.



Participants of the 16th course on 'Entrepreneurship and Skill Development Training for Retrenched Women RMG Workers' pose for photograph at the concluding session of the course held in Dhaka. MIDAS has been organising a series of training courses with financial assistance from the European Commission.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Chances of light rain or drizzle are at one or two places over Sylhet division.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met

Office said.

Highest temperature 31.8 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 15.2 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:18am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in in celsius	
percentage	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	30.3	19.5	63	61
Chittagong	30.5	19.8	77	68
Rajshahi	30.0	17.4	73	73
Khulna	31.0	19.0	75	82
Barisal	30.6	17.9	81	87
Sylhet	28.0	18.5	92	77
Cox's Bazar	30.7	19.5	70	87