

Documents to cheat migrant workers detected

PORIMOL PALMA

Police have detected documents for cheating hundreds of male and female workers who went to different countries for jobs, but were either deported or failed to find jobs.

Those who work abroad without legal status undergo various forms of abuses and exploitation, said the police of Special Branch (SB) and Immigration while investigating the case in connection with holding up of 31 Lebanon-bound women at Zia International Airport on November 17 last year.

The case was filed with Airport Police Station against 38 persons allegedly involved in the process of sending 31 women to Lebanon illegally.

Police arrested four officials of the welfare desk of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), while its former director Manzur Rahman was made official on special duty for his alleged involvement in issuing fake emigration clearances to 31 women.

A team of SB and Immigration police arrested five employees and seized more than 300 passports, composed copies of emigration clearance certificates and a number of formats for medical certificates from recruiting-cum travel agency Win International at its Fakirapool office on November 19.

The court however gave bail to all the arrestees, while the charge sheet of the case will be submitted to the court in next two weeks, Special Superintendent of Immigration Shah Alam told The Daily Star.

Quoting cheated returnee migrant workers, police said Win International charged Tk 2 to 5 lakh for sending them abroad with fake emigration clearances or forged passports that caused their deportation.

"We are convinced that Win International was about to send the 31 women to Lebanon," he noted.

An SB police said they have already checked most of over 300 seized passports and found many of those fake as persons concerned were not found according to

the names and addresses.

Alam said they found a number of passports without arrival seals proving that the passengers with those passports dodged the immigration police at the airport and the airlines had a hand in it," he said.

According to laws, the airlines are supposed to handover the passports of the deported passengers to the immigration police. "So, why should the passports of the deported passengers be kept at the Win International's office?" he asked.

The police, who documented statements of a number of returnee male and female migrants, were convinced that those who work abroad at irregular status undergo inhumane living conditions, as they cannot go to any authorities for protection, Alam said.

"Many such returnee female migrant workers said they could not see the sun for two to three years while staying abroad," he added.

Alam said a good number of sponsors in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) send photocopies

of visit visas to Bangladesh giving scopes to some recruiting agencies for forgery.

Consequently, the workers who go with forged employment visas, have to work there illegally.

He said the immigration authorities last year stopped UAE's faxed or photocopied visas, but the home ministry then said a policy should be formulated before stopping it.

The immigration authorities then submitted a policy proposal, but with no effect as of today, he added.

The recruiting agencies in most cases do not care about salaries and other facilities as if sending workers out of the country is something very important.

Even the workers, who pay large amount for migrating, do not get the returns by doing regular jobs, Alam said, adding that they have to do extra jobs illegally if they are to save some money.

"Only a small portion of the overseas workers have good jobs with satisfactory salaries and job conditions," he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Rajuk demolishes the illegal structures at Meena Bazar at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

Preparation on to hold Ekushey Book Fair

DU CORRESPONDENT

Preparation for Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2007 on Bangla Academy premises in the city is going on in full swing.

The fair is scheduled to begin on the first day of February, the month of historic Language Movement as well as International Mother Language Day.

Member-Secretary of 21-member 'Amar Ekushey Book Fair Management Committee' Fazlur Rahim, director (institutional planning and training department) of the academy, said the preparation is going on smoothly.

Amar Ekushey (Immortal February 21), commemorates the historic Language Movement against the then Pakistani ruler in 1952 when Rafiq, Salam, Jabbar, Barkat and Shafique laid down their lives for the mother tongue - Bangla.

As the fair is normally inaugurated every year by the incumbent prime minister, this year Chief Adviser to Caretaker Government Fakhrudin Ahmed is likely to inaugurate it, Rahim told The Daily Star yesterday.

"However, the issue will be

finalised in a day or two," he added.

Murshiduddin Ahmad Anwar, assistant director of Bangla Academy, said this year a total of 400 stalls will be allotted among 208 publication houses, which is less than previous year's 470 stalls.

Draw will be held on January 26 for allotting stalls among the publication houses.

All books, including those of Bangla Academy will be sold at 30 per cent commission.

Sources said steps will be taken so that pirated books and books of other publications are not sold in the fair.

On this occasion, Bangla Academy will publish or reprint some 30 books on various issues turning the fair into a rendezvous of country's eminent novel and short story writers, poets, literary critics, historians, columnists, journalists, readers and cultural activists.

Alongside the fair, seminars, symposiums and cultural functions will be held everyday at the academy stage where eminent literateurs and academicians will deliver speeches and poets read out their poems.

At the beginning of the fair, a

monument of Language Movement containing busts of five language martyrs situated beside the historic Bardhaman House will be inaugurated.

"In a changed political perspective, we hope we will face no obstacles to conduct the fair smoothly," Rahim said.

Foolproof security measures will be taken to avert any untoward incident in the fair.

A number of close-circuit TV (CCTV) cameras would be set up at different points on the academy premises.

Apart from police, members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will be deployed at the fair venue.

The security issue came to fore as eminent writer Prof Humayun Azad was the victim of a brutal attack near the Academy premises during the fair in 2004.

The fair will remain open for all from 3:00pm to 9:00pm everyday except on Friday, when the fair will remain open from 11:00am with two-hour break from 12:00noon.

On February 21, the International Mother Language Day, the fair will continue from 8:00am to 9:00pm without any break.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation builds a shade over the foot-over bridge in front of Baitul Mokarram Mosque in the city. Locals, however, said DCC has taken the initiative only to attract advertisements.

6 killed in road crashes

STAR REPORT

At least six people, including two children and Awami League leader, were killed and 29 others injured in separate road accidents in Dhaka, Bakerganj and Sirajganj yesterday.

Our Staff Correspondent reports: Two children met a tragic end when a taxicab ran over them while they were playing on the embankment at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

The dead identified as Shamima Akhter, 5, and Farzana Akhter, 7, are cousins.

The incident occurred at around 10:00am on the Baribadh (embankment) at Nababerbagh when a speedy black taxicab hit the girls while they were playing on the embankment adjacent to their house, said the witnesses.

They died on the spot. The driver, however, managed to flee away.

The bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for

autopsy.

UNB adds: A leader of Dinajpur Mohila Awami League was killed in a road accident at Baliarpur in the outskirts Savar early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Nargis Akhter Rubi, 42, president of Dinajpur town unit Mohila Awami League.

Local sources said Nargis sustained severe injuries when the bus, she was travelling, collided with a microbus at about 5:00am.

Nargis was first admitted to a local clinic. Later, she was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as her condition deteriorated. She succumbed to her injuries at the DMCH at about 7:00am.

Our Correspondent from Barisal says: At least two people were killed and 12 others injured when a trawler-tempo, locally known as Tomtom, and a passenger bus collided head-on at Bakerganj on Barisal-Patuaakhali highway yesterday morning.

One of the dead was identified as Shoshikanta Ojha, 60, while the other could not be identified immediately.

Of the injured, Proshanto Biswas, 30, Sushil, 75, Kalpona Begum, 25, Dolan, 30, Russel, 25,

Abul Howladar, 50, Bibek Das, 41, Sultan Howladar, 60, Kanchan Sikdar, 40, Fazle Ali Jamaddar, 45, Bachchu Sharif, 26, were rushed to at Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Injured and witnesses said the accident occurred when a tomtom collided with a bus coming from opposite direction at about 10:00am.

The bus left the scene immediately after the accident.

Local people recovered the bodies and rushed the injured to the hospital.

UNB from Sirajganj reports: A bus driver was killed and 17 passengers were injured in a head-on collision between a bus and a truck at Chilgachha on Sirajganj-Kazipur road in Sadar upazila yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Shafiuddin, 37, of Gandail village under Kazipur upazila of the district.

Sources said the Kazipur-bound bus from Sirajganj collided with the truck at about 11:00am, leaving its driver Shafiuddin dead on the spot and 17 passengers injured.

Of the injured, eight were taken to Sadar Hospital.

Self-proclaimed child pir freed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Turag police on Saturday released the 11-year old self-proclaimed pir (spiritual leader) Khorshed along with his father Aminul Haq and disciple Parvez, who were picked up by law enforcers from the National Press Club premises in the city earlier in the day.

Police said they released them, as no complaint was lodged against the pir.

The pir after his release met his disciples and said he will continue to distribute his blessed water among his devotees from Thursday, according to the locals.

The four disciples, arrested on Friday from the pir's house in Badaldi in Turag for beating a Reuters photographer and snatching cameras who took snaps of the pir, were placed on a one-day remand yesterday.

Khorshed for the last three months had been distributing his blessed water among thousands of his followers who believe him to be blessed with divine powers to cure incurable diseases.

Hasina visits ailing Wahidul Huq at Birdem

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday visited ailing Wahidul Huq, a veteran journalist and exponent of Tagore song at Birdem Hospital in the city.

Earlier, she paid her last respect to two party leaders who died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Nasreen Begum Ruby, general secretary of Dinajpur District Mahila Awami League, fatally wounded in a road accident at Amin Bazar on Saturday died in the hospital yesterday.

Advocate Wahidul Alam, another leader of Patuakhali District Awami League, died of old-age complications at DMCH yesterday.

Hasina offered special prayers for eternal peace of the departed souls and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved families.

BRTC special bus services for Bishwa Ijtema devotees

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will operate special bus services for the convenience of devotees of Bishwa Ijtema to be held from February 2 to 4 on the bank of the river Turag at Tongi.

The special bus services will start on January 28 and will continue till February 6 with operating as many as 115 BRTC buses, including 66 double-deckers, on Gulistan-Kalyanpur-Tongi route, said a press release.

Besides, BRTC's another 262 buses on different routes will provide 'extended service' to the devotees besides the normal service. The buses will make stoppages at places like Aricha, Manikganj, Paturiahat, Mawa, Tongi, Narsingdi, Bhairab, Kuliarchar, Sayedabad, Gulistan, Victoria Park, Kamalapur and Gabtali towards their last destination at Turag congregation.

For smooth operation of the special service, the BRTC authorities will open a control room at Joarsahara bus depot (phone number 8911778 and 9551985), added the release.

Illegal bus stands removed from Ctg city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) removed all the illegal bus stands from the city centres to ensure smooth traffic movement in the port city.

According to sources, most of the illegal bus stands of the city centre were shifted to the city outskirts before the expiry of the notice issued by CMP traffic department on Saturday night.

The notice issued on January 10 gave 10 days' time for shifting the illegal bus stands from the city centres.

As some of the buses tried to depart the city from their previous bus stands after the expiry of the notice yesterday, the CMP traffic department seized them.

"Some fifteen buses were seized while trying to leave the city from the previous bus stands in violation of the notice order," said CMP DC (Traffic) Abu Sufian.

"Besides, an equal number of

trucks were also held during this time as they were found to ignore the changes made in the routes for their movement," he said.

The move for making the city streets congestion free and eviction of illegal occupants from the footpaths was hailed by the city dwellers.

However, the removal of bus stands from the city centres created resentment among some bus owners who had their own and separate parking lot beside the bus stands.

"We are leaving the buses from our own parking lot," defended an officer of a transport service plying buses in Dhaka-Chittagong highway from the city's Dampara area.

In this regard, CMP DC said there are some rules and regulation for every transport service to follow and so one cannot establish a bus stand in the city centre and disrupt smooth traffic movement.

1589 sacks of fertiliser seized, 4 traders held

UNB, Sherpur

In their intensified drive against smuggling of agri-inputs, Armed Forces members recovered 1,589 sacks of fertiliser from Tarakandi Bazar in sadar upazila of Sherpur, Tarail upazila of Kishoreganj and Dhamrai upazila of Dhaka districts yesterday.

During the drive, four fertiliser traders were also arrested by the Army personnel. Of them, Anwar Hossain was arrested in Sherpur while Rabindranath Ghose, Babul Hossain and Towhidur Rahman in Dinajpur.

In their drive at Tarakandi Bazar in Sherpur district, Army and police personnel recovered 1047 sacks of fertiliser from a number of shops and arrested Anwar.

UNO Nawab Aslam Habib led the drive that continued from Saturday afternoon to midnight. The recovered fertiliser was kept at the BADC godown to distribute among the farmers at a fair price.

Sources said the traders collected the fertiliser from Ashuganj Fertiliser Factory and

Jamuna Fertiliser Mill.

In another drive, police recovered 500 sacks of fertiliser from Tarail upazila of Kishoreganj district yesterday morning.

A team of police, led by TNO AFM Hayatullah and OC Samsul Haq, raided the house of Dulal Miah and recovered the fertiliser. No one was arrested in this connection.

Another 42 sacks of fertiliser were recovered from Dhamrai upazila yesterday.

The Army members raided different shops in the area and recovered the fertiliser from a deserted house adjacent to local Barajethail mosque at Balia union. The recovered fertiliser was distributed among the marginal farmers at a fair price.

The traders were selling the agri-input at Tk 380-400, much higher than the government fixed rate.

In Dinajpur, Rabindranath Ghose, Babul Hossain and Towhidur Rahman were arrested from Khamshama upazila for selling fertiliser at higher prices to Army men who went to them disguised as farmers.

Sarashwati Puja tomorrow

DU CORRESPONDENT

Hindus all over the world will celebrate Sarashwati Puja with great enthusiasm tomorrow, a festival that is dedicated to Sarashwati, Hindu goddess of wisdom, also the deity for fine and performing arts.

In a statement, Bangladesh Minority Sangram Parishad yesterday urged the government to cooperate celebrating the festival in due manner.

The leaders of the Parishad said according to the Emergency Power Ordinance, there is no embargo on performing religious activities.

Mahamandaleshwar Priya Brat Brahmachari, chairman of World Hindu Federation, Bangladesh Chapter, sent a message on the eve of the Puja.

The message said Sarashwati is worshipped as a Goddess of speech, attributed to the formation of words, invention of Sanskrit language and composition of hymns.

It is also an auspicious day for start of a child's education.

Wife demands Kamal's release

Shahida Kamal, wife of former parliament member and Dhaka City Awami League (AL) Vice President Kamal Ahmed Majumdar, demanded an immediate release of her husband considering his health condition, says a press release.

In a statement she noted that the health of her husband might deteriorate any time as he is suffering from acute diabetes and heart disease and is in need of immediate advanced treatment.

She claimed that the joint forces arrested Kamal on January 12 despite having court order and without any specific reason.

Obituary

Advocate BA Rashid, a freedom fighter and eminent lawyer of the Supreme Court, passed away yesterday at Dhaka Medical College Hospital at the age of 62, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina paid tribute placing a wreath at his body yesterday and expressed her sympathy to the family members.

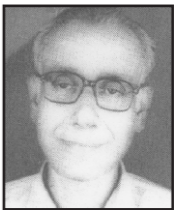
His first namaz-e-janaza was held on the premises of the Supreme Court at 1:30pm.

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, Justices of the Appellate and High Court Division, Attorney General AJ Mohammad Ali, Barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Barrister Rakan Uddin Mahmud, Barrister Shafiq Ahmed, former law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Miah and senior lawyers attended the janaza.

He will be buried at his village in Narshingdi.

Different lawyers associations expressed deep shock at his death and conveyed their sympathy to the bereaved family.

Advocate Mihir Lal Dutt



Advocate Mihir Lal Dutt, a freedom fighter and eminent litterateur of Barisal, passed away due to old age ailment at Barisal Sher-e-

Bangla Medical College Hospital on Saturday at the age of 77, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

Lawyers, freedom fighters and leaders of different organisations paid rich tribute as his body was taken to Barisal Bar Library and Ashwini Kumar Town Hall yesterday.

Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, Jukta Front leader ASM Abdur Rob and Barisal City Corporation Mayor Mojibur Rahman in separate statements expressed deep shock at the death of Mihir Lal and prayed for peace and salvation of the departed soul.

DBBL Managing Director Md Yeasin Ali distributed blankets in first phase in different areas of Panchagar, Dinajpur and Thakurgaon districts.

Deputy Managing Director (Admin) KS Tabrez distributed blankets among the cold-hit poor people in Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat districts on January 20 with the help of local Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel. Lt Colonel Azmal, Commanding Officer and Major Khaleque, Second-in-command 34 Rifles Battalion, Rangpur and Major Ekrumul Karim Howladar, Second-in-command, 19 Rifles Battalion, Lalmonirhat were present at the programme.

She left behind his husband, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn her death.

After a namaz-e-janaza at Baitul Mamur mosque at Elephant Road, she was laid to rest at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard on Friday.

Her quikhwani will be held at her Dhanmondi residence in the city after Maghrib prayers today.

All have been requested to attend the programme.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Shamsul Islam Khan, former Industries minister and lawmaker, says a press release.

He was elected member of the parliament four times consecutively in Manikganj-4 constituency since 1991 till his death.

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

Relatives and friends have been requested to attend the programme to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Azizul Hoque Bhuiya



Today is the first death anniversary of Azizul Hoque Bhuiya, former convener of the Steering Committee of the Action Committees for the Liberation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the United Kingdom in 1971 and former editor of the daily Sukhabor and weekly Charampatra, says a press release.

His family members have requested his relatives, friends and admirers to pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during late night till early morning, Met office said.

Night temperature may rise slightly over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 28.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 8.4 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:37pm today and rises at 6:42am 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	25.6	12.6	56	48
Chittagong	27.5	12.5	77	58
Rajshahi	26.3	10.4	75	60
Khulna	26.5	12.3	87	61
Barisal	26.9	10.6	78	70
Sylhet	23.4	13.2	74	69
Cox's Bazar	27.4	13.2	67	45