

Malaysia hunting 20,000 visa overstayers

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia is hunting down more than 20,000 foreign nationals who have entered the country as tourists before staying on to find jobs illegally, reports said Monday.

The visa-on-arrival scheme was introduced last year ahead of a major campaign aimed at boosting overseas visitor numbers but Home Minister Radzi Sheikh Ahmad said it is being abused.

"We simplified the entry process for foreign tourists... but some people had abused the visa to stay in the country longer than the duration allowed," Radzi was quoted as saying by the state Bernama news agency.

The minister said tourists were using the one-month visa to work illegally, and that most over-stayers are from China and India, with a small number from African nations, the New Straits Times reported.

"They are lured because we are a prosperous nation. Many have entered the country and obtained the VOA, but they never left," Radzi was quoted as saying.

He said immigration officials, police and a volunteer force are conducting daily raids to find the over-stayers, who are deported.

Despite the visa abuse, Radzi said the government will not scrap the scheme, citing its importance for tourist arrivals.



Rajuk (Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha) workers dismantle unauthorised structures at Gulshan Road No. 103 in the city yesterday.

Shibir activists beat SCF leader on CU campus

CU CORRESPONDENT

Islami Chhatra Shibir activists of Chittagong University (CU) unit beat and injured a leader of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) on the campus yesterday.

Mizanur Rahman, finance secretary of SCF and a fourth year student of sociology, was undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH).

Witnesses said a group of Shibir activists reportedly led by Suhrawardy Hall unit President Sayeed beat Mizanur without any provocation when he was taking breakfast at the hall canteen at around 9:15am.

The Proctor's office advised him to get treatment from CU Medical Centre, but the SCF leaders got him admitted to CMCH in the city fearing further attack by shibir men at the centre, sources said.

SCF President Kanchan Sarker and General Secretary Zamir Uddin Russel in a joint statement condemned the attack and demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in it.

With this incident, the shibir activists made three attacks on the leaders of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) and SCF in last five months.

In one attack on December 24 last year, the shibir cadres injured 30 activists of BCL, BCU and SCF at different points on the campus.

A photojournalist was also injured in the attack.

In another attack on April 9, BCL leader Naimul Islam Nishat was injured.

Sources said the shibir activists are making attacks repeatedly to create panic among the supporters of other organisations in a bid to establish their supremacy in different dormitories and on the campus.



PHOTO: STAR

Students march in a procession in the city yesterday marking the Global Action Week 2007. The theme of the week is 'Education for All'.

Encourage British entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh

Adviser urges expatriates

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday urged expatriate Bangladeshis to encourage foreign investors, particularly the major British entrepreneurs, to invest more in manufacturing and other sectors of Bangladesh.

Speaking to a 16-member business delegation from the British-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce (BBCC) at the foreign ministry, he said measures are being taken to create a more congenial atmosphere for investment in the country.

He urged the members of BBCC to work for further improvement of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the UK.

The adviser praised the chamber's role in promoting bilateral trade and commerce for more than one and a half decades now.

He urged the members of BBCC delegation to encourage members of the Bangladeshi community to "integrate themselves in the mainstream politics, business and other activities of Britain".

The delegation welcomed the reform measures of the present caretaker government in all sectors, particularly for the Chittagong and

Mongla ports.

The delegation of BBCC, the apex business organization of the British Bangladeshi expatriates, is

in Bangladesh on a 12-day tour to explore new sectors of trade and investment in their native land.

Indian envoy meets ACC chairman

UNB, Dhaka

Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty yesterday called on Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Lt Gen (retd) Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury at his office and assured him of Indian assistance to the reconstituted anti-graft body.

"They (India) will help if we ask for. He informed how their Vigilance Commission (India's anti-corruption watchdog) functions and talked about extending a helping hand," the ACC chairman told reporters about the meeting.

He said that during the meeting he had an opportunity to know how the Indians work in combating corruption. "They gave an idea... They have a website that can be visited."

"We also gave him an idea as to how we are working and about our prioritised tasks," Mashhud added.

Emerging from the meeting that lasted for about an hour, the Indian envoy described it as a courtesy call and said, "Every country has a central vigilance commission... We have our system and they (Bangladeshis) have theirs."

Indian visa centre closed for 2 days

The Indian Visa Application Centre at Gulshan shall remain closed today and tomorrow, says a press release of the High Commission of India in Dhaka.

It will reopen on April 26.