

EXPLOITATION OF BANGLADESHI WORKERS

# KL reviewing outsourcing system of recruitment

PORIMOL PALMA

Malaysia is reviewing the present outsourcing system of recruiting Bangladeshi workers as it led to exploitation of workers subjecting them to abuses, underemployment with lower wages and unemployment.

Kuala Lumpur initiated the review process following repeated requests from Dhaka saying workers are more likely to be abused through this system, according to officials of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment.

"The Malaysian government started reviewing the mechanism of hiring workers through outsourcing companies as we had earlier notified it about the matter and our high commissioner in Malaysia is communicating with the authorities there time to time," a senior official told The Daily Star.

The issue however is being dealt with in a delicate manner so that bilateral relations and businesses between the two nations are not hampered, he noted.

Under the existing system, Malaysian outsourcing companies sign contracts with recruiting agen-

cies to hire workers from Bangladesh and supply them to various factories and agricultural farms in Malaysia.

These outsourcing companies realise wages and other facilities of workers from the factories and farms for paying them and arranges their accommodation. The Malaysian government introduced this system of outsourcing due to requests from industries that wanted to avoid troubles in handling foreign workers, officials said.

"But once Malaysia started hiring workers in this system, there were numerous reports of exploitation of

workers in the media. Our government therefore asked the Malaysian government to consider the issue," the official said.

Reports received from Malaysia said many of the workers hired from Bangladesh were not given jobs and were stranded at various secret places, meaning that they were hired against fake job demand letters.

Tenaganita, a human rights organisation, in a fact-finding report recently revealed that outsourcing companies are mainly

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## Two slaughtered by suspected rival outlaws in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An unidentified gang slaughtered two people, believed to be rival party men, at village Chotodupkalia in Damurhuda upazila of Chuadanga district early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Razu 32, son of Meher Ali, and Wasim, 36, son of Abdul Gaffar of Shantipara village in Damurhuda upazila.

On information, police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies.

According to a source, a gang of ten picked up Meher and Wasim from Darshana Bazar at gunpoint at around 10:30pm on Thursday. The gang took them to Chotodupkalia field and slit their throats.

Other sources said both belonged to an outlawed party and were involved in criminal activities like smuggling, robbery and extortion.

Police said both were accused in several extortion and robbery cases filed with Damurhuda Police Station. They (police) are yet to find out the reason behind the killing. The killing took place several days after three outlawed parties—Biplobi Communist Party (BCP), Gono Bahini (GB) and Gono Mukti Foj (GMF)—and a gang named Mukti Bahini led by notorious criminal Mukti regrouped to launch their activities in four southwestern districts—Kushtia, Jhenidah, Chuadanga and Meherpur.

The outlawed parties held several meetings in two districts—Kushtia and Chuadanga—where some high-ranking leaders and cadres of the outfits and gang group were present.

## Explosives seized in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

BDR personnel recovered explosives and other materials from a stationery shop at frontier Momaiganj Bazar in Kanaighat upazila yesterday afternoon.

Acting on a tip-off, the border guards of Dona camp went to the bazar at around 5:00pm and recovered seven packets of plastic explosives (Indian made new gel) each weighing 125 grams, 16 electric detonators, 18 safety coats and a small pot of explosives weighing 110 grams from the shop of Samiruddin.

Momaiganj bazar is close to the Meghalayan border. The BDR men also picked up the shop owner as he failed to give satisfactory answers about the explosives.

A BDR official said such explosives are used for damaging bridge and culvert.

The BDR will deposit the explosives and detonators with Kanaighat Police Station and filed a case in this connection, sources said.

On July 15, the border guards of the same camp recovered six packets of plastic explosives, six electric detonators (with wires), four non-electric detonators from a place near Dona border.

Deputy Information Minister Tariq Azeem on Friday refused to speculate on a deal between Musharraf and Benazir, saying any new alliances would be decided after upcoming elections.

"It is not the State department, but the people of Pakistan who elect their new leadership and only the election results will determine who is to share power with whom," Azeem told The Associated Press.

Musharraf, a key US ally in the fight against terrorism, has suffered dwindling support this year and is at his weakest politically

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Members of poet Shamsur Rahman's family lay floral wreaths at his portrait at TSC auditorium of Dhaka University where Nagorik Committee arranged a meeting to reminisce the poet on his first death anniversary yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## SAARC DEVELOPMENT FUND Leaders discuss next month steps to make it operational

REZAUL KARIM

Finance ministers from eight South Asian countries will meet in New Delhi on September 14 for operationalising the \$300 million Saarc Development Fund (SDF).

The fund was created as the member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) had pledged to support projects to alleviate poverty and improve status of the peoples of the region.

Finance Adviser Dr Mirza AB Azizul Islam will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting being hosted by India as

the current chair of Saarc.

The Delhi meeting, to be preceded by a meeting of the Saarc finance secretaries of the member states on September 13, will mainly focus on finalising the recommendations on the charter and by-laws of the fund, financial issues related to the roadmap of the Saarc Economic Union and development of the regional capital market, official sources said.

Saarc has been considering proposals like Poverty Alleviation Fund, Infrastructure Fund, South Asian Development Bank, Media Development Fund, and Voluntary

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## Call for regional cooperation to fight fallout of climate change

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment and agriculture Adviser CS Karim yesterday painted a gloomy picture of environmental disasters in developing countries, including Bangladesh, which are set to be the worst victims of climate change. He urged more regional cooperation in environment matters to save lives.

"Livelihood and food security will face enormous challenges... people are now suffering as communication networks snapped and educational institutions went under water due to flooding," he said at the inaugural ceremony of a regional seminar on environmental laws.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) organised the three-day Fifth All Asia Public Interest Environmental Law Conference at Brac Inn Centre in the city in association with American Bar Association, US Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Oxfam Novib.

Around 40 environment experts and lawyers from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, China and USA are participating in the seminar.

Speaking as the chief guest, CS Karim said with rise of sea level 30 million people in the developing countries are set to be environmental refugees but few steps have been taken to prevent that.

"We, the developing countries, lack resources and the knowledge to combat such challenges," he said.

Greenhouse gas emission of the industrial countries is the main reason behind global warming, but they are advocating developing countries to maintain environmental standards when these

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PHOTO: STAR

Shukkur Ali Mia, left, and his daughter, of Ziranibazar in Savar taking the latter's diarrhoea-affected kids to a healthcare centre.

## Adviser Karim plans to submit wealth report

UNB, Dhaka

Adviser for Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock CS Karim yesterday said he is thinking of submitting his wealth statement to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The adviser said this while talking to reporters after addressing the inaugural ceremony of a six-day workshop on "Journalist on English Communication" at Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council auditorium in the capital.

Jointly organised by the Commonwealth Culture Society of Bangladesh (CCSB) and Reporters Against Corruption (Rac), the working sessions of the workshop will be held every Friday and Saturday at Dhaka Reporters Unity Office until September 2.

Aktel, a leading cellphone

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# US wants moderates to rule Pakistan

## Boucher refuses to comment on power sharing deal

AP, Islamabad

The United States wants to see Pakistan's moderate and democratic politicians unite to fight Islamic extremism, but has no interest in picking sides ahead of upcoming elections, a top US envoy said.

US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher, speaking at a news conference during a visit to the Pakistani capital, would not comment on the possibility of a power sharing deal between President Gen Pervez Musharraf and exiled former Pakistani prime minister

Benazir Bhutto.

Deals between other nations' political leaders were "their own choices to make based on their own calculations," he said Thursday, one day after holding talks with Musharraf and other top government officials.

But a Pakistan official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said Friday that US officials were going a step further and were actively encouraging Musharraf to give moderate, secular parties more power if he wins another presidential term.

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## Another held for alleged link to abduction of Danida official

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

The security forces on Thursday arrested an indigenous youth for his alleged involvement in the kidnaping of Danida official Hossain Shahid Suman.

The arrestee, Aong Thoai marma, 20, was taken to the camp of the security forces and interrogated by the members of intelligence agencies.

Aong was arrested in Betchara area while he was coming to Bandarban town by an engine boat.

Sources in the security forces said they have got some important information from Aong through cross interrogation, which will help them to find out the reasons behind the abduction. But they did

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PHOTO: STAR

Labourers employed by Dhaka City Corporation busy working to shift the road divider five feet westward as that side of the VIP road from Bangla Motor to hotel Sonargaon has been widened.

## Women's body exhumed by digging her bedroom

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Police yesterday exhumed the body of a woman by digging her bedroom floor at Ramgaon of Munshiganj Sadar upazila, 13 days after her husband allegedly killed her.

Police in presence of three magistrates exhumed the body of Masuda Begum, 26, as her rickshaw-puller husband Mansur Matbor, 32, admitted to the police that he had buried her inside their bedroom after suffocating her to death with a pillow on August 5.

Mansur told police that after killing his wife he had slept that

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Prayer Timing		
August 18		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation