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## Middleman chain stands in way of compensating migrant workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An investigation revealed yesterday a three-to-four-layer middleman chain and undocumented financial transactions in manpower business that remain as a bar to compensating workers in case of their immature returns.

Such facts came to light when an investigation officer of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) quizzed the middlemen and a few of 13 returnees. The 13 workers returned from Malaysia on September 25 and afterwards following unemployment and abuses by a Malaysian outsourcing company.

Acting Secretary Abdul Matin Chowdhury of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment directed an arrangement of such a hearing of both the middlemen and the returnees on September 27.

The move came as recruiting agency Golden Arrow handed over 11 cheques of Tk 84,000 each to 11 workers, claiming it was paid exactly that amount by the returnees.

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## NBR for negotiations with tax dodgers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) yesterday said it will prefer negotiated settlements with people who have undisclosed money or untaxed income in exchange for taxes and fines paid, rather than taking legal actions against them.

While Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) Secretary Mukhles Ur Rahman told the Daily Star yesterday that the commission has plans of taking steps including sending its officials to the United Kingdom (UK) for training in recovering siphoned off money from offshore.

The NBR announcement came against a backdrop of the High Court (HC) staying the proceedings of nine NBR filed cases following appeals from the defendants who had been convicted by a special court. The HC stay order is premised on alleged procedural misconduct in filing of the cases.

The special court sentenced different high profile corruption suspects including former BNP

lawmaker Shajahan Siraj and his family members to different terms of imprisonment in connection with 26 NBR cases, most of whom were tried in absentia.

The convicted in the nine cases filed petitions to the HC against the lower court judgment and got the verdict stayed.

NBR Chairman Badiur Rahman yesterday told journalists, "We will try to settle as many cases as possible out of the court."

"It does not mean that we are giving up our drive against tax dodgers. The drive against tax dodgers will go on simultaneously," the NBR chairman added.

The NBR chairman, however, did not specify any fixed rate of the fine to be levied. He said the fines and the due tax for an individual's undisclosed and untaxed income will be fixed through negotiations.

The NBR chairman talked to the journalists as he was coming out of the ACC head office yesterday afternoon.

"We talked about the cases filed

by both the NBR and the ACC and discussed how to coordinate them," said the NBR chairman.

Replying to a question over the propriety of filing of the cases by both the regulatory agencies, the NBR chairman said both agencies are empowered to file cases under respective laws.

"NBR may file cases without issuing any notice," said its chairman in reply to a question regarding filing of cases in connection with individuals' filed tax returns without issuing notices.

The NBR so far filed 37 tax evasion cases till September 23. A total of 73,493 people were identified as taxable individuals during the ongoing income tax survey of NBR, 42,837 of whom are new taxpayers.

According to sources a total of 18,895 individuals paid Tk 492 crore in income tax against their disclosed income of about Tk 2,882 crore till September 24.

Replying to a question regarding expiry of the September 30 deadline for declaring undisclosed

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## 11 Bangladeshi monks return from Myanmar

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Eleven Bangladeshi monks, who went to Myanmar for religious studies, returned home on Tuesday night through Teknaf border due to the closure of pagodas following an anti-junta movement in the neighbouring country.

Police said the monks, inhabitants of Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and Bandarban districts, went to Myanmar for studies at religious institutions.

BDR personnel held the monks when they arrived on Teknaf border in a boat through the Naf River at about 7:00pm and released them at about 11:00pm.

The monks told the paramilitary troops that they were studying in Seitway town of Myanmar and came back home as the military junta shut down the pagodas and other institutions.



Gulshan police yesterday brought some of the movable properties from the confiscated houses of nine high-profile political leaders, businessmen and government officials.

## ACC sues ex-MP Habibur Molla, Dab leader Dr Zahid, his wife

STAR REPORT

The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday sued former Awami League lawmaker Habibur Rahman Molla and Doctors' Association of Bangladesh (Dab) leader AZM Zahid Hossain and his wife in two separate cases for concealing information in their wealth statements.

In Narayanganj, two separate cases were filed against former BNP lawmaker Giasuddin for extorting Tk 8 lakh.

**HABIB CASE**  
ACC Deputy Director Syed Ahmed filed the case with Ramna Police Station for concealing information

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## Power-sharing talks stalled: Benazir

AFP, London/ Islamabad

Pakistani power-sharing talks with President Pervez Musharraf are "totally stalled," former premier Benazir Bhutto said here yesterday, dismissing a reported amnesty offer as "disinformation."

She confirmed that she plans to return to Pakistan later this month after presidential elections this Saturday, but warned of violence if the current stalemate continues while Pak president said Wednesday he is waiting for Benazir's response to amnesty.

"General Musharraf's political party has undermined the understanding that was being reached, that was very near at the end of last month. But since then it's been totally stalled," she said.

"The present regime cannot salvage the situation... I'm afraid we are heading for a situation that could lead to street agitation," adding: "Nothing has changed in the last months."

But despite the deadlock, Benazir vowed to arrive back in Pakistan on October 18, as previously planned.

"I plan to return to Pakistan irrespective of whether the talks have stalled or not," she told reporters as the central executive committee of her Pakistan People's Party (PPP) gathered in London.

The PPP leadership was to discuss potential power-sharing, a day after the Pakistani government said it offered her the amnesty deal.

Islamabad said on Tuesday it

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## Criminal killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A criminal on police list was killed in a shootout between Rab and his followers at Chandrima Model Town in the city's Mohammadpur area early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Manik alias Pichchi Manik, 24, a resident of Town Hall area in Mohammadpur. Rab said he was accused in nine criminal cases, including three for murders.

A Rab press release said the shootout ensued as 4-5 youths, whom a Rab team was chasing for suspicious movement in Chandrima Model Town area at about 1:15am, opened fire on the elite force in a bid to escape.

The encounter over Rab men found a bullet-hit man lying on the ground, the press release said

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Woman vegetable sellers on a road at Karwan Bazar in the capital holding baskets on their heads to ward off scorching heat yesterday.

## Soldiers hunt dissidents in Myanmar

EU set to toughen sanctions

AP, AFP, Yangon/ Brussels

Soldiers announced that they were hunting pro-democracy protesters in Myanmar's largest city Wednesday and the top US diplomat in the country said military police were pulling people out of their homes during the night.

Military vehicles patrolled the streets before dawn with loudspeakers blaring that: "We have photographs. We are going to make arrests."

Shari Villarosa, the acting US

ambassador in Myanmar, said in a telephone interview that people in Yangon were terrified.

"From what we understand, military police ... are travelling around the city in the middle of the night, going into homes and picking up people," she said.

Meanwhile, the European Union agreed in principle Wednesday to toughen sanctions against the regime in Myanmar, the EU's Portuguese presidency said.

EU ambassadors "agreed to toughen EU sanctions against the

regime in Myanmar, and requested that all preparatory steps be undertaken with a view to the necessary decisions to be taken (by EU foreign ministers) on 15 October," a statement said.

The UN's special envoy, Ibrahim Gambari, declined to comment on his four-day mission to Myanmar, where the military junta last month crushed mass pro-democracy demonstrations led by the nation's revered Buddhist monks.

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Get Prayer times from Warid Menu

Iftaar 5:46 PM Sehari 4:32 AM

WARID

Sehari, Iftar timings			
Ramadan	Oct	Sehari	Iftar
21	4		5-46
22	5	4-32	5-45
23	6	4-33	5-44

Prayer Timing			
October 4			
	Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	4-32	4-42	
Zohr	12-45	1-15	
Asr	4-15	4-30	
Maghrib	5-46	6-01	
Esha	7-30	8-00	

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Qulkhwani

**JAHANARA BEGUM (RUBY)** wife of late Md. Ibrahim Hossain Talukder, former Member (Planning), BWDB, passed away on October 1, 2007 in Washington, USA. Her body will arrive in Dhaka on Friday, October 5, 2007 morning. Her Namaz-e-Janaja will be held at Aminbagh Jame Masjid, Chamelibagh (near Shantinagar crossing) after Jumma prayers.

Her Qulkhwani will be held at her residence on Saturday, October 6, 2007 after Asar prayers. Relatives and friends are requested to pray for the peace of the departed soul.

Bula, Entu, Tinni, Jhinki, Iraj, Madani, Rashed, Mamun, Pallab, Samina Grand Children & Great Grand Son

## N Korea agrees to declare, disable nuke programmes

AFP, Beijing

North Korea has agreed to declare all its nuclear programmes and disable its main atomic reactor by the end of the year under US supervision, according to a six-nation agreement released yesterday.

The deal -- the second phase of a long-running process aimed at ending the North's atomic weapons drive -- was immediately wel-

comed by US President George W. Bush, as well as other six-party participants Japan and South Korea.

North Korea "agreed to disable all its existing nuclear facilities" as the next step in a landmark agreement reached by the six parties in February, according to a copy of the text released by China, the host of the talks.

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## Our Commitment to Deliver Project Benefits

### Helping Resolve the Energy Crisis by....

- Producing coal discovered in Phulbari Basin using efficient and safe mining methods that will ensure maximum resource recovery and benefits for Bangladesh
- Achieving production rates of some 15 million tonnes annually over most of the Project's 35 year life, thus ensuring a reliable supply of quality coal at affordable prices to meet the Country's domestic coal demand
- Working with the Government to establish a 1000 MW coal-fired power plant at the mine site to supply power to the northern region, as well as the rest of the country
- Supplying coal to other power plants as they are developed
- Supporting the development of a coal briquette industry that will supply an alternative energy source for regional light industry and domestic use, thus reducing dependency on firewood

### Contributing to National and Regional Growth ....

- Economic analysis estimates the Phulbari Coal Project would generate 1% of GDP every year for the Project's life
- Government earnings would amount to approximately US\$ 7 billion over the Project's life, representing approximately 50% of Project Net Earnings
- Utilizing Phulbari coal will have a positive impact on Foreign Exchange Reserves
- Associated infrastructure investments in power, communications, roads, rail, port and towns will create business opportunities in the Northwest and Western Region in general and be a catalyst for sustainable development
- An estimated 12,000 new jobs (direct and indirect) are expected to be created in local areas and 5,000 more jobs in different service sectors throughout the country. Skills developed through training and use of new technology will benefit other industries.
- New industries based on co-products such as gravel, glass sand, china clay and water will help satisfy deficiencies in domestic markets

### Meeting National and International Standards....

- Compliance with existing national environmental and social legislation as well as ADB's Safeguard Policies and the "Equator Principles" which have been adopted by various international financial institutions
- External monitoring to ensure environment and social accountability

### Sustainable Environmental Management....

- Extensive plans are in place to manage environmental impacts such as water, soil, air, noise, waste and biodiversity
- By extracting underground water, Asia Energy will ensure the supply of water for domestic, agricultural and industrial use and meet the demand of drinking water in and around the project area including the Phulbari Township
- Under the water management program, some of the extracted water will be injected to maintain ground water levels. The flow of water in rivers and other water bodies will also be maintained by pumping back in extracted and treated water, thereby removing any possibility of aridity in the area
- Land used by the Project will be rehabilitated to its proper state for agricultural and other productive uses

### Responsible Management of Social Impacts....

- During project implementation approximately 40,000 people including around 2300 indigenous people will be resettled in phases and provided rehabilitation support
- No one will be moved from their existing homestead before rehabilitation arrangements have been made and fair and full market price compensation has been provided for land, trees, crops, houses and other associated assets
- The rehabilitation program provides different forms of compensation, including replacement housing, land, cash and alternative livelihood activities
- Financial assistance will also be available for a period of time to support affected people while they attain their previous income levels
- Consultation and engagement with local communities, public representatives, and other stakeholders will continue throughout project implementation

For more information about Asia Energy and the Phulbari Coal Project, please contact us directly or send your queries and comments through our Bangla website. We are always available to provide information to interested stakeholders.

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