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Govt framing rules to stop cheating of overseas job seekers

PORIMOL PALMA

The government has decided in principle to make it mandatory for recruiting agencies to select overseas job seekers from the database of Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) in a bid to check fraudulent practices by manpower brokers.

"We have decided to frame rules so that middlemen cannot woo job seekers from villages on behalf of recruiting agencies which are usually stationed in the cities, mainly Dhaka, and cheat potential workers," said a high official of the expatriates welfare and overseas

employment ministry.

The decision has been taken as a lot of underhand and undocumented monetary transactions take place through these middlemen causing heavy losses to migrant workers.

The idea gained momentum in the wake of sufferings of workers who recently returned from Malaysia because of unemployment and underpayment.

The workers claimed that they had paid Tk 2 lakh to Tk 2.3 lakh to middlemen and recruiting agencies for going to Malaysia but now the agencies claim they had received only Tk 84,000 each from

the workers.

Secretary (in-charge) of the expatriates welfare ministry Abdul Matin Chowdhury said the decision to frame rules followed several meetings of committees formed to bring about reforms in the manpower sector.

Migrants' rights bodies and experts have long been demanding that the government either cancel the middleman system in manpower business or legalise it as job seekers in most cases are cheated by middlemen in the process of securing jobs abroad.

According to various studies on

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UN praises Dhaka's role in peacekeeping

BSS, New York

President of the 62nd Session of the UN General Assembly Sirjan Kerim has appreciated Bangladesh's strong role in the various sectors of the United Nations including the peacekeeping operations.

The appreciation came when Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed met him at UN headquarters here yesterday.

General Moeen congratulated Kerim for assuming the presidency of the 62nd Session of the General Assembly.

He expressed confidence that under the able leadership of Kerim the UN General Assembly will gain more pace this year in its proceedings.

General Moeen mentioned that Bangladesh is a top troop contributing country (TCC) of the United Nations peacekeeping operations with around 10,000 personnel deployed at present at the world's troubled spots.

He stressed the need for more representation of Bangladesh in the decision making level of the department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations, both at the headquarters and the field missions.

Kerim, who is from Macedonia, recalled the excellent performance of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in

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Fire kills 2 in Gaibandha

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A fire at Komarpur Bazar on Bogra-Rangpur highway in Gobindaganj upazila yesterday left two people dead, five injured and at least 10 shops gutted.

According to Gaibandha fire brigade and Gobindaganj police sources, the fire originated at a shop in Komarpur Bazar, 15km from Gobindaganj, around 10:15am and spread to adjacent shops. Within half-an-hour the blaze reduced at least 10 shops to ashes.

Two salesmen Jahidul Huq, 28, and Ashraful Huq, 30, sustained severe injuries and died on their way to Gobindaganj Health Complex. Besides, five others received burn injuries and were admitted to the health complex. The condition of one was stated to be critical.

Being called, fire engines from Gaibandha rushed to the spot in an hour and brought the fire under control.

As fire engines from Gaibandha took a little time in reaching the spot, locals became angry and vandalised a fish-laden truck.

Fire officials initially estimated that the fire caused a loss of Tk 30 lakh.

There are no fire stations in any upazila headquarters of Gaibandha district. Firemen provide service from the district headquarters.

Police said stocks of petrol and diesel at retail shops there might have caused the fire to become so deadly.

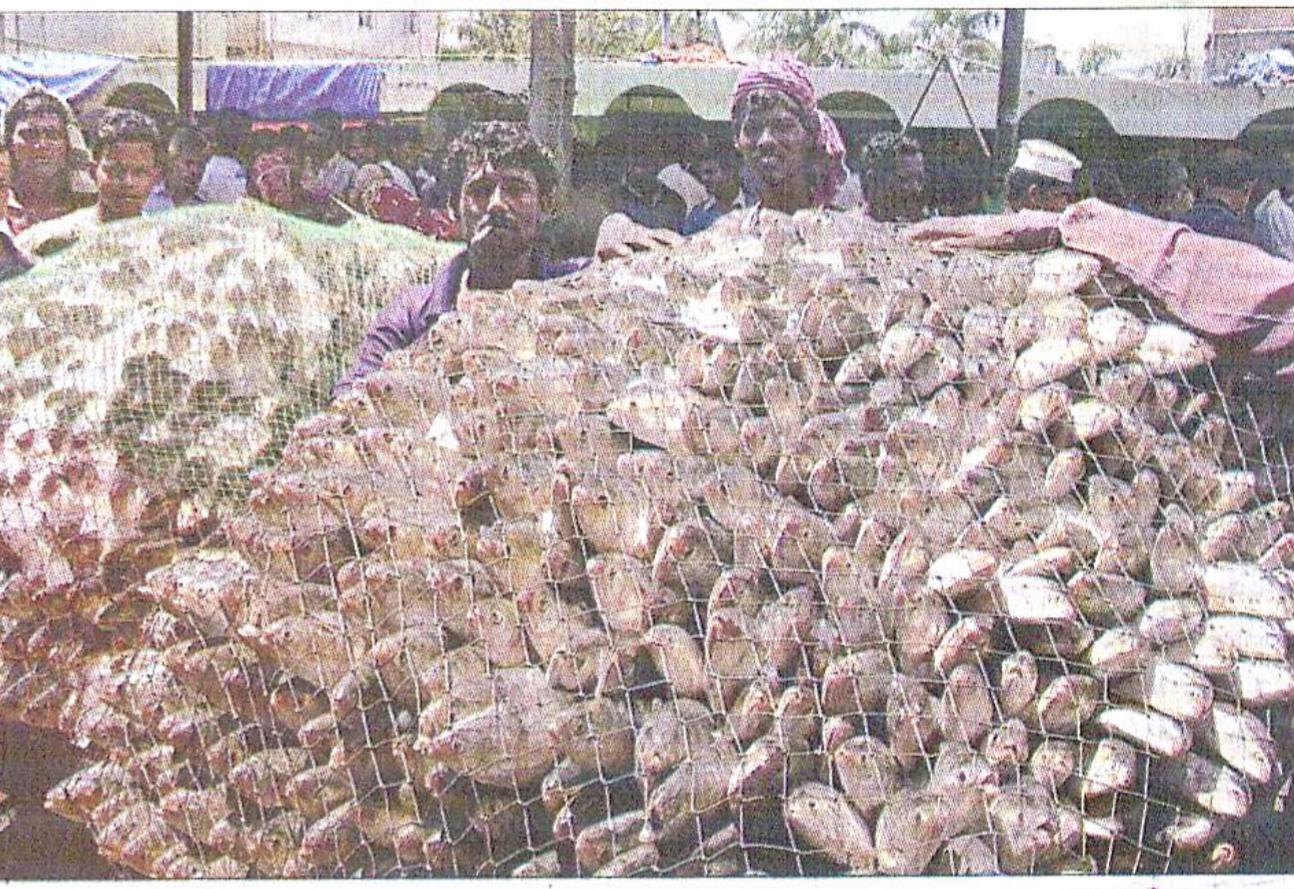


PHOTO: ZOBAE' HOSAIN SIKDER

Tonnes of hilsa arrive at Fishery Ghat in Chittagong yesterday even though there is a month-long government ban on hilsa fishing.

Most primary textbooks yet to reach dist edn offices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 84 percent of primary and Ebtedayee textbooks for 2008 are yet to reach district primary education offices, although National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) directed printers to distribute the books by November 15.

"We asked press owners to complete printing and district level distribution by November 15 so that children across the country get their books before next academic calendar begins in January. But only 16 percent of the books have been distributed," NCTB Chairman Prof Dr M Masir Uddin told a views-exchange meeting at his office yesterday.

He said about 75 percent of

primary textbooks and 40 percent of Ebtedayee books have already been printed.

"The vacation for Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja is the main reason behind poor distribution," he argued.

He however expressed the hope that distribution of the remaining textbooks before deadline is possible if printers are informed accordingly.

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Education Additional Secretary Abdul Awal Mujumdar said the World Bank gave Tk 56.4 crore for primary textbooks and Tk 20.5 crore for Ebtedayee books.

An 18-member central monitoring team and an NCTB-led madrasa students.

Bombs recovered in Tangail, Meherpur

STAR REPORT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel recovered two improvised bombs in Tangail town yesterday morning and another two raiding different places in Meherpur between Thursday evening and Friday morning.

They also arrested 16 people in Meherpur including six activists of an outlawed party.

Acting on a tip off, a team of Rab-12 went to South Thanapara in Tangail town and found the bombs in a bush adjoining the Bukhari mosque, Rab sources said.

Later, a team of army bomb specialists from Ghatal Cantonment defused activated the bombs, our Tangail correspondent reports.

In Meherpur, Rab and police arrested 16 people from different parts of the district in 12 hours and recovered two live bombs, our Meherpur correspondent reports.

The arrestees include six cadres of outlawed Purba Bangla Communist Party-Red Flag faction. They are Kamru Islam-Kamu of Jorapukuria, Akhtar of Bashbaria, Khaleque of Bhatpara, Abbas of Gozaria, Akitaruzzaman of Sharpa in Gangni upazila and Masud Rana Sumon of Haldarpura in Meherpur town.

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Prayer Timing		
October 20		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-50	5-25
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-39
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Freight train derails in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Railway communications between Dhaka-Chittagong and Sylhet-Chittagong and Dhaka-Noakhali remained suspended for two and a half hours as a wagon of a freight train derailed near Madabagh Railway Station in Kaska upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday.

Source said freight train-801 heading for Dhaka from Chittagong derailed around 3:00pm causing the disruption.

As a result, Dhaka bound Mohanagar Gudhuli, Upakul Express and other trains from

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Bush set to widen Myanmar sanctions

AFP, Washington

US President George W Bush yesterday was to widen economic sanctions on Myanmar's military rulers, piling on pressure for a transition to democracy after a bloody crackdown on anti-junta protests.

The White House said Bush would make the announcement at 1:50 pm (1750 GMT), just weeks after the United States slapped a visa ban on junta members and their families and froze their assets in the United States.

The US president had also denounced the regime in remarks

to the UN General Assembly after the junta's crackdown on peaceful protests led by Buddhist monks in late September, when at least 13 people were killed and 3,000 detained.

"He focused the attention of the international community on the need to take action against the Burmese regime," said spokesman Tony Fratto. Official US policy is to refer to Myanmar by its former name of Burma.

Bush had warned of additional action "if the Burmese regime did not end its repression," Fratto said.

"Unfortunately the regime has not

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GD-3623

Indo-Pak talks to ease nuke tension open

AFP, New Delhi

India and Pakistan opened talks yesterday aimed at cutting the risk of accidents with nuclear weapons and developing further cooperation in the arms arena, officials said.

The one-day meeting is part of a peace process launched between the nuclear-armed neighbours in January 2004, India's foreign ministry said in a statement.

Discussions will focus on reviewing the implementation of existing nuclear confidence-building deals and security issues in global organisations, such as the United Nations, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

"Both have common positions on many issues at the UN for example but do not work together as yet," said Arundhati Ghosh, India's former envoy to Geneva.

"Cooperation at this level -- presenting a common position -- could be one of the issues on the table today (Friday)."

India's delegation was led by senior foreign ministry official K.C. Singh and Pakistan's by his counterpart, Khalid Aziz Babar.

conducting ballistic missile tests and to exchange lists of nuclear facilities every year.

The South Asian rivals have fought three wars since 1947, including two over the still-disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

They are considering cooperation on a range of issues, including developing shared positions on security issues at the United Nations or the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

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