



Speakers at the special plenary of the WIPO High-Level Forum held in Geneva on Wednesday. From right are Belete Degefa, state minister for capacity building of Ethiopia; Madicke Niang, minister for mines and industry of Senegal; Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the United Nations office in Geneva; Mamady Traore, minister for industries and commerce of Guinea. (Story on Page 16)

RETURNEES FROM MALAYSIA

Workers won't go home without receiving refund

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 50 Bangladeshi workers who returned from Malaysia recently in the wake of harassment by recruiting agents yesterday decided not to go back to their homes until they receive a refund of Tk 1.75 lakh per person from the recruiting agency.

The workers have been staying at different places in the city -- on the footbridges, High Court Mazar mosques at night and in front of the National Press Club, Dhaka Reporters' Unity and Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training at Kakrail for the last three days.

This group is part of 80 workers who staged hunger strike on the premises of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur from September 10 to 15 in protest against their unemployment, non-payment of wages and confinement in congested rooms by a Malaysian company there for around six months.

Later, the government brought them back to the country and assured them of steps to pay back the money they spent on migration.

On Thursday, the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry sent a notice asking the Golden Arrow, the recruiting

agency which took them to Malaysia, to refund Tk 1.75 lakh to each worker.

Earlier, the Golden Arrow paid back Tk 84,000 to each worker and some additional money to 22 others in compensation. The recruiting agency will now have to pay the remaining amount to the workers.

The government in the notice also warned the Golden Arrow that

the security money of the recruiting agency will be confiscated and its licence cancelled if it fails to refund the money to the workers by December 17.

Joyal Abedin, one of the returnees, said, "We have been struggling since our arrival in the country in September and October to get our money back. We won't go back home until we get the money in our hand."



A group of workers who returned from Malaysia recently in the wake of harassment by recruiting agents sit on the footpath near the National Press Club yesterday. They decided not to go back to their homes until they receive a refund of Tk 1.75 lakh per person from the recruiting agency.

Follow Thakur Anukul's teachings to protect HR

Says Dr Kamal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain has said Bangladesh is one of the richest countries in terms of moral values and enlightened personalities.

He urged all to follow the teachings of Thakur Anukul to establish human rights and justice in the society.

Dr Kamal was addressing as chief guest at a discussion marking the 120th birth anniversary of Shree Shree Thakur Anukul Chandra on the premises of JM Sen Hall here yesterday.

The discussion was organised by Satsanga Kendra with its President Advocate Ramnath Pal in the chair.

Prof Anisuzzaman of Dhaka University, Prof Abdul Hai, Advocate Harisadhan Dev Barman, Sujit Kumar Biswas and Chittagong Press Club General Secretary Ejaz Eusooi took part in the discussion.

The speakers said Thakur Anukul preached a philosophy of love for mankind irrespective of race and creed.

He was against Banga Bhanga (partition of Bengal) showing his stance against any kind of division, they added.

On this occasion, Satsanga Kendra organised a daylong programme participated by hundreds of Hindu devotees.

18 FFs leave for India to celebrate Victory Day

UNB, Dhaka

Eighteen freedom fighters, led by Maj Gen (ret'd) Imam-Uz-Zaman, left for Kolkata yesterday to join the Indian Army in celebrating the Victory Day at Fort William, the headquarters of Eastern Command of Indian Army.

The Indian government has instituted joint celebration of freedom fighters and Indian Army every year.

The group also includes Col (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury (Sector Commander), Aly Zaker, Sara Zaker and Bulbul Mahalanobis, said an Indian High Commission release.

The three-day celebrations include a Tattoo and military band display, a cultural programme and Bara Khana with the Indian Army troops that were scheduled for yesterday and today.



Death anniversary of Fazle Rabbie today

Today is the 36th death anniversary of Dr Md Fazle Rabbie, a martyred intellectual, says a press release.

Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams picked him up from his Jalpaiguri House at Shiddheshwari at about 4:00pm on this day in 1971 and killed him brutally at Rayer Bazar at night. His body was recovered from Rayer Bazar killing ground on December 18.

Dr Rabbie served as a professor of Medicine and Cardiology at Dhaka Medical College.

To mark the day, wreaths will be placed and feteiha will be offered at his grave at the New Azimpur graveyard and Quarnkhani and milad will be held at Dhaka Salimullah Orphanage.

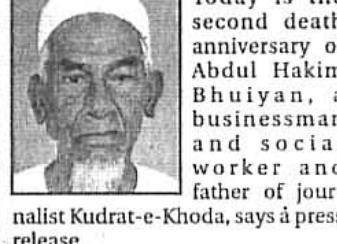
Maj (ret'd) Md Afsar Uddin

Today is the fourth death anniversary of Alhaj Maj (ret'd) Md Afsar Uddin, says a press release.

He was also elected an MNA from Barisal.

His family requested all to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Abdul Hakim Bhuiyan



Today is the second death anniversary of Abdul Hakim Bhuiyan, a businessman and social worker and father of journalist Kudrat-e-Khoda, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and Quarnkhani will be held at his home in Comilla.

He died on this day in 2005 at the age of 80.

Homage to Martyred Intellectuals



Different socio-political organisations and individuals place wreaths at Martyred Intellectuals' Mausoleum at Mirpur in the city yesterday marking the Martyred Intellectuals Day. (1) Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar and Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui (2) Mukti Juddher Shaheed Smriti Pathagar (3) War-wounded freedom fighters (4) BNP leaders (5) Awami League leaders (6) DU vice-chancellor (7) DU Teachers' Association (8) Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and (9) Gono Forum.

13 Bangladeshi policemen complete US ATA course

BSS, Dhaka

Thirteen officers of Bangladesh Police completed the ongoing US Government Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) sponsored training programme designed to advance security awareness and VIP protection capabilities.

The 13 course graduates are the latest to join a growing number of highly trained and qualified Bangladesh police officers who are protecting heads of government and foreign dignitaries in Bangladesh, a US Embassy press release said yesterday.

Essential protective equipment such as weapons and body armour were given to the Bangladesh government as part of the training programme.

More than 700 Bangladeshi police officers have already graduated from the ATA programme which offers a series of courses designed to help the Bangladesh police deal with crisis situations, provide protection to VIPs, and prevent and respond effectively to terrorism and other forms of violence.

Rajuk flouted demolition code

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the owners of each, potentially affected adjoining plot, building or structure at least a week in advance of the commencement of demolition.

The Daily Star's interviews with the neighbours of Rangas Bhaban yesterday revealed that Rajuk served no notice to the owners of the adjacent buildings or plots.

"It is only on December 10 that Tejgaon police served us a notice requesting us to remain at a certain distance from Rangas Bhaban, saying that the building after the partial collapse has become unstable. Other than that we received no other notice before or during the demolition," said Mosammat Beauty, resident of an adjacent building east of Rangas Bhaban.

Moinuddin, 12, was seriously injured in the head when at midnight in early November a large chunk of concrete slab fell from Rangas Bhaban on the tin shed house located at 115/3 Tejgunipara, where he was sleeping.

"The concrete was so heavy that the corrugated tin roof could not bear the weight. My son is lucky that the concrete fell a foot away from where he was sleeping," said Haider Ali, father of Moinuddin.

The corrugated tin roof of the house was damaged in several places due to falling concrete slabs and a sledge hammer from Rangas Bhaban quite a few times during the demolition work, said Arab Ali, owner of the house.

BNBC stipulates that demolition of any building must not commence until required pedestrian protection structures have been built. But the reality was that, not only the pedestrians, vehicles were not also safe during the demolition work in Rangas Bhaban.

A falling chunk of concrete from the upper floors of Rangas Bhaban damaged a car about a month back, admitted Nasir Majhi, a demolition sub-contractor who got the job from the original contractor Six Star, hired by Rajuk to demolish the upper floors of the 22-storey building. "Six Star however compensated the car owner," Nasir said.

While BNBC specifies that safe distances must be clearly marked, signs should be prominently posted, and every sidewalk and road

adjacent to the demolition site must be either protected or closed off -- no such protection was provided during the demolition work.

The code also says a demolition shall proceed in descending order storey by storey from top to the bottom, and all work on an upper floor must be completed and approved by the engineer prior to moving to a lower floor.

"Demolition of the structure in sections may be permitted in exceptional cases only if necessary precautions are ensured," BNBC says, adding that no person should be allowed to work in an area underneath a floor being demolished, and such areas should be barricaded.

Demolition workers engaged in the job said demolition was going on the 19th and 17th floors on the fateful night of August 8, as many of their colleagues were sleeping on the 8th and 9th floors, while BNBC restricts demolition at night, during storms, and during heavy rain.

"If demolition has to be done at night, precautions in the form of red warning signals, sirens, working

lights, and watchmen shall be provided," says BNBC.

Six Star's Site Engineer Ziaur Rahman however told The Daily Star earlier that no engineer from Rajuk or the demolition contractors stayed at the site during demolition at night.

An expert engineer, Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, said the code of demolition work was totally ignored in demolishing the floors of Rangas Bhaban.

"It shows the lack of awareness about the code among the officials who were entrusted with the responsibilities of enforcing it," Chowdhury, also the vice-chancellor of Brac University, said. "Neither proper planning nor supervision was ensured by Rajuk," said architect Iqbal Habib adding that the government agency even failed miserably in rescuing the trapped men and in recovering the bodies of the dead on time.

Rajuk Chief Engineer Shah Alam and its Chairman KAM Haroon could not be reached for their comments despite repeated attempts.



Brother Robi Purification, headmaster of St Gregory's High School, presents a crest to Foreign Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury at a programme marking the 125th anniversary of the school on its premises in the city yesterday while Archbishop Paulinus Costa looks on.



Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country with partly cloudy sky in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Night temperature may rise by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country, Met Office said.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 29.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Teknaf and the lowest of 10.7 degree at Srimangol.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:14pm today and rises at 6:34am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	26.3	15.2	56	52
Chittagong	27.7	16.5	71	71
Rajshahi	26.5	12.7	82	86
Khulna	26.0	16.0	79	82
Barisal	27.6	14.0	79	82
Sylhet	26.9	15.0	77	80
Cox's Bazar	29.4	19.0	59	70

Baul singer Dayal killed in road accident

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Baul singer Akmal Hossain Dayal Sai was killed in a road accident at Manikpur in the town yesterday morning.

Police said Dayal, 58, along with his 31 followers was coming to Munshiganj from Dhaka in a bus which fell into a roadside ditch after crashing into three shops.

All the injured passengers, including Dayal, were rushed to a nearby hospital. Doctors put a bandage on his head and sent him to his home where he died after some time.

Security management course held

British American Tobacco (BAT) Bangladesh organised a security management course in the country recently, says a press release.

A total of 10 participants from local and overseas companies took part in the stage-3 (strategic skills) of the course conducted by ARC Training International Limited, a UK-based security training institution.

The objective of the course was to allow different companies operating in Bangladesh to train their security managers on modern approach to security and enhance their ability to implement security risk management and crime reduction programme.

The participating companies are BAT -- Bangladesh, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, China and South Korea; Grameenphone, Cairn Energy, Asia Energy, Cemex Bangladesh, Chevron Bangladesh, Kafco, Standard Chartered Bank and Bangladesh.

Earlier, the BAT successfully ran security management course 1 and 2.

DHAKA TODAY

Seminar

Bangladesh Institute of Social Research (BISR) organises a seminar on 'Criminal justice system administration in Bangladesh'. Venue: BISR conference room. Time: 5:00pm.

ICMAB award

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh organises the distribution ceremony of ICMAB National Best Corporate Award 2007. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 7:00pm.

Seminar

Islamic Economic Research Bureau organises a seminar on post-cyclone rehabilitation. Venue: Islamic Economic Research Bureau, 60/E Purana Paltan. Time: 4:00pm.

Lecture

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises the Jahanara Majid and Mahbub Alam Trust Fund Lecture 2007 on 'Changing middle class of Dhaka City and its impact on Bangladesh society'. Venue: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

Seminar

Six chambers of the northern region organises a seminar on 'Development of greater Rangpur and northern region: Energy perspective'. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 9:00am.

Book launching

Society for Nature Photography organises the book 'Neer Pakhi', written by Sadat Hossain Selim, launching ceremony. Venue: Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 4:00pm.

Discussion

Patua Qamrul Hasan Art School organises a discussion to mark the 86th birth anniversary of artist Qamrul Hasan. Venue: Sofia Kamal Auditorium. Time: 4:00pm.

Rotary Dhaka North West

The regular weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Dhaka North West will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30pm.