

Establish just system to gain from labour migration

Prof Muzaffer says at discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad has called for establishing a just system of labour migration to gain from it and protect the rights of the workers who play significant role in the economic development of the country.

Referring to a study he said in many cases migrant workers on returning home find that the benefits they got from abroad are not even equal to the assets that they had sold for going and working in foreignland.

Prof Muzaffer was speaking as chief guest at a discussion titled 'Rights to mobility with dignity: Challenges and opportunities' organised by Bangladesh Migration Development Forum (BMDF) to observe the International Migrants Day yesterday.

At the programme at Cirdap auditorium in the capital, Prof Muzaffer, also Trustee Board Chairman of Transparency International Bangladesh, said there is a group in the government

that not only take bribes from the unscrupulous recruiting agencies, but also is engaged in sending workers abroad.

Elaborating the sufferings of migrant workers abroad in the absence of a just arrangement by both the receiving and sending countries he said, "Alliance of manpower agents at both the ends leads to exploitation of migrant workers."

He urged the government to take up large-scale skill development programmes, especially in nursing and technical education, and find out employment opportunities in the developed countries.

Prof Muzaffer said the migrant workers must know the rules and regulations of the receiving countries they intend to go and develop their communicative and job skills.

Human rights activist Dr Hameeda Hossain said the government looks only at the money the overseas workers send, not at their rights.

Such attitude is also reflected in the bilateral agreements the government signs with other manpower

receiving countries, she added.

There seems to be no accountability in the total overseas employment process, she said, adding that Baira (Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies) should be made accountable for any fraudulent practices by its members.

Coming heavily on the government, BMDF Joint Convener TIM Zahid Hossain said corruption, fraud and exploitation have taken a deep root in the overseas employment process where the middlemen are officially recognised, but are out of the control of the authorities.

Referring to recent exploitation of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia he said, "The government cannot deny its involvement in the victimisation of the migrant workers."

In his welcome speech, Shikha Shasthya Unnayan Karzakram (Shishuk) Executive Director Sakiul Millat Morshed said, "We are busy counting the money the migrant workers send, but do not give importance to their human aspects."

In the outsourcing system (through which workers directly cannot get jobs, rather depends totally on recruiting agencies), the workers are being deprived more and more of their rights, he observed.

Mahbub Elahi of Obhishabi Karmi Kalyan Foundation said the government takes pride in saying that it has so much of foreign reserve, but does not feel to take enough care for them who are out of the control of the authorities.

"This attitude must end," he asserted.

Migrants' rights activist Masud Pervez suggested financial transactions through banking channels to stop any fraud in the manpower business.

A returnee migrant Mina Begum, who went to the Maldives 12 years back, called for establishing greater unity among the migrant workers to wage strong movement against the frauds actively involved in the business and realise their demands for humane migration.

COMBATING TRAFFICKING Limited access for women to dev services obstacle

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inadequate support services and limited access for women to development services and facilities provided by the government are the major obstacles to combatting trafficking in persons, speakers at a workshop said yesterday.

Limited scope of work for vulnerable families, particularly for women and lack of trust and confidence from the cross border communities also hinder the efforts to fight trafficking.

At the same time lack of sharing information on the arrest of traffickers, victim rescue and their re-integration with the sphere of Police-BDR-Local Government and limited awareness of community about the functional role of Union Parishad particularly in service delivery are also responsible, the speakers said.

Concern Universal-Bangladesh and Terre des hommes-Italy organised the national level lessons sharing workshop at city's Spectra Convention Centre aiming to share the lessons learned by defining problems that arose from the implementation of C-BAT Project.

A total of 235 local government officials received formal training, 30 victims were rescued and six victims were reintegrated under the project from October 2005 to December 2006.

\$1 lakh Brunei support for cyclone victims

UNB, Dhaka

Brunei Darussalam has contributed 100,000 US dollar for cyclone victims in Bangladesh.

Brunei Ambassador Dato Seri Laila Jasa Haji Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Hamid handed over a cheque of the amount to Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday.

Expressing concern that the number of incidents of torture of minorities goes up after the national elections, they urged the government to take necessary steps so that no such incidents take place after the next election.



Cadet College Club executives

Shafiqur Rahman and Air Cdre Mirza Akther Maruf (R) have been elected president and secretary general of Cadet College Club Limited for 2008, says a press release.

The election of the executive committee of the club was held on December 13.

Other office-bearers are vice president - Maj Khandker Badrul Hasan (R), joint secretary general - Ashraf Hussain, treasurer - Rafiul Islam Tipu, and members - M Musleh Uz Zaman (FCC), Maj Mahbub Ur Rahman (R) (JCC), Shamsul Ahsan Karnal (MCC), Wg Cdre Md Alamgir, OCS, (R) (RCC), Reazul Haque (SCC), Shaikh Ehsanul Habib (CCR), Md Abdul Hashem Sarker (PCC), Tamanna Shegufa (MGCC), Dr Ehsanur Rahman (CCC) and Syed Rafiqul Haque (WPCC).

The research paper suggested that a micro-mapping approach should be taken to ensure effective utilisation of resources and proper rehabilitation of cyclone-affected



PHOTO: STAR
Artist Pijush Bandopadhyay hands over a CD titled 'Tui Razakar', an album of recitation by him, to Air Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandker at the CD release ceremony at Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday while Maj Gen (retd) CR Dutt, 2nd from right, looks on. From left are Maj Gen (retd) Harun-ar Rashid, Lt Gen (retd) Mir Shawkat Ali and Maj Gen (retd) KM Shafiullah.

Show respect to Bir Shresthas, freedom fighters

Naval chief urges all
UNB, Nodkali

Navy Chief Vice Admiral Sarwar Jahan Nizam called upon all to show appropriate respect to the Bir Shresthas as well as freedom fighters to make the spirit of Liberation War meaningful to the future generation.

He said this when he was exchanging views with the local elites and local government representatives while visiting Begumganj, the birthplace of Bir Shrestha Ruhul Amin yesterday.

He was visiting Begumganj to pay homage to the Bir Shresthas on behalf of the Bangladesh Navy.

The Navy Chief inspected the ongoing construction works of Bir Shrestha Ruhul Amin Academy, Library and Museum and also gave assurance of all sorts of help and support for its every development.

He donated a computer to Bir Shrestha Ruhul Amin Academy from his own fund.

He also requested all to come forward to help the recent Sidr victims irrespective of party affiliation and believes.

Among others, Commodore Commanding Chittagong, senior officers from Naval Headquarter, high civil and military officials were present, said an ISPR press release.

Bogra road crash kills 3

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

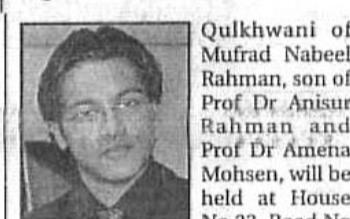
At least three people were killed and 30 others injured in a road accident at Dighalkandi area on Bogra-Rangpur Highway under Begumganj yesterday.

The victims were identified as Asad Ali, 35, Rashidul, 22, and Golam Rabbani, 20.

The accident occurred when a Kurigram-bound bus fell into a roadside ditch losing its control, leaving three people dead on the spot, police said.

The injured were rushed to Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogra.

Qulkhwani



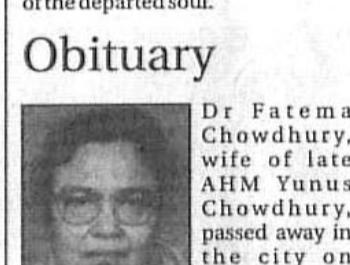
Qulkhwani of Mufrad Nabeel Rahman, son of Prof Dr Anisur Rahman and Prof Dr Ameena Mohsen, will be held at House No 23, Road No 4, Dhanmondi in the city after Maghrab prayers today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will also be held.

Nabeel, grandson of former commissioner of taxes Mizanur Rahman, passed away at the Apollo Hospitals, Dhaka following an acute liver failure on Sunday afternoon.

His family members have requested all to be present at the Qulkhwani and pray for the departed soul.

Obituary

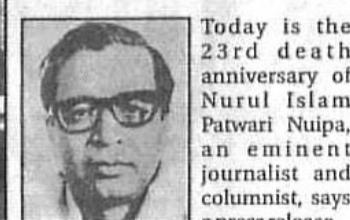


Dr. Fatema Chowdhury, wife of late AHM Yunus Chowdhury, passed away in the city on December 15, says a press release.

She was buried at Banani graveyard.

Fatema was a retired Chief Medical Officer, BCIC. She also served as Medical Officer for the Chittagong Port Trust.

Death anniversary

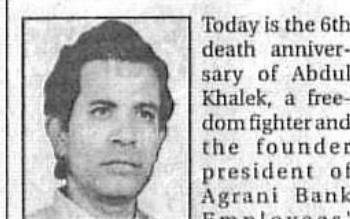


Today is the 23rd death anniversary of Nurul Islam Patwari Nuipa, an eminent journalist and columnist, says a press release.

He was the editor of the Dainik Bangla, Ittefaq, Dainik Barta, Shaptahik Bichitra and Kishore Bangla.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his residence at Baitul Aman Housing Society, Shyamoli in the city after Asr prayers.

His relatives and admirers are requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.



Today is the 6th death anniversary of Abdul Khalek, a freedom fighter and the founder president of Agrani Bank Employees' Union, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at his address at 64/3, Maniknagar residence in the city tomorrow.

His relatives and admirers are requested to attend the milad and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

4 JMB men jailed for 14 yrs in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

A court here yesterday sentenced four Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadres to 14 years' rigorous imprisonment each in an explosive case.

Chittagong Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge Shafiqul Karim in his verdict also fined them Tk 50,000 each, in default, to suffer three years more in jail.

The convicts are JMB Chittagong Region Commander Jabed Iqbal alias Mohammad, Naimuzzaman alias Sohag, Ayub Ali alias Abu Jar and Fahidul Islam alias Sumon alias Boma Mizan.

The court, however, acquitted accused Mashru Rahman alias Uzzal as the charge brought against him could not be proved.

Three of the convicts were present at the court yesterday while Boma Mizan has been absconding.

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and Police recovered huge quantity of explosives and arms from a house at Nur Para in Cox's Bazar Sadar upazila on December 13 in 2005.

Charge sheet of the case was submitted on March 23, 2006 while the charge was framed on September 5 this year.

After hearing 13 witnesses the court pronounced the verdict yesterday.

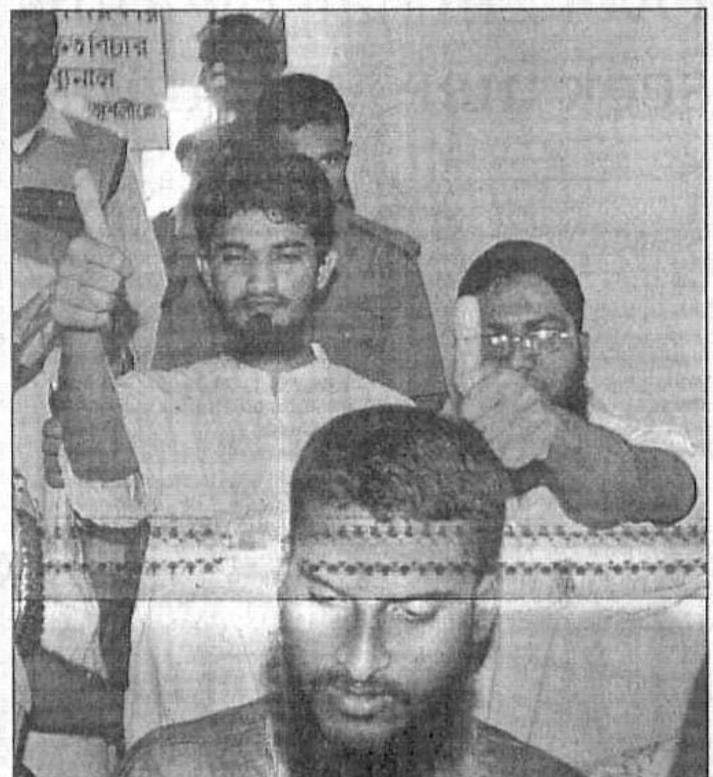


PHOTO: STAR
Cadres of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) who were sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment are being taken to jail from a Chittagong court yesterday.

Repression of minorities still rife Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although many things have changed during this caretaker government, repression of minorities is still going on, speak-

ers at a seminar said yesterday.

No governments since independence could take any effective measures to stop violence against ethnic and religious minorities in the country, they said.

According to newspaper reports, at least 22 incidents of repression of indigenous people took place in September, they added.

Smriti Mancha or Platform for Harmony and Peace organised the seminar in cooperation with the Institute for Environment and Development (IED) at the National Press Club, with Prof Ajay Roy in the chair.

It is the duty of the state to protect the rights of all citizens, but all the successive governments have failed to do so, the speakers said.

The minority people have faced inhuman torture by the majority community in the wake of Babri Mosque issue in 1992 and after the 2001 general elections, they said.

Expressing concern that the number of incidents of torture of minorities goes up after the national elections, they urged the government to take necessary steps so that no such incidents take place after the next election.

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