

Cheated workers

FROM PAGE 16
of a real Bangladesh passport is deep green.

Zia International Airport police on Saturday filed a case against the fake passport holding returnee Bangladeshis, their recruiting agencies, manpower exporters, and cabin crew and management of GMG Airlines that flew the workers back to Dhaka.

"The names were also fakes on the forged passports, which compelled us to mention two names of each person in the case -- one mentioned on the passport and the original name," an immigration police official told The Daily Star on Sunday.

He said police previously found cases when travellers forged passports by replacing pictures, but this is the first case of full passport forgery, when entirely fake passports have been printed. "We are not yet sure whether the passports were printed in Bangladesh or Malaysia."

There is no proof of any previous journey by the passport holders on the fake passports, which suggests the passports were probably printed in Malaysia, as the returnee workers came directly from there, the immigration police official said.

Quoting the returnees, he said once the workers arrived in Malaysia, their employers confiscated their passports. And as they were later either not provided with jobs with pays and perks promised earlier or cheated otherwise, the workers were forced to escape from the workplaces.

Finding no other suitable job, the cheated and ill-treated workers were forced to buy fake passports to return home, he added.

Asked why the names of the victims were included in the case, the immigration police said they do have sympathies for the abused workers, but had no alternative because according to the immigration and passport acts the workers had broken the law by carrying fake passports.

On whether the police will try to stretch its probe to Kuala Lumpur, he said they already took the matter to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment. A high level inquiry should be carried out on the matter, the immigration police official said.

A Bangladeshi expert working in Malaysia, for an NGO working with migrant workers there, told The Daily Star that there are thousands of cases when workers are hired by Malaysian companies often through employment agents, but finally the workers do not get the jobs promised or are horrendously exploited at workplaces.

Many instances are there where workers are inhumanely forced to work very long hours in exchange for meagre wages and inadequate food, often prompting the workers to protest and leave the jobs. A several hundred workers recently returned from Malaysia due to such circumstances there.

Although, Bangladesh High Commission there opened 'safe shelters' so the abused and cheated workers may stay there until their job related troubles are settled, according to media reports the 'shelters' are so crammed that many ill-fated workers had to stay on riverbanks under the open sky in Kuala Lumpur.

There is a nexus of recruiting agencies, their agents in Malaysia, and some officials of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, who not only discourage the troubled workers from returning home, but also sometimes compel them to join whatever job is available or just to continue to remain in the foreign land without any sign of hope," said a cheated worker who had returned home from Malaysian January.

The syndicate's new enthusiasm in continuing to keep the ill-fated workers in Malaysia by any means necessary, was prompted by a movement in Bangladesh against the ill practices there, which had been launched by a number of recently returned workers who are now realising compensations from their recruiting agencies, the returned workers said.

He also said cases against the returnee workers holding fake passports should be dropped, instead the manpower exporters, recruiting agencies, and the employers who

Outlaws

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the law enforcers were preparing to return to the police station after the market was closed.

The attackers first stabbed the policemen and then opened fire on them. The police tried to counter but could not fire more than two shots at the outnumbering miscreants, said a police official.

An investigation was initiated to find out whether the criminals used police arms in the attack, he added.

Anwar Zahid, circle assistant superintendent of police, said huge police force was deployed at almost all points in the district and Rajshahi city while raids were being conducted in search of the criminals.

On August 25, 2006, outlaws of Purbo Banglar Communist Party killed four policemen and looted four firearms and huge bullets from Chowdhari Hat in Naogaon. Among 21 accused in the case, 10 were sentenced to death last January.

Trader killed

FROM PAGE 1
who was among the people who rushed Ferdous to the hospital, in this connection.

Bahul Hossain, maternal uncle of the deceased, said Ferdous used to supply sand, bricks, and cement to real estate developers.

He, however, could not say what could be the motive behind the killing.

cheated them should be tried first.

When contacted, Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur M Khairuzzaman said it is not true that the high commission discourages workers from returning home.

"We are rather trying to rehabilitate workers with employment troubles. We blacklisted a few recruiting agencies for failure to maintain promises they made to workers," he said.

If the passports were fake, the immigration at Kuala Lumpur should have held the passport holders, Khairuzzaman said.

Road crashes

FROM PAGE 16
Amin. The injured are undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

Our Kushtia correspondent reported that two people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident on the Kushtia-Bheramara highway in Baranaila area under Mirpur upazila of the district early Thursday.

They were identified as Anwar, 28, son of Ishak Ali, and Sumon, 19, son of Afzar Rahman of Panchagar district.

The accident occurred when a bus carrying at least 50 people from Joypurhat to Biswa Zakir Manjil in Faridpur fell into a ditch at about 4:45am, leaving two people dead on the spot and 25 others injured.

Of the injured, ten were admitted to Kushtia General Hospital while the rest given first aid.

In Jhenidah, two motorcyclists were killed in a road accident at Baratala on the Jhenidah-Narikelbaria highway Thursday morning, reports our correspondent.

They were identified as Abdus Sattar, 50, and his wife Shahar Banu, 40.

Police and locals said the two died on the spot when a tractor hit the motorbike at around 9:30am.

The bodies were sent to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

A decorator named Enam Uddin Enam, 40, was killed in a road accident in Sylhet city in the early hours of yesterday, according to our staff correspondent.

A speeding truck hit Emon from behind while he was returning home at Zatarpur from his shop at Mirabazar at around 12:15am. Emon died on the spot.

The victim's body was handed over to his family after post-mortem examination at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College.

Our Patuakhali correspondent adds: One person was killed in a road accident on Patuakhali-Dhaka road in Telikhali area under sadar upazila at about 8:30am yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sohail, 28, of Kartikpasha village under Dumki upazila.

Police sources said Sohail was run over by a Dasmina-bound bus from Dhaka and killed on the spot. Police seized the bus but its driver and helper managed to flee.

2 muggers

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Nasirabad area of the city.

In the other incident, alleged snatcher Omar Faruk, 25, died on the spot in a mob assault.

Locals said he had snatched a cellular phone from a trader at Fakirchar in Fatikchhari upazila Thursday night.

Later, police arrested two of Omar's accomplices -- Jewel and Imrul -- with a Light Gun (LG).

Car plunges

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floating 20 minutes after the accident. She was given first aid and was waiting for her family members to be rescued as of 9:45pm yesterday.

The accident happened around 6:30pm when the car skidded off Pontoon-1 and sank in the river. Rezaul was driving the car sending his driver to buy food for them.

The district administration said since the car was under 40 feet of water, they had to call for divers from the capital.

Palm oil prices

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rice went down by Tk 2-5 a kg in wholesale and retail markets in the city. The prices of coarse rice remained unchanged.

Officials of the Directorate General of Forces Intervention (DGFI) fixed the wholesale and retail prices of palm oil Tuesday after having a meeting with edible-oil traders in Chittagong. According to the meeting decision, traders would have to sell palm oil at this rate until May 10.

Our correspondent in Chittagong reports: Many wholesalers and retailers do not know the meeting decisions even after three days.

A kg of palm oil was selling between Tk 100 and Tk 101 at wholesale markets of the capital yesterday. Retailers were selling it between Tk 103 and Tk 104.

The price of battery chickens went up by Tk 5 a kg during the last two days, reaching Tk 130 a kg at some markets in the capital yesterday. The price of free-range chickens rose between Tk 20 and Tk 50. Medium-size chickens were selling between Tk 200 and Tk 250 yesterday. Traders blamed shortfall in supply for the price hike of free-range chickens.

The price of locally-produced onions rose by Tk 2 per kg during the last two days. Onion was selling between Tk 22 and Tk 25 a kg yesterday.

Fish prices continued to go up during the last two days. It went up between Tk 10 and 20 a kg depending on species.

Prices of locally-produced pulses climbed up by Tk 2 per kg in wholesale during the last two days. A kg of locally-produced pulse was selling between Tk 85 and Tk 90 in retail.

Delwar

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mark May Day and the 29th founding anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal, the labour wing of BNP.

The same day M Saifur Rahman, acting chairman appointed by the party's standing committee, said the election would not be meaningful without participation of the now detained heads of the two major political parties.

Speaking to BNP leaders and workers from Sylhet, he said, "They (Hasina and Khaleda) will have to be involved in the electoral process to make the polls meaningful."

He said people would not support any election similar to the one held on February 15, 1996.

Pro-reform faction leader Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and Major (ret) Hafizuddin Ahmed, acting secretary general made by the standing committee, were among those present at the gathering at Saifur's Gulshan residence.

Referring to soaring prices of essentials, the former finance minister said it shows that an unelected government cannot do things that a government representing people can do.

Delwar in his speech at the Press Club programme urged political parties and professional bodies to come forward to "rescue the country from the present crises".

Accusing the EC and military-backed interim administration of hatching conspiracies, he said they are amending laws at will since they want to disqualify from the election the ones who always side with people.

"People won't accept any election under the present Election Commission and they will resist any foreign conspiracy linked to the upcoming election," he said.

BNP chairperson's Adviser Brig Gen (ret) ASM Hannan Shah alleged that the caretaker government is working to protect interests of certain quarters.

Presided over by BNP Joint Secretary General and Samik Dal President Nazrul Islam Khan, the discussion was addressed, among others, by BNP Joint Secretary General Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and acting office secretary Rizvi Ahmed.

13 grenades

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Officer-in-charge (OC) of Boalkhali Police Station Aminul Islam Sarker said the grenades were old and could have been kept under the ground since the Liberation War.

Local Union Parishad (UP) member Abu Taleb said he does not know about any Liberation War battles that took place in Sheikhpara or its adjoining areas.

"I have no idea how the ammo got there and I do not know if we would have to face any sufferings for them," said Sekandar, a resident Sheikhpara, fearing harassment.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Tofail Ahmed of Patiya Circle told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon that the search for more hidden arms and ammo is on.

Storms kill 3

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According to local sources, the storm caused partial damage to Boro paddy on 3,000 hectares of land in the two upazilas and uprooted many trees and electric poles.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reported that one person was killed and 15 others were injured in the season's first nor-wester that lashed seven unions of three upazilas of the district early yesterday.

The dead, Golam Mostafa, 25, of village Purbo Batikaman under sadar upazila was struck by lightning during the storm. Besides, 15 others, including seven children, were injured in house collapse in the affected areas. They are undergoing treatment at upazila health complexes.

The storm damaged tin-roofed schools and houses and Boro paddy in the affected Mollar Char, Kamajani, Jigabari, Alger char, Char Dakatia, Patadhoya, Alger char, Chowmohon, Harichandi, Bhatoypara, Kapasia, Ujan Burail and Porar char.

In Rangpur, Boro paddy, maize and jute plants on about 4000 hectares of land were damaged and at least 500 houses were collapsed by nor-wester in Kounia, Pirgachha and Rangpur Sadar upazilas on Thursday night, according to our correspondent.

District administration sources said Boro paddy on about 600 hectares, maize on 300 hectares and jute on 200 hectares of land at Kandi, Tambulpur and sadar unions under Pirgachha upazila was damaged.

Other affected unions are Kursha under Kounia upazila, Tampat under Rangpur Sadar upazila and Chowla under Pirgachha upazila.

Pirgachha upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) said Kandi and Pirgachha are the worst affected unions where at least 500 families have been rendered homeless by the storm.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds: Nor-wester damaged some 500 houses in Iswarganj and Halaughat upazilas early yesterday.

One person named Roman, 22, son of Izzat Ali of Neejgram village under Sharisha Union in Iswarganj upazila was electrocuted during the storm.

Iswarganj police said Roman came in touch of snapped live electric wire while he was working in his Boro field at around 8:00am.

Ensure fair wages

FROM PAGE 1
a three-day May Day fair at the same venue.

He expressed his firm expectation that the country would be able to attain an accountable, and sustainable state system with the support and active cooperation of civil-military administration and the countrymen.

He urged all to work together to establish a progressive, welfare and meaningful democratic state to materialise the dream of the great Liberation War.

A total of 44 institutions are participating in the three-day May Day Fair 2008, arranged to add productive festivity to the May Day celebrations.

The CA also unwrapped the cover of multimedia documentation titled 'Made in Bangladesh' prepared by BGMEA and the labour and employment ministry to project country's world-class products in the outer world.

Labour and Employment Adviser M Anwarul Iqbal, Director of ILO area office Dhaka Panudda Boonpala, President of Bangladesh Employers Federation Kamran T Rahman as representative of the owners, Umme Salma Farveen as representative of workers, and Labour Director Shyamol Kanti Ghosh also spoke at the function presided over by Mahfujul Huq, acting secretary to the labour and employment ministry.

Workers and owners, chiefs of the three services, distinguished personalities and senior civil and military officials were present at the function.

The CA observed that in a labour-intensive populous country like Bangladesh improvement of the nation's fate is largely interlinked with change of fortune of the working-class people. So the government is giving highest priority to ensuring basic rights of the working people in all spheres.

He said it is impracticable to keep the wheels of development moving without ensuring the just interests and welfare of those who are putting direct contribution to production and development.

"So the government is working to expand the scope of labour welfare as major precondition for advancement of industrialisation," he told the function.

On ready-made garment industry, the highest export earner for the country, the CA noted that recent incidents of labour unrest and chaos in the sector gave rise to question in the external world about the image of the country and owners' attitude to workers.

In this context, the head of the interim government categorically said there should be no scope for excuses in full implementation of the tripartite agreement among the government, owners and workers.

He said the government is making all-out efforts to ensure 'decent work' environment at workplaces and make them child labour and discrimination-free apart from ensuring health and security of the workers.

The CA said the government is giving compliance issue in garment sector highest priority and he directed the labour ministry to be more active and responsible in ensuring compliance properly at each factory.

He noted that a healthy worker community is big national wealth of the country and one of the main focal points to attract local and foreign investment. This labour force will have to be involved in the mainstream of development.

Termining workers and owners as complementary to each other, he said it is essential to maintain mutual respect and cordiality between the workers and owners by any means for development of industry-factory trade and commerce and increased production.

He said the matter of maintaining peace and stability at industrial enterprises and labour unrest should be seen and analysed with positive attitude and 'all should come out from the culture of exchanging blames'.

On behalf of government, businessmen, industrialists and workers, the CA requested all concerned to carry out responsibility maintaining discipline, honesty, sincerity and intimacy in everybody's respective sphere to further smoothen the path of advances in the competitive world.

On trade union, he said the role of effective, strong and well-disciplined trade union organisation is undeniable in establishing permanent peace and good industrial relations.

He called upon the leaders of trade unions to take wisely more realistic activities evaluating national and international situation for the country's industrialisation and attaining the rights of workers.

Mentioning the country's time-worthy Labour Law and close monitoring of its implementation, he said one's right can not be ensured only by formulating laws, and rules and regulations or by the single effort of the government—it needs confidence and respect to law by all concerned and commitment of all for its application.

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three were blasted.

The police later recovered the unexploded bomb.

The CID was interrogating Suman in a three-day remand starting from April 30.

CID Inspector Abu Hena Mohammad Yusuf, who is also the investigating officer of the case, expressed hope that there will be more development in the case today.

Suman will be produced before the court today, he told The Daily Star.

Ten persons were killed in the blasts, one of whom remained unidentified. Police had suspected this person to be one of the attackers.

Suman confessed to the CID that the unidentified victim was Huji man Sujan who hailed from Faridpur.

Suman also disclosed that Jewel is brother of David of Narayanganj who is an accused in the case filed for the August 21 grenade attacks on an Awami League rally in 2004.

Suman is also an accused in the August 21 grenade attack case.

According to CID sources, Suman confessed that Sujan was killed in the blasts as he could not plant the bombs and escape the area in time.

Suman disclosed that Huji leaders Mufi Hannan, Abu Taher, Maulana Tajuddin and Abdur Rouf planned the attacks and were present near Ramna Batamul.

Suman also disclosed that they had visited the spot the day before Pahela Baishakh.

Earlier, detained Huji boss Mufi Hannan in his confessional statement said Suman carried the bombs to Ramna Batamul.

They said the number of patients admitted to the hospital dropped yesterday in comparison to Thursday's rush. However, it treated more patients yesterday than it did on the same day the week before.

According to the control room of DGHS, 19,421 people had treatment in the hospital last week and nine died. At least 61,510 had treatment last month and 37 people died of diarrhoea since January 1, 2008.

governance efforts, necessary foundations for counterterrorism activity.

US and Bangladeshi law enforcement agencies cooperated well on several cases related to domestic and international terrorism. The US continued to fund antiterrorism assistance programmes for the Bangladeshi security forces. Bangladesh also continued cooperation with the US to strengthen control of its borders and land, sea, and airports of entry.

The report mentioned that on May 1, three small bombs went off at railway stations in the major cities of Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. Authorities found a message signed by Zaid al Qaeda at each of the sites threatening non-governmental agencies if they did not leave Bangladesh within 10 days. The deadline passed without incident and it remained unclear who was responsible for the attacks.

It said neighbouring India continued to allege that the United Liberation Front of Assam (Ulfa) and other anti-India insurgency groups operated from Bangladesh with the knowledge of senior Bangladeshi government officials.

India also blamed the terrorist group Harkatul Jihad Al Islami Bangladesh for bomb attacks in the city of Hyderabad in May and August. Bangladesh strongly denied these allegations.

The absence of counterterrorism cooperation between India and Bangladesh fuelled mutual allegations that each country facilitated terrorism inside the borders of the other.

Prof Wahiduddin

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Agriculture production support task force will work to ensure easy availability of farm inputs needed to produce rice focussing on price and distribution of fertiliser, diesel, hybrid seed and irrigation, he said.

"Country's food security cannot be ensured unless it attains self-sufficiency in production of rice," the renowned economist observed.

Wahiduddin blamed an international syndicate for rice price hike in global market.

Institute of Media & Communication Studies organised the two-day workshop on food security for journalists, held at Chhayanan Bhaban. Experts deliberated on various aspects of this vital issue at two working sessions on the day.

Prof Dr MA Sattar Mandal of Bangladesh Agriculture University, Mymensingh, spoke on 'Food Security: Way to make it sustain in Bangladesh' and Dr Fahmida Akter Khatoon on 'Global Warming & Crop Cultivation Method: Bangladesh Perspective'.

Khandaker Ibrahim Khaled, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, deliberated on 'Subsidy & Bank loan policy to Agriculture: Is it farmer friendly?'

18 killed

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and the Zaidis, a Shia offshoot, but are usually identified by the sect of their prayer leader. Therebels are Zaidis.

On Tuesday, seven soldiers were killed and 20 wounded when their convoy was ambushed by rebels in Saada.

The renewed violence comes despite recent efforts to implement a peace deal between the government and the rebels brokered by Qatar in June 2007.

The agreement, under which the insurgents would lay down their arms, was revived during a meeting between the two sides in Doha in February.

Qatari mediators were still in the capital Sanaa on Friday.

Yemeni authorities have rushed military reinforcements to Saada in the past few days.

The rebels have been fighting to restore the Zaidi imamate, which was overthrown in a 1962 republican coup in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries.

The insurgents are known as Huthis after their late commander, Hussein Badr Eddin al-Huthi, who was killed by the army in September 2004. Hussein was succeeded as field commander by Abdul Malik his brother.

The rebels reject President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime as illegitimate, although Saleh himself is a Zaidi.

The Zaidis are a minority in mainly Sunni Yemen but form the majority in the north-west.

Yemen, an Arabian peninsula country with a tribal structure, has been repeatedly hit by violence in recent weeks.

Two attacks in Sanaa in March and April targeted US interests and were claimed by the local wing of al-Qaeda. A schoolgirl and policeman were killed in one of the attacks.

On Wednesday, two car bombs exploded inside the compound of customs headquarters in Sanaa, but there were no casualties.

Over 50 BCL

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on the CU Railway Station premises Wednesday afternoon violating the EPR. They also chanted provocative slogans, the OC said.

Sources said BCL brought out the procession protesting against Islamic Chhatra Shibir activists' alleged painting over their graffiti at the station and the CU shuttle train.

They claimed the Shibir men erased "71" on a wall of the station and the carriages of the shuttle train and wrote "75".

High demand

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I do when I have to waste so much time for fuel," said taxi driver Rahim Mia.

"I have to pay Tk 700 to the taxi owner and run my four-member family with the remaining money. Moreover, the prices of essentials have gone beyond our reach."

Earlier, it took at best 45 minutes to refuel, but now it takes at least three to four hours, he said.

Some CNG-run three-wheelers drivers allege most of the refuelling stations give privilege to the larger and expensive vehicles, which consume more gas.

Entrepreneurs say if the government gives easy loan to add CNG refuelling facilities to the existing petrol pumps, the problem will reduce significantly.

Nazmul Haque, president of Bangladesh Petrol Pump Owners' Association, said they would soon submit a proposal to the ministry concerned in this regard.

As there is shortage of land, the government may allow setting up CNG stations in the limited space with a condition of two nozzles only for light vehicles, he added.

The government should find out ways for leasing out more land or allow the private entrepreneurs to set up stations in the existing pumps to ease the pressure, the entrepreneurs add.

According to RPGL, around 47.86 million million cubic feet (mmcf) of gas is currently being used in the 229 stations across the country and around Tk 390 crore is being saved every month for using CNG.

6 children

FROM PAGE 1
Benapole by a train.

Port police rescued the children as they cried out for help when taken to check post area. But the traffickers managed to flee, the OC said.

Police are now verifying information received from the rescued children.

The children will be handed over to their parents or relatives, if available, or they will be sent to court for safe custody.