

Call to stop harassment of migrant workers in Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday demanded an end to harassment and corruption in sending workers to Malaysia.

They demanded punishment to the corrupt government officials and recruitment agencies for their treacherous activities to the hapless migrant workers.

The speakers placed a 6-point demand at the press conference organised by Bangladesh Development Partnership Centre (BDPC) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

They also urged government to take an effective initiative to return the illegal migrants and trafficked people who are confined in different jails and detention camps in Malaysia for carrying forged documents.

BDPC Director Sharif A Kafi said several recruiting agencies in connivance with some corrupt government officials of both the countries are engaged in forgery of passports and other documents.

These unscrupulous groups are also competing for securing job demand letters from Malaysia, he added.

He demanded withdrawal of the officials of Bangladesh high commission's labour wing from Kuala Lumpur due to their inefficient handling of migrant workers there.

Sharif said, "Withdrawal of these officials from the spot is very essential, otherwise they can easily mislead investigations."

He emphasised the importance of forming a task force and more investigation to wipe out such corrupt people from the sector.

He said, "Plight of cheated

Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia is long-standing and the corrupt and responsible officials are still operating their unholy business smoothly."

BDPC conducted an investigation on the status of illegal migrants in Malaysia. In most cases, the probe body found these hapless workers, either cheated by recruiting agencies or manpower agents at home or employers abroad, he mentioned.

He further said that a good number of these poor job seekers lost everything in the process. On many occasions, they were landed in jails mainly due to fraudulent activities of the manpower agents.

Shahriar Rahman, Akhtar Khan Tanim and Ruma Das of BDPC and labour leaders Amirul Haque Amin and Jahangir Alam took part in the programme.

Two robbers lynched in Narayanganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Two robbers died in a mob beating at Dighi Barabo at Rugganj in the district on Monday night while they were taking preparation to commit robbery.

The dead were identified as Al Amin and Sumon. Two machetes were seized from their possession.

Police said sometime between 7:00pm to 8:00pm armed robbers were taking preparation to commit robbery.

Being suspicious, the security guards raised alarm and the dacoits took shelter at Ekhlashuddin High School.

Announcement was made using the loud speakers of the local mosque to alert people who soon chased the dacoits and nabbed two of the gang. However, the other dacoits managed to escape.

Al Amin died on the spot after the beating while seriously injured Sumon succumbed to his injuries at Rugganj Upazila Health Complex.

'Save Titas canal'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists held a rally and formed a human chain in front of the local press club at Brahmanbaria yesterday urging conservation of Titas canal.

Titas Bachao Andolon and Poribesh Bachao Andolon jointly organised the programmes where speakers blamed the municipality for filling up Titas canal for a so-called development project.

They said that by filling up the canal municipality authorities is destroying natural beauty of the town. It will create waterlogging in future.

Recently, Brahmanbaria municipality authorities start renovating the canal but instead of digging they are filling it up, said Abu Naser Khan of Poribesh Bachao Andolon.

He said the design of the development project is not environment friendly and people are protesting against it but the municipality authorities are not paying heed to the call.

The demonstrators later handed over a memorandum to Brahmanbaria municipality Mayor Hafizur Rahman Mollah.

BFUJ, DUJ concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Secretary General Altaf Mahmud and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Shah Alamgir and General Secretary Omar Faruk yesterday expressed concern as journalists were barred from entering into the parliament when it is not in session, says a press release.

They said meeting of different parliamentary committees and other activities held inside the parliament even it is not in session. So it is necessary for journalists to enter into the parliament.

They urged the speaker to let the journalists perform their professional duties without any obstacle.

DGFI

FROM PAGE 16
general of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). He joined the army in 1976.

Akbar succeeds Maj Gen Golam Mohammad who will now lead the 33 Infantry Division in Comilla Area.

General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Comilla Maj Gen Abul Kalam Humayun Kabir has been transferred to the Infantry Division in Rangpur Area.

The incumbent Rangpur Area GOC Maj Gen Syed Fatemi Ahmed Rumi has been made director general of Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS), the state-run think-tank.

Brig Gen Mahbub Haider Khan has been picked to be at the helm of the Military Secretary's Branch.



Workers' Party President and lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon visits a stall on the National Press Club premises in the city yesterday after inaugurating a 10-day honey fair. Apiculture Association organised the event.

25 injured as students, traders clash in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 people, including five policemen, were injured in a clash between the students of Daffodil International University (DIU) and local traders at Shukrabad in the city's Mohammadpur area yesterday.

The police lobbed tear gas canisters and resorted to baton-charge to bring the situation under control as the students were also locked into clashes with the police. They also hurled stones at the law enforcers.

The clash that erupted

over a trifling matter at around 1:00pm continued for about an hour, disrupting traffic movement on the Mirpur Road. As a result, the area became gridlocked, causing immense sufferings to commuters.

Sources said a student was first locked into an altercation with an employee of a nearby photocopy shop over payment for photocopies. The employee also misbehaved with a teacher who came forward to settle the issue.

In protest against the incident, when about 300 students were demonstrating

on the road, employees of several shops attacked on them, leading to the clashes, according to Belal Ahmed, public relations officer of the university.

Some 15 students were injured in the attack, he said.

Azifur Islam, officer-in-charge of Mohammadpur police, said five policemen were injured as they tried to bring the situation under control.

The university authorities filed a case against 15 to 20 shop employees, the OC said. However, none was arrested in this connection.

FM for protecting LDC interests

FROM PAGE 16

LDCs. She also emphasised special priority for the LDCs under trade in services negotiations.

Bangladesh Ambassador in Geneva Debapriya Bhattacharya was also present.

During the meeting, Lamy lauded Bangladesh's active engagement in the WTO and leadership role in promoting the cause of the LDCs.

He briefed the minister on the current status of negotiations and viewed that Aid for Trade was a useful mechanism through which Bangladesh could develop its trade related capacities.

Later, Anders B Johnsson, secretary general of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), called on Dipu Moni at the Bangladesh Mission.

The foreign minister briefed the secretary general on the smooth transition to parliamentary democracy through holding a free, fair and transparent election.

They also discussed the process of re-entry of Bangladesh to IPU following the return of democracy in the country. The matter will be considered in the next IPU meeting in April 2009.

The current status of the cases related to August 21

grenade attack and murder of Shah AMS Kibria also featured in their discussion.

The minister assured Johnsson of the government's firm commitment to bring the perpetrators to justice through proper judicial process at the earliest.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Ambassador Debapriya Bhattacharya also attended the meeting.

The Bangladesh Foreign Minister is visiting Geneva in connection to the universal periodic review of Bangladesh at the UN Human Rights Council.

Boi Mela sees 78 new books

FROM PAGE 16

Badaruddin Omar, Hayat Mamud, Ahsan Habib, Syed Manzurul Islam, Sumanto Aslam, Nasrin Jahan and Anupam Hayat, among others.

Of the stalls, Onnyapokash had to struggle hard to handle a large number of readers who came to buy titles by Humayun Ahmed--"Aj Dupure Tomar Nimontran" and "Manobi".

Around 12 schoolgirls were seen shouting the names of their desired books. They were standing a little far from the Onnyapokash stall because of the crowd. But the booksellers were too busy with the customers at the counter and could not manage time to pay attention to the girls.

Two more books by Humayun--"Bhoot Amar Poot" and "Ball Point"--were launched yesterday.

Other new titles that arrived at the fair yesterday include "Meyetir Naam

Narina" and "Octopus Chokh" by Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, "Maya", "Bijoyee Hobey Bangladesh" and "Mon+Hridoy" by Anisul Haq, "Hello Thagbaj" and "Ke Tumi" by Sumanto Aslam, "Mon", "O Bondhu Amar" and "Phele Asha Lal Golap" by Imadadul Haq Milon, "Kuwashar Bhor" by Rabeya Khatun, "Shabdokalpdrum" by Hayat Mamud, "Samorik Tatwabadhayak Sarkar Aramole Bangladesh" by Badaruddin Omar, "Kanagolir Manushera" by Syed Manzurul Islam, "Andharey Rongeen Rakhal" by Nasrin Jahan, "Singaporer Singhaalee Saheb" by Faridur Reza Sagar.

Apart from these few stalls there was not much crowd at the fair yesterday like the first two evenings. Booksellers spent idle time at many stalls even around 7:00pm. But sellers were not frustrated.

"This is only the third day of

the fair--people are coming and browsing through books. They are yet to start buying," said Abdur Rahman of Mowla Brothers.

"The sale is not much yet. We hope it will increase by next Friday and Saturday," said Shariful Islam of Oitijjo.

The dust menace was also not as much as the two other days.

A number of people from outside Dhaka visited the fair yesterday.

Shah Alam, a 60-year-old schoolteacher, came from Mymensingh to buy books for his school's library. He expressed satisfaction at the overall arrangement of the fair but complained about high prices of books.

Sohel, Russell and Manik, students of class X, came from Chittagong. But Manik said they did not find many new books at the fair.

Tk 340cr boost for Bapex

FROM PAGE 1

Production Capacity Building. The prime minister expressed her will to revitalise Bapex's strength and activities and emphasized fast implementation.

Under the project, the Bakhraabad Company along with Bapex will build a 65-kilometer 10-inch pipeline from the recently developed Semutang gas field up to Chittagong. This pipeline would increase gas supply to Chittagong by 20 million cubic feet per day by June 2010.

The tender for the pipeline scheme, which involves a cost of Tk 140 crore, would be completed by June and by June next year construction materials would be mobilised

to the project location to complete installation within next 12 months.

The other component of the project deals exclusively with Bapex with a budget of Tk 200 crore. A major part of this money will be spent for purchasing seismic equipment, drilling machine, communication equipment and replacement of the existing work over drilling rig. Bapex's existing work over rig T80 was procured in 1981-82 and is almost non-functional.

"In addition, Bapex will purchase some exploration support equipment, laboratory tools, computer hardware and software and satellite tracking system," says a source.

Planning Minister Air Vice Marshal (ret'd) AK Khandker recognised the fact that Bapex gas sales tariff was only Tk 25 per thousand meter (mcf) when foreign oil companies get almost three dollars in foreign currency, meeting sources said.

Emerging out of the meeting, the minister told reporters the prime minister has asked the authorities concerned to conduct oil and gas exploration properly and implement the projects fast.

He added the government would go ahead with the offshore survey bid. "I think there should not be any objection from any quarters in this regard."

CG 'MISDEEDS'

Moudud for nat'l enquiry commission

UNB, Dhaka

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday urged the government to constitute a national enquiry commission to probe the "unlawful and unconstitutional acts" of the immediate past caretaker government.

"It's necessary to constitute such an enquiry commission as the unaccountable caretaker government exercised unlawful acts, including persecution and torture," Moudud told reporters at the Supreme Court annex building.

Accused in five graft cases, the BNP leader, now on bail, said that the perpetrators should be brought to justice and that is why the constitution of such commission is necessary.

"The perpetrators should be punished for their misdeeds," Moudud added.

According to him, it is possible to constitute such a commission if the new government wants to do so.

AR Mallick's anniversary of death today

METRO DESK

Today is the 12th death anniversary of Dr AR Mallick, an eminent educationist and former finance minister, says a press release.

Dr Mallick was a professor of South Asian Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, USA, in the early sixties, and the founding vice-chancellor of Chittagong University where he built up a resistance during the War of Liberation. He was the president of the Liberation Council of Intellectuals in 1971.

Dr Mallick, also first Education Commissioner to India and first chairman of Asian Development Bank.

His publications include 'British Policy and the Muslims in Bengal' and 'Amir Jinnah Kotha O Bangladesh' Mukt Sangram'.

On the occasion, foods will be distributed among the orphans and underprivileged children at Deepshikha Centre (Rampura), Bhashantek and Badda orphanage. A discussion and milad mahfil will also be held at his ancestral home at Rajapur (Dhamrai) and on the RKB Mallick School and College premises.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maleka Samad, wife of former PWD engineer Md Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, passed away at her Dhanmondi residence due to cancer on Monday at the age of 52, says a press release.

Maleka, also sister of Probe News Magazine Chief Editor Irtiza Nasim Ali, was daughter of former joint secretary late MA Samad.

Her body has been kept in the Birdem mortuary as her only son Foysal Hasan Chowdhury Ziko is staying in Australia.

She will be laid to rest at Azimpur graveyard today after namaz-e-janaza at the Baitul Aman mosque at Dhanmondi after Zohr prayers.

5 extortionists caught red-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Locals caught five extortionists red-handed and gave a good thrashing that left them injured in the city's Pallabi yesterday.

They extortionists were identified as Yousuf, Arif, Taleb, Bappi and Shidhu.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Police Anwar Hossain of Mirpur zone said when the criminals went to trader Bashir at around 6:00pm at Balu Ghat in Pallabi area to realise extortion money, locals caught them and handed them over to the police after beating them up.

The extortionists were demanding extortion money from the trader for the last few days over a cellphone, he added.

Meanwhile, DB Police recovered two revolvers and 21 bullets and arrested an extortionist from the city's Tantibazar area in this connection.

The arrestee was identified as Pandab Chandra Barai, 30,

son of Mohadev Chandra Barai, of Tantibazar area.

Police said Pandab and his gang shot at Sub-Inspector (SI) Harun, leaving him injured when a police team led by the SI challenged Pandab and his gang who were escaping from Uttar Ashkuna where they committed a snatch on January 22.

On the other hand, a team of Rab-4 arrested Mohammad Milon and seized a pistol and a round of bullet yesterday from the city's Kafrul area.

According to the detainee's information, Rab recovered the pistol and the bullet from a dustbin at Sagarika slum in the area.

Meanwhile, DMP police arrested 41 criminals, including snatchers, robbers, drug peddlers and killers, from different parts of the city during the last 24 hours starting last midnight.

They also seized 1.5 kilogram of cannabis, 16 bottles of Phensidyl, seven litres of liquor, two taxicabs and one motorbike.



Fog likely

UNB, Dhaka

Dry weather is likely to continue over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the country during late night till morning, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 29.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundo and lowest 8.5 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:47pm today and rises at 6:38am tomorrow.

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	27.3	13.4	59	42
Chittagong	26.6	14.0	56	49
Rajshahi	26.2	10.5	83	53
Khulna	27.5	14.0	67	71
Barisal	28.0	12.5	72	72
Sylhet	27.8	13.0	58	45
Cox's Bazar	28.6	14.5	46	45

Brig Gen Moqbul Hossain made IG-Prisons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brig Gen AHM Moqbul Hossain was made the new Inspector General-Prisons yesterday.

Brig Gen Moqbul, who hails from Bogra district, has been deputed to the post from Bangladesh Army's supply corps, sources said.

The immediate past IG-Prisons, Brig Gen Zakir Hassan, was called back to the Army on January 27 after his deputation for three years and three months.

Additional IG-Prisons Dr Col Md Ashraful Islam Khan, who has been serving as the acting IG-Prisons, told The Daily Star last night, "I heard of the appointment of new IG-Prisons but did not receive any official order."

Sources said the establishment ministry issued the order of appointment yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, the government on Monday brought changes to the posts of the deputy inspector general in three prison divisions.

In an instant order, Major Shamsul Haider Siddiqui of Dhaka division was transferred to Barisal-Khulna division, Major Sheikh Saiful Alam of Chittagong-Sylhet to Dhaka division and Mohammad Fazlur Rahman of Dhaka to Chittagong-Sylhet division.

Jail sources said the three DIGs handed over the charges to new DIGs yesterday afternoon.

Future Group starts journey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Future Group, an education-based group of companies, was launched in the city yesterday with a view to providing different types of courses for the students, especially language and computer-based training courses.

Top officials of the group said they would offer a number of courses, including English foundation, English fluency development, basic grammar and writing, IELTS preparation, spoken English, radio jockey, cabin crew course, call centre agent training, basic computer, networking, website development, programming learning and fair handwriting.

They said this at a press conference at its Dhanmondi office in the city.

"Efficiency of English language and expertise of computer are required for getting any standard jobs. For this purpose, we have prepared different language and computer-based courses so that students can enter the job market easily," said Prof AMM Hamidur Rahman of Institute of Modern Language at Dhaka University and honorary chairman of the group.

They will spend their 10 percent profit of the company for providing stipend and free courses to poor students, he added.

Managing Director Yeasir Ahmed said they will also hold National Essay Writing Competition on the occasion of the 21st February.

"We will also hold a National Spelling Bee and IQ and a National Hand Writing Competition every year," he pointed out.

Future Group will also set up a standard school in every upazila so that meritorious students can come out, he added.



English in school

The launching ceremony of the programme 'English in School' will be held. Akter and The Daily Star jointly initiated the programme. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 10:30am.

Rally

Diganta Memorial Cancer Foundation will hold a rally marking the World Cancer Day. Venue: In front of National Press Club. Time: 8:00am.

Roundtable

Nagorik Forum organises a roundtable on 'India-Bangladesh transit, national security and trade imbalance'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 3:00pm.

Laptop fair

The inaugural ceremony of the Zoom Laptop Fair 2009 will be held. Maker Communication will organise the fair. Venue: Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre. Time: 10:00am.