

Create hassle-free investment environment for NRBs: Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday asked the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry to establish strict monitoring system so that no Bangladeshi expatriates fall victim to harassment or fraudulent activities.

He also stressed the need to create a more investment-friendly environment to encourage expatriates to make investments in the country without any hesitation.

The president said this while inaugurating the 'First NRB Manpower Development and Opportunities Conference-2009' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

He said the hard-earned money of the expatriate Bangladeshis makes immense contribution to the national economy, keeping the wheels of economy moving. "We have to engage the money to development sector properly to take the country towards development."

The main duty of Bangladesh embassies is to assist the expatriates, Zillur said and hoped that they would be more active in expanding their activities and co-operating with the expatriates.

He also stressed the need to turn the country's huge population into skilled manpower through proper training on various fields, including information technology.

The main objective of the

three-day conference, jointly organised by Scholars Bangladesh and Human Capital Development Limited, is to identify the problems facing the Bangladeshis abroad and prepare a plan of action to resolve them.

Seminars on various topics will be held today and tomorrow where ministers, experts and expatriates will discuss how Bangladesh can seize the opportunities in the field of overseas employment and make the best use of foreign exchange.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said Bangladesh had largely been dependent on foreign aids in the past. "But we have been able to reduce such dependency due

to increasing remittance from the expatriates," she said, adding that the government would take steps to resolve the problems of the expatriates.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Mosharrar Hossain said it is time to work towards ensuring the welfare of expatriates.

The total number of Bangladeshis staying abroad is about 75 lakh, he said, adding that his ministry has a plan to raise the number to one crore in the next 5 years.

Dr Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, said expatriate Bangladeshis build houses and buy lands instead of making investments in the development sector due to lack of security for their investment in the country.

"The expatriates can make investments to set up universities in order to produce skilled manpower, but we have to create scope for such activities," he added.

Despite the global meltdown, the foreign exchange reserve now stands at \$7.47 billion, thanks to the robust growth of remittances, he said, adding that the country has received \$9.67 million in remittance in 2008-09 fiscal.

ME Chowdhury Shameem, founder and president of Scholars Bangladesh, gave welcome address at the opening ceremony.



President Zillur Rahman addresses the 'First NRB Manpower Development and Opportunities Conference-2009' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

TIPAIMUKH DAM BCU protests Indian envoy's remarks

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), a left-leaning student organisation, yesterday demanded expulsion of Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty for his "audacious comment" on local experts who are raising voice against Tipaimukh Dam project.

At a rally on the Dhaka University campus, BCU leaders said India has taken an initiative to build the dam on Borak river without discussing the issue with the Bangladesh government.

Once the dam is built, it will have disastrous impacts on the economy and the environment of Bangladesh, they added.

The BCU leaders also stressed the need to forge a mass movement across the country against the Tipaimukh dam.

The navigability of two rivers -- Surma and Kushiara -- would be seriously hampered seriously if the dam is constructed, they said.

They also called on the government to clarify its stance on the Tipaimukh dam.

BCU general secretary Manabendra Dev, Khan Asaduzzaman Masum, Ferdous Ahmed Ujjal, Mahamudur Rahman Birol and Abu Toab Apus spoke at the rally.

Earlier, the student organisation took out a protest procession.

DU students confine 3 teachers for installation of furnace

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of the Ceramics department of the Fine Arts Faculty at Dhaka University kept three teachers confined for an hour yesterday demanding installation of a new chulli (furnace) for their practical works.

Department sources said the existing furnace in the department is out of order for several years.

The students padlocked the chairman's room when Chairman Prof Rabiul Islam and his two colleagues were inside the room in the morning, sources said.

Proctor Dr KM Saiful Islam Khan later took the teachers out of the room by giving assurance to the agitating students of resolving the problem soon.

The students claimed that their practical works have been greatly hampered as the furnace is out of order. Though initiatives were taken several times to set up a new furnace, it is yet to set up, they added.

Govt to implement CHT agreement Says Sajeda Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Leader of the Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury said the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Agreement would be implemented following discussions with the indigenous people, which Awami League

had pledged in its election manifesto.

She said this at a preparatory meeting of the committee at her office at the parliament.

Sajeda, also the convener of the national committee on implementation of the CHT Peace Agreement, said the implementation process of the historic agreement continued till 2001 after AL initiated it in 1997. Later, the implementation process came to a halt, she added.

She said every meeting of the implementation committee will be held in the CHT area so that the indigenous people can place their demands.

Dipankar Talukder, state minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Affairs, and lawmaker Jotindra Lal Tripura, chairman of Taskforce on CHT, were present at the meeting.

It was also decided in the meeting that the first meeting of the committee will be held at Ranganami Circuit House on July 22.

Monira Rahman wins Americans for UNFPA Int'l Honoree Award

METRO DESK

Monira Rahman, executive director of Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF), has won the Americans for UNFPA International Honoree Award 2008 for her contributions to preventing violence against women, specifically addressing acid violence.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supports efforts to improve women's health and promotes the rights of women around the world.

'Americans for UNFPA' is dedicated to building American support for the work of UNFPA and to restoring the United States' moral, political and financial contribution to the organisation, says a press release.

'Americans for UNFPA' announces the International Honoree Award annually to recognise people who have made exemplary contributions to women's health (i.e. safe motherhood, family planning, HIV prevention) and/or the promotion of women's rights (i.e. prevention of gender-based violence, promotion of education for women/girls).

Monira Rahman is a human rights defender who has been working for seven years to create a society where women live a life free from the fear of violence.

Her efforts have centered on ending violence, abuse and discrimination against women in Bangladesh.

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EPR VIOLATION Judgment on appeals by 3 DU teachers August 4

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed August 4 to deliver judgment on the appeals filed against the lower court verdict that sentenced three Dhaka University (DU) teachers to two years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) for violating Emergency Power Rules (EPR) in August, 2007 in connection with the violence on the campus.

After hearing on the arguments from the prosecution and the defence, Judge Mohammad Abul Bashar of the First Additional Metropolitan Sessions judge's Court set the date for judgment.

During the yesterday's hearing, lawyers told the court that the lower court had earlier sentenced their clients and later they were released on presidential clemency the same day.

The president's order only ensured that the teachers would not have to serve jail terms and their conviction was not set aside, the lawyers said, adding that the teachers would be unfit to contest any election if their conviction is not quashed.

The lawyers cited different decisions and rulings of the higher courts in support of acquitting their clients of convictions, lawyers said.

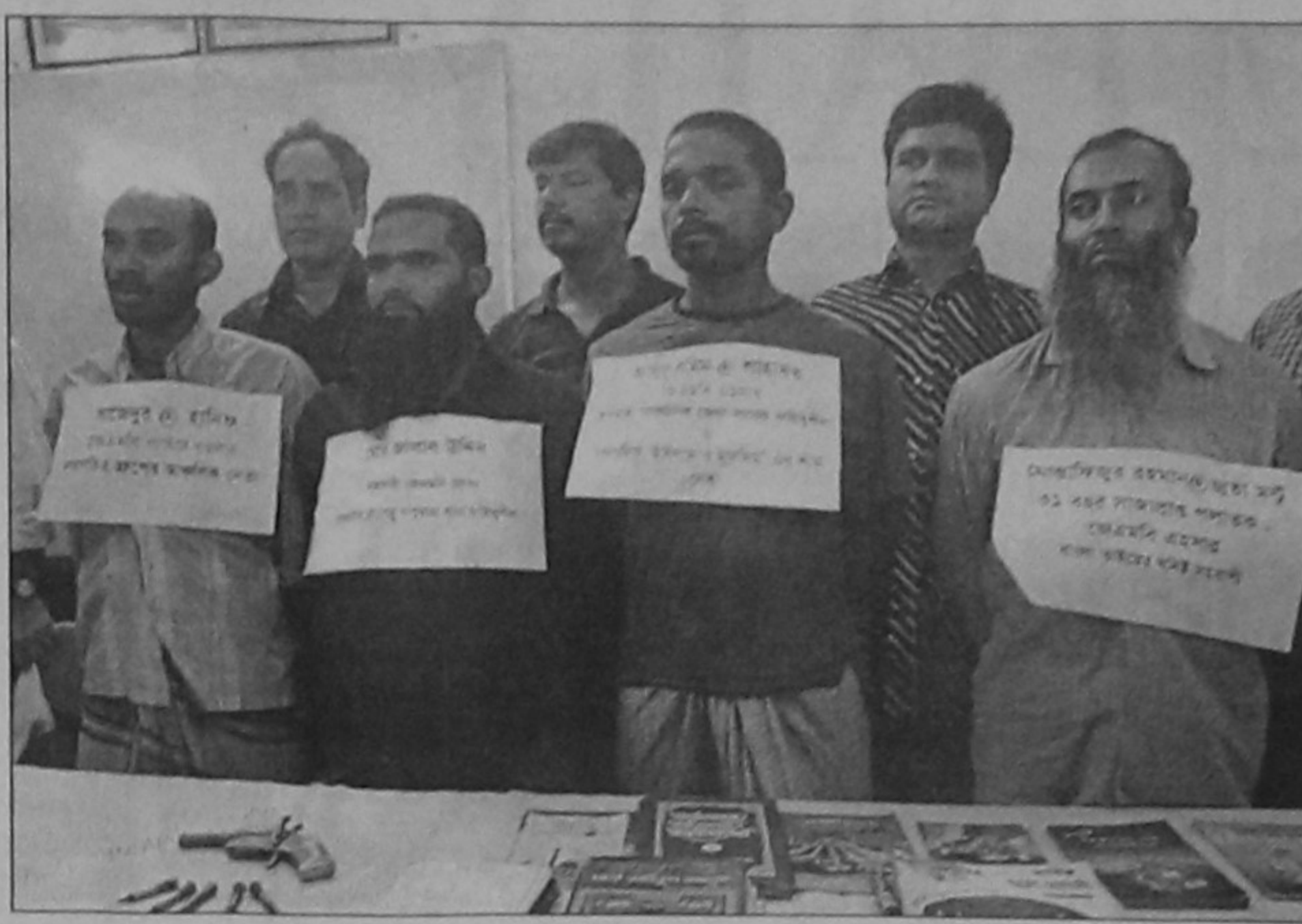
On the other hand, the prosecution made submissions against the decisions and rulings submitted by the defence lawyers.

On January 22 last year, Third Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani sentenced three DU teachers to two years' RI in connection with the August, 2007 campus unrest. But they were released from the prison the same day after the then President Iajuddin Ahmed pardoned them.

They are former Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) president Prof Sadrul Amin and former general secretary Prof Anwar Hossain and former DU Social Science Faculty dean Prof Harun-or-Rashid.

The court also acquitted Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik and 15 students, as charges brought against them were not proved.

Following the convictions, the three teachers filed three separate appeals with the higher courts on February 25 last year.



Kingpin and other operatives of the newly-formed 'Islam and Muslim', a new offshoot of banned Islamist militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) arrested from Dhaka, Gazipur and Rajshahi were produced at a press conference at Special Branch office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Two Dutch ministers due on July 5

UNB, Dhaka

Dutch Minister for Development Cooperation Bert Koenders and Vice Minister for Transport, Public Works and Water Management Tineke Huizinga will arrive here for a two-day official visit on July 5 and 6.

Both the ministers will meet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen.

The Dutch ministers will also meet with members of parliament, academics, development experts, NGO representatives and leaders of the business community.

A release from the Netherlands Embassy said the ministers would also visit Dutch government-funded education and water-sector projects in Khulna to gain firsthand experience of the progress made in the fight against poverty in Bangladesh.

G4S deal with Dutch embassy

METRO DESK

G4S Bangladesh, a security service provider, signed an agreement with the embassy of the Netherlands on Wednesday to provide comprehensive security solutions, including access control, at the embassy and other locations associated with the embassy, says a press release.

Dutch Ambassador Beate Tusscher and Managing Director of G4S Bangladesh Selim Chowdhury signed the agreement at the head office of G4S Bangladesh in the city.

Ershad for increasing wages of workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Hussain Muhammad Ershad has called for increasing the wages of workers and introducing other allowances for them.

In a written statement yesterday he also urged the government to ensure food and accommodation security of the workers.

Ershad was supposed to address the biennial national conference of Jatiya Samik Party (JSP), a labour wing of JP, at the Institute of Diploma Engineers in the capital.

As he could not attend the programme due to illness, he sent the written statement through Golam Habib Dulal, a presidium member of the party, who read out the statement at the conference on behalf of the former president.

Ershad urged people from all walks of life to work together with the workers and labourers for the prosperity of the country.

"We should take oath to work together for protecting the rights of workers and labourers for the country's economic development," he added.

The JP chief called for converting the country's vast population into vast human resources through proper training.

He observed that women workers are the victims of discriminations in their workplaces and stressed the need for eliminating these discriminations.

He thanked the government for taking some steps for the welfare of workers and

urged the government to take effective measures to quell the prevailing unrest in garment sector.

Addressing the conference former first lady and senior presidium member of JP Rowshan Ershad said, "The workers and farmers play the vital role in the country's economic development. But they are always deprived of their just rights."

She laid emphasis on creating women leadership in every sphere of national life.

Ruhul Amin Hawlader, secretary general of JP, demanded reopening of all closed mills and factories by reinstating suspended workers in their previous jobs.

Another JP presidium member Kazi Zafar Ahmed called upon the workers and farmers to work hard to make the country's economy vibrant.

Chaired by Anwar Begum, acting president of JSP, the conference also formed a convening committee to run its activities across the country.

Firearm seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized a Chinese rifle and two bullets left abandoned in Hazaribagh area in the city yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab seized the firearm and bullets that were believed to be lost from the BDR headquarters during the February 25-26 mutiny.

The rifle and bullets were found abandoned in a garbage heap near a house at Ganakutli.



(From left) Writer Kanak Champa Chakma, artist Rafiqunnabi, Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor Murshid Kuli Khan and architect Rabiul Hossain hold copies of a book titled 'Kanak and Her Artworks' at its publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Germany calls for climate commitment at G8

AFP, Berlin

Germany's Angela Merkel called yesterday for G8 leaders meeting next week to reaffirm their commitment to limiting the rise in global temperatures to under two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit).

"We are seeing a momentum that makes us confident that maybe we will achieve a result in December," when countries aim to sign a new climate change pact in Copenhagen, the chancellor told parliament in a speech.

She cited as evidence US President Barack Obama's climate bill passed in the US House of Representatives last week, calling it a "turning point."

"But it does not automatically bring us to where we need to be by 2050. Therefore it is important for us (at the G8 summit July 8-10) to make a very clear commitment to the two-degree goal," Merkel said.

She also said that the European Union was "leading the way" on climate change, setting "much more significant" targets than the United States on cutting emissions of the greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

Under the "American Clean Energy and Security Act", which is yet to pass the US Senate, emissions are set to fall 17 percent from 2005 levels by 2020, and 83 percent by 2050.

The 27-nation EU is aiming to cut its greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels by 2020 increasing to 30 percent if other big polluters make ambitious commitments in Copenhagen.

But Merkel said that the EU and the US targets mean little if emerging giants like India and China are not on board in Copenhagen, when countries aim to agree on setting emissions reduction targets beyond 2012.

"Even if we manage to reduce emissions not only by 80 percent by 2050 but by 100 percent ... without emerging economies it will be impossible with the current rise in emissions to meet the two-degree target," Merkel said.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) believes that a rise in temperatures of more than two degrees above pre-industrial levels would be dangerous for the Earth's delicately balanced climatic system.

This would require cuts of between 25 and 40 percent by rich countries by 2020, as well as a brake in the growth of emissions by emerging giants, according to the Nobel-winning panel of climate experts.

The two-degree goal has been enshrined as an objective by more than 100 countries, including the 27 nations of the EU.

Sahara operated upon at Singapore hospital

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Sahara Khatun was successfully operated upon at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore yesterday to heal her injured waist.

She suffered waist injuries when she fell in the washroom of her official residence on June 29.

A 12-member team of surgeons led by Dr Toh Chow Lai carried out the "successful operation" at the hospital at about 3:30pm (local time), officials here said.

Sahara left for Singapore on Wednesday night by a Singapore Airliner and got admitted to the Mount Elizabeth Hospital there for better treatment.

She had been undergoing treatment at a city clinic under the supervision of Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque until she left for Singapore.

Officials said Sahara is now taking rest and requested countrymen to pray for her early recovery.

Bangladesh High Commissioner to Singapore Kamrul Ahsan, PS to the home minister, visiting physicians and local Awami League leaders were present at the hospital during the surgery.

3-day IT fair begins in Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A three-day IT fair styled 'Sylhet IT Fair-2009' began at Hafiz Complex in Sylhet town yesterday.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran inaugurated the fair.

The fair was organised to keep aware the students and people in Sylhet about different IT products.

About 20 stalls of different products were set up at the fair which will remain open from 10:00am to 8:00pm everyday.

Obituary

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dr Momen Chowdhury, a folk researcher, writer and former deputy director of Bangla

Academy, passed away yesterday, says a press release.

He was buried at Gopibagh graveyard in the city yesterday after namaz-e-janaza at Bangla Academy premises.

Dr Momen received a number of awards, including Dewan Abdul Hamid Award, Kaikobad Literature Mojib Award, Sakhira Sahitya Academy Award, and Michael Award.

Bangla Academy in a condolence message expressed deep shock at his death.

Asgar Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Asgar Ali, who worked as production manager of Crescent Jute Mills Ltd, Peoples

Jute Mills Ltd and Mohsin Jute Mills Limited, passed away at his residence on June 26 at the age of 69, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, children and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

His qulhwani will be held at his residence after Asr prayers today.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the 6th death anniversary of Professor A b d u l Kader, a pioneer of ICT movement and founder of the monthly Computer Jagat, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at House # 29, Road # 6, Dhanmondi, after Juma prayers. Friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of his departed soul.