

ABUSE OF MIGRANT WORKERS IN MALAYSIA

# Caning a violation of human rights

Says Amnesty Int'l

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

International human rights watchdog Amnesty International (AI) has called for an immediate halt to caning people, a punishment widely used against immigration offences by the Malaysian authorities, saying it is a violation of human rights.

The authorities caned at least 34,923 migrants between 2002 and 2008. Of them, 3.6 percent were Bangladeshis, according to prison department records aired in parliament last week, says an AI release on July 2.

Majority 60.2 percent migrants caned were Indonesians, 14.1 percent Filipinos, 13.9 percent Myanmarese, 2.8 percent Thais and 5.4 percent from other countries, including India and Nepal.

Caning is a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment which has been prohibited under interna-

tional human rights law. The practice is humiliating and it causes such pain that people have reportedly fainted.

Those caned often carry scars -- psychological as well as physical -- for years. The severity of the pain and suffering often means that whipping is, in fact, a form of torture.

AI calls on the Malaysian authorities to repeal all laws providing for whipping and all other forms of corporal punishment and to ratify relevant human rights treaties and, in particular, the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Migrant Workers' Convention.

Malaysia, which depends largely on migrant labour, is the largest labour receiving country in South East Asia.

Following recent reports that numerous Indonesian maids were being abused in Malaysia, Indonesia on June 25 announced it would stop sending domestic helpers to Malaysia.

Undocumented workers are often ignorant of procedures and are themselves often victims of deceit at the hands of migrant worker

traffickers or unscrupulous employers. Caning is used in Malaysia as a supplementary punishment for at least 40 crimes.

AI expressing concern that documented workers whose passports have been withheld by their employers, asylum seekers and refugees, besides undocumented workers, are at risk of being caned.

Sources said estimated five lakh Bangladeshis work in Malaysia and labour exploitation has been a common story for long there.

## 2 more swine flu cases confirmed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more people were diagnosed with swine flu in the city yesterday, bringing the number of people infected with the A (H1N1) in the country virus to 18.

All 18 cases were diagnosed over the last six days.

Of them, eight people have already recovered.

The two people infected yesterday are residents of Dhaka and are in their early twenties.

They were infected through close contact with people already suffering from the flu, said Director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) Prof Mahmudur Rahman.

Both are receiving treatment in the confinement of their own homes.

IEDCR sources said till now nine people who returned from the United States and Australia were found suffering from the virus. The others were infected after close contact with them.

Government officials said yesterday that the ten infected patients are receiving treatment under close observation.

## 6 killed as truck rams 3-wheeler in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A truck ran over a locally made motorised three-wheeler killing six people, including a father and son, and injuring eight people at Daingpara intersection of Godagari upazila in Rajshahi yesterday.

The police said Babu, 11, of Matikata of the upazila died on the spot and his father Enamul, 48, and four others succumbed to their injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

The four others are Ilyas Ali, 40, of Mohishalbari, M Alauddin Biswas, 40, of Matikata, Tushar, 30, of Vatopara in Godagari upazila and Rahmat Ali, 25, of Akhila of Nachole upazila in Chapainawabganj.

Sources said the truck heading towards Godagari from Rajshahi ran over the vehicle around noon and turned turtle during its bid to escape the scene. Police seized the truck but the driver managed to escape arrest.

## Buet teams win top three positions at EWU Math Olympiad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jahangirnagar University (JU) authorities yesterday imposed a ban on the entry of three Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders to campus and suspended the studentship of a student for violent activities during an election to form 33rd batch's rag convener committee, says a press release.

The three leaders are Zahid Parvez Khan of Mir Mosharraf Hossain Hall, Mahfuzur Rahman of Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall and Abdul Hadi Bhuyian.

The studentship of Manoj Mandal Joy of Alberuni Hall has been suspended temporarily for the same reason.

The participants were asked to solve a set of 22 mathematical problems at the three-hour event.

"Competition like this is a very important exercise to emphasise the importance of mathematics and nurture one's intellect," said Prof Mohammad Sharif, vice chancellor of East West University.

EWU Board of Directors President Jalaluddin Ahmed spoke at the prize giving ceremony as the chief guest.

Emphasising the importance of such competitions, he said, "Mathematics is an interdisciplinary language as well as tool. It is considered to be one of the basic needs in our formal education system."

Noted writer Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, professor at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, headed the panel of judges on the occasion.

# NEWS



Students of the English department of Dhaka University form a human chain on the campus yesterday protesting the move to launch an evening MA course at the department.

PHOTO STAR

## FM for proper trial of war criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister (FM) Dipu Moni yesterday said it is more important to hold the trial of war criminals properly than to start the trial quickly so that the perpetrators cannot escape through legal loopholes.

She was speaking as chief guest at a discussion titled 'Quick trial of war criminals and relevant issues' organised by Projonmo '71, a platform of children of the martyrs of the liberation war, at the Liberation War Museum in the

criticised the government for taking initiative to change the name of a stadium which was named after her husband.

"Don't play the 'game of changing the name' with our husbands who died for the country," said Mili Rahman in an emotion-choked voice.

The government is working to make the trial process acceptable to international community, she added.

Dipu Moni said her ministry has already contacted the United Nations (UN) and sought its technical assistance in this regard.

Mili Rahman, wife of Birshrestha Motiur Rahman, also spoke on the occasion.

DU students protest move to introduce evening MA

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of the English department of Dhaka University yesterday formed a human chain on the campus protesting initiative of the authorities to launch an evening MA course at the department.

Students from the human chain, formed in front of the arts building, urged authorities to cancel the decision of introducing evening course saying that it would create discrimination against regular students.

After the human chain, the agitating students also brought a silent procession that marched different streets on the campus.

Suhas Chowdhury, a student of the department, said regular students do not find proper facility at the department. If the course is introduced it would put extra pressure on the department and existing session jam will be acute.

The students will submit a memorandum to university vice chancellor through chairman of the department today to press home their demand.

Chairman of the department Khondakar Ashraf Hossain told The Daily Star that the evening course would be helpful to resolve existing crisis of the department and 50 percent of the fund, which would come from the course would be used for welfare of the regular students.

## Fund crisis hits embankment repair in Khulna

UNB, Khulna

Water Development Board (WDB) cannot start full-fledged repairing work for flood control embankments damaged by the cyclone Aila in six upazilas of the district due to fund crisis.

According to the WDB, tidal surge caused by the cyclone damaged 349.5 km of embankments in Koyra, Dakop, Paikgachha, Batiaghata, Dumuria and Rupsha upazilas of the district.

The demands were made at a human chain programme organised by CRM in front of the Fine Arts Institute of Dhaka University in the morning.

CRM Vice President Major (retd) Md Mofizul Hoque Sarker presided over the programme which was addressed by CRM Secretary General Tushar Rehman, water expert Engineer Md Inamul Huq, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) leader Ruhin Hossain Prince, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok General Secretary Abdul Matin and its former general secretary Mdiful Huq Khan.

They said the BGMEA

Bhaban has been constructed in the middle of the Hatirjheel project creating unbearable traffic jam in the city.

They also demanded

installation of effluent treatment plants in all the industries and factories located on the bank of the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakha to prevent pollution of their water.

The situation has wors-

ened due to heavy rainfall for the last few days across the district. Thousands of people of the low-lying areas took shelter on higher places.

Local WBD officials said cyclone Aila damaged 60.8 km embankments completely while 288.7 kms partially.

It needs Tk 86.5 crore to repair the embankments, but the government has allocated only Tk 4.60 crore, they said.

Executive Engineer of WDB Zulfikar Ali said the situation will take a serious turn if the embankments cannot be repaired immediately.

Citizens' Rights Movement forms a human chain in front of the Fine Arts Faculty of Dhaka University yesterday demanding removal of BGMEA building for proper implementation of the Hatirjheel project.

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Recipients of scholarships pose for photograph at a scholarship award ceremony at Bhairabganj Bazar Dvipakshik High School in Moulavibazar recently. Chevron Bangladesh awarded the scholarships to 160 disadvantaged but meritorious students of four high schools in the district.

PHOTO: CHEVRON

\*Conditions apply