

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 Myanmar, 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.

Since amendments to Malaysia's Immigration Act came into force in 2002, a total of 47,914 migrants have been sentenced to caning for immigration offences.

"International standards make clear that such treatment constitutes torture," said AI, expressing concern that documented workers whose passports have been withheld by their employers, asylum seekers and refugees, besides undocumented workers, are also at risk of being caned.

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 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.

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 sixteen 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 Mohishbari, 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

Teams from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) clinched the first, second and third positions in a Math Olympiad organised by East West University (EWU) Science Club yesterday.

A total of 80 participants from 16 public and private universities participated in the competition that was held for the second time on its campus.

Dr Mohammad Farashuddin, founder vice chancellor and member, Board of Directors, East West University, inaugurated the event.

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 the judges on the occasion.



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 Projanno '71, a platform of the children of the martyrs of the Liberation War Museum in the

city.

The foreign minister said her government is determined to try the war criminals to put an end to culture of impunity and move the country forward.

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,

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.

She demanded of the government to formulate a law so that no name can be changed from any establishment.

Dr Sarwar Ali, journalist Abed Khan and Kaiser Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Rights activists demand removal of unauthorised structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Citizens' Rights Movement (CRM) yesterday placed a 13-point demand including removal of BGMEA Bhaban adjacent to Sonargaon Hotel for proper implementation of Hatirjheel project in the city.

The demands also include shifting of Bangabandhu Setu Bhaban at Mohakhali and broadening the airport road at Banani, removal of Musafir Tower at Kakrail and other towers and structures, which were constructed without the approval of Rajuk.

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 (ret'd) Md Mofizul Hoque Sarker presided over the programme which was addressed by CRM Secretary General Tushar Rahman, water expert Engineer Md Inamul Huq, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) leader Ruhin Hossain Prince, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon General Secretary Abdul Matin and its former general secretary Mafidul 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.

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 situation has worsened 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 86.85 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.



Bapa forms a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday demanding formulation of an environment-friendly energy policy.

Formulate environment-friendly energy policy

Bapa urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) yesterday called on the government to formulate an environment-friendly energy policy to ensure energy security and protect the country's environment as well.

Demanding an integrated coal policy, they urged the government to make public the recommendations from the experts' meeting on energy issues at Jamuna Resort recently.

They made the call at a rally in front of the National Museum in the city.

Bapa leaders said the government within 10-12 days is going to sign an agreement to lease some sea blocks to the foreign companies to export 80 percent gas as LNG under the PSC model 2008. But, the government should meet the internal demands first and then it can think of exporting energy, they said.

Bapa General Secretary Dr Abdul Matin said the government is thinking of exploring

coal, whereas a number of power generating stations were laid off due to coal scarcity.

He also said that the government should make the energy policy public and seek their opinion before taking a decision regarding the energy issue.

Engr Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, convener of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Port, alleged that governments in the last few decades have taken projects to serve the interest of a vested quarter and the foreign companies.

"The government should immediately stop open pit coal mining, as it has already caused huge damages to the environment and the people in the adjacent areas," he added.

Bapa Joint Secretary Jakir Hossain presented the keynote where he recommended strengthening regional cooperation to overcome power and energy crisis, making it compulsory for every commercial building and

multistoried building to have a solar power system to generate electricity from renewable sources and forming a 'high-powered' advisory committee on energy issues.

JU takes action against 3 BCL leaders

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 Bhuiyan.

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



Recipients of scholarships pose for photograph at a scholarship award ceremony at Bhairabganj Bazar Dwipakshik 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

Introducing **DHAKA-DUBAI** from July 16, 2009

Celebrating two years of operation

Induction of Jet Aircraft MD-83
flight to Chittagong on July 10, 2009

Special Fare @ Tk. 2500
(Only for 10th of July 2009)

*Fare is inclusive of all taxes, *One way fare, *No refund/Change,
*Limited seats, *First come first served basis

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG Departure 1600 hrs.
CHITTAGONG-DHAKA Departure 1710 hrs.

United AIRWAYS (BD) LTD.
... Fly your own Airline ...

For more information, please contact your travel agent or our sales offices
DHAKA- Uttara: 8931712, Gulshan: 01713486659, Karwan Bazar: 01713486658, Paltan: 01713486657, Airport: 896319,
CHITTAGONG- Nasirabad: 01713486663, Agrabad: 01713398788,
CEPZ: 01713486662, Airport: 01713486664

HOT LINE - 8933271, 01713486651

*Conditions apply