

8 Bangladeshis among 128 stranded workers in Abu Dhabi

PORIMOL PALMA

The Bangladesh Mission in Abu Dhabi finally on Monday managed to trace the eight Bangladeshi workers who along with 120 others got stranded in a camp on the outskirts of Mohammed bin Zayed City when the Jordanian manager of their company ran away with their passports around six months back.

The company, Otaiba Al Gurg Contracting, is no longer in operation.

Meanwhile, Red Crescent authorities in the United Arab Emirates have stepped in to help the workers, including nationals from India and Nepal.

After The Daily Star informed the Bangladesh Mission in Abu Dhabi of the matter, the officials came to know about the incident and

rushed to the camp.

"I have visited the place in person and met eight Bangladeshi workers," M o h a m m a d Moniruzzaman, labour counselor at the Bangladesh Mission in Abu Dhabi, told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the workers went to the UAE in 2004 and served comfortably till the end of 2008, but suddenly their company collapsed.

The company, however, allowed all of them to find jobs at other companies. They also managed jobs for them, but the Jordanian manager of their company ran away along with the passports, Moniruzzaman said.

The workers then filed cases at the Labour Court and the verdict was in favour of them, he said, adding that the manager, however, is untraceable.

"So all are waiting for the passports only to switch to other companies," he said. Apart from charity groups' assistance in food and healthcare, the Bangladesh Embassy has also given them some money to meet the exigencies.

"We are going to present ourselves at the court on the next date of hearing to expedite the matter," he told The Daily Star.

If the passports are not recovered, the Bangladesh Mission will issue new passports so that they can get visa and join other companies.

"I spoke to my wife today," said Abdul Alim, one of the eight Bangladeshi workers.

"I told her not to worry because now we are in the capable hands of the Red Crescent," he told The National, a newspaper in Abu Dhabi.

Depression over Bay

UNB, Dhaka

The depression over north-west Bay and adjoining area remained practically stationary over the same area yesterday afternoon.

It was centred about 570 km southwest off Chittagong port, 540 km southwest off Cox's Bazar port and 390 km southwest off Mongla port at 4:00pm.

"It is likely to intensify further and move in a north-westerly direction," said a special bulletin of Met office.

Under its influence steep pressure gradient persists over north Bay. Squally weather may affect the maritime ports and the coastal regions, the bulletin said.

The maximum sustained wind speed within 44 km of the depression centre is about 40 kilometres per hour, rising to 50 kmph in gusts or squalls. Sea will remain moderate.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three.

All fishing-boats and trawlers over north Bay and deep sea have been advised to remain in shelter until further notice.

One held for attacking Star journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested Sakib Al Hasan, one of the main culprits who launched an attack on The Daily Star Staff Correspondent Anwar Ali Himu's residence, from his relative's place on the outskirts of the city.

Sakib was later handed over to the police.

A gang of 25 criminals led by Sakib, stepson of former ward councillor M Masud, stormed into the residence of Himu at Asam Colony on Monday and beat up the journalist and his two family members mercilessly, leaving them injured.

A case was lodged against Sakib, his mother, Sahida Khanam Sonali, an employee of Rajshahi City Corporation and 25 other unknown people.

According to the case, Sakib and his mother Sonali hired criminals to beat up Himu and his family members for protesting Sakib's anti-social activities.

Rajshahi City Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton condemned the attack and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Rajshahi Union of Journalists President Hasan Millat and General Secretary Shibly Noman, Rajshahi Metropolitan Press Club President Bulbul Chowdhury, General Secretary Anisuzzaman also condemned the attack and demanded proper investigation into the incident and punishment to the people responsible.

BCL men extort Tk 25,000 from car owner

DU CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka University BCL leader and two activists allegedly extorted Tk 25,000 from a car owner as the car driver hit their motorcycle near the National Press Club in the city yesterday, injuring one of them.

After the accident, the three BCL men, led by Lablu Molla Shishir, president of Surya Sen Hall BCL, forcibly took the car to DU gymnasium ground around 3:00pm, said Belayet Hossain, a lawyer of the Judge Court and colleague of car owner Mahbubul Islam Majumder.

Only the driver was in the car when the accident took place. On receiving information from the driver, Mahbubul Islam along with his colleagues, including Belayet, rushed to the campus and managed to get back the car in the evening in exchange for Tk 25,000 following negotiations with the BCL men.

Belayet said the three demanded Tk 50,000 at first, claiming that two pairs of sunglasses of Shishir and his companion had broken in the accident and that the sunglasses of Shishir was worth Tk 21,000 and the other pair was worth Tk 2,000.

He also said the police did not reach the spot, despite repeated requests.

When contacted, Officer-in-charge of Shahbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim said that he had heard of the incident.

BCL leader Shishir told The Daily Star that they took Tk 12,000 from the car owner as compensation for broken sunglasses.

"We have nearly died. The car driver was driving recklessly. The person who was driving the motorcycle was injured seriously when the car hit it," he added.

He also said that his sunglasses, which were brought from abroad, were worth 300 US dollar.



Egyptian Minister for International Cooperation Fayeda Abu Aga receives Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on her arrival at the Sharm El Sheikh International Airport in Egypt yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

FORMALIN TESTING CENTRE AT KARWAN BAZAR 'Create awareness about harmful effect of formalin'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday inaugurated a formalin testing centre at city's premium kitchen market Karwan Bazar as part of its drive to ensure formalin-free fish for city-dwellers.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdul Latif Biswas formally opened the centre, which can detect formalin used on fishes to make them appear fresh using a kit made by Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial research (BCSIR).

Fisheries Minister Biswas said the centre would benefit both customers and sellers alike as they would be able to have fish examined to find if any preservatives have been used on them.

He emphasised the need to create awareness among people, especially fish traders, about the harmful effects of using chemicals such as formalin on food. The minister also

warned that fishes on which toxic chemicals have been used pose a great health hazard.

"If fish traders understand that formalin is not only harmful for consumers but themselves as well, then we can hope for fish free from formalin," he said.

He expressed hope that similar centres would gradually be set up in other markets around the city and called upon the Dhaka City Corporation to come forward to help expedite this process.

The fisheries and livestock ministry will hold a series of view-exchange programmes with representatives of fish importers, wholesalers, retail trade bodies and bazaar committees about the matter, the minister said.

Rafiqul Islam, director general of department of fisheries presided over the inauguration programme attended by Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal MP and Parikhhit Dutta Chowdhury, joint secretary

(fisheries) of the ministry.

The formalin-testing centre is a result of a project taken up by five government officials as part of their professional skill development. They are AKM Monwar Hossain Akhand, deputy secretary of the home ministry, M Imran, deputy secretary of the fisheries ministry, Amir Hossain, secretary of export promotion bureau, Momena Khatun, additional deputy commissioner of Narsingdi and Sahida Akhter, senior assistant secretary of the health ministry.

The five officials formed a committee to implement the project with AKM Monwar Hossain as its coordinator. Home affairs ministry, Export Promotion Bureau, DCC, BSTI, Consumers Association Bangladesh, Tejgaon Thana, Department of Fisheries, Hope-87 Bangladesh, Karwan Bazar Fisheries Traders Association and local lawmakers are assisting the project.

Inter-ministerial meeting on deep sea port today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Crg

An inter-ministerial meeting will be held at the shipping ministry in Dhaka today to review the draft final report of techno-economic feasibility study on the proposed deep sea port.

Pacific Consultant International, a Japanese consultancy firm, submitted the report in February. It had started the study in June 2006.

The firm conducted the study for setting up the deep seaport on Sonadia channel at the offshore island of Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar.

As per the draft final report, the deep sea port would be constructed on over 220 hectares of land in three phases, involving an estimated budget of Tk 60,000 crore, sources said, adding that the port will open for operation after the implementation of the 1st phase involving Tk 13,000 crore by 2016.

DHAKA TODAY

CPD dialogue

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organises a dialogue on investment scenario and recent development. Venue: LGED seminar room. Time: 3:00pm.

Consultation

Cirdap organises a regional consultation on the study on 'Access to land and natural resources by the rural poor in select Asian countries'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Discussion

Bangladesh Poribesh and Manobadhikar Bastobayan Society organises a discussion on role of film in establishing human rights and developing environment. Venue: Bangladesh Shishu Academy. Time: 5:00pm.

Book launching

The launching ceremony of the books titled 'Brac: Unnoyoner Ekti Upakkhan' and 'Freedom from Want' will be held. Venue: Brac Centre auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

Global Network of Bangladeshi Biotechnologists organises a roundtable on 'Biotechnology in Bangladesh: Target 2025'. Venue: Centre of Excellence, DU. Time: 10:00am.

AL, EC conspiring to split BNP

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the ruling Awami League and the Election Commission (EC) are hatching conspiracy to split BNP, like the immediate past caretaker government did, but it is not possible to ignore BNP as a political party.

The BNP leader also said his party will take decision on the submission of party constitution after holding a discussion with EC. "A party delegation would be sent to EC on Thursday to discuss the issue, as it's not possible for us to hold the party council by July 25," he told reporters at the party office.

"A conspiracy is going on so that BNP cannot submit the constitution after holding a party council and that the ruling Awami League wants to establish a one-party system in the country," he said. Accusing AL of maintain-

ing double standards on holding the party council, Delwar also said they (AL) are creating issues one after another so that BNP cannot hold council in a congenial atmosphere.

Meanwhile, a group of BNP leaders of Dhaka city units did not hold their scheduled view exchange meeting yesterday following an instruction from party chairperson Khaleda Zia.

Sources said some leaders backed by Mirza Abbas arranged the 'View exchange meeting of the Dhaka city BNP leaders who were detained and tortured after 1/11' at the Diploma Engineers Institution auditorium, with former lawmaker Salauddeen Ahmed in the chair.

But neither Salauddeen nor any organisers turned up at the meeting venue.

Party sources said that following a request of Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, Khaleda Zia on Monday night told the organisers to cancel the meeting.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at most places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls are also likely at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said.

It said day temperature may fall by 1-2 degrees Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:49pm today and rises at 6:20am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and Syedpur and lowest 24.5 degree Celsius at Rangamati.

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	32.8	27.5	75	73
Chittagong	32.0	26.8	76	77
Rajshahi	34.0	27.0	79	73
Khulna	33.5	26.8	80	83
Barisal	32.0	27.0	76	77
Sylhet	31.5	25.8	91	72
Cox's Bazar	31.8	25.8	86	90

CONTEMPT PETITION HC exempts Prothom Alo editor from appearance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday exempted Prothom Alo Editor Matur Rahman and its Associate Editor and columnist Mizanur Rahman Khan from personal appearance in the court in connection with a contempt of court petition against them.

An HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and Justice Mohammad Montazuddin Ahmed also fixed August 4 as the date for the hearing on the rule issued earlier by this court following the filing of the petition.

On July 2, the court issued a contempt rule on Matur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Khan for publishing an article 'Appeal Biviger Raay: Dabodahe Proshanti (Verdict of the Appellate Division: Relief from Scorching Heat)' in the newspaper on April 30 this year.

The court had also asked them to appear before the court on July 14.

Mamun Chowdhury, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed the contempt petition with the HC for publishing the article.

Matur Rahman and Mizanur Rahman Khan appeared before the HC bench yesterday as per the HC order.

Advocate Mahmudul Islam appeared for them while Barrister ABM Siddique Rahman Khan stood for the petitioner.

Fire at fast food shop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire gutted a machine for making chicken broasts and different food items at Yummy Yummy Fast Food at Kafrul in the city yesterday.

The fire, which originated at the fast food shop on the ground floor of a building at around 11:30am, caused panic among locals and the workers of Outfit Fashion Ltd that is situated on the first floor.

Mazid Chowdhury, managing director of the fast food company, said the garment workers came out to the street seeing the plumes of smoke.

The garment workers and locals managed to douse the fire after an hour, said Assistant Sub-inspector Mohammad Zahurul of Kafrul Police Station.

However, no casualty was reported, police said.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Shahabuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, popularly known as Komu Miah, passed away at his home in Feni on July 4 at the age of 95, says a press release.

Shahabuddin, an honest and upright person, served the people throughout his life. He was a member of food committee in 1944. He was elected chairman of union council in mid-fifties and continued in that position till 1984 when he became the chairman of Feni upazila.

He was also the director of Shamsuddin Towels Limited, Feni Cold Storage Limited and SA Chowdhury and Brothers Limited in Feni.

He left behind sons, daughters, grandchildren and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

Today is the first death anniversary of Abdur Rahim of Deputy Bari in Dagonbhuiyan.

Feni, says a press release. He retired as joint secretary in 1985. He was posted as controller, Department of Printing, Stationery, Forms & Publication, after independence. He also served as joint secretary at the Ministry of Information and Parliament Secretariat.

A doa mahfil will be held at his village home in Dagonbhuiyan on July 17.

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