

Take care of migrant workers, help explore new job markets

Minister tells labour attachés

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Minister for Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday asked the labour attachés in Bangladesh missions abroad to take care of migrant workers proactively and help explore new overseas job markets.

"The expatriate workers face multifaceted difficulties abroad starting from language, food, culture. Everything goes against them. But a little support from you can give them strength to face new challenges," he told the labour attachés at the inaugural session of a training programme.

The 3-day training for labour attachés has been organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (Unifem) at The Westin Hotel in the city.

Thirteen labour attachés of Bangladesh missions in the Middle East and South East Asian countries are attending the programme.

Stating that the expatriate workers, who

make enormous contributions to the country's economy, face difficulties in every process of migration, Mosharraf said labour officials are the only men to look after the migrants who often do not get adequate wage and work extra hours to make up their cost.

Addressing the session as chief guest, the minister called upon the officials to be careful in checking the genuineness of overseas job orders and the wages the employers are offering.

"The cost will decrease tremendously if these issues are checked carefully," he said, asking the labour attachés to look for new jobs where "we can prepare our people, but in no way labour welfare side should be neglected."

The minister also told them to give special attention to female migrant workers.

"As soon as they arrive in a foreign land, you receive them, give them a mobile number telling that they could contact them for any problem," he added.

Secretary to expatriates' welfare ministry Elias Ahmed said, "You might not feel very comfortable while talking to workers,

but keep in mind that they are the ones who are working hard and sending home money. You should be proactive to listen to their problems, instead of trying to solve after any problem arises."

IOM Regional Representative for South Asia Rabab Fatima said the three-day training programme will be utilised to review the resources, tools and mandate available to labour attachés in discharging their responsibilities efficiently.

"Keeping in mind the benefits that international migration has to offer, we owe to migrant workers to provide them with services that make their migration experience orderly and beneficial," she said.

Around 6.5 million Bangladeshi expatriates sent home \$9.01 billion last year, which is over \$7 billion as of September this year.

Labour migration last year was around 8.75 lakh, but the number decreased by 47 percent until this year compared to the corresponding period of last year mainly due to global recession.

Unifem Bangladesh's National Programme Manager Naheed Ahmed also spoke.



BIWTA workers demolish makeshift structures from the west foreshore of the river Shitalakha under Kanchpur Bridge in Narayanganj during an eviction drive yesterday. (Story on Page 16)

TESTIMONY OF SIXTY

War museum seeks int'l help in war crimes trial

DU CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Museum made an appeal to the international community as well as super-powers yesterday for their cooperation and support in trying the war criminals.

The museum would send 'Testimony of Sixty' to the heads of the governments in different countries, the authorities declared this at a press briefing at the museum in the city yesterday.

In October 1971, sixty prominent personalities of the world, including the US Senator Edward Kennedy and Mother Teresa, took position by their speeches against the genocides conducted by the Pakistani army during the

Liberation War and it is known as the 'Testimony of Sixty'.

On October 21, 1971, the 'Testimony of Sixty' was handed over to the heads of all governments and states seeking their cooperation against the ongoing genocide by the Pakistani army during the liberation war.

The authorities said the initiative was taken to commemorate the day as well as to seek cooperation from the international community in order to facilitate the trial process.

The Testimony of Sixty would also be handed over to the global leaders at the UN Headquarters in New York, they added.

Noted actor and a trustee of the museum Aly Zaker at the briefing said the testimony would be placed to expedite the trial process.

"It [trial of war criminals] would not be questioned if the world community stays with us," he added.

Members of the trustee board would submit the 'Testimony of Sixty' to the embassies of different countries in Dhaka, including the US, Russia and French.

Speakers at the briefing also called on the government to start a proper investigation into the war crimes.

Museum trustees Dr Sarwar Ali, Rabiul Hussain, Ziauddin Tariq and Akku Chowdhury were present.

'Elections to local govt bodies after flawless voter list'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Election Commissioner (EC) Brig Gen (retd) M Shakhawat Hossain yesterday said elections to local government bodies, including Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), would be held after the fresh voter list is made correct and free of faults.

He hoped the CCC election would be held by June next, saying that the time is sufficient to finalise the voter list after completing all processes.

Enlistment of unusually increased number of voters raised doubts about the clarity of the ongoing fresh voter listing processes in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong, he added.

Shakhawat said this after inaugurating a workshop on 'Promoting electoral system' at LGRD auditorium at Sholoshahar in the port city.

As per the statistics of Election Commission, number of new voters usually increases by five percent during the update on voter listing, he noted.

But, over 10 percent increase in voters in the fresh voter listing at several bordering upazilas in Cox's Bazar raised doubts. Around 30 percent of this unusual number of increased voters was reported as Rohingyas.

At the same time, increase of voters ranged between 22 and 25 percent in several wards under CCC, raising suspicion of enlisting double or fake voters, observed the EC.

He said negligence by numerators engaged in field data collection might have created a scope for Rohingyas to enlist them as voters.

Besides, undue political pressure also might be a reason behind such excessive enlisting there, said the EC, calling on the election officials to remain alert to this matter.

He mentioned that Election Commission halted the voter listing process and formed a committee to examine the newly prepared voter list in Cox's Bazar.

If any of the election personnel is found involved in enlisting Rohingyas or fake voters, he or she must face stern punitive action, he warned.

Chittagong Divisional Election Commission MAN Siddique presided over the workshop.

One killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

One person was killed and two others were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Barisal highway at Pantapara village under Kalkini upazila in Madaripur on Monday night.

The dead was identified as Riton Khan, 32, a cloth traders of Madaripur Puran Market.

Source said the accident occurred at 9:00pm while a Barisal-bound microbus collided head-on with a motorbike, which left motorbike rider Riton and two others injured.

Riton succumbed to his injuries on his way to Faridpur Medical College Hospital. The body was sent to the hospital morgue for autopsy.

Blind using computers now a reality

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visually impaired students of Baptist Mission Integrated School (BMIS) at Mirpur yesterday proved that the blind using computers is no longer a fantasy.

At a workshop held at the BMIS campus, they demonstrated their skills with Screen Reading Software designed for the blind and the short-sighted.

The workshop titled 'Introduction to computer literacy for people who are blind or visually impaired' was organised under the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Reform project of International Labour Organisation and the Bangladesh government and funded by the European Commission.

Speakers at the workshop

said making ICT accessible to the blind or shortsighted people can help empower them and lead them to meaningful employment opportunities instead of just living a life of neglect.

It can also help them be informed and share information, they added.

Stewart Hamling, a blind IT expert from Australia, conducted the workshop.

He introduced the Screen Reading Software to the blind BMIS students, teachers and representatives from organisations working with the blind.

Hamling, who is an IT change coordinator for an electricity generating company in Australia, said, "Visually impaired people can realistically leverage these technologies to help achieve important goals in life. It also enables communication between the

visually impaired."

At the inaugural ceremony of the workshop, Stefan Frowein, EC Ambassador to Bangladesh, said blind students can turn their lives around through training like any other able person.

This workshop is aimed at raising awareness about the potentiality they have to offer.

Computer training will improve their general education by enabling them to easily access documents, books, newspapers, internet and educational programmes, he added.

Arthur Shears, chief technical adviser, TVET Project, Ross Alam Hattori, skills training for under-privileged adviser, TVET, Harunur Rashid, programme officer of TVET, and Sylvia Santosree Mazumder, principal of BMIS, also spoke on the occasion.

CATTLE MARKETS

Khoka makes apology to High Court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka yesterday apologised to the High Court (HC) for violating its directives regarding the cattle markets before the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

In an affidavit submitted to the court, the mayor stated that his office will not allow any cattle market on open places or streets in Dhaka before the Eid-ul-Azha as per the court directives.

On June 29 this year, the HC in a judgement directed the DCC not to allow any cattle market on open places or streets in Dhaka before the Eid-ul-Azha and to take steps to dispose of the remains of sacrificial animals within 24 hours after these are slaughtered.

The court also asked the DCC mayor to submit a report on the implementation of its directives by October 11 this year.

As the mayor did not submit any report by the stipulated period to the court, Advocate Asaduzzaman Siddiqui, on behalf of Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), filed the contempt of court petition with the court against Khoka on October 14.

After hearing the contempt petition, the HC bench of Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury yesterday fixed Wednesday for order on the petition.

Advocate Manzill Murshid appeared for HRPB while Dr Kazi Akther Hamid stood for DCC mayor.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Reza-E-Sattar Faruk, a freedom fighter, passed away due to heart disease at Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital in the city on Monday night at the age of 62.

He left behind his mother, wife, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at Barisal Muslim graveyard with state honour.

Ashraf Girani

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Ashraf Girani, a freedom fighter in Tangail and agriculture secretary of the central committee of Jatiya Party (Ershad), passed away due to cardiac arrest at his relative's residence at Polasholti in Tangail town early yesterday in the age of 65.

He was buried with state honour at his family graveyard at Gourangi village under Ghatail upazila.

Rafiqul Islam Shishu, former senior vice president of Sylhet city unit of BNP, passed away due to ailment on Monday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Dakshin Surma.

Domestic help found dead at Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police recovered the body of a teenage girl at Mohonganj under Bagmara upazila yesterday noon, some 12 hours after her death as locals forced the law enforcers to do so, alleging that she was tortured to death.

The victim identified as Kulsum Khatun alias Sathi, 20, of Mirzakhal village in Bholia.

Police said the body was sent to Rajshahi Medical College/morgue for autopsy.

Brought to Bagmara as a domestic help for a house of one Mojibor Rahman at Mohonganj, the girl was reportedly being used as a sex worker, villagers said.

Officer-in-Charge of Bagmara Police Station Harunur Rashid said Sathi was taken to Rajshahi city on Monday morning as she was suffering from excessive bleeding and jaundice. As she died there, her body was taken to Bagmara again.

As the house owner attempted to take away the victim's body in the dark of the night from the house again without informing the police, the locals laid siege to the house.

The villagers guarded the body whole night until police

reached the spot around 12 noon yesterday and recovered the body.

Locals said sex workers have been using the house for long.

Mohonganj UP chairman Harunur Rashid alleged that, "We informed the police on that night, but they came 12 hours later."

"We did not respond as it was not possible for us to examine the body in the dark of night at the remote village," said the OC.

Quoting the inquest report, the OC said no signs of torture were found on the body.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the first death anniversary of Md Abdul Hossain, former headmaster of Maghbazar T&T High School in the city, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Goyhata of Nagarpur in Tangail.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the function.



PHOTO COURTESY: GlaxoSmithKline Bangladesh and Mutual Food Products Ltd. bring out a colourful procession at Konabari in Gazipur on the occasion of World Food Day on October 16.

Rafiqul Islam Shishu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rafiqul Islam Shishu, former senior vice president of Sylhet city unit of BNP, passed away due to ailment on Monday at the age of 70.

He left behind his wife, son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard in Dakshin Surma.

Dhaka YMCA executives

METRO DESK

Dissemination of Chinese language in Bangladesh can further strengthen Dhaka-Beijing ties, said Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Xianyi while opening a five-day Chinese Film Show in the city yesterday, says a press release.

On the occasion of the 60th

anniversary of the People's Republic of China and as a prelude to the kick-start of the Chinese language courses, the CRI-SMF Confucius Classroom organised the show.

Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Shamsul Haq presided over the function.