

FRAUDS BY RECRUITING AGENTS Families of migrants are worst sufferers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of migrant workers are the worst sufferers of recruiting agents' fraudulent activities such as providing fake travel and work documents, giving false hope of better jobs and misappropriating money, speakers at a national dialogue said yesterday.

Such frauds must be stopped to ensure safe migration, said Industries Minister Dilip Barua as the chief guest at the dialogue organised by the Centre for Development Dialogue (CDD) in the city.

There are many families who have lost their lands, money and social capital to frauds by middlemen or dishonest agents, he said.

The dialogue titled 'Impact of migration on families' was organised to mark the International Day of Families, which will be celebrated worldwide on May 15.

At the programme, Kazi Ali Reza, officer-in-charge of the United Nations Information Centre (Dhaka), read out a message of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Ban Ki-moon called on the governments to implement policies that help migrants adapt and prosper in their host countries.

He also called for ratifying and implementing the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of Migrants Workers and Members of their Families.

"Despite its many benefits, migration also places heavy burdens on family members. Migrants can face harsh living conditions, discriminations and low wages. They often lack safety nets and suffer disproportionately in terms of economic hardship."

CDD Chairperson Mirza Tarequl Qader, Secretary General SM Murshed and Vice-Chairperson Sakila Matin Mridula and Dr Naznin Akhter of BIDS also spoke.

Meanwhile, the United Nations Information Centre in Dhaka, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP) jointly organised a seminar on 'Challenges to the security of the human family' at WVA auditorium to mark the Day.

Prof Yusuf terms Liberation War 'civil war'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Describing the Liberation War of 1971 as a 'civil war', former vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University (RU) Prof Dr Yusuf Ali said a huge loss of lives is common in a civil war.

He also raised question about the war crimes trial and said the trial of war criminals had been completed a long time ago.

"So, what is this trial for?" he said, adding: "The issue of war criminals is threatening the unity and integrity of the nation."

Dr Yusuf made the remarks at the first national council of Bangladesh Biswabiddalaya Shikkhak Parishad (BBSPP), a platform of teachers of public and private universities, at Biam auditorium in the city.

The former VC also alleged that lakhs of people were killed, many were raped and robbery and looting had taken place after independence when peace was prevailing in the country.

Those who destroyed peace after independence must stand trial, he said, adding: "We will hold trial of them when our government comes to power."

Former chief justice Syed JR Modasser Hossain, former DU VC Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, columnist Mahfuz Ullah, journalist Shafiq Rehmaan, Manarat International University VC Prof Dr Mohammad Abdur Rab and Dhaka University Professors Dr Kamal Hossain Chowdhury, Dr Umme Kulsum Rowzatur Rommana and Dr Aminur Rahman Majumder also spoke.

Tagore train to arrive in August

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A special train from India, launched to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Nobel Laureate poet Rabindranath Tagore, will travel across Bangladesh in August after touring Indian cities.

The train Sanskriti Express comprises five coaches, with each one showcasing the life and works of Tagore in the field of literature, music, dance and art, a senior Indian Railway Ministry official said.

The train, flagged off by India's Railway Minister Mamata Banerjee, began its pan-India journey on May 9.

It will enter Bangladesh on August 6 and return from Dhaka on 23 of the same month covering more than 40 stations after its yearlong travel across the two countries.

During its fortnight tour in Bangladesh, it will travel to important cities connected with broad gauge line including the capital Dhaka.

"The train would halt at the stations for a few days giving the young and the old a chance to know about the rich legacy left by Tagore for the posterity," an Indian Railway official said.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL A section shows support to war criminals

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Science and ICT Yeafesh Osman yesterday said two different sides have cropped up over the issue of the war crimes trial where a group is showing support to the criminals.

He was addressing a meeting to commemorate eminent litterateur Shaukat Osman's 12th death anniversary organised by Shaukat Osman Smriti Parishad at Liberation War Museum in the city.

Yeafesh Osman, son of Shaukat Osman, said his father's knowledge and interest in politics were reflected in his writing, which made him a unique breed of litterateur.

Other speakers at the meeting said many litterateurs like turtles in times of political oppressions and military reigns, but Shaukat Osman was not one of them.

His writings predominantly highlight messages against fundamentalism and chronicle tales of the oppressed. After Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated, he was the only litterateur to raise voice against the murderers, the discussants said.

Director General of Bangla Academy Dr Shamsuzzaman Khan chaired the meeting. Eminent artists Rafiqun Nabi and Hashem Khan, Dr Syed Anwar Hossain, writer Andaleeb Rashedi and cultural personality Bulbul Mahlanbish spoke at the meeting.



Nagorik Sanghati forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding permanent rehabilitation of the Aila-hit people.

PHOTO: STAR

5 marine engns forge certificates for job abroad

Investigation reveals

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

A government investigation has found that at least five marine engineers had falsified official certificates to qualify for jobs at both home and abroad.

Officials in the Department of Shipping (DOS) said the engineers had forged their Certificates of Competency (COC) to get jobs at Marine Service Co. Ltd., a Saudi Arabia-based shipping company.

A source involved with the investigation said the engineers apparently colluded with some 'corrupt' officials in the department who helped to falsify the signatures of the director general and the chief examiner.

He said a number of engineers might be working in foreign shipping companies based on similar false certificates.

The investigation began after the Saudi Arabian company sent three e-mails to the department to verify that the five engineers indeed were legitimate. The first two e-mails were ignored, but the third, sent in January, went directly to the DG, who then ordered the probe.

It revealed that the five engineers did not participate in competency evaluation examination, which concludes four years of study at the Marine Academy in Chittagong. The exam is required to make sure the seaman can operate and maintain engines and other major equipment on a ship.

The five were identified as Nazmul Hassan Bhuiyan (class 2 engineer officer); Md Nazmul Hasan (class 3 engineer officer); Sheikh Mohammad Moorsalin (class 2 deck officer);

Saiful Islam Rasel (Class 2 deck officer); and Mizanur Rahman (class 3 deck officer). Department officials aren't sure whether the names were real of fakes, the investigation source said.

In addition to the five, another fake certificate holder was identified on March 30 at the Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) in Chittagong. He worked in a foreign ship for one and half years and a Bangladesh ship called the 'Banglar Robi' for three months. After it was discovered that his certificate had been faked, the engineer managed to flee from the ship, said an officer of the ship.

According to the 1983 Merchant Shipping Ordinance, anyone caught falsifying a COC can face up to two years of prison and a fine of Tk 10,000.

"Whenever the authorities of any foreign companies demand authentication from us, we investigate it," said Bazlur Rahman, director general of the Department of Shipping. His signature wasn't forged on the certificates in question but that of his predecessor.

Rahman admitted that a syndicate within the department might be assisting engineers in obtaining falsified certificates. He said legal action would be taken against the department insiders once they were identified. To avoid such falsification in future, all information and documents of seafarers certified by the department will be digitised, he added.

Rahman also said there's a demand for Bangladeshi marine engineers around the world, but foreign companies may lose interest if such corruption becomes widely known.

'Launch movement for women's political empowerment'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists yesterday said it is time to launch movement to achieve women's political empowerment.

Women have made significant contribution to all movements in the country since the anti-British movement, they said at the third National Convention of 'Bikoshito Nari Network' that ended at the LGED Bhaban auditorium in the city yesterday.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury said women have been contributing greatly to agriculture and household chores. But they do not receive any financial recognition for their work.

The government is working to give financial recognition to their work, she added.

The government is also working to ensure that the laws are enforced properly to protect women from violence, said the state minister.

Salma Khan, chairperson of Women for Women, said women of Bangladesh are the best managers in the world, because they can properly manage their families by tackling poverty and hunger.

Sultana Kamal, former adviser to the caretaker government, Rokeya Sultana, secretary of Rural Development and Cooperative Department, and Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, country director of The Hunger Project, also spoke.

Call to ensure rights of physically challenged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although Bangladesh has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the government is yet to ensure their rights due to lack of coordination among different ministries.

Speakers said this at a discussion styled 'Implementation of United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: The role of media' organised by Access Bangladesh Foundation in association with Disability Rights Fund at Biam auditorium in the city on Thursday.

They said the government has taken different initiatives for the welfare of the people with disabilities but a number of their vital rights remain far from implementation.

Former caretaker government adviser CM Shafi Sami presided over the meeting.

Addressing the discussion as chief guest, Editor of the daily Samakal Golam Sarwar stressed the

need for creating social awareness for implementation of all the rights of physically challenged.

"We'll not get fruit through only formulation of laws. Rather we must emphasise creating social awareness for the implementation of the rights," he said.

Sarwar called upon people to change their negative attitudes towards the physically challenged people.

Presenting the keynote paper, Access Bangladesh Advocacy Officer Hasbullah placed some recommendations for the media men to help implement the rights of the disabled.

The recommendations include publishing the rights of physically challenged people with much priority, producing films and dramas focusing the rights for the betterment of people with disabilities.

Access Bangladesh Foundation Executive Director Albert Mollah moderated the meeting while its Chairperson CM Tofail Sami and theatre personality Kazi Rozi were present.

50 injured in Akhaura clash

UNB, Brahmanbaria

At least 50 people, including an additional police super and a journalist, were injured during a clash between two groups of people in Akhaura town yesterday.

The clash between rivals, over a long-standing dispute over possession of a govern-

ment land, started at 9:45am and continued well after 12:45pm.

Traffic remained suspended on both the sides of Dhaka-Akhaura-Agartala international highway for over two and half hours during the clash.

Police resorted to indiscriminate baton charge and fired 21 rounds of blank shot from shotguns to bring the situation under control.



Relatives of Bazlur Rahman, a former UP chairman in Barisal, wail after he died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital following a road accident yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

Doctors to stage sit-in today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka city units of three organisations of doctors yesterday jointly will stage a two-hour sit-in programme today at Central Shaheed Minar in protest against the abduction of a doctor.

A number of doctors told The Daily Star last night that Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Bangladesh Society of Medicine (BCM) and Association of Physician of Bangladesh (APB) jointly announced the programme that would start at 10:00am.

Prof Dr Mujibar Rahman of Suhrawardi Medical College Hospital said they called the programme after a retired teacher of Dhaka Medical College was abducted from his Dhanmondi chamber on May 9 by a gang of criminals.

He said the criminals took the retired doctor to Dhaka University campus where they beat him up mercilessly and threatened to kill him unless he pays them Tk 10 lakh as extortion.



Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Kushtia and Comilla in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Prevailing mild to moderate heat wave sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Faridpur, Majidpur, Rajshahi, Ishwardi and Patuakhali may continue.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:34pm today and rises at 5:16pm tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 39.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 19.4 degrees Celsius at Sylhet.

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 | 36.0 | 29.4 | 74 | 67 |
| Chittagong | 33.1 | 27.5 | 72 | 69 |
| Rajshahi | 39.0 | 28.4 | 77 | 73 |
| Khulna | 37.0 | 28.6 | 78 | 70 |
| Barisal | 35.2 | 27.8 | 74 | 64 |
| Sylhet | 30.4 | 19.4 | 81 | 74 |
| Cox's Bazar | 35.8 | 28.5 | 62 | 58 |

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