

Govt moves to enter manpower business

Decides to force recruiting agencies to reduce exorbitant costs for labour migration

PORIMOL PALMA

The government itself will send manpower abroad from now on alongside private recruiting agencies, to reduce excessive cost of labour migration. "The decision comes as previous efforts for reducing labour migration cost have been unsuccessful," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan told The Daily Star. The move is also expected to alleviate cost related plethora of harassment of overseas job seekers including the immense pressure on them for recovering investments, by creating a healthy competition between private and public agencies in the sector.

A jobseeker now spends on an average Tk 2 lakh for a job in Malaysia, and the Middle Eastern countries; and Tk 4 lakh for jobs in Singapore, although the government fixed rate is only Tk 84,000, said migrant workers and government officials. A study of a Malaysian migrant rights group, Tenaganita, says recruiting agencies had to spend Tk 1 lakh on an average to arrange a job for a Bangladeshi worker in Malaysia between 2006 and 2009. Currently the country has an embargo on Bangladeshi workers. The unofficial statistics shows, private recruiting agencies are charging fees two to five times higher than the fees fixed by the government. According to the Bureau of Manpower

Employment and Training (BMET), the number of Bangladeshis gone abroad for jobs was 8.32 lakh in 2007, 8.75 lakh in 2008, and 4.75 lakh in 2009. In the first four months of this year the number was 1,34,787. Migrant workers sent home around \$10 billion annually in the last three years. The government already instructed Bangladesh's labour councillors in its foreign missions to arrange work orders for jobseekers who will migrate under government management, said Zafar Ahmed Khan. The workers will be trained and sent abroad at a minimum cost, he said adding, "We expect this will create a healthy competition in the sector."

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Cops to go tough on pickets

Says DMP commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police would go tough on pickets if they force people to observe tomorrow's hartal, said Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque yesterday. BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia announced the strike at a grand rally in the capital on May 19 protesting tender-grabbing and extortions by ruling party men and demanding solution of water, gas, and electricity crises, resignation of the Election Commission, and cancellation of the treaties signed recently with India. Police would not allow

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Khaleda warns govt against excesses during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday warned the government not to do anything that may worsen the situation during the party's hartal tomorrow. Reading out a statement at a press briefing at her Gulshan office, she asked the ruling Awami League not to "unleash armed cadres on streets in the name of any counter-programme". The leader of the opposition urged people to observe the dawn-to-dusk hartal, which she termed a "note of caution" to the government. "I'm calling on all to register their protest against the government's misrule by keeping off work for a few hours." Khaleda asked the administration and police to ensure the law enforcers do no excesses during the hartal. She said they have called the hartal to protect people's rights and protest the misrule of this government.

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AL urges Khaleda to call off hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League yesterday urged BNP to withdraw tomorrow's hartal, saying the current situation in the country does not warrant one. It however said it would not take to the streets to resist the general strike by the main opposition party. "I urge the opposition leader to withdraw the hartal," AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said. "Hartal should be the last resort to wage a democratic movement. The situation at present is not like one for which a hartal should be called." Referring to the reasons BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia stated in favour of hartal, the

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Reasons why BNP chooses streets

REZAUL KARIM

BNP opted for street agitation as it feels it failed in its secret bid to reach an understanding with the government that the latter would not make a move on Khaleda Zia's Cantonment house, and would withdraw the cases against the party chairperson and her two sons. A highly placed BNP source told The Daily Star, on condition of anonymity, that his party had offered to refrain from street agitation in exchange for an assurance from ruling Awami League that the government would withdraw the "false" cases. Soon after AL came to power in January last year, BNP said it would not announce hartals, and blockades.

AL's initial response was positive, indicating that it would not embark on tough actions against Khaleda and her family -- if BNP refrained from street protests, and from bringing Tarique Koko back to the country and politics. The ruling party's expectations echoed the expectations of some European countries that also had been asking BNP to keep a distance from Jamaat, and to refrain from trying to bring back Tarique Rahman into politics because of his tainted image. Accordingly, till a few months back, BNP maintained a distance from Jamaat, and refrained from harsh criticism against the government, and street agitations. The "friendly" gesture faced its first major blow in April last year, when the

cabinet decided to cancel the lease of Khaleda's Cantonment house on grounds of a faulty lease. The government took the decision against the backdrop of the Pilkhana tragedy, as it had information that Khaleda was secretly meeting army officers in her residence right after the mutiny. After some initial war of words between the two parties, BNP renewed its demand that the ruling party should not harass Khaleda over her Cantonment house. Soon both parties again developed an understanding on the matter. The issue of the Cantonment house went to the court, and it did not proceed further.

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Two companies occupy and fill a section of the Buriganga near Kamrangirchar in the capital despite the government's attempt to prevent illegal occupation of water bodies.



A SCORELESS SCRAP: Brazil defender Daniel Alves (C) stretches to keep the ball from Portugal winger Simao and defender Fabio Coentrao (R) during their Group G encounter at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Dour draw sees Brazil, Portugal thru'

AFP, Durban

Portugal qualified for the second round of the World Cup after battling to an ill-tempered 0-0 draw with five-time champions Brazil in their final Group G game on Friday. In a match that was hyped as a potential showcase for the "beautiful game", there was not much samba on display with seven yellow cards brandished in the first-half alone and only a handful of decent attempts on goal. Brazil, who had already qualified for the last 16 after wins over North Korea and Ivory Coast, dominated possession and looked extremely solid at the back while Portugal looked over-reliant on captain Cristiano Ronaldo up front. Portugal, on a run of 17 matches without defeat, needed a draw to guarantee going through to the next round ahead of Ivory Coast and arguably had the best chance of a winner in the 60th minute. A storming run by Ronaldo had Lucio in all kinds of problems and the Brazil skipper was forced into clearing the ball across his own six-yard box into the path of Raul Meireles. But the Porto midfielder's close-range dink was tipped around the corner by Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar.

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MATCH UPDATE
PORTUGAL 0 - 0 BRAZIL
NORTH KOREA 0 - 3 IVORY COAST
CHILE 1 - 2 SPAIN
SWITZERLAND 0 - 0 HONDURAS

Brazil dominated possession and wasted two excellent chances through Nilmar and Luis Fabiano in the first-half. In the 30th minute, Nilmar got in at the back post to direct a Fabiano cross at Portugal goalkeeper Eduardo, who did well to turn the ball onto the post and safety. Fabiano then fluffed a header nine minutes later, getting too much contact on a downward header which bounced wide from a deep Maicon cross. The industrious Dani Alves had the first attempt of the game, striking a 25-yard shot just wide after a good through ball from Julio Baptista, starting in place of suspended Brazilian playmaker Kaka. The Portuguese had to wait until the 14th minute to even get close to the Brazilian goal, Duda just failing to latch on to a good cross from Fabio Coentrao, who had the run of the left wing early on. The South Americans were seemingly happy to sit back and control the ball in the second period, under no real pressure from a muted Portugal attack. Ronaldo had an early free-kick deflected wide by Pepe and

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Indo-Bangla 'border haats' in northeast soon

BSS, New Delhi

India and Bangladesh will soon set up haats (markets) along their borders in the northeast to boost local business and trade, officials said in Agartala. The haats would be operated within 1.5 km radius of both sides of the border under close supervision of the border guards and customs officials of both the countries. Two border haats would be set up along the Indo-Bangla border in Meghalaya while eight such haats would be established along Tripura's border with Bangladesh, senior officials and traders said at a conference on India-Bangladesh trade, media reported recently. "The first border haat is expected to be opened in the next two months along the Meghalaya border in West Garo Hills," said India-Bangladesh Chamber of

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Second Dhaka-Ctg highway in limbo

\$4.3b project fails to find capable bidder

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Construction of the second Dhaka-Chittagong highway faces new dilemma as the government has yet again failed to find capable firms for the \$4.3 billion project, say officials of Roads and Highways Department (RHD). Two firms -- Soma JV of India and Sino Global Enterprise JV of China -- submitted bids in response to the government's pre-qualification tender in January, but an evaluation committee has recently found both incapable. This was the second time in four years that the government failed to find a suitable firm or investors to build the second highway, meaning implementation of the project will be further delayed. The delay will increase pressures on the narrow highway between Dhaka and the port city, eating up extra time and fuel, and causing more accidents. Earlier in 2006, Malaysia-based Azimat Consortium submitted a bid to construct the 215-kilometre second highway. But it remained shelved since then as the rules don't allow the government to award the job to any firm if there

is only one bidder. "We can't select firms that are not capable of implementing such a major project. We are desperately looking for suitable firms," Project Director Md Mafizul Islam told The Daily Star. Meanwhile, the government has decided to build the second highway in public-private partnership (PPP) due to financial constraints. Some RHD officials, however, say attracting private investors will not be easy since the PPP idea is disappointing in construction sector. Mafizul said they are going to float fresh tenders for both request for proposal (RFP) and pre-qualification for the project in 15 days. "We are now preparing documents for that," he added. In fresh tenders, the government will ask the potential firms to submit both the design of the highway and financial estimates in a bid to save time. Communications ministry officials say building the second highway has become essential as the present volume of daily traffic is more than three times the capacity of the existing one. Called lifeline of the country, the highway

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দ্বিগুণের
আমাদের ফান্ডিং এর ছেড়ে আমাদের ছেড়ে দেই কব।
তাই বলে তবুও পাব আমাদের কি কোন দাবিই নেই?
আমাদের তবুও পাব তবুও পাব, কেননা আছে যে? কি কব? এখন?
তবুও পাব তবুও পাব/অসুস্থ/বিস্ময়/ক্যান্সার...
কেন করুন : আর্চি কাম্বার...
৮৮২৬৯৭৮, ০৯২৬৭৭৮৮৮, ০৯২৬৯৯২২২
* প্রতিদিন সকাল ৯টা থেকে সন্ধ্যা ৬টা পর্যন্ত আমাদের আর্চি (স্বদেশের ও স্বদেশের চুক্তি হওয়া)
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