

FROM TODAY DECEMBER 16, 2010

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The Daily Star

in the port city of

CHITTAGONG

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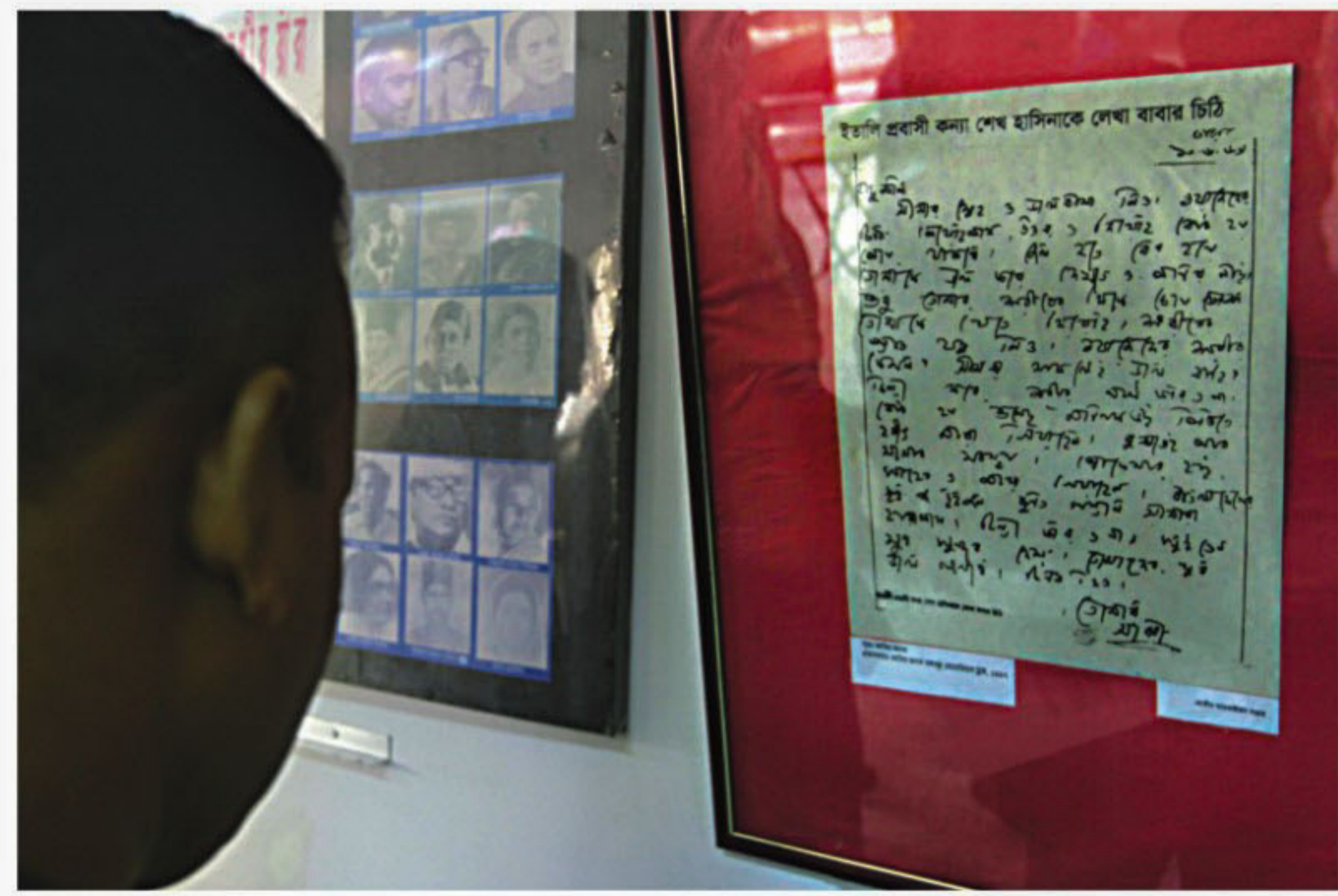
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A visitor looks at a letter, written by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to his daughter and current Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 1969 while she was in Italy, in an exhibition at National Archives Bhaban in the city yesterday. Directorate of Archives and Libraries arranged the event.

PHOTO: STAR



MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

Ratification of UN convention on cards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government would soon ratify the UN convention on migrant workers to ensure rights of the expatriate Bangladeshis, said Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday.

"The law ministry has already given its opinion about the convention. Its ratification is now awaiting the cabinet nod," he told a discussion on the UN convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families.

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in association with Migrants Forum in Asia and Sussex University of UK organised the programme ahead of the International Migrants Day on December 18.

The minister said ratifying the convention will help protect the migrants' rights through better regulatory framework in the overseas recruitment process.

So far, 44 countries ratified the convention, which was adopted by the UN in 1990 and came to effect in 2003. Bangladesh signed it in 1998.

Brushing aside the notion that ratifying the convention would create obstacles in labour recruitment abroad, Shafique said there is actually no fear of such nature.

"We shall enact necessary laws so that the recruiting agencies do not charge too much money from the outgoing workers and harass them," he said.

Abdelhamid El Jamri, chairperson of the UN committee on the convention on migrant workers, said it is a major tool to protect rights of the migrants.

The phenomena of migration, trafficking

and human trade have increased manifold now, he said, adding that the relevance of the convention has also increased.

Once a country ratifies the convention, it reports to the UN annually. This gives a comprehensive scenario of migration prompting the global body to take appropriate policies to address the problems in this regard, he noted.

Ratifying the UN tool, Bangladesh can benefit a lot, specially by making laws and practicing good migration habits and increasing regional cooperation, Jamri said.

Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan said the government would enact necessary laws after ratification of the UN convention to bring discipline in the overseas recruitment process.

RMMRU Coordinator Dr CR Abrar said the government will be more responsible to ensure migrants' welfare with the ratification of the convention.

RMMRU Chair Dr Tasneem Siddiqui said earlier there has been a lot of hindrance, specially from the recruiting agencies and bureaucracy, in ratifying the convention.

There was a notion that the convention would hamper international labour recruitment, which is not true, she said, adding that this would rather create an atmosphere where recruiting agencies can do better business under a legal framework.

Warbe Development Foundation Chairman Syed Saiful Haque, IMA Research Foundation Coordinator Anisur Rahman Khan, female migrants' association BOMSA Coordinator Sumayia Islam also spoke.

United action to cut child malnutrition stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a campaign yesterday called for united action to combat pervasive child malnutrition in the country.

Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), a year-long communication campaign, was launched at Osmani memorial auditorium in the city.

Health Minister Prof AFM Ruhul Haque inaugurated the campaign that aims to increase awareness in the society and ensure proper feeding practice of children.

Haque said, "The government of Bangladesh would like to prioritise infant nutrition with regards to exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding."

"The period between the birth and successive 24 months provides a critical chance to impact the long-term health and development of children."

Speakers at the event quoted Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS) as saying 41 percent children under the age of five in the country are underweight, 43 percent stunted, and 17 percent wasted for undernourishment.

Prof Fatima Parveen Chowdhury, line director of the Institute of Public Health and Nutrition, presided over the launching session.

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