

VISA CHECKING

Doorstep facilities to cut labour trafficking

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should arrange for checking visa and related information at district level for overseas jobs to control labour trafficking, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They said if the government provides overseas jobseekers with facility for visa checking at their doorsteps, the counts of trafficking would decrease a great deal.

Sudhakar Datta, deputy secretary of the expatriate welfare and overseas employment ministry, said several factors lead people to fall victim to traffickers.

Overseas jobseekers in general are not accustomed to seeking help from government officials, as brokers mislead them although arrangement is in place at every deputy commissioner's office for the jobseekers, he said.

Brokers take the advantage to cheat the jobseekers by providing them with tourist or Umrah visas, said Datta.

Akram Hussain, a trafficking victim from Mirpur, shared his experience

that broker Lokman of the same area took Tk 1.5 lakh from him assuring him of sending to Dubai for three years as a barber.

In 2004, Lokman sent him with a tourist visa to Dubai where he passed a month, most of the days underfed or fasting, said the victim.

"I arranged the money at interest and am incurring interest every month. But Lokman refused to pay the money", he said, adding that Lokman only returned him Tk 20,000.

The speakers said Akram's passport even did not have any visa, but some unscrupulous immigration officers managed his trip.

Dr Kamal Uddin Ahmed, joint secretary (political) of the home ministry, said traffickers most time escape through the loopholes of law, as there is no comprehensive and consolidated law to try them.

Now provisions of around 14 different laws are necessary to try a trafficker, he said, adding that the government is preparing a comprehensive act styled "Anti-trafficking Law",

which is likely to be placed in the next cabinet meeting.

Speaking as the chief guest, Ahmed said, "Apparently, we earn a good amount of foreign currencies every year...but a handsome portion of the money is siphoned off through trafficking".

Deputy Secretary Sudhakar Datta said now a total of 847 recruiting agencies are operating while over one crore people are working abroad.

Licenses of 25 recruiting agencies were canceled last year and 17 licenses this year (till May) due to irregularities, he said.

The deputy secretary added that the government has borrowed US\$40 million to provide a compensation of Tk 50,000 to each returnee worker from Libya.

The roundtable titled "Ensuring safe migration and abating labour trafficking: Role of the media" was jointly organised by Brac, Winrock International, USAID, and BMSF at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday.

Islami Andolan calls hartal July 10

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Islami Andolan Bangladesh, a political party, yesterday announced a countrywide dawn-to-dusk hartal for July 10 for what it said protesting the government move to "drop absolute faith and trust on Allah" from the constitution.

Party Chief Syed Rezaul Karim declared the programme at a press conference at its central office at Paltan in the city.

He also declared three days' demonstration programmes over the issue. On July 4, the party will organise a grand rally at Laldighi Maydan in Chittagong and rallies at Upazilas on July 5 and at district towns on July 7.

Relations with Bangladesh cemented for Hasina govt

Says Indian foreign secretary

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India has said there is "enhanced trust and mutual confidence in its relations with Bangladesh", which have improved significantly with the Sheikh Hasina government assuming power two years ago.

Addressing the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London Monday (June 27), Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao, dwelling on India's relations with its neighbours, said, "With Bangladesh, with which we share the longest border among any of our neighbours, relations have improved significantly over the last two years."

"Our dialogue has yielded benefits for both countries, in a people-centred manner that stresses trade, connectivity, easier transit, development, and the enhancement of mutual security cooperation

against insurgency and terrorism. There is enhanced trust and mutual confidence that oxygenates our relationship", she said.

Rao said India's neighbourhood policy "emphasises the advantages of building networks of inter-connectivity, trade, and investment so that prosperity can be shared and the region can benefit from India's rapid economic growth and rising prosperity".

"We want to create an environment with our neighbours, which enables us to work together to pursue our common objectives of economic development", she added.

She said India has adopted "an asymmetrical and non-reciprocal approach" in strengthening Saarc "where we are willing to go the extra mile in order to strengthen regional cooperation".



Bangladesh Mahila Parishad forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding reinstatement of secularism, a fundamental principle of the 1972 constitution.

PHOTO: STAR

Steel millers demand more security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Auto Re-rolling and Steel Mills Association yesterday urged the police to stop snatching of rod-laden vehicles, theft of steel materials and silent extortion.

The pleas came during a meeting between a delegation of the association and AKM Shahidul Haque, additional inspector general of police (administration), at the police headquarters in the city.

Sheikh Masadul Alam, chairman of the association, led the delegation, according to a statement. Abul Kashem Majumder, secretary general of the association, was also present.

MAUMOON FOUNDATION MEETS NGO LEADERS Issues of poverty, social enterprise discussed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A delegation of Maumoon Foundation of the Maldives held a meeting with a group of non-government organisation (NGO) leaders at the central office of NGO Federation in the city on Tuesday.

The foundation Vice-Chairman Farish Maumoon, son of visiting former president of the Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, and daughter Sonia Maumoon led the delegation.

Wide range of issues including poverty, health, education, safe drinking water, micro-credit, gender and social enterprise were discussed in the backdrop of long grassroots experience of NGOs in Bangladesh, says a press release.

Accompanying Gayoom, the foundation founder, the team evinced keen interest in what they called the innovations, wide and diversified experience and expertise of the NGOs.

They said the foundation would like to explore opportunities of cooperation with the sector and learn from the inner mechanism of the NGOs which make a difference to the lives of the poor.

NGO Federation Chair Dr Muhammad Ibrahim and the chief executives and representatives of leading NGOs including Brac, CAMPE, CMES, RDRS, Dhaka Ahsania Mission, Padakhep, NGO Forum and RIC took part in the discussion lasting about two hours.



Two pedestrians look for shelter while another takes refuge under a tree when the rains began pouring down in the city yesterday noon. The picture was taken from Central Shaheed Minar area.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMI

5-year-old Bangladeshi girl gets Japanese award

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old Bangladeshi girl, Sadia Islam Maisha, was awarded one of the best three of an international children's art competition in Japan, says a press release from the Japanese embassy in Dhaka yesterday.

Another 4-year-old Bangladeshi boy SM Mahfuf-E-Mahbub was awarded President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Award.

More than 22,000 works, including 739 from Bangladesh, from 77 countries and one region were entered in the competition.

Water factory owner jailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday fined Tk 3.5 lakh to the owner and manager of a mineral water producing factory and sentenced its owner to 15 months imprisonment for running the plant without BSTI license.

The court also ordered to forfeit equipment and a pick-up van of the company in favour of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI), says a press release.

The court headed by executive magistrate AHM Anwar Pasha and aided by Rab conducted the drive at Pani Pure Drinking Water in the city's outskirts Turag.

The court sentenced the owner, Mainuddin Hossain Mamun, to one year and three months in jail and fined Tk 2.5 lakh, in default, he has to suffer three months more in jail.

It also fined Tk 1 lakh to Rubel Enam, manager of the factory, in default, he has to serve three-month more in jail.

The court also directed the authorities concerned to file a regular case against Nasiruddin Kushal, another owner of the factory.

Several hundred trees felled at KMC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Several hundred trees were felled over the last seven days to create a new playground within the premises of Khulna Medical College (KMC) despite the existence of large playground in the vicinity.

Mindless felling of trees at a time of countrywide tree plantation campaign has stunned the teachers who could not voice protest fearing reprisal from higher authorities of the institution. Residents of KMC staff quarters planted the trees over the years.

A number of the felled trees and logs were strewn about carelessly in the campus, found this correspondent after visiting the KMC Residential area.

The trees were cut down at the instruction of a few KMC administrative officials who hired woodcutters to make a new 'playground' for their children, said a KMC official requesting anonymity.

Different species of fruit-bearing and tropical trees were felled along with a few old trees in spite of strong protests from various staff and their family members, along with muazzin of the local mosque.

At least sixty percent of those trees bore fruits such as mango, jackfruit, lichi, guava, papaya, lemon and hog-plum, the staff said with a heavy heart.

Sheikh Monirul Islam, chief assistant of KMC office however, said the trees were cut down upon the principal's orders following demands made by third and fourth class employees for a separate playground for their children.

Principal of KMC Dr. Kazi Hamid Asgar, said the existing playground is exclusively meant for students and teachers of KMC and not for its employees' children.

However, he denied having ordered trees to be chopped down.

"I ordered to clear the area by uprooting the shrubs and thickets only," he said.

MAITREE EXPRESS Schedule refixed

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The schedule of Dhaka-Kolkata direct train "Maitree Express" has been revised with effect from July 1 in response to popular demand in Bangladesh, says an announcement of Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

The train will now start from Dhaka on Wednesdays and Fridays and will depart from Kolkata on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The time for Customs and Immigration checks on the Indian side will be reduced by half-hour in each direction from July 1, said the announcement received yesterday.

As per the new schedule, the train will depart from Dhaka Cantonment on every Wednesday and Friday at 8:10am (BST). It will reach Darsana at 1:50pm (BST) and Kolkata at 6:10pm (IST).

The train will depart from Kolkata at 7:10am (IST) on Tuesdays and Saturdays and arrive at Dhaka Cantonment at 6:05pm (BST).

1st Ever Exclusive Day-long Boot Camp on

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Facilitator:



Mr. Nitin E Shende, PMP® (PMI-USA), QPMP (IPMA-D), DBM (ICS, UK), Qualified (ISO) Lead Auditor & Vice President, Global Project Management and Strategic Business Process Consultancy and Training Services, Vinsys IT Services (Pvt.) Ltd. India.

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Registration Fees:

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Registration Deadline:

Wednesday, July 6, 2011

One to One Consultation by Appointment:

Interested organization which wish to consult with the facilitator are requested to contact at 01713493206.

Contact:
Bangladesh Skill Development Institute (BSDI)
H # 28, R # 12, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi, Dhaka -1209
8110818, 8126324, 01713493206
Email: ad@bsdi-bd.org Web: www.bsdi-bd.org

Jointly Organized By:

