

New KSA

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ate with the Saudi government so that its workers are not made scapegoats of the system.

"The government should study the Saudi programme to act promptly."

However, this is not the first spark of "Saudization".

The Saudi government had already been restricting job transfers of Bangladeshis for the last three years, said officials and expatriates in the oil-rich country.

Foreigners also bear the brunt of employers' failure in paying premiums for social insurance of workers.

"Saudi authorities are not renewing our work permits as our employer has not paid premium for our social insurance," said Fazlur Rahman, a Bangladeshi working at a telecom company in Riyadh.

The company never bothered to pay the premium, he said. As the outstanding amount grew high, the Saudi government blacklisted the firm and stopped renewing their permits.

"I live here with my family. My daughter is scheduled to go to the US for studies, but cannot leave only because my work permit is not being renewed," said Fazlur Rahman.

Fakhru Basher Masum, who has been working there for many years, estimated around 10,000 Bangladeshis are stranded there because of the rule. Around a thousand companies were blacklisted for defaulting on paying premiums.

The foreigners cannot go back home even if they want to return forever. Even if an expatriate dies, the rule prohibits sending the body home. "Why should the foreigners suffer for employers' fault?" he said.

Haroon Or Rashid, first secretary (labour) at Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh, said the rule is in place for long, but not been enforced. Now that Saudi government is strictly enforcing it, the defaulter companies and their foreign workers could be in trouble.

Indian HC

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hotel suit on Wednesday.

In the meeting, Khaleda hoped that people of the both countries will be mutually benefited following the Indian premier's visit.

"Indian high commissioner met the BNP chairperson to invite her for a formal meeting. This is the first time the Indian government has invited the Bangladesh opposition leader to meet their premier," Shamsur Mobin Chowdhury, vice chairman of BNP, told reporters after the meeting.

"...the high commissioner hoped that the visit will make a positive contribution to enhance bilateral relations," he added.

Party's acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir and chairperson's advisers Reaz Rahman and Sabihuddin Ahmed were present in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday at a briefing said the opposition leader and leaders of Awami League led grand alliance will meet Manmohan on Wednesday.

Protocol

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Therefore, tomorrow's summit meeting will instead set the deadline for its signing, the sources add.

A joint working committee will be formed for identifying routes, fixing fees and setting rules for transit.

The issues were discussed at a meeting among the ministries concerned at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

Also yesterday, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni told a press briefing that the two countries will sign a letter of exchange on different protocols on transit during the Indian prime minister's visit.

Mamata's no

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have conveyed her decision to the Indian prime minister's office through the chief secretary of Paschim Banga.

Her decision followed Dhaka's formal announcement of finalising a 15-year interim agreement on Teesta water-sharing to be signed by the water resources ministers of the two countries in Dhaka tomorrow.

It is understood that Mamata has voiced strong reservations about the interim Teesta water-sharing treaty worked out by Dhaka and Delhi.

Indian TV channel Star Ananda said the chief minister objected to reported difference between the draft treaty and the final document which is to be signed during Manmohan's visit.

According to the channel, she felt the treaty would be "detrimental" to the interests of Paschim Banga.

The Teesta is a key river for at least six districts of the northern part of Paschim Banga in matters of irrigation and drinking water.

Contacted, a top official of Bangladesh water resources ministry said Dhaka already got written commitment from Delhi about a fair deal on the Teesta water.

"Her (Mamata's) change of decision about Dhaka visit won't hamper the signing of the treaty," said the official on condition of anonymity.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's international affairs adviser Gowher Rizvi also said Mamata's decision not to visit Dhaka with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh would not affect the outcome of the premier's visit, UNB ads. "Her [Mamata's] concern is not directed at Bangladesh. It is something between West Bengal and New Delhi," he said.

In Delhi, an official of Indian external affairs ministry said the Paschim Banga chief minister was well informed about the content of the pact as she was consulted three times before finalising it.

Indian National Security Adviser Shiv Shankar Menon and Water Resources Secretary Dhruv Vijay Singh met her in Kolkata last week

and apprised her of the treaty on border demarcation, enclave issue and other pacts, he said.

Mamata was due to come to Dhaka to join the chief ministers of four other Indian states -- Manik Sarkar of Tripura, Tarun Gogoi of Assam, Mukul Sangma of Meghalaya and Lal Thanhawla of Mizoram.

Presence of the five chief ministers would demonstrate that the five states are on board with the pacts on exchange of adversely-held enclaves, border demarcation and water-sharing that Bangladesh and India are going to sign during Singh's visit.

Mamata's Trinamool Congress party with 19 Lok Sabha members is the second largest component of the Congress-led ruling UPA.

'We won't give up UN bid' Say Palestinians

AFP, Ramallah

The Palestinians will not be deterred from seeking United Nations membership, a senior official said here yesterday, after reports Washington was trying to head off their bid.

"The Palestinians are going to the UN Security Council to ask for recognition for the state of Palestine on the 1967 borders... and there is no turning back or other choice than than this one," said leading Palestinian official Nabil Shaath.

"There is no alternative to this decision and no going back on it and if the United States vetoes it, we will continue to knock on the door of the UN Security Council seeking full Palestinian UN membership," he told AFP.

The comments from Shaath, a member of the Fatah party led by Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, came after The New York Times reported that Washington was trying to put together a new peace talks proposal that would convince the Palestinians to hold off seeking membership at the United Nations.

3 held after

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Friday evening with head injuries. He was injured earlier on the day after a vehicle hit him from behind in Faridpur town. He died on Saturday afternoon at the hospital.

Family members and friends of Sumon made the complaint when Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque was paying a surprise visit to the hospital on Saturday. The minister assured them of taking action against the doctors if the allegation was proved true.

Minutes after the minister's departure, some friends and relatives of Sumon staged a demonstration inside the hospital in protest against the death. They were also locked into a scuffle with policemen of DMCH police camp.

The police picked up Sumon's friends Ratan and Hanif from the spot and sent them to Shahbagh Police Station.

The police also conducted a raid at the city's

Hazaribagh, where Sumon used to live, early yesterday, and captured Abdul Jalil, another friend of Sumon, said locals. All three friends of Sumon were shown arrested yesterday.

Mozammel Hossain, chief of the DMCH police camp, Saturday night filed a case against 10 people including the three and some 10 to 12 unidentified persons.

Rezaul Karim, officer-in-charge of Shahbag Police Station, said the arrestees were produced in a Dhaka court yesterday seeking a three-day remand.

Meanwhile, the DMCH authorities formed a five-member committee to investigate the allegation of negligence by doctors in giving treatment to Sumon.

The committee led by Prof Hashem Bhuyan of surgery department has to submit a report within 48 hours, said Deputy Director of DMCH Mohammad Jasim Uddin.

No new deal

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legal instrument for such transit protocols.

The foreign minister further said Dhaka and New Delhi will sign an interim agreement on sharing the water of Teesta river on the basis of "equity". However, she would not provide details about the rate of sharing before the deal is signed.

She said Singh's talks with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are expected to take the relations between the two countries to a new height.

"This is going to be a historic visit, important not only for Bangladesh and India but for the region," she said.

The two leaders will sign a framework agreement spelling out a comprehensive long-term cooperation between their nations, Dipu Moni said without providing further details.

Once the framework

agreement is signed the full text will be made public, she said responding to the opposition's concern that the government is secretive about the deals.

She said deals will be signed also on sharing the water of Feni river, demarcation of 6.5-kilometre stretch of un-demarcated common border, and transfer of enclaves and adversely possessed lands.

The two sides will sign MoUs and protocols on extension of railway route from Rohanpur to Singabad, cooperation in the fields of renewable energy and fisheries, cooperation between Dhaka University and Jawaharlal Nehru University, telecast of BTV and Durdarshan programmes in both countries, conservation of the mangrove forest of Sundarbans, and conservation of Royal Bengal Tigers.

Ajit Roy

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of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia in separate messages expressed their condolence at his death.

Zillur in his message said the renowned singer as an artiste of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra had played a remarkable role during the 1971 Liberation War.

Ajit Roy's contribution to the national arts and culture would remain ever memorable in the minds of people, Hasina said.

Khaleda in her message said Roy was not only a singer but also a freedom fighter and teacher.

Roy was a veteran singer and composer of many timeless and patriotic songs including 'Ekti Bangladesh tumi jagroto janotar', 'Aponamney tumishedin'.

The prominent Tagore singer received several awards including Swadhinata Padak (2000), Gunijan Padak, Sraddhanjalipat, Shabdoshainik Padak, Sequence Award (1988) and Begum Rokaya Padak.

He has also rendered playbacks in films including Reporter, Jibon thekey neya, Jaguney puri, Janmabhum, Kothay jano dekhechhi and Kashi.

Born in 1938, Ajit Roy was inspired by the spirit of the language movement and began singing in 1952.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Industries Minister Dilip Barua, among others, expressed their deep condolence at the death of Roy.

Several organisations including Bangladesh Sangeet Parishad, Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigosthi, Bangla Academy, Bangladesh Muktiyoddha Sangsad, Ain o Salish Kendra, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad in separate messages expressed their condolences at his death.

Abul refutes

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work," he said at a press conference at his secretariat office yesterday.

The US cable published by the whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks on August 30 quoted Moriarty labelling Abul Hossain "less than honest" a man in business dealings. Citing the cable, the Bangladeshi media yesterday ran reports on this.

Giving his reaction, Abul Hossain questioned, "What is the barometer of honesty?"

He said he does not understand what "less than honest" means although the media explained it in various ways.

"I strongly suspect whether Moriarty made such a remark about me at all."

Defending himself, the minister said, "I'm an honest and a dedicated man. I'm a proven honest man."

He added that the BNP-led four-party alliance government and the caretaker government did not find any evidence of corruption against him despite repeated investigations.

About the media reports quoting the cable, he said, "The media should have verified with the US embassy in Dhaka as to whether the report was sent by Moriarty."

"Moriarty is still alive. You can ask him if he has said anything like that."

He alleged that the media did not act suitably in this regard. "I'm trying to deliver with efficiency, sincerity and honesty. But reporting without verification of the truthfulness of the US cable was embarrassing for me as well as for the government."

He claimed he communicates all the development-related decisions to the Transparency International to avoid confusion.

Regarding the Padma Bridge project, the minister said tenders for the approach road and the toll plaza on Jajira point were floated.

"Tenders for river training and construction of the main bridge and the approach road and toll plaza on Mawa point are yet to be floated. Work orders for those are yet to be given. Nothing is being done without the verification of local and international experts and concurrence of the World Bank. So, how can there be corruption?"

Fight on for Gaddafi's

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"We are waiting for orders to go into the city," Mahmud Abdelaziz said.

"Last night the Gaddafi forces tried to move out. Our fighters responded and there were some clashes lasting a few minutes."

The new government's interim interior minister Ahmed Darrat told AFP he was confident the town's capture was imminent. "We expect Bani Walid to be freed today or tomorrow," he said.

The deputy chief of the military council in the town of Tarhuna, north of Bani Walid, said a last round of negotiations would be held with tribal leaders to try to secure the peaceful entry of the new government's troops.

"We are waiting for them," Abdulrazzak Naduri told AFP.

On Saturday, a NTC official said Gaddafi's son Saadi was still in Bani Walid, along with other senior figures of the fallen regime, while prominent son Seif al-Islam

had fled the town.

Preparations for the offensive appeared to be well underway even though NTC chairman Mustafa Abdel Jalil said in Benghazi on Saturday that a truce declared until September 10 remained in force.

Civilians who managed to flee Bani Walid said that most of Gaddafi's forces had now fled taking their heavy weaponry with them into the surrounding mountains.

Nato said its warplanes had hit an ammunition storage facility near Bani Walid on Saturday.

Alliance aircraft also hit a barracks, a military police camp and 11 other targets in Gaddafi's hometown Sirte on the Mediterranean coast and carried out bombing raids on two other towns that remain in the hands of Gaddafi forces -- Buwayrat west of Sirte and Hun in the Al-Jufra oasis.

Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini warned against too thorough a purge of Gaddafi appointees in the

Highway turns

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vehicles plying 16 routes in the northern region and five routes in the south-western part, said Sanwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Gorai Highway Police.

Direct road communication between the capital and northern districts was established through the inauguration of Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge and the two-lane highway in 1998.

Further extension of road links between the south-western region and Dhaka via the bridge led to a heavy traffic on the two-lane highway.

A steep rise in traffic on the motorway over the years resulted in higher number of accidents, said observers.

Moreover, violation of traffic rules, reckless driving, exceeding speed limits, overloaded vehicles, carrying passengers on bus roofs and pressing into service unfit vehicles contribute to

the increasing number of accidents on the highway, said officials at the road transport authority office.

Many drivers often flout traffic rules on the highway as the patrol police do not perform their duty properly, alleged a number of locals.

They demanded that the authorities ensure road safety and take stern action against reckless drivers.

Sergeant Mohammad Salahuddin of Elenga Highway Police said most drivers do not know the traffic rules on overtaking other vehicles. Besides, reckless drivers do not lower speed while crossing dangerous curves and battered bridges on the highway.

Khandaker Nazim Uddin, secretary of Tangail district bus owners' association, blamed reckless driving for most of the accidents on the highway.

He said it has become essential to turn the two-

2 robbers beaten

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out of their houses and chased the criminals, reports a correspondent from Feni.

The villagers also made an announcement over the loudspeaker about the robbery from a nearby mosque.

Locals managed to catch three of the robbers near Kazirhat Sluice Gate, some 1.5 km off the village, and beat them severely. The rest of the dacoits, however, managed to flee the scene with booties.

Md Khurshid Alam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Sonagazi Police Station, said the three robbers were rescued and taken to the local upazila health complex where doctors declared two of them--Mamun, 30, and Zahir, 32--dead.

Injured robber Munna was undergoing treatment in the health complex, the OC added.

In another incident of robbery in Sadar upazila of the district, a man was critically injured when a gang of robbers hacked him indiscriminately at Jatrashiddi village.

The gang numbering 14 to 15 entered the house of Siraj Mia after breaking the collapsible gate and took the house members hostage at gunpoint.

They looted cash and gold ornaments worth about Tk 5 lakh and attacked Siraj with sharp weapons as he tried to resist them.

Our Netrakona correspondent reports, one person was killed and five others were bullet hit when a fleeing gang of dacoits sprayed bullets on a group of villagers

chasing them at Adompur village under Khaliyajuri upazila.

Police quoting locals said the gang numbering 12 to 15 entered Adompur village at about 12:30 am with firearms and committed robbery in five houses.

When the locals tried to apprehend them, the robbers fired shots at the villagers, leaving Choyan Das, 24, dead on the spot.

Five villagers, who received bullets in the attack, were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

The gang looted valuables including gold ornaments, cash worth about Tk 10 lakh.

A case was filed with Khaliyajuri Police Station.

Libyan apparatus, pointing to the chaos that had ensued in Iraq when even low-ranking officials of Saddam Hussein's Baath party were stripped of their jobs after the 2003 US-led invasion.

"If somebody used to work for the regime but has no blood on his hands, why destroy all the structure, all the apparatus of Libya like we've done in Iraq, making a big mistake?" he said.

In Iraq, US administrator Paul Bremer's policy of sidelining all Baath party members and dismantling the army put hundreds of thousands of Iraqis on the streets, swelling the ranks of the insurgency.

In fresh revelations from documents obtained by media and rights groups in Tripoli, Britain's Sunday Times said London invited two of Gaddafi's sons to the headquarters of the SAS special forces unit in 2006 as former premier Tony Blair tried to build ties with the Libyan regime.

Charges against

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13 for further hearing on charge framing against the accused.

The adjournment came following a time petition by defence counsel Tajul Islam.

Defence lawyers will place arguments on September 13 as the jail authorities will produce Sayedee before the tribunal.

Starting at 10:40am, the hearing continued till 3:25pm with an hour's lunch break.

During the hearing, Syed Haider Ali said different witnesses had told the war crimes probe agency about Sayedee's involvement in forming Razakar Bahini (an anti-liberation force) in Pirojpur in 1971.

Razakar Bahini led by Sayedee in collaboration with Pakistan army vandalised, looted and burnt down houses, tortured women and killed many in Tangrakhal, Chitholia, Masimpur, Parerhat, Hoglabunia, Nolbungia and other places in Pirojpur from May 4 to December 16, 1971.

His gang of collaborators killed a number of people including Foizur Rahman, the then deputy superintendent of police, and magistrate Saif Mizanur Rahman, after kidnapping them from Masimpur area, and dumped their bodies into the Baleshwar River in May 1971.

Foizur Rahman was the father of eminent writer Prof Humayun Ahmed and educationist Prof Md Zafar Iqbal.

Sayedee-led razakars had forced more than one hundred Hindus to convert to Islam and perform namaz. Many of the community were driven out the country, the prosecutors said.

Dhaka greets

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Airport, the South American giants will head straight to their accommodation at the Ruposhi Bangla hotel and will then hold the standard pre-match press conference at 12:00 pm.

The country will get the first chance to glimpse the South American stars when they gather for the open training session to be held at the Bangabandhu National Stadium at 6:30 pm.

15,000 tickets are up for grabs for the open session and tickets are still available at 40 different outlets in the city, like Nandos, KFC and Helvetia as well as the stadium gate and the BFF Bhaban.

Following the training session in the evening, Argentina will attend an official dinner at the Ruposhi Bangla Hotel for a section of invited guests and officials only.

The South Americans have not scheduled any events for the match-day tomorrow but the main event will kick-off at the Bangabandhu National Stadium from 6pm.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria football team including Chelsea star John Obi Mikel will arrive in the capital today at 11:20 am. The Africans will head straight for their accommodation at the Westin Hotel in Gulshan. They have not scheduled any practice sessions for today but will be part of the official dinner along with the Argentina squad in the evening.

Businesses

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on-arrival visa scheme is introduced, visa should be issued for a year. "There should also be multiple entry opportunities.

"We have talked about the issue with the Indian high commissioner in Bangladesh several times," Azad said adding that the high commissioner gave an assurance of addressing the issue.

He also urged the Bangladesh government to provide the same facility to India.

Amjad Khan Chowdhury, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka said visa complication is the barrier to trade between India and Bangladesh.

Asif Ibrahim, president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said visa-on-arrival facility is important to boost business.

The media brief was organised on the occasion of the two-day visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and chief ministers of India's five north-eastern states-- Assam, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya and West Bengal from tomorrow.