

Canadian visa from Singapore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Canada has shut down its visa services in Bangladesh, people now will have to get visas from Canadian High Commission in Singapore.

The visa office in Singapore will accept all temporary resident applications for those previously serviced by the office in Dhaka, said a notice of Canadian High Commission in Dhaka.

Applicants can also apply for visa through the visa application centres (VACs) in Dhaka, Chitagong and Sylhet, it said.

The temporary resident applications that have already been submitted at the visa office in Dhaka will be processed to completion.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the first death anniversary of Alhaj Mozaffar Ali Talukder, a social worker and ardent supporter of education and officer of food department of the then British government.

On the occasion, a Qurankhwani, doa mahfil, food distribution programme among the orphans will be held after Juma prayers at his residence.

Mozaffar, father of the Daily Jugantor Deputy Editor Alhaj Rafiqul Islam Ratan, was hailing from Kalihati upazila in Tangail.

Mohammad Hanif

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the second death anniversary of advocate Mohammad Hanif, father-in-law of Anwarul Kabir Babul, court correspondent of the daily Jugantor.

On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held at his Fakirapool residence in the capital after Juma prayers, said a press release.



UNFPA representative to Bangladesh Arthur Erken and actress Moushumi inaugurate a bus of Hanif Paribahan, which will carry a sticker calling for safe motherhood, in the capital's Agargaon yesterday. This is part of the UN agency's campaign to circulate the theme of "Motherhood is Unique: Let's Make it Safe".

PHOTO: STAR

Inform people on Rio+20 summit

Say speakers

BSS, Dhaka

Speakers yesterday underscored the need for policymakers and the masses to be more sensitised on sustainable development, green growth and the upcoming Rio+20 summit to achieve a better deal while protecting national interest in global negotiations.

They were addressing a national consultation titled "Sustainable Development, Green Growth and Rio+20: Civil Society Perspective", organised by Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

Eminent environmentalist Dr Atiq A Rahman of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies emphasised the importance of achieving sustainable development across the world.

"The environmental, ecological and economic problems are so challenging that we now urgently require planning for the planet as a whole since no national and regional effort would face this global crisis," he said.

He said inter-generational, intra-generational and international equity have to be ensured while governance, human rights and freedom must be improved to cut back poverty and achieve green growth.

"Green economy should not turn into green businesses of the industrialised rich countries at the expense of the developing countries like Bangladesh," warned Dr Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon.

FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, chairing the consultation, presented a keynote where he traced down the evolution of the concepts of sustainable development and green economy.

He also outlined Bangladesh's preparations for the Rio+20 summit, to be held in Brazil from June 20 to 22, 20 years after the Earth summit was held in Rio in 1992.

Zakir Hosain Khan of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) underscored the need for ensuring transparency and accountability in the use of global climate funds.

DU proctor, cops 'give in to BCL pressure'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Allegedly giving in to political pressure from Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Shahbagh Police Station yesterday freed two youths, who had earlier confessed to snatching a motorcycle, after taking a bond.

The duo are Fuad Alam, former vice-president of Dhaka University unit BCL and an MPhil student of political science department, and Mahtab, a DU master's student of anthropology department and a president aspirant of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall unit BCL.

In complete contrast to his earlier assurance of taking strict action against the two, DU Proctor Prof MA Ali was compelled, under pressure from BCL, to recommend police in freeing the two, said several BCL leaders, requesting anonymity.

Investigation Officer MA Jalil of Shahbagh Police Station said the DU proctor negotiated the matter and got the duo to sign a bond which states that they can attend classes but can not stay in the campus and will be responsible if any such incident occurs again.

"Police faced no political pressure," he said. The two, residents of room 208 of Kabi Jasim Uddin Hall, were detained on Tuesday on charge of mugging a motorcycle three weeks

ago from the campus.

The duo snatched a motorcycle from a first year student, Bijoy, of law faculty on April 10. But Bijoy was able to identify the snatchers at the hall on May 1, said sources.

Afterwards, the DU proctor handed them over to police as they confessed to their crime and recovered the motorcycle with police help.

Some BCL leaders threatened the motorcycle owner with dire consequences if he filed a case against the duo, said the anonymity-seeking leaders.

They said the duo confessed to their involvement with a motorcycle mugging syndicate active on the campus and adjacent areas since the present government came to power in 2009.

Their political affiliation kept them out of the reach of the law, till Tuesday's incident, they added.

The DU proctor said filing a case "will not bring any fruitful outcome". "We are thinking of taking academic action," he added.

Terming the mugging incident "shameful", DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique said the university will take strict action against any student who commits crimes such as snatching motorcycles.

JnU expels 8 students indefinitely

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jagannath University (JnU) authorities yesterday expelled eight students from the university for an indefinite period for their alleged involvement in beating up three teachers and locking them in a room over two hours.

The expelled are Suman and Sahadat of Bangla department, Sanjib and Manik of economics department, Prosanta and Hironmoy of psychology department, and Ataul Gani Emon and SM Zubayer Hossain of Islamic history department.

A three-member probe body headed by JnU Proctor Prof Kamaluddin Ahmed was formed to carry out an investigation into the incident.

Sources said yesterday that the accused students went to the room of Muhammad Mintu Ali Biswas, a teacher of Islamic history and culture, and demanded Tk 10,000 from him.

They also threatened the teacher with blowing the secret news of his "illegal relationship with a female student" if he did not pay them the money, they said.

The sources added that the expelled students locked Biswas in his room when he refused to give the money. The accused also locked in two other teachers of the university over two hours in that room and beat them up as they came to save their colleague, they added.

RIVER ACCIDENT

Minister for severer penalty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan yesterday laid emphasis on amendment of the related law to increase penalty for river accidents.

The river accident penalty is very low compared to the level of the offence, and so the Inland Shipping Ordinance (ISO)-1976 should be amended to increase it, he said.

The ISO awards five years of imprisonment or Tk 1 lakh fine or both for a river accident as the maximum punishment. In addition, the vessel owners can be charged as much as Tk 5 lakh as compensation.

Shajahan Khan made his observation while disclosing a brief summary of three probe reports on the Meghna launch tragedy at a press conference at his ministry.

At least 147 travellers died as a Dhaka-bound passenger launch from Shariatpur sank after colliding with a cargo vessel in Munshiganj in the Meghna River on March 13.

The three probe reports blame incompe-

tent operators, overloading of goods, and movement of cargo vessels for the accident. The launch was carrying some 220-240 people and about eight to nine tonnes of goods.

A compilation of the three reports has made a 24-point recommendation, including penal action against owners and staff of both cargo and passenger vessels.

The shipping minister said punitive actions would be taken against those responsible for the Meghna tragedy and the recommendations of the reports would be implemented to ensure river safety. Cases have been filed against owners of both the vessels, he said.

Shajahan Khan said training would be arranged for launch drivers and masters river transport census would be conducted, and two more salvage vessels would be procured.

The recommendations also include enforcement of the embargo on overnight movement of cargo vessels and amendment to the ISO-1976.

World Press Freedom Day observed

UNB, Dhaka

The World Press Freedom Day was observed in the country as elsewhere across the globe yesterday with the theme "Media Freedom has the Power to Transform Societies".

The day is observed every year to uplift the fundamental principles of press freedom; to evaluate press freedom around the world, to defend the media from attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession.

It serves as a reminder to governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and is also a day of reflection

among media professionals about issues of press freedom and professional ethics.

The day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 following a recommendation adopted at the twenty-sixth session of Unesco's General Conference in 1991.

In a joint message marking the day, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and Unesco Director General Irina Bokova said, "Freedom of expression is one of our most precious rights. It underpins every other freedom and provides a foundation for human dignity."

Free, pluralistic and independent media is essential for its exercise. This is the message of World Press Freedom Day, they added.

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