

Govt against CG system as it has no public support

Claims Fakhru

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday said as the government has no public support, the prime minister said that she would not budge an inch from the constitution regarding holding the next general election.

"Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina knows that if she budges an inch from the constitution, which was formulated by them [government], she and her party will go far away from power," said Fakhru.

Fakhru was addressing a programme held to unveil the cover of a memorial book on former BNP secretary general Barrister Salam Talukder at Jatiya Press Club in the capital. Barrister Salam Talukder Sriti Sangsad organised the programme.

Sheikh Hasina made the remark at a press conference at the Gono Bhaban on Sunday.

Lambasting the government for the constitution, he asked, "How can it be a constitution when it allows the prime minister and the parliament to be in power for an infinite period of time if no national election is held?"

Referring to the recent polls to the city corporations, he said none can stay in power without the support of the public.

BNP Vice-Chairman Sadeque Hossain Khoka said it would be suicidal for BNP if the party participates in the national election under the Awami League-led government.

40 Bangladeshis suffering in KSA without jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 40 Bangladeshi workers have been languishing in a labourers' accommodation facility in Saudi Arabia due to joblessness since their arrival in the Kingdom nearly four months back.

The Saudi firm, which was supposed to employ them in the service sector, is neither paying them nor giving them enough food after they refused to work in road construction, the migrants told The Daily Star by phone from Riyadh yesterday.

Asif Iqbal, a victim, said the Bangladeshi agent promised them jobs in offices, mosques and madrasas, but they were forced to work for building roads, which they declined to do.

"Most of the 40 of us have various skills. I have skills in computer hardware, welding and driving. I can't work in road construction projects."

Asif, a resident of Manikganj, said the firm was now talking about sending them home if they did not work in road construction. "This is a total injustice. Please help us get out of it."

He said they migrated to Saudi Arabia

through the recruiting agency Mascot International Ltd, paying it Tk 6 lakh to Tk 7.5 lakh each to work at a monthly salary of around Tk 21,000, and returning home penniless would be suicidal for them.

"We've contacted Mascot International to address our problem, but it is asking us to wait for some more days. How long could we suffer this way?" he wondered. Asif said they were confined to the labour accommodation whenever they declined to work in road construction.

Managing Director of Mascot International Mominul Haque Bhuiyan admitted the workers' condition, but said he did not get the work visas for these migrants.

A Bangladeshi named Hasan got those job visas, and he only helped the workers complete their immigration process. He, however, said he was trying to contact Hasan in Saudi Arabia.

In an email message, Dr Emdadul Haque, labour minister at Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh, said he had asked the officials to look into the matter urgently.

OVERSEAS JOB SEEKERS' 122 passports with visas go missing from govt office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 122 passports with visas of overseas job seekers went missing from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) on Sunday.

The job seekers are registered with two private recruiting agencies. The passports were taken to the BMET for completion of the official process, said Ishaque Khan, managing director of Tower Trade International, one of the agencies enlisted by the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira).

"A staff of my office went to the BMET with the passports and completed the official process. Then, he just kept those on a table and moved away, and within two or three minutes the passports were gone," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

A total of 109 passport holders are registered with The Winner International, run by Ishaque's wife Delowara Begum, and the remaining 13 with his own firm, he said.

Ishaque said 83 of the passports were stamped with visas of Oman, 10 of Bahrain, 23 of Qatar, and three of Italy. He apprehended that many of the workers might face problems if the passports were not recovered, as they would miss flights. A general diary was filed in this regard Sunday.

Talking to The Daily Star, BMET Director (Immigration) Abdul Latif Khan said he had provided the footage of his office surveillance camera to the agency owners so that the persons involved could be identified.

NEWS IN brief

University student 'commits suicide'

CU CORRESPONDENT

A university student allegedly committed suicide at her residence in Chittagong city's Foy's Lake area yesterday.

Nihar Nigar Nova, 20, was a first year medical student of University of Science and Technology, Chittagong.

Quoting the family members, Khulshi Sub-inspector Zahidur Rahman said Nova hanged herself from the ceiling of her room.

Pro-AL nominees for graduates' reps to DU senate picked

DU CORRESPONDENT

Gonotantik Okya Parishad, a pro-Awami League body, yesterday announced names of the candidates who will be contesting for the 25 posts of registered graduates' representatives to the Dhaka University senate.

A total of 25 candidates from the organisation will contest in the election, said a press release.

Leaders of Gonotantik Okkiya Parishad made the announcement in the Teacher-Student Centre (TSC).

The polls will take place in 43 centres outside Dhaka on September 14 and 21 and in Dhaka on September 18.

Boatman dies crushed between two launches in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boatman died as his boat was crushed between two launches in the Buriganga river near Sadar Ghat area yesterday afternoon.

The deceased was Monir Hossain, 29, of Khejur Bagh in South Keraniganj. Witness said other boatmen pulled out Monir from the river and rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

3 AL activists injured in bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three Awami League activists were injured in a bomb attack at Boyra Bazar in Sonadanga of Khulna city on Monday night.

Kazi Mozibul Haque, ex-general secretary of AL ward-16, and activists Khandakar Bahauddin and Ashrafuzzamn Khokon, were admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital.

Police said some miscreants hurled three bombs at them when they were chatting at a shop.

Their rivals might have attacked them over business feuds, said Sonadanga police. A case was filed yesterday.

Safe migration of workers sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a workshop yesterday urged the government to ensure safe migration of Bangladeshi workers abroad.

They also requested the government to scrutinise the provisions of a memorandum of understanding signed with Malaysia to send workers under state arrangements last year to protect workers' rights.

The workshop on "Labour migration framework in Malaysia: Creating a safe environment for Bangladeshi migrants" was organised by WARBE Development Foundation, an organisation working for migrant workers, in the capital's Brac Centre.

Harun-Ur-Rashid, regional coordinator of CARAM Asia, another such organisation, said the government should ensure safe migration for Bangladeshis in Malaysia, as it was important to ensure their other rights.

WARBE Chairman Syed Saiful Haque said some provisions of the government's MoU with Malaysia were against the workers' rights.

Talking about the MoU, two representatives of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) alleged that Bangladesh would lose the market as the government process had retarded the workers' migration.

Hazrat Ali, additional secretary to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, however, denied the allegation.

DUBAI IS BACK !

- Asking apartment sale prices went up by 17% year on year...Jones Lang LaSalle
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Inaugural ceremony
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will organise the inaugural ceremony of the programme marking World Breastfeeding Week; Venue: Osmani Memorial Auditorium; Time: 9:45am.

Conference
Transparency International Bangladesh will arrange a two-day conference on curbing corruption; Venue: Senate Bhaban, Dhaka University; Time: 10:30am.