

ILLEGAL TRIP TO ITALY 50 Bangladeshis held in Tunisia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 50 Bangladeshi migrant workers were detained by Tunisian coastguards while they were going to Italy illegally by a ship through the Mediterranean Sea on June 4. They were among the 269 people of different nationalities, who were travelling to Italy in search of work, Ahsan Kibria Siddiqui, first secretary (labour) at Bangladesh Embassy in Libya, told The Daily Star last night over phone. The Bangladeshis have been kept in a detention centre in an Island in

Tunisia, said Kibria, who visited the detainees on June 5. The migrants who worked in various sectors in Libya tried to enter Italy by a ship from Tripoli. It could not be known immediately who were taking them to Italy illegally. Kibria said they would try to find out who had arranged their travel to Italy without valid documents. But it would be difficult as there is no Bangladesh Mission in Tunisia. Many foreign workers had been detained during their attempts to enter Italy illegally from Libya since a war broke out in the African country in

It's shameful

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The allocation of Tk 16,462 crore for the defence ministry in the proposed budget for 2014-15 fiscal. Badal is a lawmaker from Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, a component of the Awami League-led ruling alliance, while Farazi is an independent MP. Refuting their claims, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, who is in charge of the defence ministry in parliamentary affairs, said previous military autocrats played hide and seek with allocating money for the defence ministry and they never revealed the exact amount of the allocation. "But the present democratic government does not deserve this allegation. The budgetary allocation for the defence ministry is transparent," mentioned the minister. About the lack of details of the defence budget, Muhith said it was a tradition not to say anything in details about the defence budget in the speech. The tradition began as power had been grabbed illegally time and again, he added. "This is not a healthy tradition."

The finance minister said the government had tried for the last five years to break with the tradition. There would be attempts to end the tradition during the tenure of this government, he said. Speaking on the supplementary budget, Badal said, "It has become a taboo not to explain where and how the budgetary allocation for the defence ministry will be spent. This tradition has been followed since long. It should be stopped. It should be open to public." The defence ministry has been allocated around 6.6 percent of the total budget, but there is no explanation where and how this money will be spent, he added. "We want our defence to be strengthened. But the finance minister must explain how and where the allocated public money will be spent," insisted the legislator. Echoing the opinion of Badal, Farazi demanded the government maintains transparency in budgetary allocation for the defence ministry.

Power project gets

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Bazar via Ramu and Ramu to Gundum near Bangladesh-Myanmar border, and establishment of Eastern Refinery Unit-2 and Single Point Mooring Project. Our diplomatic correspondent reports: There was no firm commitment from the Chinese side regarding the construction of the deep-sea port, which could cost about \$14 billion. An official who attended the talks told The Daily Star over the phone that the project was discussed and Dhaka agreed with Beijing to have further discussions. As proposed by China, the two sides had earlier agreed to sign a framework agreement on the deep-sea port during Hasina's visit. But the deal became uncertain just before she left for China on June 6, diplomatic sources said. Officials at the foreign ministry said Dhaka declined to sign the agreement on the deep-sea port following differences of opinions and shifting of Chinese position. They said China had agreed to provide soft loan for the port construction but later changed its mind and offered a commercial loan. It also set the precondition that it would do the design, construction and operation of the port. Foreign ministry sources said the Chinese side itself had offered to expand zero-tariff facility to 95 percent Bangladesh goods going into China to get a more balanced bilateral trade. However, China backed off at the last moment. UNB adds: The official talks were held in a very cordial, warm and friendly manner, and both leaders discussed various issues of bilateral interests and of common concerns, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haq said after the meeting.

During the talks, Hasina mentioned that Bangladesh attached highest importance to its relations with China. The foundation of these relations was laid by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman during his visits to China in 1952 and 1957 as minister, she said. China has always been a reliable development partner, and so far it has contributed immensely to Bangladesh's socio-economic development, she told Keqiang. In this regard, Hasina said the seventh Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge and Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka bear testament to the Dhaka-China friendship. She also appreciated the dynamic and visionary leadership of Keqiang, saying that China was emerging as the largest economy of the world. Hasina said Bangladesh welcomes the peaceful rise of China and wishes to remain as an active partner in this "Asian Century". In his introductory speech, Keqiang lauded the Bangladesh premier's dynamic and able leadership, and said the bilateral relations between the two countries had reached a new dimension following her visit to China. Earlier, on her arrival, the Chinese premier welcomed the state guest at the Great Hall premises. Hasina along with Keqiang proceeded to a saluting deais when the national anthems of both countries were played. The Bangladesh premier was given 19 gun salutes by a contingent from the three services of the People's Liberation Army of China. She witnessed the march-past and inspected the parade.

BNP demands arrest

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names," added Rizvi. Former Rab-11 officials Maj Arif Hossain and Lt Commander MM Rana have confessed their roles in the seven-murder incident under section 164 of the code of criminal procedure, according to media reports. The two have been fired from their jobs. "Maj Arif and Lt Commander Rana have confessed to their crimes and revealed the names of those who ordered the killings," said the BNP leader adding that "Col Ziaul Ahsan and a godfather are in that list, according to newspaper reports." Narayanganj panel mayor Nazrul Islam, along with four of his aides, was abducted from the town on April 27. Lawyer Chandan Sarkar and his driver were also kidnapped on the same day. Later, the decomposed bodies of the seven were found floating in the Shitalakkhya. Shahidul Islam, father-in-law of

Nazrul, claimed that Rapid Action Battalion men kidnapped and killed the seven in exchange for Tk 6 crore from Nur Hossain, a ward councillor of Narayanganj. KHALEDA TO VISIT JOYPUHAT BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will address a public rally in Joypurhat on June 22 protesting the recent incidents of abduction, forced disappearance and killing across the country. The rally will be held at Ramdev Bazla Govt High School ground, reports our Dinaajpur correspondent quoting Mozahar Ali Prodhan, a former lawmaker and president of district BNP unit. Ahead of her visit, the local BNP sat in a preparatory meeting yesterday afternoon at the party office in the town, with Mozahar in the chair. BNP leaders from all five upazilas of the district were present.

Biman incurs Tk 785cr loss in 2 years

Sangsad told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman incurred a loss of around Tk 785 crore in fiscal years 2011-12 and 2012-13, parliament was told yesterday. In the Jatiya Sangsad, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon said the national flag carrier lost Tk 594 crore in fiscal 2011-12 and Tk 191 crore in fiscal 2012-13. Replying to lawmakers' queries, the minister said there were various reasons behind the Biman's loss, including excessive fuel prices, interest of bank loan, an increase in rent for taking lease of aircraft and the Biman's failure to increase air fares. He also informed lawmakers that his ministry had given many instructions to Biman to make the national airliner a profitable venture. Explaining the reasons behind the Biman's loss, Menon said the fuel costs were almost half of the total Biman's expenditure. The minister also said the expenditure of Biman also increased due to payment of interest against loans which were taken to procure new aircraft. Failure to increase ticket fares is another reason for the Biman's loss, he added. In the written reply, Menon also said with a fleet of 10 aircraft, Biman is now operating flights to 19 international destinations.

5 deals inked

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between Bangladesh and China and over a feasibility study on flood prevention and management in Bangladesh. The memorandum of understanding was signed between China Harbour and Engineering Company and Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority for setting up a Chinese economic and investment zone in Chittagong. Hasina's Media Adviser Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and Press Secretary AKM Shamim Chowdhury were present.

Smoking causes

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for, the greater risk to hearing, the study found. But ex-smokers reduce their chance of hearing loss, which researchers speculated might be because they adopt a healthier life style overall. It is unclear how smoking affects hearing loss, said researchers, but it may be related to heart disease. "We are not sure if toxins in tobacco smoke affect hearing directly, or whether smoking-related cardiovascular disease causes microvascular changes that impact on hearing, or both," said Piers Dawes, from the Centre for Human Communication and Deafness at The University of Manchester, which led the research. Passive smokers have an even greater risk of hearing loss than smokers -- but that could be because they were only compared with non-smokers, researchers said. The research was conducted using data from the UK Biobank, a long-term health study that began in 2007 and is following around 500,000 volunteers in the UK. The study -- 'Cigarette smoking, passive smoking, alcohol consumption and hearing loss' -- was published in the Journal of the Association of Otolaryngology on Thursday.

Open sale

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Out of these, 25 sales points will be in Dhaka, 10 in Chittagong and 5 in each remaining divisional cities. There will have two truck sale points in every district. The price of sugar has been fixed at Tk 39 per kilogram and every customer can buy 4 kg sugar at a time, the statement said. The price of a five litre can of edible oil has been fixed at Tk 530 while one and two litre bottles of the same has been fixed at Tk 107. Lentil will sell for Tk 65 per kg, Bengal gram for Tk 44 per kg and date for Tk 70 per kg as per the priced fixed by TCB. Customers will be allowed to buy 3 kg of lentil, 3 kg of gram and 1kg of date at a time. The main sales points in Dhaka will be at the Jatiya Press Club, Secretariat Gate, Fakirapool Bazar and Ideal School Zone, Shantinagar Bazar, Shapla Square, Dainik Bangla Crossing, Shahjahanpur Bazar, Basabo Bazar, Jatrabari Crossing, Kaptan Bazar and Islambagh Kitchen Market. The other spots in the capital are at Chhapra Masjid and Palashi Bazar, New Market Kitchen Market, Jhigatola Kitchen Market, Khamar Bari, Mohakhali Kitchen Market, Rampura Bazar, Banasree Bazar, Agargaon Bazar, Shewrapara Bazar, Mirpur 10 Bazar, Kachukhet Bazar, Mohammadpur Town Hall Market, Mohammadpur Krishi Market and Abdullahpur Bazar, according to the statement.

'Organised campaign' to impose Islam in UK schools

AFP, London

Conservative Muslim school leaders in Britain's second city of Birmingham conducted an "organised campaign" to impose faith-based ideology on their pupils, Education Secretary Michael Gove said on Monday. Clashes between Muslim governors and non-Muslim senior staff had led to a "culture of fear and intimidation" in which some headteachers felt forced to leave their jobs, leaving those remaining free to impose a narrow curriculum, the minister said. Gove was reporting the findings of two official investigations into allegations of an Islamist plot to take over the leadership of state-funded schools in Birmingham with the intention of imposing a religious agenda. The allegations renewed concerns about the risk to young people in Britain of Islamic extremism, and exposed a rift at the heart of the government about how to tackle religious radicalism. However, some community leaders in Birmingham, a former industrial centre which has one of Britain's largest Muslim communities, said the row was baseless and driven by Islamophobia. Inspections by Ofsted, the schools watchdog, concluded that five schools

were providing an "inadequate" standard of education due to failings that the chief inspector of schools, Michael Wilshaw, said were "deeply worrying". "Ofsted states that head teachers reported an organised campaign to target schools in order to alter their character and ethos, with a culture of fear and intimidation," Gove told the House of Commons. "Ofsted concluded that governors are trying to impose and promote a narrow, faith-based ideology in what are non-faith schools, specifically by narrowing the curriculum, manipulating staff appointments, and in using school funds inappropriately." A separate report by the Education Funding Agency, a branch of the education ministry, revealed that at one school the Muslim call to prayers was broadcast across the playground. School funds at another, Oldknow Academy in the majority Muslim Small Heath district, were used for an annual trip to Saudi Arabia that was open only to Muslim pupils, while the words "white prostitute" were used in one assembly. The EFA also found that Oldknow had tried to cover up its activities by putting on a special Easter assembly and a lesson on Christianity when

Boy killed as City College students clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A schoolboy was stabbed to death during a clash between two groups of college students over a football match at Jigatola in the capital yesterday. The victim was identified as Ayaz, a 15-year-old student of the Government Laboratory High School. Students of the science and commerce faculties of the City College got into a fight over a trivial matter during a football match in the afternoon, Mohammad Imran, sub-inspector of Dhanmondi Police Station, told this correspondent. The clash that broke out in front of the college soon spread to nearby Jigatola. Ayaz was with his elder brother Arzeen, a student of City College, who was present on the spot. The severely wounded boy was whisked off to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries around 6:00pm. The boy was stabbed in the lower back, said sources at the DMCH. His body was sent to the morgue for autopsy. Eight students of the college were arrested in connection with the incident, said Dhanmondi police.

Gauhati High Court orders deportation of 4 Bangladeshis

TIMES OF INDIA

A division bench of Gauhati High Court has ordered the state government to deport Bangladeshi nationals Shah Mohammad Anwar Ali, his wife and their two children to their country after they were found to have illegally overstayed their visa period in India. Ali and his family members possess Bangladeshi passports and according to government records, they came to India in May, 1997, on a 10-day visa, which was later extended till September. However, they have been living in the Panbazar area here since then. A single bench of the High Court had earlier ordered deportation of Anwar and his family to Bangladesh. Anwar challenged the order in the division bench, which not only upheld the single bench order but also dismissed Anwar's claim that he was an Indian citizen and should be allowed to stay in India.

Arrests after video of Egypt sex assault goes viral

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian police have arrested seven men accused of sexually assaulting women at celebrations marking President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's inauguration, officials said yesterday, after outrage triggered by a graphic video of one attack. The footage shows a crowd of men surrounding the young woman, who was stripped off her clothes and badly bruised, as police escorted her to an ambulance following Sunday's attack on Cairo's iconic Tahrir Square. Shared widely on social media websites like YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, it appears to have been filmed using a mobile telephone. A security official authenticated the video, saying police had arrested seven men for assaulting and stripping the 19-year-old student. The woman was transferred to a hospital and prosecutors had been asked to investigate the attack, the official said, alleging the seven were also involved in three other cases of sexual harassment. "Sexual harassment in Tahrir... is absolutely disgusting. I have no words. So appalled and ashamed," said one Twitter user. The Egyptian interior ministry said police had arrested seven men aged 16 to 49 as "they had (sexually) harassed a number of girls during the celebrations in the Tahrir area". It did not specify whether the seven were involved in the assault of the girl seen in the video. "It is shameful that security officials

from the interior ministry did not adopt any measures or security plans to prevent such assaults, despite the fact they have repeatedly occurred," said the "I Saw Harassment" activist group. It said it had documented five cases of sexual assault by mobs, with four victims needing medical aid on Sunday. Egypt has been plagued by rampant sexual harassment cases, with more than 99 percent of women subjected to some form of such abuse, the United Nations said in a study issued last year. Women in the North African country said that they are harassed regardless of whether they wear conservative Islamic attire or Western-style clothes. But since the revolution that toppled long-time president Hosni Mubarak in 2011, the problem has worsened, with women now being regularly attacked during rallies by groups of men in and around Tahrir Square. Almost 100 women were sexually assaulted during the four days of mass protests that led to the military ouster of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in July last year, Human Rights Watch reported at the time. Sunday's attacks come days after the presidency approved new punishments for sexual harassment, entailing hefty fines and jail terms for offenders. Sisi, the former army chief who deposed Morsi, was sworn in on Sunday amid mass celebrations organised by the authorities, after winning last month's presidential election in a landslide.

China must avoid 'trap' of Western-style democracy: media

AFP, Beijing

China must beware the "trap" of Western-style democracy, the ruling Communist Party's flagship newspaper said yesterday, days after the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown. "Street politics" often leads to civil unrest and even civil war," the paper warned in a Chinese-language commentary signed by Mi Bohua, a senior editor at the paper. "From West Asia and North Africa to Ukraine and Thailand, each one without exception was led astray onto the path of 'Western-style democracy' - and each has seen street politics escalate from rallies and demonstrations to armed conflict," it said. "In most of these countries' street politics, whether openly or behind the scenes, American and Western forces have been involved," the party mouth-piece added. "If we remain on guard against the trap of Western-style democracy, persist in reform and opening-up, and continue on the path of political development with Chinese characteristics, no one can stop China's peaceful rise." While the paper made no mention of Tiananmen, the editorial comes days after the 25th anniversary of the June 1989 crackdown. Hundreds of people -- by some estimates, more than a thousand -- died after the Communist Party sent tanks to crush demonstrations in the

heart of Beijing. The crackdown followed a peaceful seven-week sit-in staged by student-led protesters demanding democratic reforms. China has forbidden all public discussion of Tiananmen, and any references to the crackdown are swiftly censored from the country's popular online social networks. Beijing swept up dozens of Chinese rights campaigners, lawyers, journalists and victims' relatives in the weeks leading up to the anniversary, and even private efforts to commemorate the date have triggered detentions. The Communist Party's powerful 1980s leader, Deng Xiaoping, pursued economic reforms while keeping tight restrictions on any political dissent -- a path followed by subsequent leaders to this day, including current President Xi Jinping. In a speech during a trip to Germany in April, Xi said that while China had experimented with parliamentary and multi-party systems in the past, "none of them worked". "Finally," Xi said, "China took on the path of socialism." The People's Daily echoed that sentiment, contrasting China's political development with the "colour revolutions" that have taken place in other countries in recent years. "Happily, we have adhered to socialism with Chinese characteristics," it said. "Otherwise, how could China have peace and prosperity?"