

# US may allow 5m to stay, work

NEW YORK TIMES ONLINE

US President Obama will ignore angry protests from Republicans and announce as soon as next week a broad overhaul of the nation's immigration enforcement system that will protect up to five million unauthorised immigrants from the threat of deportation and provide many of them with work permits, according to administration officials who have direct knowledge of the plan.

Asserting his authority as president to enforce the nation's laws with discretion, Obama intends to order changes that will significantly refocus the activities of the government's 12,000 immigration agents. One key piece of the order, officials said, will allow many parents of children who are American citizens or legal residents to obtain legal work documents and no longer worry about being discovered, separated from their families and sent away.

That part of Mr. Obama's plan alone could affect as many as 3.3 million people who have been living in the United States illegally for at least five years, according to an analysis by the Migration Policy Institute, an immigration research organization in Washington. But the White House is also considering a stricter policy that would limit the benefits to people who have lived in

the country for at least 10 years, or about 2.5 million people.

Extending protections to more undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children, and to their parents, could affect an additional one million or more if they are included in the final plan that the president announces. White House officials are also still debating whether to include protections for farm workers who have entered the country illegally but have been employed for years in the agriculture industry, a move that could affect hundreds of thousands of people.

Obama's actions will also expand opportunities for legal immigrants who have high-tech skills, shift extra security resources to the nation's southern border, revamp a controversial immigration enforcement program called Secure Communities, and provide clearer guidance to the agencies that enforce immigration laws about who should be a low priority for deportation, especially those with strong family ties and no serious criminal history.

A new memorandum, which will direct the actions of enforcement and border agents and immigration judges, will make clear that deportations should still proceed for convicted criminals, foreigners who pose national security risks and

recent border crossers, officials said.

White House officials declined to comment publicly before a formal announcement by Obama, who will return from an eight-day trip to Asia on Sunday. Administration officials said details about the package of executive actions were still being finished and could change. An announcement could be pushed off until next month but will not be delayed to next year, officials said.

The decision to move forward sets in motion a political confrontation between Obama and his Republican adversaries that is likely to affect budget negotiations and the debate over Loretta E Lynch, the president's nominee to be attorney general, during the lame-duck session of Congress that began this week.

Speaker John A. Boehner said Thursday afternoon that if Obama went forward on his own, House Republicans would "fight the president tooth and nail."

Boehner is considering suing Obama over immigration — as Republicans have said they might do on the president's health care law — and on Thursday he refused to rule out a government shutdown, despite saying that was not his goal.

"We are looking at all options, and they're on the table," Boehner said.

## FELANI'S MURDER Father to testify in retrial

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram

The father of Felani Khatun will testify at a special court in India on Monday in the revision trial on his daughter's killing.

Indian Border Security Force in a letter yesterday requested Border Guard Bangladesh to ensure that Nurul Islam appears before the court as a witness on that day, said Maj Hemayetul Islam, BCB-45 Battalion's acting commanding officer, yesterday.

The BCB official and Kurigram Public Prosecutor Abraham Lincoln, also the case's lawyer from Bangladesh side, will accompany Nurul to India tomorrow.

Fifteen-year-old Felani was shot dead by the BSF while she, along with her father, was returning home from India through Anantapur border in Pulbari upazila of Kurigram on January 7, 2011.

Images of her body hanging in the barbed-wire fence of the border fence drew widespread criticism from all over the world.

A special Indian court, however, acquitted BSF constable Amiya Ghosh, the lone accused in the case, of the murder charge.

Nurul rejected the verdict and appealed to the Indian high commissioner in Bangladesh for a fresh trial.

The revision trial began on September 22 at BSF sector headquarters in Cooch Behar district of West Bengal.

## Joy calls

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"If Jamaat was to be saved, had we hanged Quader Mollah ahead of the last elections when US Secretary of State John Kerry and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon requested us not to do so? Who had that courage?" asked Joy, also PM's ICT affairs adviser.

The trial will go on as long as Awami League is in power, he told the seminar, "Spirit of the Liberation War, Democracy, Development and Good Governance", organised by Shuchinta Foundation.

Projecting successes of the government, he said Bangladesh was the fourth fastest growing economy in the world. "We have reduced the poverty rate by half and eliminated militancy in just five years. We are human beings; it's impossible for us to do more in five years."

Referring to media criticism against government's misdeeds, Joy said, "To err is human... Is it possible that there will be no problem in a country of 16 crore people?"

## Young entrepreneurs

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Entrepreneurs Conference at the city's National Parade Ground on Tuesday. The Prime Minister's Office organised the conference where Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina spoke as the chief guest.

The PMO, in association with UNDP and USAID, initiated the Access to Information programme (a2i) under which digital centres were launched in all 4,501 UPs of the country on November 11, 2010.

At present, there are 4,547 Union Parishad Digital Centres, 321 Municipality Centres and 407 Ward Level Centres in 11 city corporations.

The digital centres draw students, youths, farmers, jobseekers, migrant families who get around 60 digital services including computer training, land registration, public exam results, government forms, birth and death registration, online university admission, employment information, and mobile banking.

"I did not know how to use a cell phone whereas now I know how to operate a computer and many are learning from me to be self-reliant," Kabir told The Daily Star after the conference.

He said if their work continued unhindered, they would be able to improve the centres more.

Akmol Hossain, another entrepreneur from Moulvibazar district, said the digital centre where he had been working changed his life and his income rose to Tk 60,000 per month.

Taslima Begum, another entrepreneur from the district's Chadnighat, said the society did not receive their involvement with the centres positively at the beginning.

"Now people understand that we have been contributing to the country, to the society and finally to our family," she said.

Each Union Digital Centre is operated by two young local entrepreneurs under the supervision of a local advisory headed by the UP chairman. The UP provides space and utility for the centre while Local Government Division coordinates activities with the Cabinet Division and the Bangladesh Computer Council to establish the basic ICT setup including computers, laptops, printers, multimedia projector, digital camera, webcam and solar panel, according to the a2i website.

## Pollution major cause

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every year 100 million people were pushed into poverty because they had to pay for health services directly.

She also said over a billion people, or 15 percent of the world's population, were estimated to have some form of disabilities, and 80 percent of these people lived in developing countries.

The sessions were chaired by David C Walker, chairman of IMPACT UK; Prof Rakesh Prasad Shrivastav, chairman of IMPACT Nepal; Monsur Ahmed Chowdhury, founder trustee of

IMPACT Bangladesh; and Dr Ramachandra Pararajasegaram, honorary president of IMPACT Switzerland.

IMPACT was founded in late 1982 with the aim that no one should become needlessly disabled by diseases, lack of knowledge, or shortage of medical services.

IMPACT Foundation Bangladesh came into existence in 1993. It offers healthcare services to underprivileged communities and operates a floating hospital, "Jibon Tari", in the country.

## 31 foreigners detained

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Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (South) at the DMP media centre.

"We have arrested the 31 foreigners as they could not show valid documents in favour of their stay. We are also investigating whether they are involved in any criminal activities," he said.

Detectives said passports and visas of some of them were found expired.

The arrestees have been overstay in the country for two to 12 years.

According to the existing law, if the charges against them are proved, they might face a maximum of five years in prison.

Krishna said instances of many foreigners getting involved in criminal activities including killing, drug peddling, smuggling and other fraudulent acts had come to their notice.

Officials at the Special Branch of Police said around one lakh foreigners, mostly from African and South East Asian nations, are living in the country

illegally for years.

Around 8,000 nationals of different African countries are involved in killing, mugging, smuggling, fake note manufacturing and running illegal VOIP business in the capital, said detectives.

"They have become our headache now," said a top SB official requesting anonymity.

The African nationals mainly entered Bangladesh as football players or students while others came with tourist visas but didn't leave the country before expiry of their visas.

In many cases, they destroy their passports and other documents so that law enforcers cannot verify their nationality to repatriate them upon arrest for criminal offences, say intelligence officials.

Krishna also urged house owners and hotel authorities to verify documents of foreigners before renting out apartments or rooms to them.

## HT Imam's comments irk Hasina

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speak against the January 5 elections.

HT Imam, at a discussion at Dhaka University on Wednesday, said if members of Bangladesh Chhatra League, student front of the AL, pass the written test for recruitments in public services, the party leaders would help them with the viva voce.

He also said many pro-AL officials, before the January 5 polls, were inducted into mobile courts and this helped the government hold the election despite the BNP-Jamaat's bid to thwart it. "They [pro-AL officials] stood beside us."

Imam's speech called the government's achievements into question, sources quoted AL leaders as saying.

Tofail Ahmed said HT Imam had requested him to speak in his favour should the issue come up in the meet-

ing.

In response, Hasina smilingly told Tofail to defend Imam with logic if he had any.

Suranjit Sengupta then termed Tofail "Imam's advocate" and said there is no chance to speak in Imam's favour following latter's comments.

At one stage, the PM asked Tofail to advise Imam to resign from his post, sources said.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, senior AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury and Alauddin Ahmed, and office secretaries Abdul Mannan Khan and Abdus Sobhan Golap were at the meeting.

Earlier at a discussion in the capital, Suranjit advised HT Imam of being cautious while speaking.

He said the Public Service

Commission is an independent and constitutional body and everyone has the right to sit any exam under it.

Trashing Imam's comments on pro-AL officials helping the party in the January 5 elections, Suranjit said the Awami League has assumed power banking on solely public support.

**SIRAJGANJ BY-POLLS**

At yesterday's meeting, the ALPB decided to start selling nomination paper for Sirajganj-3 by-election till Monday at Taka 25,000 apiece.

The ruling party will finalise its candidate in the constituency at its next meeting on Monday.

The parliamentary seat fell vacant after AL lawmaker Ishaque Hossain Talukder died on October 6.

The by-election will be held on December 23.

## Imam's remarks

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Alamgir told a press conference at the party's Nayapalton central office.

The press meet was organised to inform the media about the BNP's decisions from its standing committee meeting held on Thursday night.

Speaking at a discussion at Dhaka University on Wednesday, Imam described how the AL benefited from its men in the administration during the January 5 polls.

Days before the election, many pro-AL officials were inducted into mobile courts that helped the then government resist the BNP-Jamaat's bid to thwart the polls, he mentioned.

"They [pro-AL officials] stood by us. Nineteen of our policemen were killed brutally by Jamaat-Shibir men," Imam said referring to the pre-election violence across the country.

**KIBRIA MURDER CASE**

Fakhrul said his party was deeply concerned that some party leaders were charged with the murder of former finance minister SAMS Kibria.

The BNP thinks that inclusion of the names of Sylhet Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury and Habiganj municipality Mayor GK Gaus in the charge sheet has a political motivation, he mentioned.

The party, added Fakhrul, believes the allegations against its leaders are part of a blueprint drawn up by the government to destroy BNP leadership.

The CID on Thursday submitted the third charge sheet in the murder case to a Habiganj court. It also accused Harris Chowdhury, former political secretary to Khaleda Zia, of the murder. But Fakhrul did not mention his name at the press conference.

Meanwhile, BNP Vice-chairman Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury at a press conference in Sylhet city yesterday announced that the district and city BNP units will jointly hold a rally at Court Point in the city tomorrow afternoon protesting inclusion of the names of BNP leaders in the supplementary charge sheet of Kibria murder case.

Kibria, then an opposition lawmaker, was assassinated in a grenade attack while addressing a rally in Habiganj on January 27, 2005.

## ISIS chief calls for attacks

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In the recording, which appeared to be genuine but has still to be confirmed, the self-appointed "caliph" claimed the group now has bases in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Libya and Algeria.

He specifically called on ISIS fighters to launch attacks in Saudi Arabia, particularly on its rulers, and in Yemen. A previous broadcast by al-Baghdadi is thought to have inspired militants in Algeria to kill and behead a Frenchman.

It remained unclear when the recording was made but in the speech he appeared to refer to the US announcement last Friday that it was to send 1,500 troops to Iraq.

The air strikes that Iraqi officials maintained had left him injured were carried out last Saturday. There were also reports that al-Baghdadi could have been caught in US air strikes last Friday night. The US said earlier this week that it could not confirm whether he was killed or wounded.

Whether al-Baghdadi is alive or dead, wounded or healthy, the tone of the message was deliberately defiant and incendiary.

Claiming that ISIS is expanding rather than being driven back by the "Crusader campaign", he said: "We announce to you the expansion of the Islamic State to new countries, to the countries of the Haramayn, Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Algeria.

"We announce the acceptance of the pledges of allegiance of the brothers who swore loyalty to us in these countries... and the appointment governors."

"America and its allies are terrified, weak and powerless. God has ordered us to fight. For that reason the soldiers of the Islamic State are fighting... they will never leave fighting, even if only one soldier remains."

The audio recording was released on social media sites linked to ISIS and observers noted that the voice appeared to be the same as a speech confirmed to have been by al-Baghdadi in July, the last time he spoke in public.

## Unique protest

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month he was quoted as saying "coal is good for humanity".

On Bondi Beach in Sydney, around 400 men, women and school children dug holes in the sand and stuck their heads in them, symbolising Abbott's avoidance of the pressing issue.

While the message was serious, megaphone-wielding activist Pat Norman, 28, couldn't help but have a bit of fun, shouting: "Wiggle your bum if you feel like it."

The disparate crowd included men and women in business suits — and they expressed exasperation that Australia couldn't do more even as the US and China reached an agreement to limit their collective carbon emissions.

"Obama's on board, Xi Jinping's on board, every-

one's on board except one man," Norman shouted, to which protesters replied: "Tony Abbott!"

In July, Australia became one of the only countries in the world to reverse action on climate change when it repealed a tax on greenhouse gas emissions.

Justin Field, 36, a former army intelligence officer who is running for a seat in state parliament for the Green Party, said his country had to act.

"To be so far behind the rest of the developed world embarrasses progressive Australia," he said.

Australia is now under pressure to follow the United States and China, the world's two biggest polluters, who announced a deal in Beijing on Wednesday to curb greenhouse gas emissions. The move has been hailed as a potential breakthrough in the long fight for a global pact.

## NIA chief may lead team

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investigation officer of the case is also likely to join the team which was earlier expected to be consisting of three NIA officers of the rank of an inspector general, a DIG and an SP, Indian home ministry sources said.

The NIA officials are making the visit against the backdrop of the blast probe and arrest of persons allegedly linked with Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

The anti-terror probe agency is to seek details about JMB's network in Bangladesh and also about

the interrogation of Monaem, the alleged brother of Sajid who is the prime accused in the case.

The agency will also seek information on the interrogation of two other alleged JMB members — Asif Adnan and Fazle Elahi Tanjil — who were arrested from Segunbagicha in Dhaka in September, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

The team will also share with Bangladesh details of its probe so that Bangladesh can take preventive steps and necessary actions to counter the threat posed by JMB.

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