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MACHINE-READABLE PASSPORT

30 lakh expats cross fingers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 30 lakh expatriates are still anxiously waiting for news about getting the new machine-readable passport (MRP) as they could lose their jobs abroad and be sent home after November 24.

After the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO) deadline to end the use of old hand-written passports, the expatriates, mostly migrant workers, could be in a serious jam.

The government's indifference and the Malaysian outsourcing company IRIS Corporation Berhad's nonchalance would be to blame for this.

The company, in contract to enrol expatriates for the MRPs, has miserably failed to do its job. The government, instead of punishing the firm, has given it more time to sort things out, making the situation even worse.

At an advisory committee meeting on March 19, the IRIS officials promised to improve its performance within a week with daily enrolment of 9,000 expatriates in Saudi Arabia, and 5,000 in the UAE and Malaysia, meeting minutes say. It promised to finish its job by September.

More than two weeks have gone by but the company's enrolment pace remains the same, sluggish, according to officials in Bangladesh missions.

A follow-up meeting was scheduled for March 29 but the meeting had to be cancelled as Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Mosharraf Hossain and State Minister for Home Asaduzzaman Khan were overseas.

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Tiny mangoes growing on a tree near the Senate Building of Dhaka University. A sign that spring is about to end and summer is just around the corner. The Dhaka dwellers would have to wait just a few more weeks to see the summer fruit in the market. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

DCC ELECTIONS

AL finalises councillor aspirants

STAR REPORT

The ruling Awami League has finalised its councillor aspirants for most wards of the two city corporations in Dhaka.

Only one candidate in each ward has been given the party endorsement for contesting the city polls, to be held on April 28.

The party has done the same for the reserved women councillor posts: one AL-backed candidate for each post.

Earlier, the party decided to back single councillor aspirants in each ward to clinch victory for the AL-sponsored aspirants and the party top leaders held several meetings with the AL's city unit leaders in this regard.

"Those who didn't get the party support will have to withdraw their candidature. We've given the message to every candidate. If anyone violates the party decision, organisational actions will be taken against them," MA Aziz, acting president of Dhaka city AL, told The Daily Star yesterday, the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

SEE ONLINE FOR FULL LIST

COMPLAINT OF ELECTORAL CODE VIOLATION

EC sees no wrong in ministers' meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has found no violation of code of conduct in connection with holding a meeting where several ministers discussed electoral strategy for a mayoral candidate in Chittagong.

"The returning officer himself investigated the incident and found that the ministers were present there, but did not participate in electoral campaign," Election Commissioner

Shah Nawaz told reporters yesterday.

"So, it does not directly violate the code of conduct," he said.

The EC will send separate letters to the Cabinet Division and the speaker of parliament today, requesting them to take necessary steps so that ministers and other key persons do not join the electoral campaign.

"Usually, we send such directions to the authorities concerned before important

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3 GRAFT CASES

New HC bench to deal with Khaleda's pleas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A new High Court bench has been assigned to dispose of four separate petitions filed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia challenging the legality of proceedings in three graft cases against her.

Chief justice Surendra Kumar Sinha assigned the bench of Justice Md Nuruzzaman and Justice Zafar Ahmed on

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Biman plans to expand network

New managing director says number of flights on viable routes to be increased

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has taken up a plan to increase flight frequencies on financially viable routes and expand network to all key commercial and capital cities in the region.

As part of the plan, the national flag carrier has already increased its weekly Kuala Lumpur flights to 10 from seven and Kolkata flights to 14 from seven, said Biman's new Managing Director Kyle Heywood.

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KAMARUZZAMAN

UN official urges Bangladesh to halt execution

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in a statement on Wednesday urged the Bangladesh government to halt the execution of war criminal Muhammad Kamaruzzaman.

"We urgently call on the Government of Bangladesh to halt the execution of Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, leader of Jamaat-e-Islami, which is reportedly imminent, following the rejection of his appeal on Monday by the

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Afroza Abbas, wife of BNP-backed Dhaka South City Corporation mayor candidate Mirza Abbas, campaigns for her husband in Goran area yesterday.



Secrets of gibbon 'speech' decoded

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Scientists have deciphered the secrets of gibbon "speech" – discovering that the apes are sophisticated communicators employing a range of more

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স্বপ্নে এসে ইলিশ কিনুন, বৈশাখী সদাই নিয়ে ঘরে ফিরুন....

২৫ টাকা ছাড়	সয়াবিন তেল ভিওলা / ফ্রেশ ৫ লি:	৪৪৯ টাকা পিস	ইলিশ মাছ ৫০০ গ্রাম+ ৬০০ গ্রাম+	১৭৯ টাকা কেজি	রুই মাছ ১-২ কেজি
৪৪ টাকা কেজি	মিনিকেট (প্রিমিয়াম)	৫৫৯ টাকা পিস		২৮ টাকা পিস	চিনিচম্পা
৪৭ টাকা কেজি	নাজিরশাইল (প্রিমিয়াম)	৪২০ টাকা কেজি	খাসির মাংস (ষ্ট্যাডার্ড)	৮ টাকা পিস	আনারস (কেরি)
৭৫ টাকা কেজি	চিনিগুঁড়া (প্রিমিয়াম)			১২০ টাকা পিস	তরমুজ
৩৯ টাকা কেজি	চিনি	১৫৫ টাকা পিস	জ্যান্ড মুরগী সোনালিকা	১৯ টাকা কেজি	করলা
২০ টাকা ছাড়	মার্কস গুঁড়ো দুধ ৫০০ গ্রাম			২৮ টাকা কেজি	পটল
৩০ টাকা ছাড়	কোকাকোলা/ স্প্রাইট ২ লিটারের যে কোন ২ টি কিনলে	৫০ টাকা ছাড়	ফোষ্টার ক্লারকস্ / ট্যাং জার নিলে ৫০ টাকা ছাড় *প্যাকেট নিলে ৪০ টাকা ছাড়	১৫ টাকা পিস	চালকুমড়া

৭৫০ মিলি

Helpline: 01976 555 666, 01977 492 766 (9 am to 6 pm)

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