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MIGRANTS IN KSA

Errant agents will face music

Says expat minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government will take "stern action" against the agents involved in irregularities in the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers for companies in Saudi Arabia, with the country deporting thousands, even those with valid work permits.

"We have collected the identities of a number of migrants who returned home recently. We want to see which agents sent them and how. We are trying to find any irregularities [in the recruitment process]. If found, we will take stern action. None will be spared," said Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad.

The warning comes at a time when 17,000 Bangladeshis were deported from Saudi Arabia in the first ten months of this year.

On Saturday, a total of 173 workers were deported by Saudi Arabia, according to the Brac Migration Programme, an NGO-programme which deals with migrants.

Most of the migrants alleged that they had valid visas and Iqamas (residential permits), but after deportation they now face financial hardships, having already spent Tk 3-4 lakh to go abroad.

Officials concerned said manpower brokers and recruiting agents often send workers to middle-eastern countries with so-called "free visas", which they claim will help secure jobs in any company.

Minister Imran Ahmad hinted that the recruiting agents or manpower brokers were involved in the "free visa" business.

According to Saudi law, however, it is illegal for any foreigner to work for a company that did not hire them.

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PHOTO: REUTERS

A devotee lights oil lamps as she takes part in Diwali celebrations in Dhaka yesterday. Diwali, the Festival of Lights, marks victory over evil and commemorates the time when Hindu god Lord Rama achieved victory over Ravana and returned to his kingdom Ayodhya.

Why no baby care corners in public places?

HC asks govt after lawyer, her 9-month-old child file writ

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why it should not be directed to take necessary steps to set up breast feeding and baby care corners at all public places.

After a writ petition was filed by advocate Ishrat Hasan and her nine-month-old child Umair Bin Sadi, the HC bench of Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Khandaker Diliruzzaman came up with the rule.

The court asked the authorities concerned of the government to show cause why the women and children affairs ministry would not be ordered to formulate a guideline to establish breastfeeding and baby care corners at all work places, shopping malls, airports, bus stops and railway stations, and public, private and autonomous institutions across the country.

Ishrat had asked for the court's permission to allow her baby to be a

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Bus owners blame system for extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Company-based route permit system for buses in Dhaka city is the main cause of extortion, said Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association yesterday, demanding the system be changed.

Under the system, some four to five people form a company and register it with the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies and Firms, said an association leader.

They then seek a route permit from the Metro Regional Transport Committee and after getting those for a certain number of buses, they admit other bus owners into their company, he said.

The leader said the companies then charge the bus owners "daily fees", Association President Mashirul Rahman Ranga and its Secretary General Khondaker Enayet Ullah at a press conference at its Paribagh office refuted the allegation of collecting toll from the transport sector and said it only collected subscription fees from its members to run the organisation and its activities.

The organisation held the briefing after leaders of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya League, a relatively new platform of transport owners and workers, accused the association, and particularly its top leader Enayet Ullah, of collecting illegal toll.

Ismail Hossain Bachchu, member secretary of the Paribahan Malik-Sramik Oikya League, raised the allegation at a press briefing earlier this month.

Ranga and Enayet, however, refuted the allegations and said a vested quarter led by Bachchu, who is facing several criminal cases, including two murder cases, was conspiring to destabilise the transport sector.

They also urged the administration and the law enforcers to take immediate legal action against Bachchu.

Enayet said it was true many companies took "additional charges" from bus owners, but the association did not have full control over those companies.

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'Robber' killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narayanganj

An alleged robber was killed in a "gunfight" between law enforcers and his cohorts in Araihazar upazila of Narayanganj yesterday.

Araihazar police arrested Abu Sayed alias Chhatika, 35, in Fausa area on Saturday evening, police said.

Officer-in-Charge Nazrul Islam of Araihazar Police Station said he was an accused in eight criminal cases with different police stations in Narayanganj.

As per the information given by him, police took him on a drive in Ilumadi area around 3:00am to arrest his accomplices. As soon as they reached the spot, cohorts of Sayed started firing on the team, forcing the police to retaliate, he said.

After the gunfight, Sayed was found shot and lying on the ground. He was

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Dogs with a nose for archaeology



MAIL ONLINE

Dogs' naturally powerful sense of smell has been put to use by Croatian scientists to uncover human remains dating back to the Iron Age - nearly 3,000 years ago.

The new canine technique has uncovered six new burial chests containing human bones and artefacts along the Velebit mountains in Croatia.

Experts said the dogs can smell even ancient human remains, and noticed they could locate excavated graves even after all traces of people were removed.

Sniffer dogs could be better for archaeological excavations than even sophisticated radar techniques, due to their naturally accurate sniffing ability.

"Dogs' noses obviously don't make mistakes," says Professor Vedrana Glavaš at the University of SEE PAGE II COL 1



PRAYER TIMING OCTOBER 28

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:50 12:45 4:00 5:32 7:15
JAMAAT 5:25 1:15 4:15 5:35 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Two killed in roof collapse at coalmine

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two workers were killed and seven others injured as the roof of an under-construction building collapsed in Barapukuria coalmine site in Dinajpur yesterday.

The deceased are: Proshanta Roy, 19, of Chowhati village of Parbatipur upazila, and Akash, 36, of Malipara village of Phulbari upazila. The injured were hospitalised.

According to officials, a one-storey building, about 150m long, 40m wide, and 20m high, was being built to house a generator of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd in Parbatipur upazila.

Around 4:30pm yesterday, when the roof construction was underway, a portion of it collapsed trapping nine of the around 50 labourers working there.

Rushing to the scene, firefighters recovered two bodies from under the rubble and rescued the rest.

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A woman slips underneath a makeshift bamboo fence which has been put up to prevent jaywalking. A child and another woman wait their turn to do the same yesterday. Surprisingly, there is a footbridge (not in the picture) right above them.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

BREXIT IMPASSE

UK opposition parties outline election plan

Govt to mull other options if early vote bid fails

AGENCIES

The leaders of two British opposition parties unveiled a plan Saturday to give Prime Minister Boris Johnson the snap election he wants -- but only if EU leaders delay Brexit until January.

Johnson has tried twice to call an early election to break the deadlock in the House of Commons over Britain's departure from the European Union and will try again in a vote today.

But he needs the support of opposition MPs and they have refused to back a poll until the risk of a disorderly "no deal" Brexit on October 31 is completely removed.

Johnson was forced by law to ask EU leaders last weekend to delay Brexit after MPs refused to back the divorce terms he struck with Brussels.

EU leaders are expected to decide today or early tomorrow whether to grant the three-month delay requested, or to set another date.

The Scottish National Party (SNP) and the Liberal Democrats, who between them have 54 MPs in the 650-seat Commons, said that a three-month delay to end-January would see them put forward plans for an early election.

"If that meaningful extension is secured we will then

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