

'Get rid of syndication'

Urge recruiting agencies for sending workers to Malaysia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alliance of recruiting agencies yesterday urged both Bangladesh and Malaysia to ensure participation of all valid Bangladeshi recruiting agencies in sending workers to the Southeast Asian country.

Organising a press conference at a city hotel, members of "Baira Anti-Syndicate Grand Alliance" called on both governments to ensure dignified migration of workers under a "zero cost" policy.

Bangladesh and Malaysia signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on labour cooperation in December last year, which essentially lifts a previous moratorium on hiring Bangladeshi workers.

However, recruitment of workers has not been started yet. More than 1,400 recruiting agencies are currently enlisted at the expatriates' welfare ministry.

At the press conference, the alliance members voiced concern over the reported number of 25 agencies to be given with the opportunity to send workers to Malaysia.

They said this will deprive most agencies in the present context. They also condemned Malaysian Human Resources Minister M Saravanan's "confusing" remarks published in media over selecting recruiting agencies from Bangladesh.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, a former secretary general of Baira, said they were expecting that the market will be opened for all valid agencies after a Joint Working Group meeting between the two countries held in Dhaka on June 2.

He said in his visit to Bangladesh during the JWG meeting, Saravanan told the media that selection of recruiting agencies will be as per the decision of his country's cabinet. However, after returning to Malaysia, he reportedly said it was not an issue to be discussed in the cabinet, Shameem said.

Abul Bashar, a former president of Baira, alleged that Malaysian market has not opened yet due to "influence" of the "syndicate" of 25 recruiting agencies.

Fakhrul Islam, former finance secretary of Baira, Noor Ali, another former president of Baira, and M Tipu Sultan, president of Recruiting Agencies Oikya Parishad, among others, spoke at the event.



Malaysian market has not opened yet due to "influence" of the "syndicate" of 25 recruiting agencies. The government should look into the matter.

Abul Bashar
Former President of Baira



A rickshaw-puller carrying passengers gets caught in the sudden rain in front of TSC at Dhaka University yesterday. With the city seeing downpours over the last few days, residents have faced much trouble during their travels.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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PADMA BRIDGE 14-party brings out 'victory' procession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling 14-party alliance brought out a "victory" procession in the capital yesterday, hailing the completion of Padma Bridge project and felicitating Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for building it with domestic funds.

Criticising BNP, the alliance coordinator and Awami League adviser Amir Hossain Amu, said those who oppose the country's development as well as Padma Bridge are the "national black sheep".

Addressing a rally prior to the procession at Bangabandhu Avenue, he said after the Liberation War victory, there will be another victory celebration on June 25, when Padma Bridge will be inaugurated.

He said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina proved that the Bangalee nation can do whatever they want, as she

EC can't even dare to hold fair polls

Says Akbar Ali Khan at 8th council of Shujan

Citizens are still the "clients" of political leaders. Citizenship has not developed here. All we get is mainly by the grace of political leaders, not as a result of our rights.

BADIUL ALAM MAJUMDAR
Shujan Secretary



We are constantly falling behind in all indicators of democracy... If the major element -- good governance -- is undermined, then how will democracy exist?

ATM SHAMSUL HUDA
Former Chief Election Commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Due to the challenges facing democracy in Bangladesh, the Election Commission (EC) cannot hold fair elections nor can it even dare to do so, said former adviser to a caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan yesterday.

He made the remark at the eighth national council of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan), a civil society platform, held at an auditorium of Institute of Diploma Engineers, Bangladesh.

Shujan placed a 21-point "national charter" and urged people as well as all political parties to unite to ensure that the upcoming national election is fair and neutral.

Akbar talked about four challenges facing democracy in Bangladesh.

He said while many countries are adopting a "proportional majority" as a tool to form the government, Bangladesh is still depending on the majority of

votes.

"If there were a bicameral parliament instead of a single chamber system, the opposition's voice would be amplified," he mentioned.

Bicameral literally means "two-Chamber". A bicameral parliament is one that contains two separate assemblies.

"Moreover, in this country, only one person holds all the power, and the prime minister holds the party leader's post as well. As a result, the prime minister has to focus on the party's interests, and people become deprived of their rights," he added.

Akbar said in neighbouring India, elections are held for two to three months. Deputy commissioners keep the ballot boxes during the whole period. "Is there a single DC in Bangladesh who could keep ballot boxes for one night? They have lost their reputation, and no political parties trusts them."

The daylong conference was inaugurated by prominent

economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud. According to him, the prerequisite for governance is to ensure accountability at all levels of the government's structure.

"Prioritising economic development and then democracy is not the way to go," he said.

Retired judge Abdul Matin said the civil society must do what even the media cannot.

"As an organisation, Shujan should continue monitoring the government's activities and find loopholes inside it, or what it is doing wrong," he said.

Former Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said at a time when all protesting organisations are whimpering, Shujan is the only one that has kept its voice loud.

"We are constantly falling behind in all indicators of democracy... If the major element of democracy -- good governance -- is undermined, then how will democracy exist?" he asked.

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Remain alert to protect minorities Demands Oikya Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday called upon the government to take immediate steps to stop attacks on minorities and ensure exemplary punishment for the attackers.

They made the demand at a human chain formed in front of Jatiya Press Club.

The front organisations of the parishad -- Bangladesh Ainjibi Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Shikhhak Oikya Parishad and Mahila, Juba and Chhatra oikya parishads jointly organised the event.

At the event, the protesters also made some demands, which included immediately enacting minority protection law, forming a national

DEMANDS

- Punishment for attackers
- Minority protection law
- National minority commission
- Law on eliminating discrimination

minority commission and enacting a law on eliminating discrimination.

Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik, president of Shikhhak Oikya Parishad, said people from minority communities were recently attacked in Chattogram's Banskhal and Barishal's Uzirpur areas. Miscreants vandalised their homes, and some people were injured in the attacks.

Prof Arun Kumar Goswami, was chief guest at the event. He demanded proper investigation into those incidents.

Monindra Kumar Nath, acting general secretary of the Hindu-Bouddha-Christian Oikya Parishad, its central leaders Kajal Debath, Subrata Chowdhury and Bashudeb Dhar among others spoke at the event.

The rally was followed by a protest procession that paraded different city roads.

Increase price of tobacco products Demand Progga, ATMA

Demand Progga, ATMA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-tobacco campaigners yesterday demanded that the government increase retail price for premium-tier cigarettes to Tk 150 per 10 sticks while passing the 2022-2023 national budget in the parliament to further discourage smoking.

They made the comment at a post-budget press conference jointly organised by Knowledge for Progress (Progga) and Anti-Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA) at the capital's Dhaka Reporters Unity.

They proposed for setting Tk 97.5 as supplementary duty for 10-stick premium-tier cigarettes, said a press release. They also proposed setting Tk 50 in retail price for 10 sticks of low-tier cigarettes and specific supplementary duty at Tk 32.5 in the finalised budget.

In the proposed budget, the retail price for 10-stick premium-tier cigarettes have been set at Tk 142, an increase of 5.18 percent from the previous price, said

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PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 19



	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	4-05	12-45	5-00	6-50	8-15
Jamaat	4-40	1-15	5-15	6-55	8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



In the course of constructing a drain, DSCC dug up a large section of this footpath at Bailey Road intersection, leaving little to no room for pedestrians to tread on, for almost two weeks now. With the continued downpour in the city, there is much concern for the safety of pedestrians who use this walkway. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

NU postpones exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National University yesterday postponed the ongoing Bachelor of Education (B ed) Honours examination until further notice due to the worsening flood situation.

The NU authorities in a statement said they are postponing the first year (2nd semester) and second year (4th semester) examinations of 2020.

The revised schedule will be communicated to all concerned later.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education on the same day asked the authorities of all schools and colleges in the flood-affected areas to get their establishments ready for sheltering people.

The government on Friday postponed this year's SSC and equivalent exams.

Bangladesh-India JCC talks today

STAR REPORT

The Joint Consultative Commission (JCC), talks between Bangladesh and India, is set to be held today. Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen reached New Delhi yesterday on an official visit to take part in the event.

Tomorrow, Momen will meet Indian Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, before returning to Dhaka.

The JCC meeting, being held after two years, will focus on issues centring connectivity, river-water sharing, investments and security partnership. The last JCC meeting was held virtually in September 2020 due to the pandemic.

A month ago, Momen met Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in India's Guwahati and sought suggestions to import crude oil from Russia by managing sanctions, as Bangladesh is keen to ensure energy security.

The two countries have launched a number of connectivity initiatives, including the revival of rail links, which were suspended after the 1965 India-Pakistan war, and river routes that provide access to Bangladeshi ports for north-eastern Indian states.

Other issues expected to be brought up in the meeting are security matters, development cooperation, and consular and cultural issues.