





LABOUR RECRUITMENT

MoU with Malaysia likely to be amended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existing Memorandum of Understanding with Malaysia on sending Bangladeshi workers to the Southeast Asian country is likely to be amended to make the recruitment process easier.

After a meeting with visiting Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail yesterday at the Probashi Kalyan Bhavan in the capital, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad told journalists that a Joint Working Group meeting in this regard may take place this month.

"The [Malaysia] government is new. There will be significant changes in whatever issues we had agreed upon with the previous government. He [Saifuddin] assured us of this."

Earlier at a joint briefing, the Malaysian home minister said both parties have agreed that there is an urgent need for senior officials from both countries to sit and look into the contents of the MoU that need to be revised, reviewed and, if need be, revoked.

However, none of the ministers disclosed what issues in the MoU, which was never made public, would be changed.

Signed in December 2021, the memorandum lifted a suspension on recruitment imposed by Malaysia in 2018 and made way for sending workers under a new arrangement from August last year.

Since then till December, nearly 50,000 Bangladeshi workers have migrated to Malaysia, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



A young reader looking at foreign comics at the Ekushey Boi Mela on the Bangla Academy premises in the capital. With parks and playgrounds slowly becoming uncommon, this fair ensures that young minds are exposed to knowledge during their leisure time over the weekends or after school. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on page 3.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Ex-Pakistan president Musharraf dies in Dubai



REUTERS, Islamabad/Dubai

Pakistani former President Pervez Musharraf died yesterday following a prolonged illness at a hospital in Dubai, after years in self-imposed exile.

Pakistan's military and the country's mission in the United Arab Emirates announced the death of the former army chief, 79, who was pushed from power in 2008.

"I can confirm that he passed away this morning," Shazia Siraj, spokesperson for Pakistan's consulate in Dubai and embassy in Abu Dhabi, told Reuters.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

GM Quader can resume duties as JP chair: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday cleared the way for GM Quader to resume performing his duties as the chairman of Jatiya Party.



The HC stayed for eight weeks a Dhaka court order that on January 19 prohibited him from taking part in any party activities.

It also issued a rule asking Ziaul Haque Mridha, a former JP lawmaker, who challenged GM Quader's role in the party, and other authorities concerned to explain why the lower court order should not be scrapped.

The HC bench of Justice Muhammad Abdul Hafiz issued the order and rule following an appeal filed by GM Quader challenging the lower court order.

GM Quader's lawyer Sheikh Muhammed Serajul Islam told The Daily Star that there was no legal bar for his client to discharge duties as JP chairman following the HC order.

On January 19 this year a Dhaka court rejected the appeal submitted for lifting the injunction order barring GM Quader from taking any political decision regarding the party.

The Supreme Court on December 14 last year ruled that GM Quader cannot

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

Per capita income misses estimate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's per capita income stood at \$2,793 in fiscal 2021-22 -- \$31 lower than the initial estimate as the steep depreciation of the taka messed up the government's numbers.

However, the per capita income for the year is an increase of 7.8 percent from a year earlier, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Similarly, the per capita gross domestic product -- a measure of the value of all final goods and services produced in a certain period -- was lower than the provisional estimate of \$2,723.

The per capita GDP last fiscal year was \$2,687, up 9.1 percent year on year.

The continuous depreciation of taka against the dollar might have deflated the estimates.

But the final figures were lower than the provisional estimates under almost all overheads.

GDP growth was 15

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

TK 2,000CR LAUNDERING

Fresh CID probe finds 30 involved

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The Criminal Investigation Department has found involvement of at least 30 people in laundering Tk 2,000 crore while investigating a case filed against two Faridpur brothers Sajjad Hossain Barkat and Imtiaz Hasan Rubel.

The number of people involved in the crime may rise as investigation is still going on, said CID officials aware of the fresh probe being carried out following a court order.

"We have almost completed the probe and may submit a fresh charge sheet within a month," Humayun Kabir, special superintendent of CID's financial crime unit, told The Daily Star recently.

The CID filed the case with Kafrul Police Station in June 2020 against Barkat and Rubel, also leaders of Faridpur Awami League.

They are accused of laundering Tk 2,000 crore amassed through tender manipulation, drug smuggling, land grabbing and extortion. They are part of a syndicate led by former minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain's brother Khandaker Mohtesam Hossain Babar.

Twelve people, including Babar, Barkat and Rubel, were arrested in the case and six of them made confessional statements before courts mentioning names of 52 people.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Uttam Kumar Biswas, then investigation officer of the case, submitted a charge sheet against 10 people, including the three, before a Dhaka court in March last year.

The court, however, ordered a further probe on September 1 last year, saying the charge sheet was submitted without following the proper procedure.

The court said two accused were left out of the charge sheet even though they confessed their involvement in the crime. And several others were not included in the charge sheet

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

AL to finalise candidate tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League Parliamentary Party is going to hold a meeting tomorrow to finalise the party's candidate for the 22nd presidential election slated for February 19.

It will be organised at the meeting room of the ruling party in the Jatiya Sangsad at 7:30pm, said AL insiders.

Incumbent President Abdul Hamid's term will expire on April 24.

Nomination papers have to be submitted to the Election Commission for the post of president on February 12. The next day, the papers will be scrutinised.

If there is more than one candidate, the presidential election will be held in parliament on February 19. Members of parliament will cast votes to elect the president.

The main opposition in parliament, Jatiya Party, already said they would not nominate anyone for the president post. And since

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

‘Oldest animal fossil’ unearthed in India’s Bhopal

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A sensational "fossil" discovery in 2020 of a rare 550 million-year-old life form has turned out to be "a case of mistaken identity," according to a new study.

The "fossil" found at the Bhimbetka Rock Shelters cave site in India's Bhopal city was declared as one that belonged to the primitive animal Dickinsonia tenuis.

New research, published recently in the journal Gondwana Research, however, found it was just the imprint of a recently decayed "giant beehive". The 2020

discovery was also published in the same journal.

It was widely reported as evidence that Dickinsonia -- one of the earliest animals to have lived on Earth -- was likely present in the Indian subcontinent at a time when India, Australia, South America, Africa, and Antarctica were a single landmass.

Scientists behind the earlier study had also argued that the Indian finding resembled a Dickinsonia tenuis fossil previously found in South Australia.

It was hence suggested that the supercontinent Gondwanaland may have been assembled 550

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

DMCH FIRE

Patient, 60, dies losing oxygen support

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 60-year-old cardiac patient, kept under oxygen support, died yesterday as he was evacuating the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a panic after a fire broke out there.

Around 2:45pm, the fire originated from the air-conditioning unit outside the kidney department on the third floor of the DMCH's new building.

Two firefighting units reached the spot at 3:04pm and the fire was doused at 3:12pm. Khaleda Yasmin, a duty officer at Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star.

Akbar Hossain, ward boy of the kidney department, said there were 30 patients in the department and they were all unharmed.

The deceased, Jasim Uddin, from Cumilla's Titus

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2



Vendors at the capital's Mohammadia Housing Society are stocking up on 12kg LPG cylinders, which are selling at a premium for a supply crunch stemming from the strain on foreign currency reserves. Although the price of the 12kg bottle has been fixed at Tk 1,498 for this month, consumers are paying more. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Sri Lanka likely to pay back \$200m by Sept

Says Momen on return from Colombo

UNB, Dhaka

Sri Lanka is expected to pay back the \$200 million it borrowed from Bangladesh in a currency swap agreement in May 2021 by September as the island nation's economic situation is improving, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"Sri Lanka is gradually doing better. They are recovering slowly. We have given them until September [to repay the loan]," Momen told journalists yesterday at state guest house Padma on his return from Colombo.

Momen was a guest at Sri Lanka's 75th Independence Day celebrations.

Sri Lanka was supposed to repay the \$200 million in March but the island nation sought more time. Subsequently, Bangladesh Bank gave Sri Lanka six more months.

"The new government there is running the country pretty well."

The Sri Lankan government is hopeful of recovering from its deep economic problem with support from the International Monetary Fund.

The two parties have recently reached a staff-level agreement on a 48-month \$2.9 billion loan programme that will also help the beleaguered nation to secure short-

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3