

LABOUR EXPORT President seeks support from Malaysia

BSS, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin has sought support of the Malaysian government to recruit more manpower from Bangladesh.

The president raised the labour export issue as Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who was on a six-hour visit to Dhaka, paid a courtesy call on him at Bangabhaban yesterday evening.

The president also called upon the Malaysian government to provide all-out cooperation in the "economic reform" programme of the current interim government.

President's Press Secretary Md Joynal Abedin told BSS that during the meeting they exchanged views on various issues of bilateral interest, especially trade, investment, economic, technical cooperation, the Rohingya issue, and labour market.

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With Durga Puja approaching, saree stores across the country are bustling with customers. At this store on Bailey Road in Dhaka, customers can be seen browsing through a vibrant selection of sarees yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Situation may worsen due to rain

HELEMUL ALAM

The ongoing rainy weather is expected to persist for the next three days, raising concerns about the worsening dengue situation, which is already at a dangerous level.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, light to moderate rain, along with gusty winds, is likely to affect most parts of Rangpur, Dhaka, Mymensingh, and Sylhet divisions.

Many areas in Rajshahi, Khulna, Barishal, and Chattogram divisions will also experience moderate to heavy rainfall over the next 24 hours, starting from Friday. This weather pattern is expected to continue for the following 24 hours.

Experts warn that such intermittent rain, coupled with high humidity, creates ideal conditions for Aedes aegypti mosquitoes, the primary carrier of the dengue virus, to breed. The rainy weather also increases the mosquitoes' biting tendencies, which will further escalate the dengue crisis.

The Directorate General of Health Services reported 34,438 dengue hospitalisations this year until yesterday morning, with 177 deaths recorded during this period.

Entomologist Professor Kabirul Bashar from Jahangirnagar University cautioned that the situation will likely worsen in October if urgent measures are not taken.

A field-level survey conducted by Prof Bashar indicated a high density of Aedes mosquitoes in several areas of Dhaka, with the Breteau Index -- a measure used to predict dengue outbreaks -- showing values over 20 in most areas, and over 70 in some, which is considered highly dangerous.

Prof Bashar also identified a high mosquito density

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AHMED DEEPTO

Amid the ongoing surge in dengue cases and hospitalisations across Bangladesh, scientists from the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research have reported that the DEN-2 virus remains the dominant strain this season.

While individuals previously infected with one of the four dengue serotypes have some level of immunity, a second infection often results in more severe

complications, experts warned.

Meanwhile, a dengue vaccine that has undergone Phase II clinical trials in Bangladesh is showing favourable results. However, despite the vaccine's potential, the Phase III clinical trial has yet to begin due to a lack of funding, according to scientists from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b).

Meanwhile, this final trial phase is already underway in countries such as India and Brazil. The vaccine is expected to take three

to five years to become available in Bangladesh, the scientists said.

The tetravalent dengue vaccine candidate, TV005, has been found to be effective against all four dengue serotypes, including DEN-2, which currently prevails.

Despite its success in early trials, Bangladesh faces challenges in securing the financial backing necessary for further study and development.

The vaccine, developed by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), has been evaluated by the University of Vermont Vaccine Training Centre since 2009.

Clinical trials in Bangladesh are led by icddr,b in collaboration with Larner College of Medicine at the University of Vermont.

The results from Phase II trials were recently published in The Lancet Infectious Diseases.

Although discussions are ongoing with India's Panacea Biotech to fund the trials in Bangladesh, the response has been lukewarm.

A senior icddr,b official revealed that Panacea has shown little interest in financing the Phase III trials locally.

"Without adequate funding, the trial remains stalled," the official said, requesting anonymity.

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Form rights commission for women

Demands Nari Sanghati

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nari Sanghati, a women's welfare organisation, yesterday demanded the formation of a women's rights commission to ensure equality, justice, and security for women in all spheres of life.

They came up with the demand at a rally held in front of the National Museum in Shahbagh at 4:00pm.

"The government has already formed several commissions for various reforms, yet we have heard no discussion about establishing a women's rights commission," said Nari Sanghati President Shyamoli Shil.

The platform also stressed the need for reforms in inheritance and family laws, justice for victims of rape and sexual violence, and an end to misogynistic actions.

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Withdraw military rule from CHT Prof Anu Muhammad tells discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Withdrawal of military rule from the Chittagong Hill Tracts is essential for the region's democratic transformation, said economist Prof Anu Muhammad yesterday.

Speaking at a roundtable titled "Establishing Democratic Governance and People's Rights, Dignity, and Power in the CHT" at Jatiya Press Club, organised by the United People's Democratic Front, he urged the interim government to prioritise this issue and break from the policies of previous administrations.

To achieve democratic transformation, the interim government must take this issue seriously and remove military rule from the CHT, he said.

He said many demands proposed by the CHT Basic Rights Conservation Committee after the 1992 Logang massacre remain unfulfilled and are now part of the UPDF's current demands.

Anu Muhammad explained that the term "settler" emerged during the regime of President Ziaur Rahman as part of a government programme to relocate poor, landless Bangalees to the CHT.

This, he said, was a military project designed to reduce the indigenous population to a minority, creating an artificial conflict between indigenous people and settlers.

Criticising the government's neglect of CHT issues, he pointed out that many indigenous people were displaced by the Kaptai Dam during the Pakistan era.

Despite their participation in the 1971 Liberation War, their rights were not secured afterwards, he said.

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Three students huddle under a single umbrella as they walk home after school, smiling and laughing despite the rain. While many in Dhaka find rainy days a hassle, for these friends, it's a chance to enjoy and have fun. This moment was captured in the New Eskaton area yesterday afternoon.

Closed since August 5, safari park in shambles

Animals looted, properties vandalised on Aug 5; repair costs could reach Tk 10cr

MONJUR HAQUE

Shuttered tea stalls, closed restaurants, vacant parking spaces, and a deserted entrance—once abuzz with tourists, the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Safari Park in Gazipur, the second largest of its kind in the country, has seen no crowd for around two months.

Visiting the spot on Thursday, this correspondent came across just one battery-run three-wheeler at the park's stoppage.

"Tourists ask us to bring them here, then they see the park is closed and fight with us in disappointment. So, I tell them beforehand and see them returning disheartened," said Zakir Miah, the vehicle's driver, who was sipping a cup of tea at the only operating tea stall in front of the park.

Most shops in the area have seen almost no customers since the park's closure on August 5, said the owner of the tea stall, Lal Miah.

Qayum Mia, an 80-year-old local hawker sitting in front of the ticket counter, suggested this correspondent enter through the alternative gate no 2.



Inside, this correspondent saw vandalised minibuses near the gate. The children's park area was seen in ruins, while display maps, the natural museum, butterfly corner, information centre and food corner were in shambles.

According to the park's assistant forest conservator, Rafiqul Islam, various birds and other animals were looted, while several spots were damaged following the fall of the Awami League regime on August 5. The park has been closed since then. "Two peacocks and 10 macaws were looted from the park. Besides, property worth around Tk 5 crore was damaged. Repairing costs would round off to about Tk 10 crore," he said.

Nevertheless, there is adequate food supply for the animal currently, he said.

He said the higher authorities will soon decide how long it would take for renovation, he added.

Meanwhile, some new animals have been introduced to the park's collection.

An elephant has been brought in from Gopalganj's Kotalipara last week, taking the park's total count of this mammal to nine, said Mostafizur Rahman, a veterinary surgeon at the park.

Thirteen spotted deer, five male and eight female, have also arrived at the park last week from Gazipur's Kaliakoir.

Ex-AL lawmaker Shahidul held

UNB, Dhaka

Detectives of Dhaka Metropolitan Police arrested Shahidul Islam Milon, former Awami League lawmaker from Jashore Sadar constituency, in Dhaka's Gulistan area on Thursday.

Talibur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of the DMP, confirmed the matter saying that a Detective Branch team arrested him from Phulbaria area. Milon, a freedom fighter and also president of Jashore district unit of AL, was taken to Gulshan police station after arrest, he said.

He is accused in several cases over the attacks on the students and people during the mass uprising, the police official said.