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JOB IN MALAYSIA 18,000 workers in depths of despair

Despite having visas, they have not been able to join work for failure to enter Malaysia within deadline

MD ABBAS

Frustration is mounting among the over 18,000 Bangladeshis who missed a deadline to fly to Malaysia for work around eight months ago.

They secured visas and clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) after paying hefty sums of money to recruitment agencies.

However, a ticket shortage triggered by huge demand ahead of the May 31 deadline last year led to the situation surrounding the workers.

Even after having tickets, some others failed to travel to Malaysia at that time since the Malaysian government blacklisted the companies that hired them.

The aspiring Bangladeshi migrant workers launched protests multiple times, with the latest held yesterday, as their dream of working in Malaysia and sending money to their families became more and more distant.

An uncertainty over when the breadwinners will be

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Workers desperate to go to Malaysia march towards the expatriates' welfare ministry. Some of the protesters say they spent up to Tk 6 lakh to be able to work in Malaysia but the recruitment agents failed to arrange their flights before deadline. The photo was taken on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue near Bangla Motor yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Laid-off Beximco workers' protest turns violent

Vehicles, Grameen Fabrics factory set on fire, journos attacked

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Parts of a factory and several vehicles were set ablaze as protests by laid-off workers against the closure of 16 Beximco Industrial Park units in Gazipur turned violent yesterday.

The fire at the Grameen Fabrics factory in Tantuibari was brought under control around 10:20pm, said Isarul Haque, duty officer of Sarabo Fire Station. Five units of the fire service rushed to the scene after the fire started in the evening.

Inspector AK Azad of Gazipur Industrial Police told The Daily Star that the fire was set to the ground floor of the five-storey building.

The workers have been demonstrating since Beximco laid off nearly 40,000 workers of 16 apparel units in mid-December last year, citing a lack of export orders for its garment and textile factories. The layoffs affected over 57 percent of Beximco's workforce.

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If govt fails to be neutral, it cannot hold election

Says Fakhrul in interview with BBC Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the interim government fails to be neutral, it cannot hold the election, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday. Then a neutral government would be needed, he said.

He added that questions of neutrality might arise as "what we are now seeing is that students are considering forming a political party."

"If representatives of these students are part of this government, neutrality cannot be maintained. If they think they can hold elections keeping their representatives in the government, political parties will not accept it," Fakhrul said in an interview with BBC Bangla.

He said the BNP wants the election as early as possible. "Based on our past experiences with caretaker governments, we believe this is not an impossible task. If the government wants to hold an election in June, July, or August, it will be able to do so."

He, however, did not mention any specific time frame for the polls.

Asked what their course of action will



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Trump targets US diversity scheme

Threatens private sector probes, touts \$500b AI project

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump escalated his campaign against diversity programmes on Tuesday by pressuring the private sector to join the initiative, ordering aviation officials to review diversity hires and telling government DEI employees they would be placed on paid leave.

The measures come one day after Trump on his first day in office issued a series of executive orders to end diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes, which attempt to promote opportunities for women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people and other traditionally underrepresented groups.

Civil rights advocates have argued such programmes are necessary to address longstanding inequities and structural racism.

Trump's administration fired Coast Guard chief Linda Fagan -- the first woman to lead a US military service -- with an official blaming her "leadership deficiencies" and an "excessive focus" on diversity programmes.

The president withdrew Secret Service protection for former US national security advisor John Bolton, the target of an alleged Iranian assassination plot, with whom he fell out. "He was a very dumb person," said Trump.

He also vowed to hit the European Union with tariffs and said his administration was discussing a 10 percent punitive duty on Chinese imports because fentanyl is being sent from China to the US via Mexico and Canada. However, China yesterday vowed to defend its "national interests" against tariff threats from Trump.

In a new executive order issued on Tuesday, Trump revoked executive orders dating as far back as 1965 on environmental actions, equal employment opportunities and encouragement to federal contractors to achieve workforce balancing on race, gender and religion, reports Reuters.

The Trump executive order seeks to dissuade private companies that



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BNP, Khelafat Majlis agree on calls for polls within this year

UNB, Dhaka

BNP and Khelafat Majlis have agreed on seven issues, including holding the national election by 2025 and strengthening national unity to prevent the re-emergence of the fallen fascists.

"We have agreed on seven points, including the quick withdrawal of all false cases against the leaders and workers of the political parties that were part of the movement. In light of this, we will work especially to achieve unity among the Islamic parties and to form national unity with all," Khelafat Majlis Secretary General Ahmed Abdul Kader said yesterday after a meeting with BNP.

The nine-member delegation, led by Khelafat Majlis Ameer Maulana Abdul Basit Azad, held an hour-long meeting with BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan at the BNP chairperson's Gulshan office.

Abdul Kader said they focused on maintaining the national unity achieved through the July-August mass uprising.

However, he noted that some political parties' statements and activities go against the spirit of national unity. "Our stance is in favour of unity, not division. It is important to unite now for the sake of the nation. That is why we held talks with BNP... we agreed with them on some issues."

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Israel presses on with raid in West Bank

Shooting, explosions reported in Jenin; 20 Palestinians detained

AGENCIES

A Palestinian official reported shooting and explosions in the flashpoint West Bank town of Jenin yesterday as Israeli forces pressed on with a raid that the military described as a "counterterrorism" operation.

"The situation is very difficult," Kamal Abu al-Rub, the governor of Jenin, told AFP.

"The occupation army has bulldozed all the roads leading to the Jenin camp, and leading to the Jenin Governmental Hospital... There is shooting and explosions," he added.

On Tuesday, Israeli forces launched an operation in Jenin which Palestinian officials said killed 10 people, just days after a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect in the Gaza Strip.

According to Abu al Rub, Israeli forces detained around 20 people from villages near Jenin. The Israeli military said it had launched a "counterterrorism operation" in the area, and had "hit over 10 terrorists".

"Additionally, aerial strikes on terror infrastructure sites were conducted and numerous explosives planted on the routes by the terrorists were dismantled," it said in a statement yesterday. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz vowed to continue the assault.

"It is a decisive operation aimed at eliminating terrorists in the camp," Katz said in a statement yesterday, adding that the military would not allow a "terror front" to be established there.

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All roads leading to Jenin camp bulldozed
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Israeli defence minister vows to continue assault
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900 aid trucks enter Gaza under truce

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2 stabbed, 'Tk 1cr snatched' in Gulshan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A forex dealer and his cousin have been stabbed and the attackers allegedly made off with Tk 1 crore in the city's Gulshan.

A case was filed last night over the attack on Abdul Kader Sikdar, 30, owner of City Monetary Exchange in Gulshan-2 and his cousin Amir Hamza, 25, in front of Gulshan-2 DCC Market around 9:00pm on Tuesday.

Kader's brother Mintu Sikdar told The Daily Star the attackers intercepted the victims when Kader was returning home to Gulshan 1 on a motorcycle with Amir.

He said that the attackers used rods and sharp weapons, injuring the victims severely.

Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of Dhaka Medical College Hospital Police Outpost, said that two individuals injured by sharp weapons were brought in from the Gulshan area at night. After receiving first aid, they were taken to another hospital by their relatives. The family said the victims were admitted to United Hospital in Gulshan.

Dulal Molla, a relative of Kader, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station, according to Sub-Inspector Ujjol Chakrabarty.

The case's investigation officer,

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Bangladesh players celebrate their 18-run victory against Scotland in their last Group D fixture of the ICC Women's U-19 World Cup at the YSD-UKM Cricket Oval in Bangi, Selangor yesterday. A second win in three matches helped the Sumaiya Akter-led side finish the group in second position behind Australia and confirm a place in the Super 6 stage of the tournament.

PHOTO: ICC

C'NAWABGANJ BORDER Only farmers allowed within 150 yards

Agree BGB, BSF at flag meeting after tension flared

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

The Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday agreed on restricting access to all except farmers within 150 yards of the border.

The decision was made during a sector commander-level courtesy meeting between the BGB and BSF held at the Sonamasjid BOP conference room in Shilganj upazila of Chapainawabganj, according to a press release from the 59 BGB Battalion.

Both sides reached a consensus on three additional issues to ensure peaceful coexistence, said Lt Col Golam Kibria, commanding officer of the 59 BGB Battalion.

The issues include resolving any border-related problems through discussion, taking measures to prevent border-related propaganda or rumours, and discouraging people living near the border from engaging in illegal trespassing and drug peddling, the BGB

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