

## Malaysian racket wants to control BAIRA

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The 25-member Bangladeshi recruiting agency (BRA) syndicate, which is controlling the worker sending market of Malaysia, is trying to take control over the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agency (BAIRA), an apex body of the recruiting agencies, in its upcoming elections under the patronisation of powerful quarters to silence its other members raising voices against its illegal activities.

Allegations of purchasing votes have been arisen against the syndicate to take over the control. Same time, giving pressure from influential quarters and commitments of allowing the agencies to work as sub-agent, the syndicate is also trying to manage the voters to overcome the BAIRA polls would be held on Saturday (September 3) in the Wasis Hall of Hotel Sonargaon in Dhaka, according to the BAIRA sources.

In the election, its 181 members out of its 1042 voters have been vying for the posts of 27 executive committee (EC) members under three panels and individually. The EC members will elect their office bearers after the polls.

In the polls, the leaders of anti-syndicate agencies are leading two panels – Abul Bashar and Ali Haider Chowdhury led BAIRA Sammilito Oikya Parishad and Dr. Mohammad Faruque and Golam Mostafa Babul led Sammilito Samonnay Parishad, while Ruhul Amin Swapan, the key person of the 25-agency syndicate, is leading the BAIRA Sammilito Ganatantrik Jote. BAIRA's founder Noor Ali is backing the Sammilito Oikya Parishad.

According to the allegations, this syndicate is so powerful that the general members

of BAIRA have now become the hostages in their hands. The syndicate is trying to lure the other members to bring them under their umbrella through various means in a bid to continue their monopoly of manpower business.

When Bangladesh is encouraging its citizens living in different countries including Malaysia to send remittance to bolster its foreign reserve, the syndicate is desperate to establish their control over BAIRA.

A number of BAIRA members told this correspondent preferring anonymity that the syndicate wants to manipulate the biennial elections to seize the control over BAIRA. They have already started luring the weak members to vote for them in the name of various promises including hefty amount of money.

Earlier, this same syndicate carried out their syndication in Malaysian recruitment process by depriving about 1,500 recruiting agencies.

Some six years ago proprietor of Catharsis International Ruhul Amin Swapan in collaboration with Malaysian partner Dato Amin Bin Abdun Noor formed the syndicate with other 10 like-minded agencies. During that period this syndicate realised Tk 1.5 lakh from each worker for visa processing.

It is alleged that the syndicate through various means laundered several thousand crore taka to foreign countries. Later, when Mahathir Mohammad assumed power, he dissolved the syndicate and ordered to bring them to justice.

Even the then Expatriate Secretary Anita Halder lodged a case with the Anti-Corruption Commission against the syndicate including Ruhul Amin. But it is alleged that the case did not see the light due to the power of money.

But Bangladesh loses its image in the manpower sector because of this syndicate and Malaysia stopped taking workers from the country because of such irregularities and corruptions.

When Mahathir resigned, this vested quarter again becomes active to re-run their illegal activities in Malaysia. Ruhul Amin again comes to the front and some months ago formed another syndicate comprising of 25 like-minded BRAs.

Though the Malaysian government has fixed the cost of labour at Tk78,000 but in reality the syndicate is realizing Tk 3.5 lakh to four lakh taka from each worker.

This syndicate has also connection with SPPA.

Due to the illegal activities, the BAIRA members and the workers have also expressed their resentment and informed to the concerned authority but no redress. Now this syndicate is trying to take control of BAIRA so that none can raise voices against them.

As part of this, they are managing the voters through various means and offering various promises including making partners of the sub-agents of 25-BRAs syndicate and medical centers, it is alleged.

The syndicate ringleader started his career as an agent and now he possesses several crore takas including assets in Canada, Dubai and Malaysia. There is allegation of money laundering against the syndicate boss.

The members demanded immediate actions against the syndicate through unbiased and proper investigation to save the manpower sector, the lifeline of country's economy.

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