

Recruiters demand syndicate-free hiring to Malaysia

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Former leaders of Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA) are worried that the Malaysian labour market for Bangladeshis might slip into the grip of rouse syndication.

They claimed that a syndicate of 25 recruiting agencies is trying to call the shots from behind to sway the situation in their favour.

According to them, BAIRA's former secretary general Ruhul Amin Swapan, also proprietor of Catharsis International, is the kingpin of this syndicate.

Their malpractice is depriving scores of general businessmen in this sector of sending migrant labour overseas, thereby incurring a huge loss as witnessed previously in 2016.

At a press conference held on Wednesday (27 April) under the banner of BAIRA Anti-Syndicate Grand Alliance at Jatiya Press Club, leaders of the recruiting agencies demanded that the licences of all syndicated recruiting agencies including Swapan's be revoked and they be brought to book.

Ali Haider Chowdhury, organiser of the grand alliance and former secretary general of BAIRA, presented a written statement while former BAIRA president Abul Bashir, former secretary general Shamim Ahmed Chowdhury Noman replied various questions from the media.

Former BAIRA vice presidents Shahadat Hossain and Abul Barkat, former finance secretary Fakhurul Islam, Recruiting Agency Unity Council president M Tipu Sultan and Secretary General Arifur Rahman were present at the programme.

The press conference was organised to brief the media on the latest development of reopening labour market without any syndication.

The BAIRA leaders demanded that Bangladeshi labour be sent to Malaysia following the same method as is done for sending the migrant workers to 13 other countries and there should be a level-playing field when it comes to manpower export.

They sought the intervention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the Malaysian government and all parties concerned to improve the situation.

Abul Bashar, former president of BAIRA, said earlier the migration cost of workers increased several times due to the syndication of 10 recruiting agencies.

“If it is syndicated again, the cost will increase more. In addition, those involved in the syndicate have already laundered money to various countries, including Canada,” mentioned the leader.

He argued that in the past many of the syndicate members built homes in Begumpara, Canada. Instead of taking only Tk 36,000 from the migrants, they charged Tk 3 to Tk 4 lakh from them as migration cost.

They are still on the prowl to forge syndication and manipulate the market, claimed Bashar.

“The Malaysian market is not opening because of their misdeeds. I ask the government to cancel their licences,” he made a kind request.

“Let a sedition case be filed against them. Let them be given exemplary punishment so none will dare to commit such crime in future.”

Due to syndication, migration cost increases manifold; manpower exporters launder money, and if they get such opportunity again, Bangladesh may run the risk of bankruptcy like Sri Lanka in future, Bashar pointed out.

In his address, Ali Haider Chowdhury said some Malaysians are trying to make Bangladesh a ‘money making machine’ with the help of some local cliques.

“Syndication will lead to irregularities, corruption and hike in migration cost as before. Hundreds of manpower traders will be deprived of having due opportunity to do business and the labour market will descent into anarchy,” he explained.

Haider stated that Malaysia is hiring workers from 13 other countries. In that case, it would be disgraceful for the hiring country to take workers from Bangladesh only through the syndicate.

Former secretary general of BAIRA Shamim Ahmed Chowdhury Noman said the government doesn’t want this syndication; traders don’t want it now, nor did they have it earlier; all valid licencees must have a level-playing field.

Recruiting Agency Unity Council president Tipu Sultan maintained that except for those who formed 10-member syndicate in the past, all are in the new 25-member syndicate.

“They are led by Ruhul Amin Swapan and we want a syndicate-free labour market for all countries,” hoped the leader.

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