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At a loss in Lebanon

Bangladeshi migrants stranded with unemployment, low wage amid Covid-19 outbreak

PORIMOL PALMA

With no jobs or low wages for months in crisis-hit Lebanon, Bangladeshi migrants are now borrowing money from home for their survival. As coronavirus spreading fast in the middle-eastern country and businesses are closing down, their future has become further uncertain.

Abdul Aziz Hawlader, 35, from Shariatpur could be a classic case in point.

"I have been jobless for eight months. Frustrated, I had decided to return home and applied for travel pass around five months back, but have yet to get it," he told The Daily Star from Lebanon on Sunday.

On that day, Lebanese troops began patrolling the city streets and major roads, setting up roadblocks and urging people to stay home amid official warnings that the country is struggling to contain the virus outbreak, reported Arab News.

After the number of coronavirus cases in the country rose to 248 the same day, an increase of 18 from the previous day, Interior Minister Mohammed Fahmi said, "The situation is worrying. We must save ourselves, our families and our country before it's too late."

The crisis of COVID-19 comes following months of economic crisis with an acute dollar shortage leading banks to restrict foreign currency withdrawals in the heavily dollarised economy. Thousands of employees have been laid off or had their working hours and wages slashed,

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Vehicles stuck in a long tailback on the eastern side of Bangabandhu Bridge in Tangail's Bhuapur upazila yesterday morning. Although the government suspended public transport services from yesterday as part of its efforts to contain the spread of coronavirus, many vehicles continued to ply the highway. The situation was similar on the western side of the bridge in Sirajganj Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

A leisurely day for Khaleda

Spends first day out of jail in self-quarantine

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

After getting conditional release from jail, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has spent the first day in self-quarantine and talking to relatives over Skype.

The 74-year-old former premier did not meet any party leaders and activists in her house "Firoza" as yet.

As she home-quarantined, no one but her brother Shamim Ishkandar's wife Kaniz Fatema went to meet her, family sources said.

"Madam's [Khaleda] relatives could not go to meet her as she is in home quarantine..." said one of her relatives, wishing anonymity.

Khaleda's personal aide Fatema Bagum, who accompanied her inside the jail too, is looking after her.

"She [Khaleda] could not eat anything except rice porridge [jaw bhat]. She cannot eat anything

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ENFORCING SHUTDOWN

Police excesses worry people

Suppliers of essentials, food items harassed, beaten up

MUNTAKIM SAAD and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Some police personnel resorted to excesses while restricting people's movement and enforcing social distancing in some parts of the country yesterday.

They were seen charging truncheons on people in Tangail and Rajbari.

Similar incidents took place in Chattogram, Dinajpur, and some areas in the capital, according to media reports.

Even those who went outside to get their daily needs and an on-duty medical officer faced the wrath of those policemen, alleged victims.

Law enforcement agencies yesterday beat up and harassed delivery men of essentials and foodstuffs in various places of the country, ignoring the fact that movement of essentials is outside purview of the 10-day closure, said leading food producers and suppliers.

The incidents were reported from Sonargaon of Narayanganj, Cumilla, Chandpur, Sylhet region, and Ashulia, raising alarm bells of food producers and truckers. They said such acts would severely hamper supply chain of the essentials and commodities and increase prices.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

"We believe in peaceful co-existence"



Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora calls on Bangabandhu at his official residence on March 25, 1972.

MARCH 27, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY DECLARED

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman today spells out the non-aligned and positive neutral foreign policy of Bangladesh and says, "We are dedicated to seeking peace and to keeping ourselves out of big power politics and conflicts." He adds, "We believe in peaceful co-existence and are eager to establish friendly relations with our neighbours."

The prime minister further says that assistance from any country which wants to help Bangladesh will be accepted. But he adds that such help must be unconditional and must be extended on the

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PROTEST OVER ARREARS

One killed as jute workers clash with cops in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A man was killed and five others were injured in a clash between jute mill workers and police in Biral upazila of Dinajpur on Wednesday night.

The dead is Surat Ali, 40, a tea-vendor near the Rupali Bangla Jute Mills in the upazila, said police.

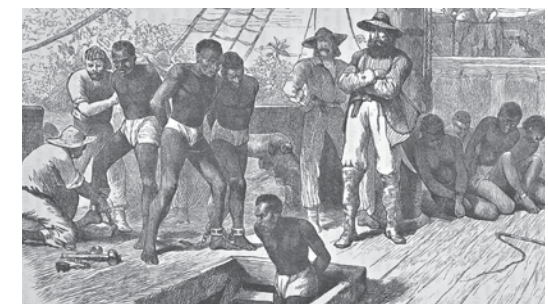
Amir Ali, a workers' leader of Rupali Bangla Jute Mills, said the mill authorities announced to shut down the mills without any prior notice amid coronavirus outbreak.

Knowing about the closure, the workers demonstrated in and around the mill demanding their three weeks' arrears, he added.

At one point, the director of the mill tried to pacify the workers with police, resulting in the clash, he added.

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Last survivor of transatlantic slave trade discovered



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

A woman called Matilda McCrear has been identified as the last known survivor of the transatlantic slave trade.

Dr Hannah Durkin of Newcastle University discovered Matilda to be the latest survivor of the Clotilda, the last slave ship to arrive in the US in 1860.

McCrear died in 1940, aged either 81 or 82, three years after Sally 'Redoshi' Smith, who was previously understood to be the last survivor of the slave ship.

Her 83-year-old grandson, Johnny Crear, had no idea about his grandmother's history until it was discovered by Dr Durkin.

"Her story gives me mixed emotions because if she hadn't been brought here, I wouldn't be here. But it's hard to read about what she experienced,"

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Consider closure of factories till April 4

BGMEA to owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday asked factory owners to consider shutting down their factories to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

The management of the factories have been asked to follow the government announced general holiday notice and keep the units closed from today till April

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PRAYER TIMING MARCH 27

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-45 12-30 4-45 6-20 7-45
JAMAAT 5-20 1-15 5-00 6-25 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

CUSTODIAL DEATH

2 policemen suspended

Allegedly tortured man to death, made it look like suicide

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Two police officers were suspended following allegations that they tortured a 55-year-old man to death at Amtali Police Station in Barguna yesterday.

The officers also allegedly hung the man's body from the ceiling to make it appear that he died by suicide.

Inspector Manoranjan Mistry and Assistant Sub Inspector Arif Hossain, both suspended after the incident, are facing an investigation, officials said.

Shanu Hawlader, 55, a farmer, died after 6:30am yesterday, three days after he was arrested. A doctor said there were multiple injury marks on his body.

Police arrested him on Monday night at his home in Kalagachia village of Amtali upazila on suspicion of being involved with a murder last year.

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MONARCH ON HIS THRONE

A black-naped monarch in his nest. The photo was taken in Gandagram village in Bogra's Shajahanpur upazila a couple of days ago.

PHOTO: MOSTAFA SHABUJ

Because they too need care

ASIFUR RAHMAN

As the country spends days in a near-lockdown situation to curb the spread of coronavirus, street animals are having to go hungry with everyone at home and all shops closed.

However, some people are making an extra effort to make sure the poor animals can also survive in this time of crisis.

On a quiet afternoon at Dhaka University's TSC area, a middle-aged man wearing a facemask and hand gloves was seen feeding a stray dog, who was evidently starving, having not been fed over the past few days.

"Don't move, little one. It will burn a bit. Everything will be okay," the man Rafiq Ahmed Dollar, 45, said to the dog as he rubbed some disinfectant on its back.

The rickshaw that Rafiq travelled had piles of biscuit packets, some emptied, some still full. While he cuddled and fed the dog, two more came to him, wagging their tails, in hope of some love and food for themselves. Rafiq put his hand in his side bag and brought out another packet of biscuits to feed the two new furry friends he made.

Asked, Rafiq, a businessman of a travel agency, said he only came here to feed these innocent animals as all the students of Dhaka University left their halls earlier.

"On the campus, there are many animals who have no one to take care of

them. These dogs were usually taken care of by the students of DU. One student also posted on his Facebook seeking help for them after he left his dormitory recently," he said.

After the university halls closed down on March 20 amid fears of the coronavirus outbreak, Ishtiaq Ahmed Ridoy, a student of DU, posted a status on his Facebook, seeking help to arrange food for the dogs



and cats living on DU campus.

"When I thought about the poor hungry animals, I could not stop myself. I have been coming here for four consecutive days to feed them," he added.

Asked whether he was concerned about the coronavirus spread, he said that there was no proof or data about coronavirus being spread from animals. "However, I am trying to maintain adequate protection.

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