

# Not a question of 'if', but 'how'

'Middlemen' in labour migration to be regularised, says ministry secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has agreed on principle to bring "middlemen" in the labour migration sector under an accountability framework, expatriates' welfare ministry secretary Ahmed Munir Saleheen said yesterday.

"We no longer want to think whether it should be done or not. Instead, we want how it can be done," he told an online discussion organised by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU).

The secretary made the remarks amid demands from migrant rights groups that middlemen, also known as sub-agents, should be brought under accountability to ensure safe and orderly migration.

The discussion on the topic, "Streamlining Labour Recruitment through Regularisation of Middlemen" was part of RMMRU's e-symposium series "Build Back Better" on Covid-19 and migration.

Addressing the discussion, Saleheen said under the existing legal framework, there is no provision for employment of middlemen.

However, as per law, each recruiting agent after getting approval from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) can employ required number of "representatives" at home and abroad, he said.

He stressed that such provision could be considered while regularising middlemen.

Anisul Islam Mahmud, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry, said different recruiting agents have sub-agents employed unofficially across the country.

"We want those sub-agents to be registered," he said, adding BMET should be the main focal point for the registration process.

Those who have already been involved in the sector will do the job, said Anisul.

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The city corporation had planted shrubs in hanging pots on the Basabo footbridge, but the plants seem to have died long ago due to lack of care. Even the weeds that grew on the pots couldn't survive. Instead of sprucing up the bridge, these just make it look uglier now.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRES Petition seeks HC directive to probe violation of rights

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday submitted a writ petition before the High Court seeking its directive on the government to form a high powered inquiry committee to probe the violation of fundamental rights of the children in the three child development centres of the country.

Lawyer Manoj Kumar Bhowmick, also a rights activists, placed the petition before the HC bench of Justice Md Mozibur Rahman Miah and Justice Mohi Uddin Shamim praying to this court to issue a rule asking the authorities concerned of the government why the abusive behaviour and negligence to the children in the centres should not be declared illegal and why appropriate action should not be taken against unscrupulous officials.

Early last week, Bhowmik filed the petition with the HC following a report published on The Daily Star on September 29 under the headline, "No better than a jail", describing the violation of fundamental rights of children and their miserable condition in the child development centres.

He said in the petition that the condition of the children and violation of their fundamental rights is heart-wrenching.

# Tormented there, attacked here

Victim, family charged by relatives of arrested 'human trafficker'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

Family members of an alleged human trafficker reportedly launched an attack on the residence of one of the victims right after he was arrested by Rapid Action Battalion on Saturday at Gafargaon upazila of Mymensingh.

The family of the trafficking victim -- Mohammad Tajuddin -- had to flee their home out of fear, said his brother Rafiqul Islam.

They were able to go back to their residence with police intervention, he added.

On Saturday afternoon, Rab-14 arrested Md Asad (25) of Ghagra village after three human trafficking victims -- Abdur Rahman (35), his nephew Tajuddin (35) and neighbor Masum (22) -- filed three cases against Asad and his elder brother Kamruzzaman Kajal (45) with a Mymensingh court for the duo's alleged involvement in trafficking them to Vietnam in December last year, said Rab sources.

Rab raided the area and arrested Asad around 2:30pm, said Sub-inspector Indrajit Roy. Kajal managed to flee, he added.

Asad was being interrogated at the Rab office in Mymensingh as of filing this report.

Regarding the attack, Anukul Sarker, officer-in-charge of Gafargaon Police Station, said, "We visited the spot, and are looking into the matter."

Tajuddin, one of the victims, said the accused took Tk 4.2 lakh from each of them to send them to Vietnam on December 25 last year, promising jobs with Tk 30,000 per month salary.

They managed the money mostly by selling land and on loan, he said.

After reaching Vietnam, three Bangladeshis received them.

Tajuddin said the three held them captive. "We were forced to work for them," he added. After working for two months, when they demanded salary, they were tortured, alleged

Tajuddin.

At one stage, they managed to flee, and surrendered to Vietnam police, who handed them over to the Bangladesh embassy. They returned home in August, he added.

"The traffickers are influential. At first we informed locals and tried to realise the money through arbitration but they did not respond. They refused to return the money," said Tajuddin's brother Rafiqul.

"We then informed police and eventually filed the cases," he said.

He alleged that right after Asad's arrest, his family members and relatives tried to attack them with rods and sticks.

"We had to flee to save ourselves," he said, adding, "We were able to return home the same day with police intervention." This correspondent could not get in touch with Asad's family members, despite repeated attempts.

Though Tajuddin and his family

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## Annisul Huq's 3rd anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today marks the third death anniversary of former Dhaka North City Corporation Mayor Annisul Huq.

On this day in 2017, Huq lost the battle for life in a London hospital after nearly three months' treatment there, at the age of 65.

From an ordinary middle-class man, Annisul turned himself into one of

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## WOMEN OF COASTAL AREAS

# Their lives riddled with challenges: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women of coastal and flood-prone areas are already marginalised and now there is added challenge of Amphan, early marriage, the added burden of unpaid care work, destroyed livelihood, and gender-based violence, said speakers at an online roundtable yesterday.

The event, titled "Pandemic and Disaster: Life of Climate-Vulnerable Women and Girls", was jointly organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and The Daily Star.

"We have to think about the future steps of the government and the non-government organisations to overcome the negative impact of the pandemic and disasters," said MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam.

"Early marriage has a long impact on the health of the girls, which will increase the number of unwanted pregnancies, and we have to think about them. Besides, there must be proper measures taken for those girls who are staying at home, exposed to the vulnerabilities, and they must be

brought to schools again," she added.

Dr Fazle Rabbi Sadeque Ahmed, director (Environment and Climate Change) of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation highlighted that along with the government, the private sector should also come forward for the betterment of women and girls of informal sectors and marginalised areas.

"We have to identify grassroots women and girls who have been badly impacted by the pandemic and disaster, and they must be given proper support. If they can be empowered economically, they will be able to take a decision, he said.

A recent study jointly conducted by MJF and Inspira Advisory and Consulting in September also found that cyclone shelters of six upazilas of four coastal districts -- Barguna, Satkhira, Gaibandha and Rangamati -- were not women-friendly at all.

According to Muntasir Tahmed Chowdhury of Inspira, who shared the survey findings at the roundtable, the

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## Rab arrests man for raping sister-in-law in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Rab yesterday night arrested a man on charge of raping his sister-in-law for multiple times throughout last three months in Gazipur.

The arrestee is Ali Akbar (35), a resident of Mymensingh's Trisha upazila.

Law enforcers said the accused used to work in a garment factory in Gazipur, and lived in a rented house at Khoar para area in Gazipur city. Around three months ago, he lured the girl to Gazipur with the promise of a job.

Akbar's wife lives in Mymensingh and the victim, her sister, lived there with their family before coming to Gazipur.

The girl stayed at Akbar's house in Gazipur. At one stage, Akbar raped her after threatening to murder her. He did it multiple times.

On Friday, the girl filed a written complaint with Rab-1 Gazipur Porabari Camp. Rab then arrested the accused from Basan Thana area of Gazipur city.

In primary interrogation, Akbar gave a confessional statement. A case was filed with Basan Police Station of Gazipur in this regard, said Lt Commander Abdullah-Al-Mamun, in-charge of the Rab camp.



A laminated sign says no passenger should board the trawler without a mask -- but with no one there to strictly enforce the rule, many forgo the mask during their travels on public transports The photo was taken yesterday from Sadarghat.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## 2nd phase of municipal elections in mid-January

EC revokes registration of PDP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission has cancelled the registration of Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) as a political party as it failed to meet the condition of maintaining the registration.

"The commission has revoked the registration of Progressive Democratic Party," EC Senior Secretary Md Alamgir told The Daily Star after a commission meeting held yesterday evening at its office in the capital.

"We cancelled the registration as PDP is failing to meet the conditions of keeping their registration. Our probe has found that they do not have sufficient infrastructures like offices at district and other levels. They do not have sufficient number of committee members," he said, adding that the party has not even held councils in years.

The Daily Star called PDP secretary general Principal MA Hossain several times but his mobile phone was found switched off.

Party Chairman Ferdous Ahmed Qureshi died in September this year.

PDP was formed in 2007 during the military-backed interim government. According to the EC, a party needs to have a functional central office, by the name it may be called, with a central committee, have offices at least in one-third of administrative districts, and offices at least in 100 upazilas or metropolitan thanas. The party must have at least 200 voters as members in each upazila. There are 41 registered political parties under the EC.

Alamgir while talking to reporters after the meeting said municipality elections will be held in four phases. He said elections of second, third and fourth phases will take place in mid-January, end of January and mid-February respectively.

On average, 60 municipalities will go to polls in each of the three phases. Elections to 30 municipalities in each phases will take place using electronic voting machines.

On November 22, the EC announced schedule for the first phase of elections to 25 municipalities, setting the date on December 28.

## BOOKS BRIEFING

# Bangladeshi authors at int'l #ReadTheWorld challenge

LABIBA KABIR

In an effort to ease children's loneliness during the pandemic, International Publishers Association (IPA), World Health Organization (WHO) and Unicef have collaborated on an initiative called #ReadTheWorld series, for which children's literature authors are holding virtual reading sessions for kids all around the world. Bangladeshi authors Nazia Jabeen and Banhi Bepari took part in the initiative through Dhaka's Mayurpankhi publishing house.

Banhi Bepari, an author and education facilitator, performed the series' first reading in Bangla, with an excerpt from her illustrated children's book Megher Kol e Rod Eshchehe. Illustrated by Manob Golder, the story portrays the interaction between clouds and the sun. "The experience was wonderful because I got to read the book in Bangla," the author told The Daily Star.

Nazia Jabeen, Founder of Sporsho Braille



Nazia Jabeen reads from "By the Seaside".

Foundation, offered the second Bangla reading with an excerpt of her debut children's book By the Seashore (Sagor Teere), illustrated by Moumita Sikder and published by

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## Office Relocation

MJL Bangladesh Limited's head office shifted to its own LEED PLATINUM certified, state-of-the-art building with world class features of newly constructed facilities and eco-friendly amenities.

**New Address:**  
Mobil House  
CWS (A) 13/A, Gulshan Avenue  
Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak  
Dhaka-1212

**Old Address:**  
Mobil House  
CWS (C) 9, Gulshan 1  
Dhaka-1212



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