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SHAH CEMENT

MIDDLEMEN IN LABOUR MIGRATION

Invisible they cannot remain

Govt seeks to regulate informal service providers to check fraudulence

JAMIL MAHMUD

The government is considering bringing informal grassroots service providers into the labour migration sector under a framework to tackle fraudulence.

Known as "middlemen" or "sub-agents", they are an integral part of the labour migration cycle despite not being recognised by relevant laws.

They provide at least a dozen types of services to migrant workers -- from assisting in passport processing to accompanying workers to the airport, according to studies by various migrant rights groups.

This is due to a major gap that exists in the government's pre-departure services to migrants, said a joint report of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Migrants depend on the informal agents more than authorised recruiters and state institutions because of their proximity with the former and lax awareness, the report added.

Yet these informal service providers remain largely out of the coverage of the Overseas Employment and Migrant Act-2013 and government regulations and work under many recruiting agencies unofficially.

There are also widespread allegations that remaining

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



When many are not maintaining health rules properly, two people are seen trying to choose clothes at a hawker's shop wearing face masks, glasses, and face shields. The hawker, who apparently meets hundreds of customers each day, has no protection on. The photo was taken in New Market area in the capital on Saturday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

2 hundi traders held with half million dollars

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Border Guard Bangladesh personnel yesterday detained two hundi traders with half a million US dollars (Tk 4.40 crore) from Jashore's Ulashi area.

The detainees are Hridoy Mia, 38, from Chandpur's Matlab upazila, and Ashrafur Islam, 40, from Cumilla's Daudkandi upazila.

Lt Colonel Md Selim Reza, commanding officer of 49 BGB Battalion, said BGB members took position in Ulashi area of Sharsa upazila yesterday upon information that a large amount of US dollars, smuggled in from India, would be carried to the capital in a private car.

Around noon, they stopped a Dhaka-bound car, searched it and found 50 bundles of dollar bills hidden in the car doors and gear box, he mentioned.

The BGB members detained the two and seized the car.

Selim further said the detainees admitted that they have been involved

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

REMITTANCE INFLOW

Holding on to surge is key

Says expat welfare minister; stresses on sending more workers abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Stressing the importance of remittance in the country economy, Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday said Bangladesh needs to send more skilled workers abroad to hold on the surge in remittance inflow.

He made the remark while addressing a consultation programme at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Dhaka.

Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and Brac jointly organised the national level stakeholder consultation on "Safe Migration and Sustainable Reintegration in the Context of Covid-19 Crisis."

Addressing as chief guest, the minister said the remittance inflow in the current fiscal year was over 40 percent more than the same period in last fiscal year.

He also said that collective efforts from both government and non-government organisations for migration sector development were important for overcoming the Covid-19 situation.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

'Friendship with India based on reality'

December 21, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

CUNNINGHAME CALLS ON BANGABANDHU

R.R. Cunninghame, high commissioner of New Zealand in Bangladesh, calls on Prime Minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Gono Bhaban today and stays with him for some time. Cunninghame is visiting Dhaka in connection with the handing over of an aircraft for plant protection programme in Bangladesh.

TAJUDDIN WARNS AGAINST SABOTEURS

Finance Minister Tajuddin Ahmed says the Indo-Bangladesh friendship is based on "reality and not guided by emotion" and would be everlasting. Giving stern warning to those who are trying to create fissures in the friendship built during the "most difficult days in the nation's life", the minister declares that no power in the world would be able to wreck it and all machinations would fail as the conscious people of Bangladesh would never allow these saboteurs to succeed.

FRANCE, BANGLADESH ASSOCIATION FORMED IN PARIS

An association to promote friendship and cooperation between France and Bangladesh has been set up in France under the honorary chairmanship of writer Andre Malraux, former French

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



Ex-Ducusu VP Nur sued for 'defaming government'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Former vice-president of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) Nurul Haque Nur has been sued for "making derogatory remarks on the government and several government institutions".

Brahmanbaria District Chhatra League President Rabiul Hossain Rubel filed the case with the court of Senior Judicial Magistrate Ayesha Begum yesterday morning.

According to the case statement, Nur, in a Facebook live, called the Election Commission "Behuda [useless] Commission".

Nur also said that "nowadays the interest of Awami League leaders and activists are contradictory to Bangabandhu's one", the case statement added. Nur

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

'Ice man' sets new world record in freezing cabin



AFP, Watterelos

Frenchman Romain Vandendorpe on Saturday set a world record for sitting immersed in ice cubes for the longest time, enduring the extreme challenge to raise money for childhood cancers.

The 34-year-old health worker remained buried up to his neck in ice in a plexiglass cabin for two hours, 35 minutes and 43 seconds, breaking the previous record by 40 minutes in the northern French town of Watterelos.

He said he trained to "overcome human limits" by neuro-cognitive techniques based on "imagination and concentration" to put himself in

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



Manzoor-e-Mawla no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Poet and former director general of Bangla Academy Manzoor-e-Mawla died with Covid-19 at a hospital in the capital yesterday. He was 80.

He breathed his last at Dhaka's United Hospital around 11:00am, according to Bangla Academy's public relations department. He was buried in the afternoon at Azimpur Graveyard.

Manzoor-e-Mawla, also a researcher on Rabindranath Tagore, was admitted to hospital on December 5 after testing positive for coronavirus.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Post-Brexit talks stall

EU, UK each demand more concessions from the other

AFP, Brussels

British and EU negotiators had dug in their heels and were each demanding more concessions from the other as post-Brexit trade talks dragged on into yesterday, deadlocked on fishing rights.

Sources from both sides said that unless the other backed down on access to UK waters, Britain would leave the single market at midnight on December 31 without a follow-on deal on cross-Channel commerce.

"We're continuing to try every possible path to an agreement, but without a substantial shift from the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 21

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



An overloaded truck entering the capital. It is an utter callousness as an accident may happen anytime due to the high centre of gravity of the vehicle. This also damages the road surface. This photo was taken from the capital's Gabtoli area around 10:00am on Friday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

New Covid strain 'out of control'

Says Britain; European nations started banning UK flights

AGENCIES

European countries started banning flights coming from the UK yesterday as government in London warned that a potent new strain of the virus was "out of control".

Following the example of the Netherlands, where a ban on all UK passenger flights came into effect yesterday, a German government source said Berlin, too, was considering a similar move as "a serious option" for flights from both Britain and South Africa.

The Dutch ban came into effect from 6:00 am (0500 GMT) and will last until January 1. And neighbouring Belgium also said it was suspending flight and train arrivals from Britain from midnight.

The moves come as around a third of England's population entered a Christmas lockdown and UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock warned that the new strain of virus was "out of control".

Prime Minister Boris Johnson had said the day before that millions of Britons would have to cancel their Christmas plans and stay home because the new strain was spreading far more quickly.

Speaking on Sky News, Hancock said the situation was "deadly serious."

"It's going to be very difficult to keep it under control until we have the vaccine rolled out," he said.

It seems that scientists first discovered the new variant in a patient in September.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4