



## 5 lakh expats face trouble

**MRP deadline nears as IRIS fails to deliver, keep Tk 50cr passport fees in own account violating contract; meeting with home ministry today**

M ABUL KALAM AZAD and BELAL HOSSAIN  
BIPLOB

Malaysian IRIS Corporation Berhad is now not paying Bangladesh about Tk 50 crore it had collected from Bangladeshi expatriates as passport fees.

This is the company whose failure in machine readable passport (MRP) enrolment is going to put the fate of at least five lakh Bangladeshis abroad at stake in less than two weeks.

Over the last six months, the company has repeatedly been asked to deposit the money, according to documents and officials concerned.

As per its contracts with Bangladesh, IRIS has to deposit the passport fees and service charges it had realised from expatriates in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for the MRP to the bank accounts of

Bangladesh missions concerned. The government was then supposed to pay IRIS its service charge.

"IRIS deposited some money but [it is] not willing to pay the entire amount," said a senior official of the Department of Immigration and Passport (DIP).

IRIS' contract with the government ended in August but the company is not handing over 1,075 MRPs to Bangladeshis in Malaysia, leaving them in a limbo.

The expatriates who would not have MRPs before the expiry of November 24 deadline, set by the International Civil Aviation Authority (ICAO), would face multiple problems, like losing their jobs and deportation.

**THE MONEY**  
IRIS is keeping Bangladesh's money in its

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- MRP deadline expires Nov 24
- IRIS declines to pay money, DIP reluctant to realise
- No trace of 1,075 MRPs in Malaysia



Visually impaired Monir Hossain doesn't know any trade other than pulling a rickshaw to earn a living. To make this happen, he has to take the help of his younger daughter Afroza Faria. The underprivileged man makes around Tk 150 a day, pulling a rented rickshaw for about three hours. Below, the two are having a break at a tea stall. The photos were taken at Notun Bazar in Feni Sadar upazila last week. PHOTO: MD KAWSAR

## A father's eyes

MD KAWSAR

"Turn right, baba," the little girl sitting on the crossbar tells her father, "stop right here." The rickshaw comes to a stop and the passenger pays the fare, to the little girl. She gives back Tk 5 as change.

Theirs is a father-daughter team. She is the eyes of her father Monir Hossain, for

he is blind since age two and pulling the rickshaw is his job.

"Faria directs me on the road," said Monir while taking a break from the hard labour. Afroza Faria is a second-grader in the local primary school at Sundarpur in Feni. She also takes care of the fare.

They go out after Faria's school. She

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## Anisuzzaman threatened with death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a text message yesterday, country's preeminent intellectual Professor Anisuzzaman was threatened with death.

"Why do you support and uphold the rude bloggers? Do you like to die with a blow of Chapati [machete] at your last gasp?" reads the SMS,

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## STATEMENT ON WAR CRIMES TRIAL Govt asks Amnesty Int'l to apologise

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Blasting the Amnesty International over a statement on war crimes trial, the government has demanded the rights watchdog withdraw the statement immediately and apologise for its highly objectionable pronouncement concerning the pro-independence forces.

In a protest note sent to Amnesty headquarters in London on Friday, the government said the watchdog in its October 27 statement went beyond its usual stand, and caused widespread outrage by suggesting that the "pro-independence forces" in Bangladesh be also implicated for committing "serious crimes".

"This egregious comment is just a brazen insult to the valued freedom fighters and martyrs of Bangladesh's

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## Military police stabbed Attacker caught

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man attacked a member of military police with a sharp weapon at a checkpoint of Dhaka Cantonment in the capital's Kachukhet yesterday morning.

Two army members, who were also on duty with the victim, chased the attacker for around 400 metres and captured him with the help of police and locals from a house where the man holed up for

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A bulldozer of Dhaka North City Corporation knocks down an illegal billboard in front of the city corporation market in Gulshan-2 last night. PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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