



## A year gone yet wait not over

50,000 expatriates yet to get machine-readable passports as Malaysian contractor stays out of Home's grip

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPLOB

Around 50,000 Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Malaysia are anxiously waiting for their machine-readable passports (MRP) even after paying the fees over a year ago.

Malaysian company IRIS Corporation Berhad, which had taken data from the Bangladeshis for the passports, did not transfer all the information to the central system of Department of Immigration and Passports, said DIP officials.

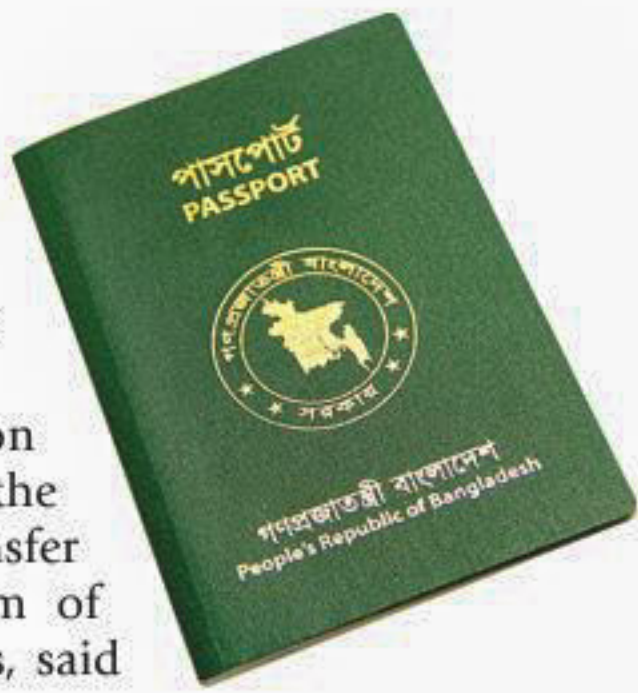
And the data provided by the company are full of inconsistencies and are not usable.

Also, the company did not deposit most of the TK 50 crore realised from the workers as passport fees, added the officials.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach IRIS for comments.

After a contract between home ministry and IRIS ended in January, the

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A man trying to operate a music system up for sale in front of the hockey stadium at Gulistan in the capital yesterday. Every day, many from across the country throng the area to buy secondhand and stolen electronic devices. Sometimes, police raid the place and remove the illegal shops, but those return within a day or two.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



## A win at last for Comilla

SPORTS REPORTER

Six matches. It took the reigning champions of the Bangladesh Premier League six matches to get off the mark. Comilla Victorians skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will hope that their 32-run win over the Rajshahi Kings in Chittagong yesterday can help change the course of their luck so far.

Just like every other game, Comilla decided to tinker with their squad again yesterday when they let Nazmul Hossain Shanto and Khalid Latif open the innings. They also dropped Rashid Khan and brought in Ryan Ten Doeschate.

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## Time for jute stick too to earn forex

Exporters see golden prospect as demand for its charcoal powder rises globally

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

You may well have seen this many times before: long, thin jute sticks being dried under the open by the roadside or at a village yard. Usually, they end up as fuel for earthen stoves or as fences for betel leaf plantations.

You may not know that ashes of jute sticks could have any other use apart from cleaning kitchen utensils. The ashes can fetch a fortune.

Two Pabna jute stick processing factories have in recent times earned a good amount of foreign currency by exporting ashes of jute sticks, known as *patkhari*.

This particular type of ashes is produced from burning dried jute sticks at a certain temperature in special furnaces. Later, they are crushed to powder. The powder is called "jute stick carbon", as it contains carbon.

"China is a big market for our jute stick charcoal dust powder," said Waheduzzaman, manager of SJJ Company Ltd in Pabna. "Korea, Japan, Taiwan and other countries also have demand for the ashes, as those are used for making dry cell batteries, cosmetics, carbon paper, computer ink and various chemical products."

The China-Bangladesh joint venture company started exporting the

charcoal powder to China this year. The other company in the district is in Bera upazila.

There are 25 such factories, including the two in Pabna, in the country, according to officials of SJJ Company.

The country exported jute stick carbon to China and earned Tk 140 million during the fiscal year 2015-16, according to industry insiders.

Countries like Japan, Turkey, the United States, Australia, Taiwan, Canada and Mexico have demand for charcoal powder.

The powder is used for making various products like cosmetics,

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Two workers burning jute sticks in a furnace for producing ash at a factory in Pabna recently. The factory sends the ash, which has a huge export potential, to China.



PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU



## Faraaz to be honoured with Mother Teresa award today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, the young man who refused to desert his friends during the July 1 terror attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery, will be awarded Mother Teresa Memorial International Award for Social Justice posthumously at a ceremony in Mumbai today.

Faraaz's parents will receive the award at the JW Marriott, Sahar.

Earlier this month, The Harmony Foundation named Faraaz for the award.

Harmony Foundation President Abraham Mathai said the 20-year-old Faraaz

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## Coast guards push back 125 Rohingyas

Suu Kyi's handling of crisis slammed amid call for Myanmar abuse probe

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh coast guards yesterday prevented 125 Rohingyas, including women and children, from entering the country's territory through the Naf river as the group attempted to escape violence in Myanmar.

The Rohingyas on seven small fishing boats tried to infiltrate early in the morning. They were pushed back by the coast guards patrolling the river, which separates Bangladesh's southeastern border from western Myanmar.

Lt Nafiur Rahman, commander of Coast Guard Teknaf station, said the Rohingyas attempted to enter Bangladesh through Naya Para No 5 Sluice Gate point under Sabrang union of the upazila.

They included 36 children, 61 women and 28 men, he told some reporters in the afternoon.

"There were 125 Myanmar nationals in seven wooden boats. They included 61 women and 36 children. We resisted them from entering our water territory," Nafiur told AFP.

All of the passengers were Rohingya who tried to enter Bangladesh amid an uptick of violent clashes in neighbouring Myanmar's Rakhine state, he said.

The official added that to monitor the movement of the Rohingyas the patrol by coast guards along the river has been increased.

On November 15, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) stopped 86 Rohingyas on two boats from entering Bangladesh through Hnila and Sabrang in Teknaf. They were sent back, reports the Cox's Bazar correspondent of The Daily Star.

A senior Bangladeshi official said its border guard force on Friday turned back 82 Rohingya Muslims, including women and children, attempting to leave Myanmar, reports Reuters.

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