

Negotiations

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optimistic," he told reporters after the second day's sessions of the Ninth GFMD Summit in Dhaka.

The GFMD is a recent initiative of the UN member states to address migration and development interconnections in practical and action-oriented ways, according to the GFMD website.

The foreign secretary said they were in initial discussions on what type of mechanism or global compact they would have and whether it would be binding or non-binding.

He said Bangladesh had already proposed three ways for devising a global compact. It may be binding or non-binding but all member states would implement it. Even it can be an instrument having both binding and non-binding provisions.

"Discussion is on ...," Shahidul said, adding that many countries were unwilling to talk about it.

On September 19, Bangladesh placed the proposal at the UN summit on migration.

There was consensus at the UN General Assembly that an intergovernmental conference -- the first of its kind -- will be held in 2018 with an exclusive focus on adopting a "Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration" by the member states.

The New York declaration adopted at the UN summit on September 19 includes an explicit commitment to strengthening global governance of migration.

The foreign secretary said six roundtables and three side events were held on the second day of the GFMD summit.

The member states discussed three issues -- migration and connectivity, migration governance, and how migration costs can be reduced.

Shahidul said there would be discussions on three issues today, the concluding day of the event. "Recommendations will come from the discussions."

Replying to a query, he said the Rohingya issue didn't come up for discussions, but the issue of forced displacement would be discussed today in the context of climate change.

Children

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NUTRITION STATUS
In terms of nutrition, the study found more than one in four under-five children in urban areas stunted.

The picture in the city's slums is grimmer with 40 percent children stunted while 25 percent children outside slums are malnourished.

CHILD MARRIAGE
Early marriage, according to the survey, is still high with 59.7 percent of women between 20 and 49 stating that they were married before 18. The survey also found one in three girls aged between 15 and 19 married.

Sylhet has the least percentage of child marriage at 40.4 percent while Khulna has the worst scenario with 65.9 percent girls getting married before 18.

OTHER INDICATORS
On average, three in five births take place in presence of skilled birth attendants. In slum areas, 56 percent births are overseen by skilled birth attendants while it is 74 percent outside slums.

Primary school attendance considered by the study as one of the main indicators of the education sector was 86 percent in urban areas. Slums lag behind with 71 percent attendance.

The study also found that only 18.9 percent slum households had access to improved sanitation while the percentage was 51.3 outside slum areas.

More than eight percent urban children between 5 and 14 were found to be child labourers. The number goes up to a significant 14.3 percent in slums.

New autopsy

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from the Criminal Investigation Department filed a petition, seeking another postmortem.

On November 20, the body of Diaz, central assistant secretary of the BCL, was found hanging from the ceiling of his room near Chittagong University (CU). The first autopsy report, prepared by Chittagong Medical College Hospital's Forensic department's three doctors led by Prof Md Kashem, said Diaz might have committed suicide.

Diaz's family, however, rejected that and demanded another autopsy. They said there was no similarity between the inquest and the autopsy report. His friends and family members have been alleging that Diaz was murdered and his body was hung from the ceiling later.

Diaz's elder sister Jobaida Sarwar believes that her brother would never commit suicide.

"We are hopeful about getting justice", she said, adding that they came to know that the "killers" of his brother were in the capital and that they were trying to manipulate the autopsy report.

On November, 24, Diaz's mother lodged a murder case with a Chittagong court against around 20 people, including CU Assistant Proctor Anwar Hossain and CU BCL President Mohammad Alamgir Tipu.

South Korea a unique example

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SECTOR.

"It's a great opportunity for me to be able to work in Korea ... all workers under the EPS are equally paid and treated here," SM Saiful Islam, a Bangladeshi working at a colour-sheet manufacturing company in Hwaseong city, told The Daily Star over phone.

He said his monthly salary, including overtime, on average is about Tk 1.6 lakh. For many, it goes up to Tk 2 lakh.

"Both my job and my future is secure," said Saiful, 24, who went to Korea early last year under the EPS.

The shift to EPS in 2003 actually left behind a history of malpractices and labour abuses under its previous system -- Industrial Trainee Scheme (ITS) of 1994, which was meant to train and recruit foreign labour.

Involvement of private actors under the ITS gave birth to a lot of malpractices -- foreign workers were charged high amounts -- as much as \$10,000, according to a report by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

To recoup the money, migrants changed jobs frequently and overstayed their visas, prompting the Korean authorities to design the EPS. Korea's Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL) eventually signed agreements with 16 labour-sending countries.

Bangladesh signed an MoU with the MOEL in 2007. The Human Resources Development Korea (HRD Korea) and Bangladesh Overseas Employment Services Ltd (BOESL), state-owned recruiting agent of Bangladesh, implement the computer-based recruitment.

The recruitment process starts every year with Korea announcing quotas for each country. Based on that, HRD Korea conducts language tests and basic skills test of the aspirant migrants, said Mohammed Shamsul Alam, general manager at the HRD Korea in Bangladesh.

Those getting highest marks in both tests go for medical test. The successful candidates then apply online to the HRD Korea in Dhaka via BOESL.

Once approved, the applicants' information is put on the rosters managed by the Korean Job Centre. Employers who can prove that they could not find local workers for the posts after advertising in newspapers are eligible to ask the Job Centre for foreign workers, Shamsul Alam said.

If the requirements match, the employers ask the MOEL to hire workers. Upon approval from HRD Korea, they prepare job contracts, which are checked by the MOEL, and then send them to the BOESL in Dhaka online, he added.

The BOESL then calls the aspirant for signing a job contract, after which they attend a six-day training session at the Bangladesh-Korea Technical Centre in Dhaka. Afterwards, the BOESL arranges visas for their travel to Korea. Before joining the job, the migrants are trained for three more days by the trade bodies of the sectors the migrants would work in, according to HRD Korea.

The employer then can have a contract for one year to four years and 10 months, Shamsul Alam told this correspondent.

"If the worker loses his job for some reason, he can report to the Job Centre. It will find jobs for him in 90 days. Otherwise, he has to return home. However, usually workers get jobs," he said.

The worker is provided with a shelter and food during these 90 days in case he does not have it.

After four years and 10 months, a worker must return home. However, after three months leave at home, he can go to Korea again for another four

years and 10 months. This he can repeat until he is 40, the HRD Korea official said.

"The most important thing about Korea is that the labour law covers both the local and the foreign labour equally," he added.

The EPS has five mandatory insurances for supporting the migrants in case of job loss, return cost, job end benefits and health benefits.

Workers get two days off a week in addition to one monthly day off, when they can work if they want to. There is no annual leave, but in case of emergency they can take leave without pay for a maximum 90 days.

According to a 2015 ILO report, three months before the worker's official last day in Korea, the HRD Korea reaches out to the worker and his employer to check that everything is in order.

It has a "Happy Return Programme" to facilitate the long-term employment or business start-up plans of EPS workers upon their return, it said.

The ILO report lauded the EPS for low-cost migration, legal protection, reintegration and so on, but also found some flaws.

It said the EPS has failed to meet the real demand of foreign labour, which was why employers often try to hold on to the employees as long as possible and using any means possible.

"Sometimes their methods come dangerously close to violating labour standards," it said.

Also, many of the aspirants had to wait one to two years before departing for Korea, it noted.

The report also said 21.3 percent of the workers had paid over \$2,000 to go to Korea, an amount that is close to double the amount set by the HRD Korea.

Asked about this, Shamsul said initially there might have been some brokers who took advantage of workers' ignorance. But such elements have now been eliminated.

"We are continuously researching and trying to make it flawless," he said.

Japan to lift

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Muhith said his Japanese counterpart told him that his government had decided to lift the travel alert issued for Japanese nationals about visiting Bangladesh.

He added that from now on there would be no restrictions, but a little time would be needed to make the decision effective.

Muhith further said a travel alert was in force since 2015 which meant the Japanese citizens were advised not to visit Bangladesh and if they did, they had to stay cautious.

After the Holey Artisan attack on July 1 restrictions were imposed on Japanese officials' visit to Dhaka. Since then all negotiations with Bangladesh were held in a third country, like Singapore or Thailand.

Muhith said the Bangladesh officials of various projects went to those countries for signing agreements or for negotiations.

Since the restriction, Japanese officials did not visit Bangladesh, but some private officials visited, Muhith said.

"Except the JICA volunteers, other experts are working in various projects in Bangladesh," a diplomat at the Japanese embassy said when he was contacted after the finance minister's information about the Japan government's decision.

ERD Secretary Mohammad Mejbahuddin said many foreigners had left Bangladesh or were in panic after the Holey Artisan attack on July 1.

He added they were fully satisfied with various measures taken by the government. Activities in no project had stopped and everything was running smoothly, he added.

During his Japan visit, the finance minister was accompanied by Additional Secretary to the Home Ministry Mostafa Kamal Uddin.

The home ministry official said they had been providing adequate security to all foreigners. Border Guard Bangladesh, police and Coast Guard personnel were deployed when ever the situation required.

Bangladesh now receives the highest amount of foreign aid from Japan among the bilateral donor countries at the very low interest of 0.01 percent.

The rate is the lowest among all multilateral and bilateral lenders, with a repayment period of 50 years including a grace period of 10 years.

Currently, Japan commits about \$700 million each year as development assistance.

The country has already made commitments to finance a number of large infrastructure projects in Bangladesh.

The projects include Matarbari coal-fired power project, several bridge and power projects, metro rail and Dhaka mass rapid transit development project, which means the annual commitment of Japan will exceed \$1 billion in the next couple of years.

Many foreign consultants and officials are still afraid of working or moving freely in Bangladesh, which resulted in slow progress of the projects, sources said.

'Gang violence leaves 1 dead in Jessore'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

An alleged criminal, injured during a gunfight on Saturday night between two gangs in TB Clinic area of Jessore, died of his bullet wounds yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Yusuf Ali, 30, a resident of Ghop Central Road in the town.

Illias Hossain, officer-in-charge of Jessore Kotwali Police Station, said a police team raided the area around 11:30pm Saturday following information that two gangs were in a gunfight.

The gangs fled leaving behind bullet-hit Yusuf, he claimed.

Police took him to Jessore Medical College Hospital where he died around 9:00am yesterday.

Nasa

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the 20-year trip was over, according to Science Alert.

Nasa proposed a number of options to pursue in the development stages of the project. They presented their findings at the International Electron Devices Meeting in San Francisco this week.

First, adjust the route of the flight to avoid those high-radiation areas. But that could add years to the voyage and would not necessarily protect the ship from degradation.

Second, they proposed the ship could be built with protective shielding on the electronics. But adding shielding to the ship would add to the size and weight and thus slow down the remarkable speed of the craft.

Third, Nasa researchers proposed a silicon chip that would automatically repair itself.

"On-chip healing has been around for many, many years," Nasa team member Jin-Woo Han said in the presentation.

Still the research is only theoretical and researchers have significant work to do to address other major problems in interstellar travel.

"The limit that confronts us now is the great void between us and the stars," Hawking said in April. "But now we can transcend it. With light beams, light sails, and the lightest spacecraft ever built, we can launch a mission to Alpha Centauri within a generation."

"Today, we commit to this next great leap into the cosmos because we are human, and our nature is to fly."

BSF kills

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from the same village -- was entering into Bangladesh with Indian cattle, said sources at the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The BSF took possession of the corpse and moved it away inside India. They did not return the corpse till yesterday afternoon.

The victim died on the spot when he and three other cattle traders from Bangladesh were chased and shot by a patrol team of 100 BSF Battalion from Singimari camp, said sources at the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB).

The three other traders accompanying the victim managed to flee unhurt and were able cross into Bangladesh along with all 20 cattle they had with them, the sources added.

Lt Col Ahmed Bazlur Rahman Hayati, commanding officer of 15 BGB Battalion in Lalmonirhat, said they sent a letter to BSF, formally protesting the killing and demanding the body of the Bangladeshi be returned.

In a reply message, the BSF said they would conduct an autopsy of the corpse and hand it over to the BGB during a bilateral flag meeting, he added.

Husband

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the housewife in the case filed by her father against Shofiquil and his parents.

Five days into her delivery of the second child, Liya went back to hospital with swollen eyes and severe injuries caused by her husband for dowry.

On the night of December 6, Shofiquil switched off the light of their room and attacked her all of a sudden with a sharp object. Hearing her screams, neighbours rushed to the house and rescued her.

No need

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secretaries of the law ministry -- Law and Justice Division Secretary ASSM Zahirul Haque and Legislative and Parliamentary Affairs Secretary Mohammad Shahidul Haque -- to appear before it today and explain the non-compliance of its order about framing the rules and issuing the gazette notification.

The eight-member full bench of the Appellate Division led by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha had passed the order.

On December 1, the Appellate Division gave seven days' time to the ministry to finalise the rules and asked it to submit the gazette notification on the rules before the court on December 8.

But the same day Attorney General Mahbub Alam, on behalf of the ministry, asked the apex court for further two weeks' time. He said the ministry had finalised the rules and its summery had been sent to the president for approval after the prime minister signed it.

ExxonMobil CEO

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His links to Russia could be problematic with Moscow facing renewed scrutiny in Washington. A Washington Post report late Friday said a secret CIA assessment found that Russia interfered in the US presidential election with the aim of tipping it in Trump's favor.

The president-elect, who has praised Putin and called for closer ties with Russia, dismissed the report.

Trump has already decided on Tillerson, according to NBC News, citing two unnamed sources close to the transition process. They cautioned, however, that nothing was final until Trump makes the official announcement, likely next week.

Other media outlets, including CBS News and The Wall Street Journal, described Tillerson as the leading candidate for the job of top US diplomat.

Former UN Ambassador John Bolton will be Tillerson's deputy secretary of state "for day-to-day management of the department," NBC News added, citing one unnamed source.

Asked in an interview with Fox News -- which was to air in full yesterday -- why it makes sense to appoint a businessman as the nation's top diplomat, Trump said Tillerson is "much more than a business executive."

"I mean, he's a world-class player," the president-elect said. "He knows

many of the players and he knows them well.

"He does massive deals in Russia. He does massive deals for the company, not for himself, for the company."

Trump and Tillerson met for more than two hours Saturday in Trump Tower, the New York Times reported, adding that chief strategist Stephen Bannon and son-in-law Jared Kushner told the president-elect the Exxon chief is in a "different league" from other candidates.

If he is officially nominated, Tillerson can expect sharp questioning during confirmation hearings in the US Senate.

Why no

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procedure for all admission seekers regardless of their medium of instruction at their educational institutions.

Petitioner's lawyer Reza M Sadequeen told reporters while explaining the reason behind the filing of the writ that admission seekers from English medium institutions encounter difficulties when they take admission tests out of Bangla question papers at the public universities.

The chairman of the University Grants Commission, the education secretary, the health secretary, the vice chancellor of Dhaka University, the vice chancellor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), the principal of Dhaka Medical College and the director of Medical Education were made respondents to the rule.

462 languishing

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prisoners whose trials have been going on for long, saying it would provide legal assistance to those who are not financially solvent.

An SCLAC official told The Daily Star that the committee will now study the report to select the under-trial prisoners who will be given legal aid.

The report shows that the highest number of such accused is in four Kashimpur jails with 87 prisoners. Of them, 57 are in Kashimpur Central Jail-2 alone.

The Chittagong Central Jail has 56 such prisoners, Cox's Bazar District Jail 31, Comilla District Jail 17 and Sylhet Central Jail 14.

The number of under-trial accused kept in jails for less than five years is more than 55,000, jail sources said.

In Shipon's case, the HC bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice JBM Hassan ordered the lower court concerned to finish the trial proceedings in 60 working days.

On December 4, the same bench set time limits for the lower courts concerned to finish the trial proceedings against four under-trial accused who have been in jail for 14 to 16 years.

The court granted bail to three of them and ordered the trial courts to conclude their trial proceedings in 90 days. The three are Makbul Hossain, Sentu Kamal and Billal Hossain.

However, it refrained from granting bail to another prisoner, Chan Miah, as he gave confessional statements before police and a magistrate in connection with the murder case filed against him.

The lower court, which has been running the trial proceedings against

Chan Miah, was asked to finish the trial against him in 60 days.

The HC bench led by Justice M Enayetur Rahim, also the chairman of SCLAC, passed the order after hearing the statements of the four and examining their case documents.

According to a news report, Chan Miah has been in Kashimpur jail since 1999 in connection with the murder case filed with Shyampur Police Station. The case is pending with Paribesh Appeal Adalat (Environment Appellate Court) in Dhaka.

Makbul from Madaripur was arrested in 2000 in a murder case filed with Uttara Police Station. The case is now pending with Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka.

Sentu from the capital's Motijheel AGB Colony area was arrested in 2001. He was produced before the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka last month but the trial proceedings were not finished.

Billal Hossain from Comilla has been in jail since 2002. The case against him is now pending with Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in Dhaka.

On November 30, the HC bench in a suo moto move issued a rule upon the government to explain why four under-trial female inmates at the Kashimpur jail in Gazipur should not be granted bail in the cases filed against them.

Sumi Akter Reshma from Narayanganj, Razia Sultana from Gazipur and Rani alias Nupur from Mymensingh have been in the jail since 2009 in three separate murder cases.

Shanaj Begum from Narayanganj has been in prison since 2008 in a killing case.

Bhawaiya song

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the Bhawaiya tradition in May this year, with thoughts of a museum. In Ulipur, it's a popular idea.

So far Bhupati has located more than one hundred potential exhibits including agricultural items such as wooden yokes; ploughs; harrow-like kursi; penti sticks for driving oxen; karail axes; bakua shoulder-carrying-poles; topa wicker farmer's hats; winnowing trays and baskets; pesta stabilisers positioned between a person's head and the basket or pot being carried on top; and paddy processing implements called unrunge and paat.

His collection includes fishing implements such as barshi fish hooks; various types of fish traps like darki, deru, palo and chaak; and khalay and zina used to keep the fish once caught. As well there are various musical instruments. All such items are referred to in Bhawaiya songs, of course by their commonly-used North Bengali names. Books on Bhawaiya and CD song compilations will also form part of the museum's collection.

On October 7, Ulipur's Upazila Nirbahi Officer Muhammad Shafiqul Islam laid the foundation stone for the museum within the grounds of Bangladesh Bhawaiya Academy, the local institution of which Bhupati is the founding director and head teacher.

"It will be named Kasim Uddin Folk Museum," says Bhupati, "in memory of Kurigram town's eminent Bhawaiya singer who found success in bringing new popularity to our songs, at home and abroad. We could do little to help Kasim Uddin during his lifetime; it's befitting the museum bears his name."

Indeed the choice of site within the academy's grounds is also significant. Ulipur's academy is the sole surviving Bhawaiya teaching institution of the eight similar associations established across Rangpur region in the early 1990s. Within a few years all other branches had closed, most commonly due to poor organisation. By contrast, in 1994 Durgapur's the then-chairman Al-Hap Golap Uddin Sarkar donated five decimals of land for the academy.

Since then, in a long tin-shed building constructed with locally-sourced and some government funds, the academy has run three-year courses in the Bhawaiya tradition. Students study five subjects which include lessons on playing dotara, sharinda, drum and flute free of cost. The teachers, nowadays eight work as volunteers. Currently 70 students attend the classes held on every Thursday and Friday afternoon, keeping the tradition alive.

Over the years more than 2,000 students have benefited from the academy's instruction, with renowned artistes like Jiban Chandra Pal, Tapan Kumar Sarkar, Parul Roy, Dulal Chandra Barman, Sujita Roy and Shaju Ahmed among the alumni. Around 42 former students have pursued opportunities in radio and television.

"I will start the work of the museum," says Bhupati, "and complete it as best I can. But I would ask any kind-hearted citizen who is able, to help us in constructing the building; the museum authority will forever remember any contributor with a thankful heart."

More than 100

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brought out on loaders," said Ubong, who said he had rushed to the scene after the accident. "I also went to two hospitals and saw heaps of dead bodies difficult to count."

State police spokeswoman Cordelia Nwawe said 27 had been killed and 30 injured when the Reigners Bible church in Akwa Ibom state capital Uyo collapsed during a service on Saturday. State emergency agency NEMA said in a statement that six people had been killed and 115 injured.

State governor Udom Emmanuel, who escaped unhurt from the church service, ordered the arrest of the building contractor, state news agency NAN said.

Buildings collapses are frequent in the West African nation and often blamed by officials on lack of construction permits and the use of cheap materials amid widespread corruption.

Critics say Nigerian authorities tend to understate the death toll at such accidents or suicide bombings by the Boko Haram jihadist group in the north of the country.

During at gas plant blast in southern Nigeria a year ago the presidency said "tens of people" had been killed while witnesses counted more than 100 bodies. Police had then just confirmed eight dead.