

Housewife found dead at home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A housewife was found dead at her home in Haripur upazila of Thakurgaon yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Moyna Khatun, 30, wife of Zakir Hossain, said police.

Officer-in-Charge Amiruzzaman of Haripur Police Station said the hanging body of Moyna was found by her family members in the morning and was taken to Haripur Health Complex around 7:00am.

Doctors in the hospital declared her brought dead.

Moyna had rope marks around her neck, said the police, adding that there was no other injury mark on the body.

Meanwhile, the deceased's brother filed a murder case against Zakir, Moyna's husband, and seven others, in connection with the death.

The brother, Ashrafal Ali alleged that Zakir was a drug addict and used to beat her sister often.

Zakir also had extra-marital affairs. His family members tried to stop him from continuing the relationships through arranging arbitrations on several occasions but failed, said the brother.

Ashrafal claimed that Zakir had beaten Moyna to death and later hung the body to make it look like a suicide.

OC Amiruzzaman said the body was sent for an autopsy. The reason of the death would be known after getting the report, he added.

Zakir was on the run and no one was arrested in the case till the filing of the report at 8:00pm.

Manju

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Rajdhani Super Market.

The councillor had long been running an extortion racket in the area, according to Rab.

He amassed crores of taka from extortion and grabbing properties of others. Rab said he used to send the money to his family in the US through Hundi (an illegal non-banking channel).

Rab said they recovered two firearms, some bottles of liquor, a stash of cannabis, and a large amount of sex stimulating pills from the ward councillor's office in Tikatoli.

The councillor could not show any valid documents of the firearms, said Rab.

However, in the remand prayer, police mentioned that of the two pistols, one was found to be a toy gun.

With Manju, law enforcers have so far arrested three ward councillors in the capital since the beginning of the ongoing crackdown on corruption and illegal casinos.

Locals said Manju was elected councillor of the ward-39 twice before.

In 2015, shop owners of Rajdhani Super Market filed a complaint against Manju with the home ministry, but no action was taken.

Since September 18, Rab and police have raided different areas and arrested a number of leaders of ruling Awami League and its associated bodies.

The other arrestees are expelled Dhaka South Jubo League president Ismail Hossain Chowdhury Samrat, his accomplice Arman, its expelled organising secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, Kalabagan Krira Chakra president and former Krishak League leader Shafiq Alam Feroz, contractor GK Shamim, and Mohammedan Sporting Club Director (in-charge) Lokman Hossain Bhuiyan.

Shakib calls

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your country. On that note, I am requesting calm and patience from all my supporters who may have felt aggrieved at the sanction imposed on me," read the post uploaded on Shakib's verified Facebook page at around 1:00am.

Shakib had accepted the charges levelled by the ICC of not reporting three separate 'corrupt approaches' from a bookmaker named Deepak Aggarwal between January and April 2018.

Fans of Shakib, Bangladesh's Test and T20I captain before the ban, had taken to social media to protest what they alleged was a conspiracy helmed by Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) President Nazmul Hassan, especially after Shakib's leading role in a three-day players' strike from October 21 to 23. Supporters were also aggrieved by the timing of the ban, on the eve of a difficult Test and T20I tour of India.

"I wish to make it very clear that the entire investigation by the ICC Anti-Corruption Unit was confidential and the BCB only came to know about it from me just a few days before the announcement of the sanction. From that point onwards, the BCB has been most supportive and understanding of my situation and I am grateful for that.

"I can understand why many people are offering to help and I really appreciate that. However, there is a process in place and I have accepted my ban because I felt that was the right thing to do. My entire focus now is on returning to the cricket field and playing for Bangladesh again in 2020. Until then keep me in your prayers and heart. Thank you," Shakib wrote.

The second of the two years of this ban will be suspended, provided he does not repeat the offence over the next year and takes part in any education and/or rehabilitation programmes specified by the ICC.



The main structure of the coal-fired Payra Power Plant in Patuakhali's Kalapara upazila. Right, the jetty of the plant will be used to unload coal from vessels. The coal will be carried along on conveyor belts to the coal storage silo. The photos were taken on Tuesday.

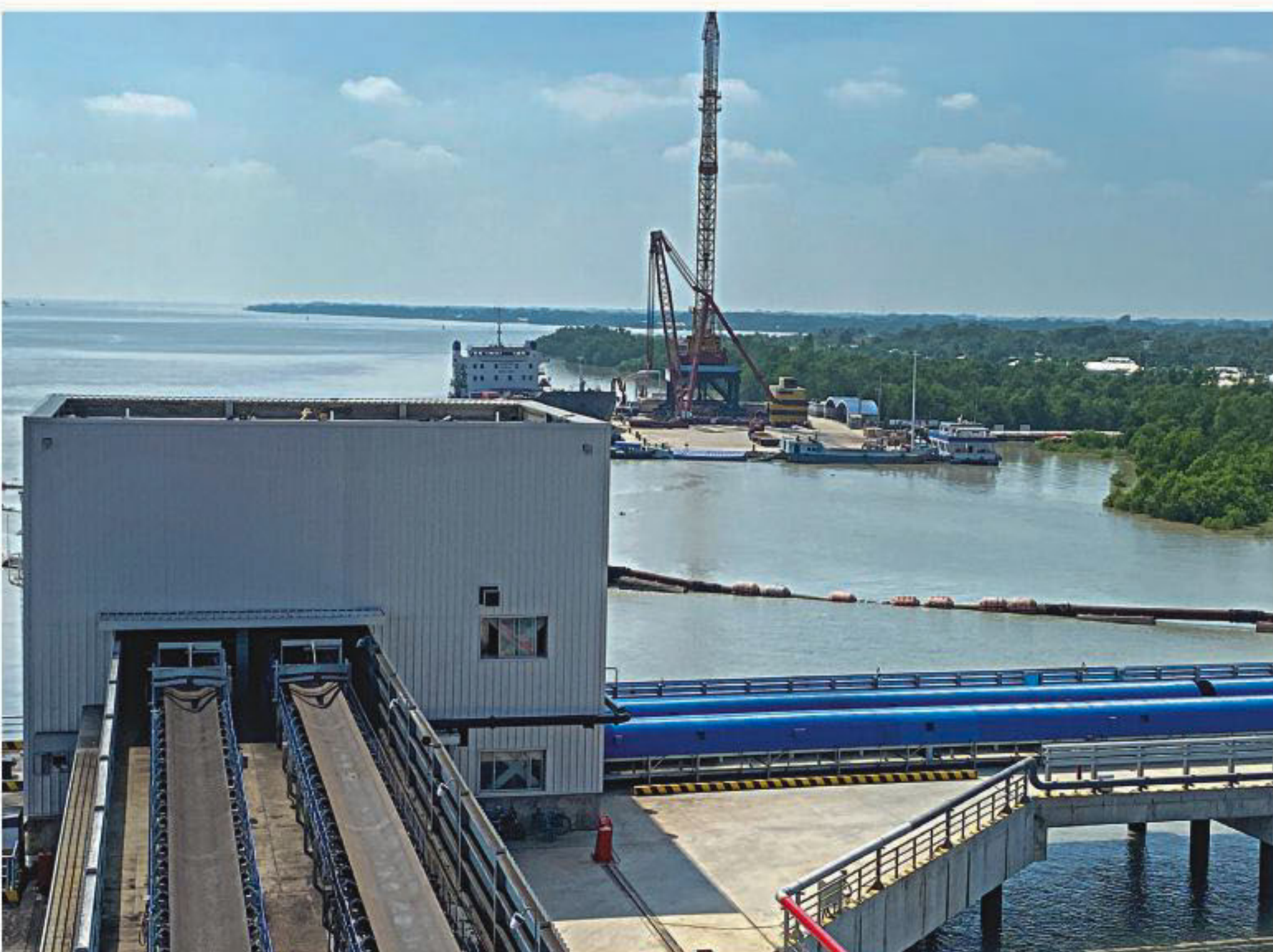


PHOTO: REJAUL KARIM BYRON

A symbol of optimism

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twin power plants — each of 660 MW generation capacity — was supposed to be ready to supply electricity by April this year. Earlier last month, the boiler of the first unit that would be generating 660 MW electricity was successfully lit up.

"This has given us great confidence," said Ahmed Kaikaus, senior secretary at the Power division.

But the electricity is not being added to the grid as the 400 kilovolt transmission lines are not ready yet for a longer monsoon this year and some implementation shortcomings of the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

Kaikaus though is hopeful that the lines would be ready within the

next two months. Once completed, Bangladesh's power generation capacity will stand at 23,222 MW, up from 22,562 MW at present, that is enough to bring 94 percent of the population under electricity coverage.

"Until then, we will keep on testing and testing," he said, adding that even if the transmission lines are not fully ready by January next year the power plant will supply electricity to the grid at half-load.

The second unit is scheduled to be ready by the middle of next year too.

The two units would be fed with sub-bituminous coal, a relatively inexpensive and less environmentally harmful variety, brought in from Indonesia and Australia.

But for now, the coal being used is coming from Indonesia, according to Kaikaus.

One challenge, as of now, is the low navigability of the river along which coal is being brought in, due to which one-third the amounts are arriving at a time. But that problem is being addressed.

The power plant is being built using the state-of-the-art ultra-supercritical technology, which has greater efficiency and lower emissions. The power plant has the mechanism to fully capture bottom ash, fly ash, sulphur and nitrogen, all of which are environmental pollutants.

Asked why the government is going headlong towards dirty energy given

the growing environmental concerns, Kaikaus said: "There are about 750 new coal-fired power plants which are now being built around the world. Those who are preaching us are still using coal-fired power plant."

What's worse is the coal-fired power plants being used in developed countries are mostly based on dated subcritical technology, which cause more pollution and the harmful sulphur and nitrogen are not captured properly.

"But they did not convert their outdated power plants to ultra-supercritical ones. You are asking me to clean up when your own home is dirty," he said, adding that Bangladesh is a victim of climate change for no fault of its own.

Bangladesh's emission is 0.4 tonne

per capita. In contrast, the US's s 17 tonne per capita. And India is the fourth highest emitter in the world.

"You have to think how to provide energy to Bangladesh with the least cost," said Kaikaus, as the sun set into horizon behind him.

Outside, the hustle and bustle became louder, as the workers who had just clocked out for the day were convening towards the restaurants for dinner or evening snacks.

Howlader's stall was packed to the rafters.

"I have no time to breathe," he said, while his college-going son Shamim was helping him.

He hopes his stall continues to be this packed for evermore.

AL lists 1,500 'infiltrators'

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The intruders are tarnishing the party's image by indulging in various illegal activities, he said after visiting two projects in Gazipur.

Quader, also road transport and bridges minister, said the councils of the AL's several organisational units will be held across the country before the party's national council next month.

Directives have been given to the leaders concerned so that no controversial person is included in the new committees, he mentioned.

"We welcome those with clean image to join the Awami League,"

added the AL leader.

The party has already fixed dates for holding the councils of 27 district units.

The councils of AL's associate organisations Jubo League, Swchhasebak League and Krishak League will be held this month.

Hasina on several occasions hinted that controversial leaders would not be included in the central committee to be formed through the party's council slated for December 20-21.

In September, Rezwanul Haque Chowdhury Shovon and Golam Rabbani were removed from the posts of Chhatra League president

and general secretary for their controversial activities.

Later, Jubo League organising secretary Khaled Mahmud Bhuiyan, its Dhaka South City Unit president Ismail Chowdhury Samrat and contractor GK Shamim were arrested over their alleged involvement in casino business, gambling and other illegal activities.

Omar Faruk Chowdhury was removed from the post of Jubo League president amid allegations of corruption. Swchhasebak League president Molla Abu Kausar and its secretary Pankaj Devnath were also relieved of their posts.

Abrar murder charge sheet

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were "drunk" during the murder incident, he said, "We didn't find any of them drunk during investigation... Such claim will not hinder the charge sheet submission and delivery of justice," he added.

Replying to a journalist's query about police's failure to rescue Abrar in time, Monirul said police didn't have sufficient information while the incident was taking place.

Police just heard of a chaos and such incidents take place at the university dormitories more often than not, he said.

At the event, Monirul also said the murderers of Abrar were morally degraded and abused the platform of

student politics for carrying out such a heinous crime.

Therefore, there is no scope to blame the student politics of a particular organisation for the murder of Abrar, he added.

Debate for Democracy, a non-government organisation familiar for arranging debate competitions, organised the competition with the topic: "Whether Student Politics is Responsible for Abrar's Murder."

Students of Tejgaon College and Govt Bangla College participated in the competition where the latter won by establishing their argument that student politics was to blame for the murder.

BRTA, police not ready for enforcement

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WHAT THE LAW SAYS

On October 22, the Road Transport and Highways Division issued a gazette, stating that the Road Transport Act (RTA) would be effective from today. Parliament had passed the RTA in September last year, replacing the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983.

According to section 105 of the new act, if anybody gets seriously injured or killed in a motor vehicle-related accident, it would be considered an offence under the relevant sections of the Penal Code-1860.

However, no matter what section 304(B) of the Penal Code contains, if anybody causes accident by reckless and negligent driving, and kills or injures someone severely, the person will face a maximum sentence of five years in jail or fine or both, reads section 105 of the RTA.

The offences that fall under section 105 are not bailable.

The maximum punishment under section 302 of the Penal Code is death penalty while it is life imprisonment under section 304(B).

The law also hands hefty fines for violation of traffic rules.

For driving without licence, the maximum penalty is six months in jail or a fine of Tk 25,000 or both. It is same for running unfit vehicles.

The maximum punishment for driving vehicles without registration is six months' jail sentence or Tk 50,000 in fine or both. The highest punishment for honking banned horns is three months' jail term or Tk 10,000 fine or both.

The law says the maximum punishment for illegally modifying vehicles' body parts is three years' jail sentence or Tk 3,00,000 fine or both.

According to the previous law, the maximum punishment for driving without licence was four months' jail or Tk 500 fine or both. For driving vehicle without registration, the punishment was 3 months' jail or Tk 2,000 fine or both (for first time) while for running unfit vehicles the punishment was three months in jail or Tk 2,000 fine or both.

Talking to reporters yesterday,

Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said the new law was enacted to bring discipline on roads and highways across the country.

"Our main target is to bring discipline on roads ... it's our challenge," he said after visiting an under-construction flyover at Shafipur on Dhaka-Tangail highway.

THE FIRST DAY

On the first day of the implementation of the new law, The Daily Star correspondents in Dhaka, Chattogram and many other districts did not see any policemen imposing fines for traffic rules violations.

Around 3:30pm, a traffic policeman stopped a motorcycle near the capital's Khamarbari intersection as the pillion rider was not wearing any helmet. He, however, let the biker go after warning him about the new law.

A traffic sergeant stopped a bus driver for violating road rules in Shabbagh area, but also allowed him to go without taking any fine from him.

Asked, the sergeant said, "Our PoS machines are taking updates. We are

yet to get the case slips without which we can't impose any fine."

Another traffic sergeant deployed in Karwan Bazar area said he hands down fines to five to seven drivers every day, but yesterday no was fined by him.

"We mainly made drivers and pedestrians aware of the new law yesterday," he said, wishing not to be named.

Mofizuddin Ahmed, additional commissioner (Traffic) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), said they stopped enforcing the previous law as it was replaced by the RTA yesterday.

He said preparations for implementing the new law was almost over and hoped that the situation would change in a day or two.

"We are expecting to get new case receipts within a day or two as we have already ordered printing the receipts," he said, adding the PoS machines would also be ready soon.

"We started our groundwork immediately after the gazette was issued, our groundwork is at the final

stage," he added.

The additional commissioner further said that they will train some 800 traffic sergeants in the DMP areas on the new law.

The DMP commissioner will brief the media about the new law and its enforcement tomorrow, he said, adding that they would launch a massive awareness campaign for drivers, their helpers and the vehicle owners.

Joint Commissioner (traffic north) of DMP Md Abdur Razzak said they had already taken initiatives to distribute leaflets to raise awareness in this regard.

"We will also use loudspeakers to inform people about the new law and the punishments," he said.

Road Transport and Bridges Division Secretary Nazrul Islam said several newspapers published government advertisements informing people about the RTA.

"We will also hold roadshows in the capital today under the leadership of Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader," he added.

104 more return from KSA Little steps to end

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 104 Bangladeshi migrant workers returned home empty handed from Saudi Arabia on Thursday night.

With them, 4,662 such migrant workers were deported by the Gulf country in October, said Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme.

The flight of Saudia Airlines, carrying latest deportees, landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport around 11:20pm, he added.

Officials of the migration programme, with help of Prabashi Kalyan Desk set under the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, provided the deported workers with immediate assistance like food and drinking water. They also assisted the workers to return home safely, Shariful said.

Quoting a number of the workers, he said they had gone to Saudi Arabia barely a few months ago and were sent back "empty-handed".

Meanwhile, speakers at a protest rally yesterday demanded that Bangladesh government takes measures to properly address torture and abuse of female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia.

They also demanded that the government raise the issue before international communities to create pressure on Saudi Arabia so that guilty Saudi employers can be brought to book.

The rally was held under the banner of "Bangladesh-er Shacheton Nagorik Shamaj" at the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the capital.

Addressing the rally, engineer M Enamul Haque said government's way of addressing issue regarding female migrant workers' sufferings was not up to the expectation.

Female workers were sent to some Middle Eastern countries despite knowing those countries' past records of abuse and torture, he alleged.

Reading out a 10-point demand, journalist Rakkhal Raha said Bangladesh government had to create pressure on Saudi Arabia to make the case filing process against torture and abuse of female migrant workers easier.

Women were facing violence and torture at home and abroad which should have been stopped, said Rawshan Ara of Naripokkho.

Supreme Court lawyer Advocate Hasnat Quayum, among others, spoke at the event.

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He alleged that Bangladesh mission officials hardly ever listened to what detained migrant workers had to say.

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme, said workers often go to the Middle Eastern countries with the so-called "free visas".

Actually, there is no such thing as a free visa. The workers are told that they can work freely without being tied to a particular employer. But that is illegal, he said.

In many cases, employers are also involved in corruption, he said, adding that much of the problems being faced by the migrants is so-called "free visas".

The Bangladesh government should take steps to save the workers from being deceived like this, he said.

Saudi Arabia has been a leading destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers since it resumed taking them in 2015.

Between 2015 and September 2019, Saudi Arabia received about 13.68 lakh Bangladeshi

workers, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

Migration expert Prof CR Abrar said the government could have been vocal against the problems migrant workers were facing in Saudi Arabia to prevent the deportations.

If it's not possible to settle issues bilaterally then Bangladesh could contact international labour migration forums like the Abu Dhabi Dialogue or the Colombo Process, he said.

The government should also look into whether migrant workers willingly violate Saudi laws or they are forced to do that by someone else, said Prof CR Abrar.

It's important to learn lessons from the recent incidents of deportation, he said.

Another labour migration expert Asif Munier said that labour recruitment agreements between the two countries should be updated in line with laws concerned.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, secretary general of Bangladesh Association of

International Recruiting Agencies, said Bangladesh mission should look into whether the Saudi authorities send back migrant workers who have valid documents.

Contacted, Aminul Islam, labour counsellor at the Bangladesh Consulate General in Jeddah, said only those who become undocumented and found to be "at fault" were being deported.

Amid the crackdown that started in 2017, Bangladesh mission sent 'note verbale' to Saudi foreign ministry on multiple occasions so that Bangladeshi expatriates were not abused, he said.

He added that issues relating to migrant workers' problems were raised in several meetings between overseas employment minister and the Saudi authorities.

Regarding Imran's allegations, Aminul said his office usually takes steps after receiving specific complaints.

He could not say how many undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers were living in the Gulf country now.