

## Skilled here is not skilled

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The current trend of sending workers abroad shows that the number of migrant workers would be about 10 percent less than last year's, says the report.

Some 7.34 lakh workers went last year, it says, referring to the data of Bureau of Manpower, Training and Employment.

On this declining trend, Prof Tasneem said a reason for this could be suspension of hiring Bangladeshi workers by Malaysia since September last year.

Market domination by a syndicate of 10 recruiting agents, and charging of high migration cost had been alleged.

Until November this year, around 97,430 female workers went abroad, it said, adding that the average age of female migrants is 27, and 70 percent of them are married. The rest are divorcees or widows.

Of the total workers, 59.6 percent or 3.6 lakh migrated to Saudi Arabia alone.

About 89 percent workers went to the Middle Eastern countries, and a large number of the remaining 11 percent to Southeast Asian countries.

The report says the government is likely to receive an estimated \$18.19 billion in remittance this year, an increase of 17.05 percent from last year's \$16.67 billion.

Of the amount, the highest 19.87 percent came from Saudi Arabia followed by 14.99 percent from the UAE, it says.

This year, top four migrant-sending districts were Cumilla, Brahmanbaria, Chattogram, and Tangail, it adds. The report mentions that the unwanted repatriation of female migrant workers from Saudi Arabia was an important issue throughout the year.

But there is no exact figure of the returnees, it says.

Also, some 21,000 male workers were deported by Saudi Arabia in the first 10 months of this year, the report says.

Besides, some 152 Bangladeshis returned home from war-torn Libya with the government's help.

The government has taken some steps, including introducing two percent incentive for sending remittance through legal channel, and the mandatory "Prabashi Kormi Bima" insurance for migrant workers.

The expatriates' welfare ministry issued a set of directives to ensure safety for female migrant workers.

Prabashi Kallyan Bank disbursed loans of Tk 105.49 crore to 7,115 people, mostly for labour migration.

The report also recommends that the government bring brokers or middlemen under a registration process to ensure accountability.



A pro-democracy protester waves flag on top of a car park during a gathering at Edinburgh Place in the Central district of Hong Kong yesterday. Hong Kong has been battered by more than six months of protests that has upended the financial hub's reputation for stability and helped tip the city into recession.

PHOTO: AFP

## Female astronaut

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yet. Her return is scheduled for February 2020, meaning that she will have been on board the ISS for just 12 days fewer than the US record of 340 days that her colleague Scott Kelly was in space.

Whitson is still the holder of the record for the longest time spent in space over a series of missions, having spent nearly 666 days away from Earth over the course of five flights. The all-time record for one space flight is 438 days and was set by cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov in 1995.

Speaking as 28 December arrived and her record was set, Koch said that she hoped her achievements would be inspiring to others who hoped to follow her. And she said that she hopes her record is broken as soon as possible again, as humanity looks to push more boundaries further in space.

"Do what scares you. Everyone should think about what intrigues them and what draws them in," she said during a live interview with CNN from the space station.

## I'm cautiously

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Canada and the Netherlands for supporting the Gambia in the legal battle.

The director of the Centre for Genocide Studies in DU Professor Intiaz Ahmed, Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Benoit Préfontaine, Deputy Ambassador of the Netherlands in Dhaka Jeroen Steeghs, Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Hoque and others spoke at the discussion.

## On this day

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Muktibahini, Allied Force, government officials and civilians.

They also request the president to entomb the bodies lying at Rayerbazar.

Mother Teresa meets president Syed Nazrul Islam. She discusses making a residence for the Biranganas.

She receives warm felicitations from the president for her extended helping hands to the refugees.

## Trespassing

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raised during the meeting, read the press release.

The conference also discussed on effective implementation of the Comprehensive Border Management Plan (CBMP) for smooth border management and resolving border related problems.

Shafeenul told the press conference that the BGB would continue to work to prevent illegal crossings into India.

Shafeenul, heading an 11-member BGB delegation, is now in India for the DG-level border talks with their counterparts the Border Security Force (BSF).

Asked about the provisions of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that seeks to grant Indian citizenship to persecuted non-Muslims from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, the BGB chief said he would not like to make any comment on it.

Replying to a question on the death of a BSF jawan allegedly by a BGB trooper along the India-Bangladesh border in West Bengal in October, Shafeenul said it was an unfortunate, unwarranted and unexpected incident.

"An inquiry is still on...we will take necessary steps," he added.

BSF DG V K Johri said the incident was unwarranted and unfortunate and that "there are lessons to be learnt."

"We are preparing a detailed standard operating procedure in the wake of this incident that took place along the riverine border along Bangladesh," Johri said.

## Explosions

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Saddam Hossain said, "This could be an act of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activists who were deprived of posts in the new committee... This incident needs to be investigated."

DU JCD Convener Rakibul Islam Rakib said he didn't want to blame anybody. "Finding out the culprits should not be difficult because there are many CCTV cameras around the place."

The campus has been tense since December 22 when Ducusu Vice President Nurul Haque Nur and his supporters were attacked.

Storage devices of the CCTV footage of the incident had "mysteriously" disappeared from the room of Ducusu administrative officer.

Ducusu members of the BCL panel yesterday demanded the CCTV footage of the attack on Ducusu leaders.

During the BCL press conference in Ducusu building, they demanded withdrawal of "false cases" against BCL men.

They claimed that the BCL had no connection with the attack.

By filing cases against the Ducusu VP and his followers, the BCL is creating a ground for harassing members of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, the platform alleged at another press conference around 12:45pm at TSC.

## Kaikaus

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Administration Cadre of Bangladesh Civil Service in 1986.

He has worked at different levels of field administration and worked on deputation in several organisations, including Directorate of Accommodation, Department of Narcotics Control and Bangladesh Services Limited.

## KSA arrests

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This marked the first such mass crackdown since de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman began easing social restrictions in the ultra-conservative kingdom, lifting decades-long bans on cinemas and women drivers while allowing gender-mixed concerts and sporting extravaganzas.

The relaxed social norms have been welcomed by many Saudis, two-thirds of whom are under 30.

But in September, Saudi Arabia said it would penalise violations of "public decency", including wearing immodest clothing and public displays of affection, after the austere kingdom began issuing tourist visas for the first time.

Men and women must avoid "tight-fitting clothing" or clothes with "profane language or images", read an instruction on an English language website launched by the tourism authority.

"Women should cover shoulders and knees in public," it added.

The public decency guidelines, first approved by cabinet in April, are widely perceived to be vague and have sparked public concern that they would be open to interpretation.

They have also stoked fears of a revival of morality policing.

Saudi Arabia's religious police once elicited widespread fear, chasing men and women out of malls to pray and berating anyone seen mingling with the opposite sex.

But the bearded enforcers of public morality, whose powers have been clipped in recent years, are now largely out of sight.

## BBPL resumes

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intensity.

A fixture between the bottom two sides on the points table -- Sylhet Thunder and Rangpur Rangers -- will kick off today's proceedings while the night match will pit the second placed Rajshahi Royals against Dhaka Platoon.

Rajshahi, with five wins in six games, are just behind Chattogram Challengers, who have six wins in eight games. Khulna Tigers are in third position with five wins in seven games while Dhaka Platoon are in fourth position with four wins in seven matches.

Sylhet and Rangpur have managed to win only one match in the seven and six fixtures they have respectively played so far and so, both sides will be desperate for a win today.

Shane Watson led Rangpur in their previous match, which was a 52-run loss to Khulna. Therefore, the Australian all-rounder will surely be looking to turn things around for the club, who have suffered both on and off the field throughout the tournament.

Likewise, Sylhet has been below par till now and could turn to their West Indian recruits for salvation with the likes of Andre Fletcher, who scored the first of two centuries hit so far in the tournament, and Johnson Charles being in fine form.

Andre Russell's Rajshahi have remained a solid unit with Liton Das, Afif Hossain, Shoaib Malik and the skipper himself having performed well during their 15-run win over Cumilla Warriors in their previous game.

Meanwhile, despite winning four matches, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Dhaka have yet to find the perfect combination. Their dashing opener, Tamim Iqbal, who scored two fifties and a few thirty odd innings, is yet to flourish since making his return to professional cricket following a long break.

However, this has allowed all-rounder Mahedi Hasan to remain as the star player for Dhaka both with the bat and ball and so, today should feature an interesting battle.

## Deeds of a deed writer

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job as a deed writer at the sub-registrar office in 1999.

This was the beginning of his rise.

A year after Awami League government assumed power in 2008, Nasir formed an association of deed writers in his upazila and became the general secretary of the association that had three other members. He established himself under the patronage of local politicians.

Following a story in a Bangla national daily on the existing corruption at the sub-registrar's office on November 26, the ACC began the investigation into him.

### ADDITIONAL FIVE PERCENT

According to the government rules, the cost of land registration is nine

percent of the value of the land at the union level and 10 percent at the municipality level.

But in Kaliganj upazila, locals would have to bear an additional five percent for registration and other expenses.

This practice was introduced by Nasir, and if any other deed writer would try to protest, they would be threatened that their licence would be cancelled, said members, seeking anonymity.

When asked, Sub-Registrar Amina Begun of Kaliganj said she was unaware of such extra charges. She was not available for any further comment, despite repeated attempts.

Shariful Islam of Shabaria village in

the upazila said, "I recently went to the Kaliganj upazila sub registrar's office for land registration. I knew that I had to bear a cost of nine percent of total land price, but I had to pay 14 percent. This is nothing but corruption."

Nazmus Sardar, deputy director of ACC in Jessore, said Nasir is currently under investigation to know the source of his wealth. "If proven guilty, action will be taken against him."

The Daily Star learnt that Nasir has deposited around Tk 3 crores in different bank accounts, which are operated by him and some of his family members. This correspondent has collected these account numbers and statements.

Apart from cash, Nasir has four

apartments, a bungalow and around 60 bighas of land in the upazila.

Contacted, Nasir told The Daily Star that some rivals were spreading propaganda against him. "The local assistant commissioner (land) has investigated my property and found that I only have 10 bighas of land," he added.

However, Jhenaidah AC (land) Bhupali Sarkar said her office didn't conduct any survey on Nasir's land.

Regarding his bank balance, Nasir said he did not commit any crime. "Rather, I earned the money legally through deed writing."

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Suborna Rani Saha said action would be taken against Nasir if she receives any written complaint.

## Year's lowest 4.5 degrees in Tentulia

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In Panchagrah, the chilly weather disrupted normal life. People of low-income group are the worst victim of it.

The stone lifting workers, who collect stones from the Mahananda river in Tentulia, could not continue doing their job due to the adverse weather.

"We cannot stay in the river due to bone-chilling cold. We cannot earn our livelihood as we have been remaining jobless since last couple of days," said Muktarul Islam, a stone

lifting worker of Sardarpara village in the same upazila.

Rickshaw pullers, day labourers and people of similar professions are also passing hard days after being hit by cold.

Rahidul Islam, officer-in-charge of Tentulia Weather Observation Centre, said cold wind from Himalayan side sweeps easily through the northern region. That is why, mercury continues dropping in this region.

In Dinajpur, continuous low temperature, accompanied with thick fog, has already started affecting the

winter crops in the district.

Many crops, including potato, onion, garlic and wheat, are largely produced in the district during the winter season. But production of these crops might be affected if such adverse weather continued, said farmers.

Besides, winter vegetables and Boro seedbed was also under threat.

"I have cultivated potato this year on one acre of land. On Thursday, I have noticed the potato leaf have already been curled," said Mobarak Hossain, a potato farmer of Uttar

Gosairpur village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila.

"Potato and Boro seedbeds are under threat. You see the seedbed have turned yellowish, which should look green," said Altaf Hossain, a farmer of Boroil village.

Touhidul Iqbal, deputy director of Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) in Dinajpur, said staffers of local agriculture offices were working to assist farmers to protect their crops.

Our Dinajpur and Thakurgaon correspondents contributed to this report

## Govt blocks mobile signals

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the government's first priority, and that's why the government made this decision," Jabbar said without elaborating.

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission wrote to the four carriers -- Grameenphone, Robi, Banglalink, and Teletalk-- at 7:45pm yesterday, and the operators started complying soon after getting the directive, said BTRC officials.

The letters were signed by deputy director Md Sohul Rana of the BTRC's spectrum management division.

The decision would affect about one crore subscribers in 32 districts that have borders with India and Myanmar.

A senior executive of a carrier said about 2,000 mobile towers would be turned off, and it would take a couple of days to do that since some of them were in remote areas.

"The border is not a straight line, and if we block the last tower closest to the border, signals would be affected in at least a few kilometres inside the country," said the executive requesting

anonymity.

The official said they had never done such wholesale signal blocking and that they only blocked signals in certain areas temporarily.

Officials of the carriers said since there would be no signals of Bangladeshi operators, carriers of neighbouring countries could take the chance and cover the areas.

However, Jabbar said, "As far as we know, a neighbouring country has already blocked signals in its border areas."

## OIC welcomes UN resolution

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persecution against the Rohingyas in Myanmar.

The resolution titled "Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar" was passed with an overwhelming majority of votes during the 74th session of UN General Assembly at its 52nd resumed meeting, held at the UN headquarters in New York on Friday.

This resolution follows the UN's Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar report that declared Myanmar is failing

in its obligations under the Genocide Convention to prevent, investigate and enact effective legislation criminalising and punishing genocide.

"The OIC reiterates its call on the international community to extend its support to the legal effort for justice and accountability for the Rohingyas," said the release.

It mentioned that Gambia, as chair of the "OIC Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Human Rights Violations against the Rohingya", has filed a legal case in the

International Court of Justice against Myanmar for violating its obligations under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Bangladesh is currently hosting over 1.1 million forcibly displaced Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar. Most of them arrived since Myanmar launched a military crackdown on August 25, 2017, which the UN called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" and dubbed as "genocide" by other rights groups.

## Bid to reorganise party falls flat

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for councils. They handpick leaders. But the grassroots leaders don't accept this," a senior leader told The Daily Star.

In Madaripur, for example, a convening committee formed in July was asked to hold a council in three months and form a full-fledged committee.

Instead of doing that, the convener Zafar Ali allegedly formed committees in eight units of the district with his own people.

Member secretary of the convening committee Jahandar Ali Jahan alleged that he was not aware of the committees being formed and complained to the central leaders. Eventually, the central office suspended all new committees in the district.

The BNP is in similar limbo in many districts, leaders alleged.

Moreover, as per the party charter, the convener and member secretary of a convening committee can't be the president or general secretary of the full-fledged committee.

"It is a major barrier in reorganising the party. No one wants to make room for others. The longer they remain in the convening posts, the more they get to exercise power," said a district leader.

Besides, the top leaders of the party are not complying with a provision that says one leader cannot hold more than one post.

This provision was introduced in the last BNP national council held in 2016. Khaleda Zia tried to implement it but could not finish the process as

she landed in jail in a corruption case.

Tarique has also been trying to implement the provision, but has made next to no progress.

"Reorganisation is going on. We are going through a difficult time. We haven't been able to hold meetings in different places and our leaders and activists are accused in many cases. That's why it is taking some time. But it will be done in near future," Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, senior joint secretary general, told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, BNP Vice Chairman Altaf Hossain Chowdhury is also president of Patuakhali BNP, chairperson's adviser Mashur Rahman is convener of Jhenaidah BNP, Joint Secretary General Mujibur Rahman Sarwar is president of

Barishal BNP, Joint Secretary General Khairul Kabir Khokon is in Narsingdi BNP, Joint Secretary General Habib-un-Nabi Khan Sohul is president of Dhaka south BNP, Joint Secretary Aslam Chowdhury is president of Chattogram north BNP, and Organising Secretary Nazrul Islam Monju is president of Khulna city BNP.

The BNP has also taken an initiative to reform Krishak Dal, Matsyajibi Dal, and Olama Dal. Convening committees of those organisations were formed but they failed to form any full-fledged committee.

Contacted, Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir blamed the government for obstructing the process of reorganisation.