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## Empty-handed they returned

148 migrants return from Libya as work dries up in war-torn country

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bangladeshi migrant workers who returned home from Libya on Wednesday went through severe hardship as their livelihoods were hampered due to economic uncertainty and deterioration of law and order.

The migrants, who returned voluntarily, faced dearth of income opportunities as the North African country was torn by a bloody war.

The 148 Bangladeshis landed in Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on a special flight Wednesday morning.

They returned with the help of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and on their return, the migrants were given different support they needed, including food from Prabashi Kalyan Desk set up at the airport by the expatriates' welfare ministry, and Brac Migration Programme.

On Thursday, The Daily Star talked to three of the returnees who shared stories of their sufferings in Libya.

Masud Mollah, 43, from Narsingdi, said the value of Libyan currency declined.

He said after entering Libya in April, 2019, he could work only six months and the rest of the time he was unemployed.

Masud said his monthly income was barely Tk 15,000, which was not sufficient to support his wife and three children back home after meeting his own expenses.

Besides, the law-and-order situation was deteriorating there, he added.

Masud said he reached Libya spending about Tk 3.5 lakh via a middleman who demanded Tk 4 lakh. The

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The authorities did not remove the remains of a decommissioned bridge on the Sylhet-Shillong highway even though a new bridge was built around 20 years ago. The pilings have helped reduce the navigability of the river which has shrunk significantly over the years.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

## Remains of old bridge narrowing Sari river

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, Sylhet

The road that connects Bangladesh's Sylhet to India's Shillong through Jaintapur-Tamabil was constructed in 1932.

The next year, a bridge was constructed over the Sari river in Jaintapur upazila to finally establish connection between Sylhet and Shillong.

Decades later, in 2000, another bridge was constructed on the river and the older one was declared abandoned.

Although the archaeological heritage was supposed to be removed right after, it still stands still at the heart of the river as a major obstacle.

According to the National River Conservation Commission, at least 98 illegal structures, sand and sediments from the upstream are causing serious trouble to the river's navigability.

In addition to that, the ruins of the old bridge

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## UK SC rejects Shamima's legal bid to return

AFP, London

Britain's highest court yesterday rejected a bid by a woman who was stripped of her UK citizenship for joining the Islamic State group to return to challenge the decision.

Five judges at the Supreme Court gave a unanimous decision in the case of Shamima Begum, whose legal battles have come to be seen as a test of how Britain treat nationals who joined the jihadists.

They found her right to a fair hearing did not override considerations such as public safety, and that the decision to block her return should remain until she can participate "without the safety of the public being compromised".

"That is not a perfect solution, as it is not known how long it may be before

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### COUP IN MYANMAR

## Cops fire to break up protests

Several hurt; NLD says Suu Kyi moved to undisclosed location; World Bank halts payments to projects

REUTERS

Police dispersed protesters in Myanmar's two biggest cities yesterday, firing stun grenades, rubber bullets and guns into the air, witnesses said, as the challenge to the army's bid to re-impose its rule showed no sign of slackening.

At least one person was wounded in the protests in the main city of Yangon, a witness said, and several people were hurt in the second city of Mandalay.

Police were not immediately available for comment.

The Southeast Asian country has been in crisis since the army seized power on February 1 and detained government leader Aung San Suu Kyi and much of her party leadership after the military complained of fraud in a November election her party won. The election commission said the vote was fair.

A lawyer for Suu Kyi, who is being held under house arrest, said he had not been granted access to her, three days before she is due to return to court, adding that it would undermine her right to a fair hearing.

Citing officials in her party, Myanmar Now website said yesterday Suu Kyi has been moved to an undisclosed location from the home where she was being kept under house arrest in the capital Naypyitaw.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) sources said she had been taken away six days ago, the website reported.

"We don't know where she's being kept anymore," Myanmar Now quoted one senior NLD source as saying on condition of anonymity.

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## Indian coast guard finds 81 Rohingyas adrift at sea

Asks Bangladesh to take them

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's coast guard found 81 survivors and eight dead on a boat crammed with Muslim Rohingya refugees adrift in the Andaman Sea, and were repairing the vessel so that it can return safely to Bangladesh, Indian officials said yesterday.

The Indian government was in discussions with Bangladesh to facilitate the safe return of the vessel, which was found drifting in international waters having left southern Bangladesh about two weeks ago with hopes of reaching Malaysia.

The boat had sailed on February 11 from Cox's Bazar carrying 56 women and eight girls as well as 21 men and five boys, officials said.

Many of the survivors, according to Indian

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## Driverless bus hits streets in southern Spain



AFP, Malaga

A new driverless electric bus has begun operating in the southern Spanish city of Malaga, in a project presented as a first in Europe.

The bus is equipped with sensors and cameras and links Malaga's port to the city centre on an eight-kilometre (five-mile) loop it does six times a day.

"The bus knows at all times where it is and what is around it," said Rafael Durban Carmona, who heads the southern division of Spanish transport company Avanza that leads the public-private consortium behind the project.

It can "interact with traffic lights," which are also equipped with sensors that alert the bus when they turn red, he told AFP.

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## Cop arrested, sent to jail for raping teen

STAR REPORT

A police constable landed in jail yesterday on charge of raping a teenaged girl in Feni's Fulgaji.

The constable -- Towhidul Islam Shaon, 21, of Shalbagan Police Camp -- was arrested from Ranganamati on Thursday night.

Fulgaji Police Station Officer-in-charge Qutub Uddin confirmed the matter.

On Thursday afternoon, the victim's mother filed a case against Towhidul, his father Aminul Islam, mother Shiran and a man named Firoz Ahmed Babu, said the OC.

The OC said Towhidul was produced in court yesterday and the court sent him to jail, reports our Feni correspondent.

According to the case statement, Towhidul took the girl, a ninth-grader, to a house in Feni on June 1, 2020.

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## Rejoinder, our reply

Zahirul Islam, managing director of Lama Rubber Industries Limited, in a rejoinder claimed that the news report on the grabbing of indigenous Mro people's jhum land carried by this paper on February 13 was "completely one sided, fake and very harmful" for its shareholders.

Without mentioning the headline of the report, the rejoinder read: "We have 64 plot holders of respectable peoples of the society not land grabber made Lama Rubber Industry."

It also stated, "Several investigation was made by different govt. agencies. We got govt. allocations and have valid documents but tribal people have no documents."

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### PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 27

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30  
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Parents and guardians of jobseekers, who sat for the 32nd Bangladesh Civil Service test, wait outside an exam centre near Farmgate in the capital yesterday. This is the first such large-scale government recruitment test since closure of educational institutions last year due to the pandemic.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### GRABBING, FILLING BHADRA, HORI RIVERS

## HC orders status quo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has ordered the authorities to maintain status quo on land grabbing, earth filling and operating brick kilns on the land of the Bhadra and Hori rivers in Khulna's Dumuria upazila for three months.

In response to a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB), the court on Thursday ordered the government authorities concerned to submit a report to it after complying with the directive.

The writ petitioner said lawmaker of Khulna-5 (Dumuria-Phultola) Narayan Chandra Chanda, also a former fisheries and livestock minister, Dumuria upazila Chairman Ajaz Ahmed, local union parishad Chairman Human Kabir Bulu and many others were reportedly involved in the acts of land grabbing and operating brick kilns on river land, which was obstructing the flow of the rivers.

On Thursday, the HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why their inaction to stop encroachment, earth filling and operating brick kilns on river land should not be declared illegal.

In the rule, the HC asked the respondents to show causes why they should not be directed to stop such activities and remove the dams built on the rivers by influential people.

Secretaries to the ministries of local government and rural development, water resources, land, and environment and forest, the director general of Department of Environment, the deputy commissioner of Khulna, the assistant commissioner (land) of Dumuria upazila, and other government officials concerned and the local elected representatives concerned have been made respondents to the rule.

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