



Valid passports so dear

Slow issuance of passports leaves migrants in Oman unable to come home, draw salary



EZAZ MAHMUD

Renewing passports have suddenly become a “wild goose chase” for Bangladeshi migrants in Oman.

Frustration and anxiety is growing among Bangladeshi expatriates as thousands of workers are not getting their passports renewed on time.

Amid such a situation, pressure is growing on the Bangladesh embassy in Oman and the money exchange firms tasked with the service.

Slow supply of passports from Dhaka are blamed for the crisis. However, the Bangladesh embassy and the Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP) hoped the crisis will be over within a month.

According to expatriates, the passport crisis in Oman has been prevailing for the last six to seven months, causing

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



The Mayor Hanif flyover in the capital's Jatrabari area is usually teeming with vehicles. However, it has been almost empty since a “lockdown” was enforced by the government from April 14 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

MIGRANTS' TRAVEL Suspension of flights another blow for them

RASHIDUL HASAN

The return of several thousand Bangladeshi migrants to their workplaces abroad faced another blow as suspension of regular international flights to and from Bangladesh was extended for another week from April 22.

However, special flights to Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar, UAE and Singapore will continue despite the suspension.

Leaders of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) and Association of Travel Agents of Bangladesh (Atab) said migrant workers were facing various difficulties in returning to work.

Baira and Atab leaders said many migrants can't afford the tickets as their prices have gone up. Some can't even come to Dhaka amid the “lockdown” to catch their flights.

Besides, migrant workers are also facing problems in getting tested on time for Covid-19, mandatory for travel abroad.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) yesterday extended the flight suspension inline

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Lockdown may be eased to let people go home for Eid

Says Obaidul Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing lockdown could be relaxed for homebound people during the upcoming Eid, Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

During a virtual briefing, Quader, also general secretary of ruling Awami League, urged everyone to be mentally prepared and patient.

He said they have decided to provide financial assistance to workers who became unemployed, including those in the transport sector.

Quader also called upon the party leaders and activists to distribute relief among disadvantaged people.

Before the briefing, he joined another virtual programme with officials of Rangpur road zone of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

At the programme, the minister added that as roads are vacant due to lockdown, it is the right time to repair them.

Quader said Prime Minister Sheikh

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

ROAD TO FREEDOM THIS DAY IN BANGLADESH LIBERATION WAR HISTORY

Bhashani writes to Mao

APRIL 20, 1971

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BHASHANI'S LETTERS TO CHINESE LEADERS

Maulana Bhashani, leader of the National Awami Party (Bhashani), had written personal letters to Chairman Mao and the Premier of the People's Republic of China, Chou en-Lai, expressing surprise at Peking's support to the Pakistani military junta.

Bhashani had at the same time expressed his sincere support to the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Tajuddin Ahmad, for jointly fighting with the Mukti Fauz to oust the occupation army of Pakistan.

It was learnt that Bhashani, who had been given a heroic reception during his visit to Peking and knew the Chinese leaders personally, described in his recent letters in vivid detail the ruthless atrocities of the Pakistani army on the innocent unarmed people in Bangladesh.

Bhashani appealed to the Chinese leaders for lending



whole-hearted support to the liberation struggle of Bangladesh against the genocide let loose by the Pakistan occupation army. He also hoped to see a change in China's policy in favour of the freedom fighters of Bangladesh sooner than later. China would soon, he expected, publicly condemn the brutal atrocities of the Pakistan army and back the people's liberation struggle in Bangladesh. PAKISTAN DEMANDS INDIA OUST DIPLOMATS Pakistan demanded today that India oust dissident East Pakistani diplomats who “seized” the Pakistani deputy high commission, or consulate, in Calcutta on April 18, 1971. India refused. The foreign ministry of India said the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

7 cops hurt in Hefajat attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

At least seven policemen, including the officer-in-charge of Mollahat Police Station, were injured as activists of Hefajat-e-Islam, a Qawmi madrasa-based organisation, attacked them yesterday.

Injured OC Kazi Golam Kabir said Hefajat activists gathered near Mollahat Upazila Health Complex to bring out a procession to protest the arrest of its leader Maulana Mamunul Haque around 11:00am. On information, police went to the spot and Hefajat activists attacked them, he added.

Mamunul's maternal grandfather's house is in Udaipur village of Mollahat.

The other injured are Mollahat Police Station SI Thakur Das Mandal, ASI Mohammad Liakat, Mohammad Bahar, police constables Nazmul Fakir, Sohag Mia and

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

Hidden 'embassy' of legendary Mayan city found



MAIL ONLINE

Archaeologists in Guatemala believe they have discovered a hidden “embassy” in the legendary Mayan city of Tikal.

The compound includes a pyramid, burial site and various items indicative of Teotihuacan, a rival city-state hundreds of miles away in Mexico.

It was recently discovered thanks to aerial laser scans that could pierce through centuries of dirt and jungle growth.

The finding suggests Teotihuacan, which conquered Tikal in the late 4th century, was once

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



PRAYER TIMING APRIL 20

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-09 12-45 4-45 6-26 8-00
JAMAAT 4-19 1-15 5-00 6-36 8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING

RAMADAN APRIL SEHRI IFTAR

| | | |
|---|----|-----------|
| 7 | 20 | 6:26 |
| 8 | 21 | 4:08 6:26 |
| 9 | 22 | 4:07 6:27 |

SUED UNDER DSA Labour leader Ruhul Amin gets bail

2 held in DSA cases in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ruhul Amin was released from jail after a court yesterday granted him bail in a case filed under the controversial Digital Security Act.

The Metropolitan Sessions Judges Court passed the order around noon, Ruhul's lawyer Akhter Jahan Ruku told The Daily Star, adding that the bail was granted upon a bond of Tk 10,000.

Meanwhile, police arrested two more men under the Digital Security Act (DSA) in remote Naikhyangchhari, Bandarban, for making “anti-state” posts on Facebook.

Ruhul Amin, coordinator of Sramik-Krishak-Chhatra-Janata Oikya Parishad, and Niaz Murshid Dolan, a member of the association, were arrested on February 26 at the house of cartoonist

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1



People of all ages sitting in front of the “Bhalo Kaajer Khabar Hotel” near Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital. Run by school-going children scattered all across Dhaka, who dream of doing good for the nation through their own expenses, the hotel has been distributing free food to the poor and will be doing so throughout the holy month of Ramadan during this pandemic. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

US hits vaccine milestone

More than half of its adults got at least one dose; India locks down capital

AGENCIES

The hard-hit United States passed a hopeful milestone of giving at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose to half its adults, as India locked down its capital New Delhi for a week from last night to try and control a raging outbreak.

There was good news from Australia and New Zealand as well as the two neighbours opened a travel bubble that would allow people to travel without a mandatory quarantine.

Infections are skyrocketing in India, however, with hospitals running out of beds and the government forced to reimpose economically painful restrictions again.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the capital's “health system is at a tipping point”.

“If we don't impose a lockdown now, we will be looking at a bigger disaster.”

Kejriwal said businesses would be shut and movement around the city of 20 million limited to essential services.

The Delhi lockdown came after the vast nation of 1.3 billion people reported a record high of 273,810 infections yesterday -- the fifth consecutive day of more than 200,000 cases.

The restrictions followed similar measures in other parts of India, including in the western state of Maharashtra, home to financial capital Mumbai, reports AFP.

India said yesterday it will open its vaccination drive to all adults from May 1.

Former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh has

SEE PAGE 10 COL 3