

Looking for way back

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he returned and opened a shop in Madhabdi, Narsingdi. Murad's shop did not run well and after several failed attempts to settle down, he flew to Qatar in 2013.

"It seems I have no alternative but to go abroad," said Murad.

These experiences were reflected in a recent survey, where Brac Migration Programme found that among 417 migrants returned home amid the pandemic, 72 percent want to re-migrate.

Of them, 89 percent are from rural areas, said the survey report published in April that explores and analyses "socio-economic and psycho-social situation of returnee migrants after one year of their return home during the pandemic".

The report said 47.23 percent of the returnees don't have any income source.

Younger migrant workers were most eager to re-migrate for work, with some 84 percent of those wishing to re-migrate belonging to the 26-30 age group, the report said. Eighty percent of the respondents wishing to re-migrate are from Chattogram division.

While trying to reach 1,360 returnees for the survey, Brac found 207 of them had already re-migrated.

Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme, said they found most of the respondents in the survey without an income source put re-migration as their "first choice".

Besides, he said, many who came home on vacation and were subsequently stuck here amid the pandemic or came home after losing their jobs, were contacted by their previous employers. So, they want to re-migrate.

TOP DRIVERS OF MIGRATION

Top drivers of migration from Bangladesh include absence of job opportunities, particularly in the formal sector; insufficient income; financial problems, and a lack of social

services and limited social protection systems, said a report of International Organisation for Migration (IOM), published in August last year.

For the report, titled "Bangladesh: Survey on Drivers of Migration and Migrants' Profile", IOM interviewed 11,415 potential migrants -- either "regular" or "irregular" based on whether or not they had registered with the government -- in November-December 2019.

Most respondents, who intended to migrate by June 2020, were of working age and had attained some level of education, it said.

As many as 40 percent of the potential migrants were unemployed before deciding to migrate, and 90 percent reported no personal income or insufficient income, it added.

The report found if there were better job opportunities in Bangladesh, 99 percent of potential migrants would choose to stay in the country.

Bangladesh is the sixth largest origin country for international migrants in the world, with 7.8 million Bangladeshi migrants living abroad as of 2019, IOM said.

Over 2.2 million young adults join the labour force every year in Bangladesh, but the domestic labour market is unable to absorb all these job seekers, it said.

As per Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (Bmet) data, 1.95 lakh Bangladeshis took up new overseas employment this year, till May.

When people want to migrate abroad due to a lack of job opportunities or other alternatives, then it cannot be said migration is his or her choice, said Brac Migration Programme head Shariful.

"Migration has to be a choice," he said.

As lots of opportunities are opening up in Bangladesh at present, if these could be made "visible" to people intending to migrate, then they can have a choice, Shariful added.



A girl has her temperature checked as she arrives to receive China's Sinovac Biotech vaccine against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) during a mass vaccination program at Ancol amusement park in Jakarta, Indonesia, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Frontliners' loved ones above 18 to get shots

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Maleque said 21 crore doses of vaccine have already been arranged or have been assured by different sources.

"Of those, three crore doses are from China, three crore more from Serum Institute of India, seven crore from Covax, one crore from Russia and seven crore doses from Johnson & Johnson. If these are available in time, Bangladesh will be able to vaccinate 80 percent of its population, he said.

The minister also said 26 cold freezers were being brought through the World Health Organization (WHO) for vaccines that need to be stored at minus 70 or minus 80 degrees Celsius.

Besides, the government has directed the authorities to prioritise the elderly people in rural areas in the vaccination drives and to bring teachers, students and their family members above 18 years under the campaign, he said.

"The elderly are at risk of death, they have to be vaccinated first," the minister said, adding that around 75 percent of the Covid patients in public hospitals are from rural areas and 90 percent of all patients are non-vaccinated. It means they needed hospitalisation because they did not take vaccines.

"If we can vaccinate elderly people in rural areas quickly, the number of patients and deaths will decrease," he added.

He also said the rural people who cannot register online using the "Surokha" website would get vaccines by showing their National Identity cards and that they would be able to register for the inoculation after taking the shots.

About the latest spike in Covid-19 transmission, the minister said, "The infection rate has definitely increased as a result of people going to the cattle

markets and shops for Eid. We will see that [result] in the future."

DAILY OXYGEN DEMAND 270 TONNES

At the same event, the minister said the daily demand for medical oxygen has risen to 270 tonnes from the usual demand of 60 to 70 tonnes.

He said 40 oxygen generators would be installed in 40 hospitals across the country by next month. "So we will not have any oxygen shortage."

Explaining the latest oxygen supply chain, Director General of the health directorate Prof Abul Bashar Mohammad Khurshid Alam said there would be enough supply of oxygen from India to meet the rising demand.

"From now on, 400 tonnes of oxygen can be imported from India twice a week. As such, 1,600 tonnes of oxygen will be imported each month. Then there will be no more oxygen crisis," Khurshid said.

Massive offensive against

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when I visit there later."

NISHIMURA CRITICISES YAHYA

Nishimura, Japanese Socialist Party parliamentarian, said in Kolkata today that it was wrong on the part of Gen Yahya Khan to order army crackdown instead of handing over power to the Awami League.

Nishimura, who visited several camps sheltering the evacuees from Bangladesh at Bongaon in 24-Parganas district said in an interview that violence could not solve any problem.

Nishimura said that the UN should intervene to start fresh negotiations between the West Pakistan authorities and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for a political settlement in the troubled Bangladesh.

Giving a horrifying picture of miserable situation of the people in Bangladesh, Nishimura said that during his tour of the camps in the border areas, he had found thousands of men, women and children trekking long distances to cross over to India for safety. When such a condition was prevailing in Bangladesh, people of

the world should try to assess the real situation, he commented.

AID BID FOR BANGLADESH

Headed by a young white South African, a group of 10 people would assemble in Kolkata within the next few days and then try to drive two SUVs loaded with food and medical supplies across the closed frontier into East Pakistan. The leader, Colin Jackson, was a 29-year-old writer whose family lives in Johannesburg. Operating under the title Omega, the group would include an American woman married to a Bangladesh activist, a British nurse in her fifties, a Peace News journalist, an expellee and an official of British European Airways, who is devoting his leave to the enterprise.

Jackson said yesterday that he believed aid, desperately needed inside East Pakistan, was being prevented from getting there by "the principle of national sovereignty", backed up in this case by the Pakistan Army.

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Scientists find tiny mountains

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these dense stars; anything greater than that will continue to collapse until they eventually form black holes.

The gravitational forces on a neutron star are about one billion times greater than those on Earth, which compresses every feature on the surface down to tiny dimensions -- creating an almost perfect sphere.

However, on the surface of this sphere are minor imperfections, known as 'mountains'.

"For the past two decades, there has been much interest in understanding how large these mountains can be before the crust of the neutron star breaks, and the mountain can no longer be supported", Southampton University PhD student Fabian Gittins, who built a computational model to depict and study neutron stars, said in a statement.

The largest mountains possible to produce in this mathematical model were only one fraction of a millimetre tall, one hundred times smaller than was previously estimated.

Past work suggests that neutron stars can deviate from their perfect spherical shape with a margin of a few parts in a million, suggesting that mountains as large as a few

centimetres could be possible, but this new data shows that this is impossible as the crust would be too close to breaking at every point.

"These results show how neutron stars truly are remarkably spherical objects. Additionally, they suggest that observing gravitational waves from rotating neutron stars may be even more challenging than previously thought," Gittins said.

Understanding these slight deformations is vital to physicists hoping to garner a better understanding of our universe. Spinning neutron stars cause ripples in the fabric of spacetime known as gravitational waves, started from these slight imperfections.

These gravitational waves have yet to be observed, but future advances in more sensitive scientific equipment at the Ligo (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) and Virgo observatories could prove astounding results.

These observatories have already found astounding phenomena, including a black hole swallowing a neutron star for the first time, and the violent merging of two huge black holes in deep space.

Fourteen dead in China warehouse fire

AFP, Beijing

A warehouse fire in northeastern China yesterday left at least fourteen people dead and twelve seriously injured, state media reported.

The logistics warehouse, located in Changchun, the capital of the northeastern province of Jilin, caught on fire Saturday afternoon, and rescue work is still underway, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Images published by the agency showed firefighters using ladders and cranes outside the burned-out shell of a glass-walled building.

"The cause of the incident is under investigation," Xinhua said.

Deadly fires are not uncommon in China, where lax enforcement of building codes and rampant unauthorised construction can make it hard for people to escape burning buildings.

A fire at a martial arts boarding school in central China's Henan province killed 18 people in June -- mostly children studying at the school, with state media later reporting that the school building had not completed mandatory fire safety audits.

Fewer cattle

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the pandemic, he added.

The development can be viewed as a blow to the country's meat production industry, which began growing with gusto in 2014, right after the BJP-led government imposed a ban on cattle export from India, a major source of sacrificial animals for Bangladesh.

The ban coupled with the improving purchasing power capacity of Bangladeshis brought on by the stellar economic growth clocked in over the past decade meant cow fattening targeting Eid-ul-Azha became a lucrative venture in the hinterlands.

In 2017, 44.7 lakh cows were slaughtered on Eid-ul-Azha. In 2019, the number stood at 56.6 lakh.

According to industry insiders, despair among the cattle traders and farmers were high this year as many had to leave Dhaka with their unsold cows, incurring huge financial losses.

More than 28 lakh cows have remained unsold this Eid, according to Md Shah Emran, secretary of the Bangladesh Dairy Farmers' Association.

A cow trader in Keraniganj told The Daily Star that he bought 13 cows from Kushtia three days before Eid-ul-Azha, which was celebrated in Bangladesh on July 21, and all of the cows remained unsold.

"The marginalised cow farmers suffered a lot last year and this year the financial woes would be bigger," Emran said.

Although the country has become self-sufficient in meat production, the farmers are not getting financial benefit due to the increasing cost of cow feed and electricity, he added.

Along comes some good

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In a message sent to Japan's Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu, he acknowledged and appreciated the continued assistance of Japan in facing the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic in Bangladesh.

He also mentioned Japan's direct budgetary support separately.

Foreign Minister lauded Japanese Prime Minister Suga's leadership in hosting the Vaccine Summit on June 2 and committing vaccines and funds to combat the pandemic.

"As we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between our two friendly countries in 2022, both the countries are now working to upgrade Bangladesh-Japan relationship from a 'Comprehensive Partnership' to the 'Strategic Partnership' level," Momen said.

Momen further said that Bangladesh has lined up vaccines after a gap and there will not be a vaccine shortage in the coming months.

However, it is now time that Bangladesh goes for local production of vaccines. Bangladesh is in talks with China and Russia for co-production, which he said, would be finalised at the soonest.

Some 16 lakh Bangladeshis who got the first doses of the vaccine were waiting for the second dose as India halted the export of AstraZeneca vaccines in March this year.

The Serum Institute of India had supplied 7 million of the contracted 30 million AstraZeneca vaccines, while the Indian government had gifted 3.3 million others to Bangladesh previously.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh received 250 ventilators from the US, completely

Along comes some good

free of cost.

The ventilators, which had arrived in India earlier, were transported to Dhaka last night.

Some Bangladeshi and Indian doctors have arranged 1,000 ventilators from the US.

Of those, 250 were sent to Bangladesh by the Biman Bangladesh Airlines, an official at the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi told this correspondent.

Another 150 ventilators were sent to Bangladesh earlier.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's physician Prof ABM Abdullah, who received the ventilators at Shahjalal International Airport, said, "Each of these ventilators would have cost \$15,000 to \$16,000, but thanks to the Bangladeshi and Indian doctors, we are getting it for free."

These ventilators can be used in rural areas for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. These will be of great help during the current situation, he added.

Meanwhile, Indian Railways' Oxygen Express began supplying the much-needed oxygen to Bangladesh, according to a statement of the Press Information Bureau of India yesterday.

Yesterday, an indent was placed at Tata in Chakradharpur Division under South Eastern Railway to transport 200 metric tonnes of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) to Benapole, Bangladesh.

"The oxygen being sent to Bangladesh is commercially procured, but using Oxygen Express to transport it to Bangladesh can be quick and smooth," said an official of the Bangladesh High Commission to India.

Linde Bangladesh was importing 200 MT oxygen by Oxygen Express.

Teen rape victim

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trio intruded into their house, took Rekha to an abandoned place and gang-raped her, he added.

Hearing her scream, locals rushed to the spot and rescued her. The criminals fled the scene, he further said.

The rescuers took the girl to her home where she took poison around 2:00am.

She was rushed to a local hospital where she was declared dead, he said.

Contacted, Kanan Sarkar, inspector (investigation) of Pekua Police Station, said a case was filed in this connection and necessary legal actions would be taken against the accused.

Talking to The Daily Star, local union parishad member Nezam Uddin said the accused persons used to stalk the girl on her way back home from the madrasa.

Govt plans

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for vaccine registration.

He said the digital e-commerce policy of 2018 aims at creating 20 lakh jobs in the ICT sector by this year.

The e-commerce, hardware, software and BPO sectors will be able to meet the target of more than 20 lakh jobs by 2021, he added.

The state minister hoped it would be possible to earn \$5 billion in export revenue by 2025.

Probe body finds

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onboard the ferry were injured after the ferry heading towards Shimulia, Munshiganj, from Banglabazar, Madaripur, hit the pillar.

Thirty-eight 38 vehicles and over 300 people were onboard at the time.

Shafiqul Islam, project director of Padma Multipurpose Bridge, told The Daily Star after the incident that no damage was apparently done to the pillar, but the officials were investigating.

He added that his department would write to the BIWTC to take the measures necessary to avoid any such incident in future.

Master of the ferry Abdur Rahman was suspended by the BIWTC, which operates the ferry service, soon after the incident.

BIWTC's four-member probe committee was led by SM Ashiquzzaman, general manager (commerce) of BIWTC. The committee was asked to submit its report after investigating the incident in three days. Besides, project officials of the Padma bridge also filed a general diary with a local police station.

Earlier on Tuesday, another ferry hit another pillar of the bridge, which damaged the ferry.

The 6.15km bridge, which is expected to open to traffic in June next year, is being constructed with a cost of more than Tk 30,000 crore.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, a member of the probe committee said the velocity of the current at the particular spot was 3.5 nautical miles at the time of the accident.

Along with the velocity of current, the ferry was being operated at 15-16km per hour, he said.

"The master and quartermaster should have been more careful. They failed to prove their skill in such a situation," the official said, wishing not to be named.

The master gives directions while the quartermaster operates the ferry.

After the incident, Master Abdur Rahman claimed that the accident took place due to a mechanical error.

But the official said, "We did not find any major technical flaw in the ferry."

They will recommend departmental action against Abdur Rahman and Saiful Islam, he said.

Contacted, Probe committee chief Ashiquzzaman said they were preparing the report and would submit it today.

He, however, declined to talk about their findings.

Death toll rises

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"Around 90,000 people were rescued from flood affected areas," the Maharashtra government said in a statement, as authorities released water from overflowing dams.

Thousands of trucks were stuck for more than 24 hours on a highway linking Mumbai with the southern technology hub of Bengaluru, with the road submerged in some places.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was in anguish over the loss of lives.

"The situation in Maharashtra due to heavy rains is being closely monitored and assistance is being provided to the affected," Modi said on Twitter on Friday.

In the southern state of Telangana, heavy rain caused flooding in the state capital of Hyderabad and other low-lying areas.

Indian environmentalists have warned that climate change and indiscriminate construction in fragile coastal regions could lead to more disasters.

"The rain fury that lashed Mahabaleshwar ... is a strong warning against any more tampering with the ecologically fragile Western Ghats," environment economist Devendra Sharma said on Twitter referring to the range of hills along India's west coast.