



The onslaught of dengue is showing no signs of stopping. In 24 hours till yesterday morning, there were at least two more deaths and 214 new hospitalisations. Amid such a crisis, mosquito nets have become a staple for city residents, whether or not they have a roof over their head. This photo was taken yesterday from the capital's Bangabandhu National Stadium area.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

60pc returnee female workers unemployed

Says BILS report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sixty percent of 323 female returnee migrant workers in 12 upazilas under three districts are currently unemployed, according to a new report of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

The report states that one in three female returnees have lower socio-economic status than before.

Highest 22.6 percent of the female migrants returned home within 12 months of their migration and lowest 3.4 percent stayed abroad for 10 years or more, the report adds.

BILS disclosed findings of the report "Social and Economic Reintegration of the Returnee Female Migrant Workers: Success and Sorrows" at a programme at its auditorium yesterday.

In a broad sense, the reasons behind female migrant workers' return home include low wage and forced labour in the host countries, said the report's lead researcher Manirul Islam.

He said official data on returnee female migrant workers is not available, but in their estimate, on an average, 200 to 300 such workers return home each month.

Manirul, deputy director (research) of BILS, said at least a dozen ministries are responsible for returnee reintegration but a coordination gap in this regard among them was evident.

The report says 55 percent returns of the female migrants was either unexpected or forced.

The research was conducted in four upazilas each of Jashore, Faridpur and Chattogram districts between July and December 2020.

Most of the female migrants returned from the Middle East -- Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Jordan. Of them, 5.6 percent are aged between 18-25 years and 81.3 percent between 26-49 years.

Also, 24.5 percent female returnees are either divorced, widowed or were abandoned by their husbands, and 3.1 percent are unmarried.

Some 54.5 percent female returnees have no institutional education, and another 29.8 percent studied up to grade-V.

The report says 61 percent female returnees have debt burden of Tk 76,736 on an average. Thirty-eight percent respondents alleged they were abused physically in the destination countries, 52 percent were victims of forced labour, and 61 percent often suffered from lack of food and water while abroad, it says.

Besides, 10 percent of the female returnees were imprisoned abroad, it adds.

Fifty-two percent female returnees thought "a change of social attitude"

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Killing an innocent woman to frame rival in polls

PBI arrests Mongla UP election candidate, two others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A member candidate of a union parishad election got a woman killed, all to frame his rival so that he can't win.

None of them won eventually, but an innocent woman, with no connection to the politicians, lost her life.

The Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) investigated the incident for over a week and arrested three people in connection with the murder.

Although the feud started centring the UP member election of Chila union in Mongla, the killing took place in Baktarpur area in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital.

After murdering the woman, the killer left a photocopy of the

National Identity Card of the rival UP member candidate to frame him.

At a press briefing at its headquarters in Dhaka yesterday, PBI Chief Banaj Kumar Majumder said they arrested the mastermind, UP member candidate Halim Hawlader (52), the killer, Jamal Hawlader (50) and their associate, Moshir Rahman Milon Kabiraj, a tailor by profession, from Bagerhat's Mongla, and Dhaka's Lalbagh and Mirpur areas.

At the press conference, Banaj Kumar said, Halim wanted to frame opposition member candidate Billal Sardar in a case so that he gets arrested and can not come out of jail.

The PBI got a record of a

phone call where Halim was heard saying: "If Billal is not arrested, first a rickshaw-puller will die. If that does not work, then a woman will die."

Banaj said the election was scheduled to be held on September 20. According to the plan, Halim hired a man from Dhaka -- Jamal -- to kill someone in exchange of Tk 30,000 in late August.

Halim collected Billal's NID copy and handed it over to Jamal, said the PBI Chief.

"The killer did not know whom to kill. The victim did not know why she was killed. They killed an innocent person only to gain influence..." said Banaj Kumar.

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Govt politicised the entire state machinery: Fakhru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that the government has politicised the entire state machinery, including the administration and law enforcement agencies.

"I saw in the newspaper a few days back that judges were appointed on a temporary basis, and this too has been done in a partisan manner," he said.

Speaking at a discussion, the BNP leader said people are being appointed to the administration, law enforcement agencies and all other state organisations based on political consideration.

"This is how, they (govt) have politicised the entire administration and the state."

ASM Hannan Shah Smriti Parishad arranged the programme at Jatiya Press Club, marking the fifth death anniversary of the late BNP standing committee member.

On September 27, 2016, Hannan Shah died at a hospital in Singapore, aged 77.

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WATERLOGGED FOR 70 DAYS

Khulna's Bastuhara colony an island now



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

A woman wades through the ankle-deep pool inside the colony.

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

It started around 70 days ago. Due to heavy rainfall, almost a third of Khulna city went underwater, including the low-lying Bastuhara colony area. But while the rest of the city has since recovered, the water is yet to drain out of Bastuhara.

As a result, around 10,000 residents of the area have been suffering endlessly. Visiting the area recently, this correspondent found almost all the roads underwater. Many were forced to stay indoors, with women and children being the worst sufferers. Residents were seen using bricks to prevent filthy water from flowing into their homes.

Rickshaw-pullers were seen dropping passengers outside the colony to avoid the water, leaving the residents to wade through the ankle-deep pool. Although most shops remained open, customers were sparse.

At this point, even a brief shower waterlogs the area all over again, locals said. Despite repeated promises by

public representatives, no initiative has been taken to resolve the issue, they alleged.

Abdur Rob, a stationary shopkeeper and resident of the colony, described to The Daily Star how unbearable it has become to live there, not just because of the waterlogging, but also the additional troubles it brings, like mosquitoes, snakes, and water-borne insects.

He pointed at some influential quarters for the disaster. "They have built illegal establishments occupying land on both sides of the nearby Bastuhara canal, the main source of discharging water from Bastuhara, Khalishpur, and Boyra," Rob alleged.

"Besides, lack of proper maintenance and mindless dumping of garbage is gradually filling up the 40 to 50 feet wide canal," he added.

Another element of concern is the ongoing road construction in the area, especially since the roads are higher than the households, which means water is spilling over into the houses,

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Repeatedly fined, biker sets vehicle on fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Incurring huge losses in his sanitary business during the pandemic, Shawkat Ali bought a motorbike two months ago to use it for ride-sharing services.

But ever since he got it down to the street, he kept getting bludgeoned with fines for violating traffic rules.

Yesterday, right as the 46-year-old was about to be charged for a similar violation, the frustration inside him finally came out. In broad daylight, Shawkat pulled out the bike's fuel pipe, lit a fire, and torched the bike then and there. He even obstructed people who tried to douse the flame.

A video of the incident soon went viral on social media. In the footage, Shawkat could be heard shouting in exasperation.

When The Daily Star contacted him over cellphone, he said, "I set it on fire myself. I cannot bear it anymore. Last week, traffic police filed a case against me, and another was



Screengrab from video that went viral on FB. filed today [yesterday]."

For Shawkat, the last straw was when a traffic sergeant stopped him at the capital's Badda Link Road around 9:30am. Debpryo Barua, the sergeant, took away his documents and started filing a case on charge of obstructing traffic.

Following the incident, police took Shawkat to Badda Police Station around noon, said Officer-in-Charge Abul Kalam Azad.

Contacted around 7pm, Shawkat said he

was still in the office of deputy commissioner and not in a position to talk. "You understand I cannot talk," he said when this correspondent wanted to meet him.

OC Azad said, "He [Shawkat] was severely affected financially and was going through some psychological issues. He is burdened with debt after incurring around Tk 9 lakh in losses at his shop."

Narrating the incident, eyewitness Azam Khan said he, Shakhwat, and several other ride service providers stopped their bikes at the left turning point of the road for passengers, when the sergeant approached them.

While everyone else managed to drive away, Shawkat stood there bargaining with a passenger. The sergeant proceeded to catch up to him and asked for documents to penalise him Tk 5,000.

"Shawkat begged repeatedly not to penalise him, but to no avail," Azam said.

Zakir Hossain, additional deputy

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Rejoinder, our reply

Chattogram Veterinary Animal Science University (CVASU) has sent a rejoinder to the report "Destroying Forest in the name of research centre" published on The Daily Star on September 22. We are publishing the full and unedited rejoinder along with our reply.

REJOINDER
CVASU under an initiative established a research centre at Dorianagar adjacent to Marine Drive titled "Coastal Biodiversity, Marine Fisheries and Wildlife Research Centre" taking proper approval from appropriate authority in 2015. The then minister for education Nurul Islam Nahid, MP laid the foundation stone of the research centre on 22 November in 2015.

With the maritime victory under the sturdy leadership of honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina comes the new scope of research. The government has taken up multifaceted steps to reap the benefits of maritime

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Migrant workers' struggles since the coronavirus outbreak is a well-known public concern by now. Yesterday saw the latest round of their ceaseless tribulations, when they went to Dhaka Medical College Hospital to get vaccinated and stood in line for hours under the scorching sun.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Free Kirtankhola of illegal occupation

Residents, activists demand at World Rivers Day event

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

On the occasion of World Rivers Day, citizens of Barishal have demanded a Kirtankhola river free from pollution and illegal occupation. Prominent citizens and activists of Barishal made the demands while speaking at a programme yesterday morning.

The programme, titled "Nadi Kathan", was organised by the city-based rivers day celebration committee "Sammilito Udjapon Parshad" on the banks of Kirtankhola, where Deputy Commissioner Jasim Uddin Haider was present as chief guest.

Speakers said Kirtankhola is not safe anymore. Industrial pollution from various factories has spread throughout the river. Although all industrial establishments are required to have Effluent Treatment Plants to reduce pollution, only one out of seven such establishments in the city has one, they said.

The deputy commissioner said they have undertaken an initiative to evict illegal occupants from the seven canals connected to the river.

During his speech, environmental activist Anwar Zahid said it is a matter of concern that the water of Kirtankhola river has lost salinity.

Meanwhile, Rafiqul Alam, divisional coordinator of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon, said although there are 4,000 illegal occupants in the area, authorities have taken action against only 60 organisations.

Among others, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association executive director Rizwana Hasan, eminent citizen Sharmil Murshid, and LRD executive director Shamsul Huda attended the programme virtually.