

BIG BLOW TO UK PM
Johnson under fire as ruling
Conservatives lose key
parliamentary seat
SEE PAGE 12

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"Traffic congestion is seen at the intersections. So, widening highways will not bring any fruitful results. It will rather lead to more congestions."
PROF SHAMSUL HOQUE OF BUET'S CIVIL ENGINEERING.



"We are looking at a winter of severe illness and death... If you're vaccinated and have your booster shot, you're protected from severe illness and death."
US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN ON OMICRON



"Let there be no doubt. If Russia were to move against Ukraine, the Union will be in a position to take sanctions that could extract a massive cost."
EU CHIEF URSULA VON DER LEYEN

RECRUITMENT FROM BANGLADESH

Malaysia opens doors, finally

MoU signing tomorrow; syndication fear remains

A powerful lobby in Kuala Lumpur and Dhaka is behind labour recruitment arrangement and it wants only 25 Bangladeshi agencies to be allowed for recruitment in Malaysia. There can be 250 other recruiting agents to assist them.

JAMIL MAHMUD and PORIMOL PALMA

Malaysia will soon open its market for Bangladeshi workers, ending a freeze of more than three years, but concerns remain over the syndication of a few agents and the high cost of migration -- major factors behind labour exploitation in the past.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) is likely to be signed tomorrow in Kuala Lumpur between Bangladesh and Malaysia in this regard.

Following allegations of labour exploitation and high migration costs of up to Tk 4 lakh per worker, the then Malaysian government had frozen recruitment from Bangladesh from September 2018.

Ahead of the reopening of the Malaysian

market, labour migration experts say the concerns are justified as Malaysia is not keeping the market open for all agents in Bangladesh.

Moreover, the draft MoU suggests the workers will pay the migration cost instead of employers paying it in full as per the ethical recruitment model.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad, who is leading a delegation to Malaysia today and will sign the MoU tomorrow, said, "We are not allowing any system for syndication."

Addressing a press conference at the Prabashi Kalyan Bhaban yesterday, the minister said a vested group was trying to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Children enjoying a game of cricket even though garbage and waste is piled up all around them near the capital's Lalbagh Beribadh road. People of the surrounding areas dump waste here and, finding no other open spaces for recreation, the children took it upon themselves to clear the area needed for a cricket pitch. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

Migration cost high, pay low

Bangladeshi workers getting jobs abroad struggle to repay debt

JAMIL MAHMUD

Shahidul Mia (not his real name) spent about Tk 4 lakh to get employed in Saudi Arabia last year.

The 35-year-old from Munshiganj paid a portion of the money to a recruiting agency in Dhaka and the rest to a local intermediary as per a verbal agreement.

His construction sector job in Riyadh paid Tk 30,000 a month.

High cost of migration and poor pay abroad is not rare in this country. Many migrants spend years paying off the debt they incur before migrating.

According to Cost of Migration Survey-2020 of Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), Bangladeshi workers need nearly 18 months on average to recover the money they pay for migration.

For men it is over 19 months and for women a little under six months.

"The migration cost in Bangladesh is one of the highest in the world but what a Bangladeshi migrant worker earns is one of the lowest globally," said Shariful Hasan, head of Brac Migration Programme.

This is mainly because of high demand for work visas by a large number of unemployed people in the country, he told this newspaper.

The BBS survey says an estimated average recruitment cost for migrants was Tk 4.17 lakh between 2015 and 2018. This includes service charge of the recruiting agency, airfare, and passport, medical, and visa fees.

The cost for migrating to Singapore was Tk 5.74 lakh, Saudi Arabia Tk 4.36 lakh,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Letter after letter, but no result

Minister says migrants' plight not ending despite efforts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates' Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad yesterday said despite their efforts, they failed to end migrant workers' sufferings at various places, including Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

He said his ministry wrote to the ministries and departments concerned on multiple occasions in this regard, but all went in vain.

"Now I'm helpless"

The minister was addressing a press conference at the Prabashi Kalyan Bhaban in the capital to inform media about their preparation regarding the International Migrants Day to be observed globally today.

"If you talk about [sufferings] at airport, the civil aviation authority and the immigration department are there. You ask them why sufferings are there."

In reply to a query, Imran said his

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

CTG CHHATRA DAL LEADER'S ARREST

Everything goes against Rab claim

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg



Md Elias Khan

The Rapid Action Battalion-7 has framed Chattogram city Chhatra Dal leader Md Elias Khan in an arms case, family members alleged.

The 33-year-old is now behind bars in the case filed by Rab-7 with Akbar Shah Police Station.

Rab claimed to have arrested Elias with a double barrel pistol and two cartridges on CDA Road-1 around 9:00pm on November 26. However, witness accounts contradict the case statement.

Elias, a resident of Akbar Shah Biswa Colony residential area in the port city, was a former vice president of Chattogram City Chhatra Dal, said sources in the pro-BNP students' front. Cops said he faces 12 cases filed with Akbar Shah Police Station over carrying out subversive activities during the "BNP's countrywide violence" in 2015.

Interestingly, the place where the incident occurred is about 450 metres away from Akbar Shah Police Station. Elias used to sit in his cement-

sand-iron supply shop named "E & I Traders" just in front of the police station.

Sub-Inspector Biswajit Chandra Debnath of Rab-7, filed the case on November 27. Family members, however, alleged that a local Rab informant in connivance with the SI implicated Elias in the false case.

According to the case statement, a Rab-7 team led by SI Biswajit was performing its duty in Akbar Shah area on the night of November 26.

At one stage, the SI got information that a group of drug traders gathered in front of "Popular Crockerries" shop on CDA Road-1.

As the law enforcers reached the spot at 9:25pm, a man tried to flee but the Rab detained him. Based on Elias's confession, the Rab later recovered the firearm and cartridges in front of witnesses. The SI then prepared a seizure list on the spot and had it signed by witnesses.

The SI named two local people and Rab member

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

CRIMES AGAINST ROHINGYAS

Argentine case begins

Court agrees to probe allegations

AFP, Buenos Aires

A representative for Myanmar's Rohingya minority community testified in an Argentine court Thursday as a part of an investigation into alleged crimes against humanity by the Asian country's military rulers.

The court agreed to investigate the allegations based on the principles of universal jurisdiction, which holds that some acts -- including war crimes and crimes against humanity -- are so horrific they are not specific to one nation and can be tried anywhere.

A 2017 army crackdown on Rohingyas in Myanmar, which the UN says could amount to genocide, has triggered an exodus of more than 740,000 members of the community, mainly to Bangladesh.

"Recently they announced new orders

SEE PAGE 5 COL 2



A frontal view of the newly renovated Ramna Kali Mandir in the capital. Indian President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the refurbished temple yesterday and offered puja there before wrapping up his three-day official visit to Bangladesh. The photo was taken hours after the inauguration.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A bond forged with blood, sacrifice in '71

Kovind on Bangladesh-India ties

AGENCIES

Indian President Ram Nath Kovind yesterday said his country would remain closely connected with its Bangladeshi friends to jointly achieve development and prosperity.

"India values your extraordinary goodwill and friendship and I am confident that the bond forged by blood and sacrifice in 1971 will continue to bind our nations together in future," he said.

The Indian president made the remarks while addressing a reception accorded to the Indian community before wrapping up his three-day visit to Bangladesh.

The visiting president said he was deeply touched by the warmth and affection of the Bangladeshi people and that the country had a special place in the hearts of Indians.

"Ours is a uniquely close relationship based on age-old ties of kinship, shared language and culture. Our ties have been nurtured by the sagacious leadership of the two countries."

Paying homage to Bangabandhu in the capital's Dhanmondi-32, President Kovind said he was reminded of the declaration of independence that Bangabandhu had issued on March 26, 1971.

He also mentioned the atrocities and genocide faced

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

