

## Migrant dies in Serbia

Unable to find a job, he was trying to go to Italy



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Badal Khandaker went to Serbia in November last year with hopes of a well-paying job that would ensure a better life for his family back home.

Recruiters in Bangladesh told the 48-year-old man from Singair upazila of Manikganj that he would earn between Tk 60,000 and Tk 70,000 a month working for a company in the European country.

However, upon reaching Serbia he found that the company does not exist.

In the early hours of Monday, while trying to make a journey by a lorry on way to Italy, Badal suddenly fell unconscious and subsequently died in Serbia.

A relative of the deceased, Saddam Hossain, told this newspaper yesterday that Badal's family members came to know of his death from another Bangladeshi in Serbia on Monday noon.

Arifanul Haque, labour welfare counsellor at the Bangladesh embassy in Italy, said they have identified the deceased through an honorary consul in Serbia, where Bangladesh does not have a mission.

He said they were yet to know the reason behind Badal's death since they did not get the death certificate.

The mission is trying to send the dead body home from Serbia via the honorary consul, he told this newspaper over a WhatsApp call.

Saddam, who narrated his relative's plight over phone to this newspaper yesterday, said after failing to get the job upon arrival in Serbia, Badal was under

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Flames sweep through the hawkers' market in Chattogram city's New Market area last night after a fire broke out around 9:00pm. Firefighters doused the blaze in the market which is closed on Fridays. No casualty was reported immediately.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Bangladesh urges FAO to build 'digital hub'

Says it will help countries in Asia-Pacific region boost agri production

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has urged the Food and Agriculture Organization to set up a digital hub for the Asia-Pacific region so that developing countries can increase their agricultural production using modern technologies.

The call was made at FAO's 36th Session of the Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific, yesterday, which was the last day of the event, hosted by Bangladesh at InterContinental Dhaka.

Briefing reporters after the conference, Agriculture Minister Muhammad Abdur Razzaque said, "We proposed setting up a digital hub for 47 countries of this region to make technologies available for increasing their agricultural outputs. Developing countries will benefit from it."

Referring to South Korea and Japan where robots and drones are used to harvest crops, he said the countries that are lagging behind the technology-rich nations must adopt technologies to

gradually ensure food security.

Agriculture is the first thing that bears the brunt of climate change impacts, he said, adding that it is agriculture that fulfils people's fundamental right to food. "IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change] assessment shows

**"We proposed setting up a digital hub for 47 countries of this region to make technologies available for increasing their agricultural outputs. Developing countries will benefit from it."**

climate change threatens food the most. We discussed the climate change impacts, which is greater than what we anticipated. The final report which was accepted unanimously recommended making a roadmap on FAO strategies to fight climate change," he also said.

Focusing on agricultural technologies, Razzaque said, they requested FAO to set up the digital hub. "We need technology to innovate saline resilient species and varieties as salinity is invading our arable land and fresh water."

The regional conference which was participated by 42 member countries began Tuesday.

It was held in two parts -- senior officers' meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday and a ministerial session on Thursday and Friday.

It was a forum to discuss the current country and regional priorities and pressing issues in the region such as the impact of Covid-19, the state of agriculture, natural resources management, food security and nutrition.

The other objectives included highlighting examples of partnerships, innovation and digital technologies that are helping improve food security and nutrition across the region as well as regional and global policy and regulatory matters.

## Understanding teen acne

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solid and bumpy are called nodules.

As acne is caused by normal hormonal changes during puberty, its prevention is almost impossible.

However, avoiding certain substances and a healthy lifestyle may help.

Taking certain medicines such as corticosteroids, too much oil consumption, or using too many beauty products may be avoided during puberty to keep the acne situation under control.

Shampooing helps prevent oil and grease on the scalp from getting on the face and back. Also, early treatment of acne

may prevent deterioration and scars.

Doctors may suggest medications or over-the-counter products including cleansers according to the type of acne. However, harsh products must not be used on young skin.

Acne during puberty may have adverse mental impact on children. Children tend to become self-conscious and lose self-esteem with the newly appeared spots on their faces. Parents should take the problem seriously and act accordingly. They should talk to dermatologists if necessary.

## Tea revolution in the north

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officer at Bangladesh Tea Research Institute, Panchagarh.

The region, where thriving tea cultivation has turned the landscape into a verdant green, has about 50,000 acres of land suitable for tea production, he said.

Tea production in the region will proliferate in the coming days if Saidul Islam's fortune is any indication.

The resident of Birajot village produces tea saplings, and last year he sold 90,000 saplings, priced at Tk 6 to Tk 10 each.

"That's a fourfold return on my investment of time and toil," said Islam, who earned Tk 6 lakh last year.

The industry will expand even faster if the government takes the initiative to set up a state-owned tea factory and a third auction centre

in Panchagarh to ensure fair prices, said Amirul Haque Khokon, president of Bangladesh Small Tea Growers Association.

At present, there are two auction centres: one at Sreemangal and the other at Chatogram.

A third auction centre in Panchagarh would greatly bring down the transport costs of the farmers of the northern region, Khokon said, while urging the government to provide irrigation facilities, training and assistance to farmers.

The biggest challenge is in providing training to workers and fair wages for them in ensuring the production of quality tea, according to Mamun.

The tea board always recommends plucking tea leaves manually after a seven-day interval for

ensuring the best quality.

"The growers can pluck 32 round to 34-round in a season. But in Panchagarh, the growers usually pluck 6-8 round in a season after about a 40 day interval due to a shortage of trained labour. For this, the leaves become older and the quality of tea deteriorates."

A tea worker can pluck about 25-30kg leaves with hands compared to 150-200kg daily using a scythe, according to Mamun.

Considering that hand plucking costs Tk 5-6 a kg, a tea worker can earn between Tk 125 and Tk 180 per day.

"This is not adequate for maintaining their family expenses. So, they will lose their interest after a point, which would hamper tea production."

The situation can only improve if the factory

owners pay a fair price for the hand-plucked raw tea leaves, Mamun said.

The BTB has submitted a development project proposal to the ministry concerned for purchasing plucking machines, which would be provided on a community basis to mitigate the labour shortage and also to help ensure the quality of processed tea production.

A third auction centre in Panchagarh is also in the works, Mamun added.

There couldn't be any better development for growers like Ali, who now lives in a newly-built two-storey building.

"A tea grower can take home a profit of Tk 1.5 lakh to Tk 2.5 lakh from one acre of land after three to four years of tea plantation -- this is remarkable."

## Kyiv assault 'within days'

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hit early yesterday, with four Ukrainian servicemen killed in strikes on the Lutsk military airport in the northwest, local officials said. Moscow said the airfield had been "put out of action".

Meanwhile the advance of Russian forces continued against the capital Kyiv, which risks being entirely surrounded.

The Ukrainian military warned Russia was trying to "block" Kyiv by taking out defences to the west and north of the capital, adding that there was also a risk to Brovary in the east.

Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko said Thursday that half the city's population had fled and the capital "has been transformed into a fortress".

The northwest suburbs, including Irpin and Bucha, have already endured days of heavy bombardment but Russian armoured vehicles are also advancing on the northeastern edge.

Ukrainian soldiers described fierce fighting for control of the main highway leading into the capital, and AFP reporters saw missile strikes in Velyka Dymarka just outside Kyiv's city limits on Thursday.

The Kremlin yesterday said that fighters from Syria and the Middle East would be allowed to fight for Russia in what Moscow calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine.

The Russian army this week admitted conscripts were taking part, after Putin previously said only "professional" soldiers were involved.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia of hiring "murderers from Syria, a country where everything has been destroyed... like they are doing here to us".

"It is impossible to say how many days we still have to free Ukrainian land. But we can say we will do it. For we have already reached a strategic turning point. We are already moving towards our goal, our victory," he said speaking outdoors in a street with a Ukrainian flag in the background.

Zelensky also demanded the European Union "do more" to help his country.

EU leaders meeting in France yesterday were expected to back a proposal to double financing for military aid to Ukraine by an extra 500 million euros (\$550 million).

Late Thursday the US congress passed a budget including \$14 billion in humanitarian and military aid for Ukraine.

## Hadisur's body

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The BSC ship had been stranded at Olvia port in Ukraine since February 23, following Russia's invasion of its eastern European neighbour.

Hadisur, third engineer of the ship, was killed in a rocket attack on the vessel on March 3. The ship had since then been declared abandoned.

Hadisur's body was preserved in a bunker near Ukraine. The procedure to bring back Hadisur's body was being delayed due to the worsening situation in Ukraine.