



The foot-over bridge in front of Azimpur Government Girls' School & College is in a dilapidated state. Rust and holes have formed all over and the metal sheets have detached from the welding in many places. Fearing risk of accidents, many have stopped using the bridge, but some students still use it to cross the road as there is no footbridge nearby. This photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Boom of unlicensed bikers

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The difference between the number of registered motorcycles and actual bike licence holders is growing due to lack of proper monitoring by the authorities.

The difference was around 11 lakh in September 2018, and it rose to 13 lakh in three and a half years, show government data.

While the government is playing a role in raising the number of bikes on roads by reducing registration fee, a move by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) to ensure licences for new bikers did not see the light of day, as it faced opposition from bike importers and manufacturers, said experts and officials.

Absence of adequate public transport, hike of bus fare, and traffic congestion are pushing people to buy two-wheelers, which is considered as a risky mode of transport, they said.

In this situation, the number of deaths involving bike accidents has risen sharply, which was evident during the Eid rush.

But BRTA, the government's regulatory body for vehicles, is allegedly just publishing some advertisements in newspapers to create awareness about how to prevent bike accidents.

At least 1,168 people were killed in 994 road crashes involving bikes last year, according to Buet's Accident Research Institute (ARI). In contrast, there were 1,097 deaths in 958 bike-related accidents in 2020.

The numbers are set to jump even higher this year.



- » Difference between registered bikes, licence holders 13 lakh
- » Direct link between number of bikes, road crashes, say experts
- » Govt favourable policy, lack of public transport, bus-fare hike, traffic congestion pushing
- » Non-registered bikes abundant in districts, upazilas

RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Impose taxes to discourage people from buying bikes
- » Must not allow bikes with engine capacity over 165 CC
- » Make licence mandatory for buying, registering bikes
- » Ensure high-quality helmets

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The depressing case of homecoming

Exploited, 340 female workers returned last month within a year of migration



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 340 female migrant workers have returned home in April within one year of their migration abroad, according to the Expatriates' Welfare Desk.

Many of these workers returned after being exploited in the host countries, an official at the welfare desk said yesterday on condition of anonymity.

He said many returnees could not "adapt" to the new environment in the host countries, such as changing food habits and extreme workload. Some also developed various health issues and returned due to illness.

The desk, set up at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport by the expatriates' welfare ministry, in a Facebook post yesterday said it has provided the 340 "helpless" female returnees with Tk 5,000 each as transportation costs.

The official also said they provided the amount under an official directive of the ministry to those female migrants who returned home empty-handed after being cheated, tortured or exploited.

Female migrant workers from Bangladesh usually go overseas on a two year job contract, and most of the returnees are from Saudi Arabia, he added.

ISSUES

- Non-payment of wages
- Sexual abuse, torture
- Health complications
- Excessive workload

According to a 2021 report of Ovibashi Karmi Unnayan Programme (Okup), 151 Bangladeshi female migrant workers, who make up around 58 percent of those surveyed, returned home within one year of their migration to Middle Eastern countries after facing various challenges, including exploitative work conditions.

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They returned before ending their two-year job "contracts", says the study report "Access to Justice for Bangladeshi Migrant Workers: Opportunities and Challenges".

Okup, a grassroots migrant rights group, surveyed 262 female returnees in Faridpur, Narsingdi, Munshiganj, and Narayanganj who had migrated between 2010 and 2019.

The majority of the workers returned between 2018 and 2019.

Non-payment of wages, illness, physical torture, sexual abuse, and excessive work were among the reasons behind their return, the survey found.

According to Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET), 10,00,456 female workers migrated abroad between 1991 and 2021. Another 32,113 female workers have migrated abroad this year as of March, as per BMET data.

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BNP will take part in polls, hopes Hanif

BSS, Dhaka

Amari League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif yesterday hoped that BNP will take part in the next general election.

He was talking to journalists while inaugurating a newly-constructed building of Seed Certification Agency in Kushtia.

He said the BNPs top leader has been jailed for embezzling orphans' money while another leader has fled abroad on corruption and terrorism charges. Leaders and activists of that party should look in the mirror before commenting on other parties, Hanif added.

The Awami League is the only party in this country which believes in democracy. There is no precedent for peaceful transfer of power in Bangladesh, he said.

Hanif said Awami League does not engage in trickery regarding elections, rather, it's the habit of BNP.

PRAYER TIMING
MAY 10

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4-10	12-45	5-00	6-36	8-00
JAMAT 4-45	1-15	5-15	6-40	8-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Shouldn't the EC be deciding that? GM Quader questions PM's statement on using EVM in nat'l election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairperson GM Quader yesterday said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's statement, in which she said the next national election will be held using electronic voting machine (EVM), has created doubt and confusion among opposition parties.

Quader, also deputy leader of the opposition, said it is the Election Commission's responsibility to decide the manner in which the election will be held.

"It is only natural that the Election Commission should consult with political parties for any change in the electoral system," he said while addressing a meeting with Jatiya Juba Mahila Party at his Banani office.

The JP chief said, "Due to the prevalence of illiteracy in our country, we still have to use electoral symbols next to names of candidates. In such a scenario, the rationale for using EVMs in the national election is questionable."

According to news published in various media platforms, the prime minister told an Awami League Central Working Committee meeting that the next parliamentary election will be held using EVMs, he said.

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It's nothing but a trap

Says Rizvi on AL assurance of fair polls

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday said Awami League's assurance of a fair election is only a trap to deceive their party.

"Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader assured that the next election would be fair... We would like to say joining the polls without a non-party neutral government means falling into their trap of deception," he said.

Speaking at a press conference at BNP's Nayapaltan central office, Rizvi also said what the ruling party leaders and the prime minister are saying about the fair election is nothing but a deception.

He also said people cannot understand what Obaidul Quader exactly meant by "fair election", as there is an "Awami version" of the fair election which the country's people have been watching for 14 years.

The BNP leader also said the definition of

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