

Bangladesh must advocate for legal migration opportunities for the climate-vulnerable



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The last 15 years have seen an increase in the frequency and intensity of cyclones, floods and tidal surges in Bangladesh. The impacts of salinity intrusion and drought have worsened in the last couple of years. These climate events have taken a toll on the livelihoods of the coastal population and their ability to adapt. Agricultural options are already scarce in coastal areas, and due to extreme salinity and change in rainfall patterns, harvesting paddy or other seasonal crops has become quite difficult. On the other hand, shrimp cultivation, despite being popular in coastal areas, hasn't generated much employment opportunities. It is also vulnerable to climate change effects, as the shrimp farms can be washed away by powerful tidal surges and cyclones. Apart from agricultural activities, options for entrepreneurship and service industry jobs are also limited in coastal villages.

If you look in from the outside, it might seem like the local youth and their families have very little hope for the future. Poverty, school dropouts, early marriage, and health problems due to the use of saline water are widespread. But if you hear about their dreams, you will be surprised at their resilience.

Many local youth have already completed college or even

postgraduate studies. The internet has now reached even the remotest villages of Padmapukur and Koyra, connecting people and their ideas. Young people are not just playing games on their smartphones, but accessing information on job opportunities, at home and abroad.

For instance, I met an HSC student in Kaikhali Union of Shyamnagar, Satkhira, who was planning to learn IT skills to get some freelance or online jobs. Ambitions have no boundaries. I met eight-year-old Asmat, who has already made up his mind about becoming a pilot. He doesn't want to be a van driver like his father, who works hard to make ends meet.

Another HSC candidate, Sadiya, is looking for opportunities to work abroad. In fact, many adolescents like her are fascinated by overseas employment. For instance, a man was telling me how he goes to work in India every year. Although one of his friends was caught by the police and jailed for a few months for illegally working there, he still considers it profitable because he finds no viable work opportunities in his village during the rainy season.

The young population in the coastal villages want to develop their skills and knowledge and advance their career. But in the absence of training and employment opportunities,



Climate migration was not on the COP27 agenda, despite millions of people around the world being vulnerable to climate change.

FILE PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

many of them fail to fulfill their potential. They end up working in brick kilns or other informal sector jobs where exploitation of labor is quite prevalent. The lack of necessary protection mechanisms also leads to failed migration for some.

However, the parents of these young children also understand the importance of research for local

adaptation. Many have expressed their hope that the government will make special arrangements to export manpower from their climate-vulnerable villages.

People in the coastal areas might not have any knowledge about the GCM (Global Compact on Migration) objectives that aim to create a legal pathway for their overseas migration.

They are also not very conscious about the government's action plans designed for their adaptation. Still, they are raising demands for overseas jobs and training opportunities to become self-sufficient and resilient, no matter where they are.

But how far have we progressed in achieving the GCM objectives? So far, it took the biggest step by

calling on the state parties to plan visa options for climate-vulnerable people. But there is still a long way to go to yield substantial policies and translate them into tangible benefits. The politics around climate migration remains an intractable issue. For instance, at COP27, climate migration was not included on the agenda. But can we discuss climate adaptation and loss and damage without even considering the need for creating a global pathway for climate-vulnerable people? Adaptation or resilience-building won't be so easy if this part of it is missing.

Advocacy on climate migration at COP27 is an opportunity to influence the wealthiest countries to play their part. Other than getting their

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Bad economic policies and Biden's loss



AN OPEN DIALOGUE
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ABDULLAH SHIBLI

The US midterm election on November 8 was not such a disaster for the Democrats and President Biden as pollsters had predicted it would be.

On November 3, the president told a rally in Albuquerque, New Mexico: "Five days – five days to go until the most important election in our lifetime." At stake were all 435 seats of the House of Representatives (the lower house) and 35 (roughly one-third) of the Senate (the upper house).

While opinion polls had been predicting a major shift in voter sentiments away from the

of 25 seats (except in 2002 after the 9/11 attacks).

Thus, it is no surprise that the 2022 elections were a setback for the Democratic Party, which is expected to lose control of the House of Representatives, and gave the incumbent President Joe Biden plenty of reasons to worry about the next two years of his term. Yale economist Ray Fair's forecasting model suggested that Democrats would get 46.7 percent of the national vote in November – down from the 51.3 percent in 2020 when Biden defeated Donald Trump. The actual number was pretty close, a

would only unleash inflationary pressures, and this was not helped by pandemic-related disruptions and geopolitical conflicts (in Europe and the Far East).

So, did Biden's economic policy determine the outcome of the elections? Yes and no. There were three factors in play: politics, policy, and economics.

Plato, the Greek philosopher said, "A democratic society in its thirst for liberty may fall under the influence of bad leaders," but added that "popular acclaim will attend on the man who tells the people what they want to hear rather than what truly benefits them."

It is known that Biden and the Democrats tried to distract people with their own agenda, including the January 6 riots, the Supreme Court's decisions, and the war in Ukraine. The Republicans played up the rising crime rate, immigration crisis, high interest rates, and defeat in Afghanistan.

The US economy overall is in very

that the price of a gallon was only USD 2.40 when Biden took office.

The price of everything else has gone up considerably, too. The Federal Reserve, the US central bank, is on a mission to bring down the inflation rate to two percent, with only modest success so far.

The week before the election, there were two pieces of bad news: the Fed raised the interest rate another three quarters of a percent and the rate of inflation was 8.2 percent in September. The good news on the economic front is that jobs are plentiful and the unemployment rate is low. But there are pockets of poverty and the wage rate is not rising with the cost of living.

The Fed also announced that, because inflation was higher and unemployment rate lower than what was necessary to curb inflation, it would be raising interest rates again and that the next year, the US electorate would have to live with a rising interest rate, high inflation, and possibly a recession.

Data shows that soaring prices and rising interest rates drove typical homebuyers in October to pay 77 percent more on their loans per month than they paid last year, according to Realtor.com.

Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Analytics, said "This may be the worst time in my living history for the home buyer – it just doesn't make sense."

So, yes, the economic news is not so good for homebuyers and commuters, but there are some silver linings. Used-car prices have come down, and home prices have reached a plateau in many markets.

However, the policies of the Biden administration are also facing strong headwinds before the new Congress convenes in January. Three issues need to be mentioned: the financial support for the war in Ukraine, Biden's kowtow to the rulers of Saudi Arabia, and the House Democrats' failure to control the January 9 investigation.

Although President Biden was not up for reelection, he was considered

a weak and prevaricating leader. The Democratic Party was led by politicians who were clueless. A 30-member strong Congressional Progressive Caucus, a progressive group, came out with a statement beseeching the president to refrain from feeding the Ukraine War machine. According to the Congressional Budget Office estimates, US taxpayers are funding the war to the tune of USD 5 billion every month.

So, what can we expect in the coming months? Bloomberg Economics model projections show that a recession is effectively certain in the next 12 months because of tightening financial conditions, persistent inflation, and expectations of a hawkish Federal Reserve pressing ahead with rate hikes. The model is more certain of a recession than other forecasts. A separate Bloomberg survey of 42 economists, predicting the probability of a recession over the next 12 months, stands at 60 percent, up from 50 percent a month earlier.



Voters line up a few minutes before the polls close during the 2022 US midterm elections in Durham, North Carolina.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Democrats – who were in control of the White House and both houses of Congress – the news on election night, as results started to trickle in, demonstrated that the US electorate is much smarter than what political pundits had assumed.

One of the few anxieties of US politics is the loss of seats by the president's party in midterm House elections. Data shows that, in the last 12 midterms, the party in command of the White House lost an average

little under 46 percent.

The outcome was not completely unforeseen. Polls leading up to November had uniformly pointed to the direction which US voters were leaning towards given the economic hardship and geo-political uncertainty that has resulted from two years of Biden's stewardship. It is also well-known that the Democrats were warned by many that the stimulus package unfurled by the then newly elected Biden

good shape, except for one issue: the rate of inflation has been high for almost a year, and there is no sign of it coming down soon.

The average price of unleaded regular gasoline has been ticking up again, reaching USD 3.80 a gallon on November 6, according to American Automobile Association (AAA). That is lower than the USD 5 we saw in summer, but 38 percent higher compared to the same period last year. And US consumers remember

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সর্বসাধারণের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বিভিন্ন ব্যক্তি ও প্রতিষ্ঠান কর্তৃক বাস্তবায়িত বৃক্ষরোপণ কর্মকাণ্ডকে নিম্নে বর্ণিত ০৭(সাত) টি শ্রেণীভুক্ত করে প্রত্যেক শ্রেণীতে ৩(তিন)টি করে পুরস্কার প্রদানের জন্য সরকার সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেছেন।

ক)	প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়/ উচ্চ বিদ্যালয়/এবতেদায়ী মাদ্রাসা/ সিনিয়র মাদ্রাসা /কলেজ/বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
খ)	ইউনিয়ন পরিষদ/উপজেলা পরিষদ/জেলা পরিষদ/পৌরসভা/সিটি কর্পোরেশন/ অধিদপ্তর/পরিদপ্তর/সেইসর কর্পোরেশন/প্রতিষ্ঠান / এন জি ও/ক্লাব/স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংস্থা
গ)	ব্যক্তিগত পর্যায়ে বৃক্ষরোপণ
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চ)	বন বিভাগ কর্তৃক সৃজিত বাগান
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(১) বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা, চট্টগ্রাম উত্তর বন বিভাগ, চট্টগ্রাম এর কার্যালয়, বন পাহাড়, নন্দনকানন, চট্টগ্রাম।

(২) উপজেলা নির্বাহী কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয় (সকল), চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।

(৩) রেল কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়- মীরসরাই রেল, মীরসরাই উপজেলা/ বাইরায়াদালা রেল,সীতাবুড় উপজেলা/ নারায়নহাট রেল,ফটিকছড়ি উপজেলা/ হাটহাজারী রেল, হাটহাজারী উপজেলা/ ইছামতি রেল, রাউজান উপজেলা/ রাউনিয়া রেল, রাউনিয়া উপজেলা/ পটিয়া রেল, পটিয়া ও বোয়ালখালী উপজেলা/ পটিয়া এস.এফ.এন.টি.সি, কর্ণফুলী ও অনোয়ারা উপজেলা/ দোহাজারী রেল,চন্দনাইশ উপজেলা / পদ্মা রেল, লোহাশাড়া উপজেলা/ কালীপুর রেল, বাঁশখালী উপজেলা/ মাদার্সা রেল, সাতকানিয়া উপজেলা/ সন্দ্বীপ রেল, সন্দ্বীপ উপজেলা/ শহর রেল, মহানগর এলাকা, চট্টগ্রাম জেলা।

এতদসংক্রান্ত অন্যান্য জ্ঞাতব্য বিষয় (প্রয়োজন হলে) বর্ণিত কার্যালয় হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে।

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