

WAGE EARNERS' WELFARE BOARD

Expatriates signing up to get benefits

JAMIL MAHMUD

In recent years, Bangladeshi expatriates have been registering as members of the Wage Earners' Welfare Board (WEWB), which enables them to avail of its various welfare services, right from their host countries.

Over 1.37 lakh expatriates became members of the board, which is under the expatriates' welfare ministry, from 2017, when the registration process started, till October this year. Of them, 85,493 have been availing of the services since last year, show WEWB data.

Registrations were completed through 27 Bangladesh mission offices -- embassies, high commissions and consulate generals -- that have a labour-welfare wing.

Officials said while providing other services, they have been encouraging expatriates to become WEWB members.

Membership is "mandatory" to get WEWB services, said its director (finance and welfare) Shoaib Ahmad Khan.

Expatriates who are legally employed abroad but did not register [with WEWB] before migrating can apply for membership now, he told this newspaper over phone.

If a migrant worker dies abroad, WEWB gives Tk 3 lakh to the family as compensation and Tk 35,000 for burial and taking the body from the airport to home, after it arrives in Bangladesh, he added.

At present, over one crore Bangladeshis live in over 160 countries, according to an estimate of the expatriates' welfare ministry.

Over 1.37 lakh expatriates became members of the welfare board from 2017, when the registration process started, till October this year. Of them, 85,493 have been availing the services since last year.

Outgoing migrants with employment visas undergo an emigration clearance process conducted by the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). Since 2010, such migrants have been provided with a BMET emigration clearance card.

At present, one needs to pay Tk 3,500 as

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



WINTER IS COMING... this rickshaw puller was seen transporting a mountain of blankets with the passenger sitting right on top of the pile. Such an endeavour could be risky as an accident can happen any time. This photo was taken in the Dhaka University area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Dengue situation a headache for govt
Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dengue outbreak this year has turned out to be a headache for the government, Local Government and Rural Development Minister Tazul Islam said yesterday.

The minister also pointed out that the concern grew although the country has not experienced downpours for more than a month now.

"Compared to last year and 2020, this year it is a very bitter experience," he added.

About 300 new dengue cases were reported on Tuesday, which was not supposed to happen, said the minister.

He was addressing a dialogue at a city hotel organised by the Local Government Division, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (US CDC) and Save the Children Bangladesh.

Mentioning the dengue outbreak this year has also been reported in the country's other parts compared to its previous concentration only in Dhaka, the minister urged public representatives, especially mayors and councillors of different cities, to come forward to tackle it.

City corporation mayors, councillors and officials, government service providers, and representatives from development partners participated in the dialogue, titled "City Leadership Summit to Strengthen Urban Public Health System".

It was part of the "Strengthening Urban Public Health System" programme implemented by Save the Children and South Asia Field Epidemiology and Technology Network, Inc (Safetynet) with funds from the US CDC.

Addressing the dialogue, US Ambassador Peter D Haas

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Strategy shift
need of the hour
Speakers tell conference on Rohingya crisis amid declining funds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A change in strategy is required to deal with the Rohingya crisis -- focusing on skill development among Rohingyas, helping them find alternative livelihood -- in the wake of a significant drop in funding, speakers told a conference yesterday.

They came up with the suggestion as the repatriation issue has been stuck in geopolitical intricacies, coupled with an alarming decline in the international fund for Rohingyas who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar in 2017 and took refuge in the southern part of Bangladesh.

The dialogue was jointly organised by Brac and Dhaka University's development studies department at a city hotel.

Four papers, related to the basic services in Rohingya camps, their livelihoods and skills, a changing ecosystem of Rohingya crisis responses and changing needs and priorities in Rohingya crisis

In the first three years, the fund received was 26 percent less than the amount sought by the joint response plan. In the last two years during the pandemic, the drop in funds was 33 percent. This year, it declined by an additional 56 percent. That's why we need a strategic shift.

KAZI MARUFUL ISLAM
Professor of development studies, DU

response, were presented in the dialogue.

Prof Kazi Maruful Islam of development studies at Dhaka University, said over the years, a downtrend in funding for the Rohingya crisis has been noticed, which reached an alarming level this year.

"In the first three years, the fund received was 26 percent less than the amount sought by the Joint Response Plan. In the last two years during the Covid-19 pandemic, the drop in funds was 33 percent. This year, it declined by an additional 56 percent. That's why we need a strategic shift," he said.

Planning Minister M A Mannan, also the chief guest of the dialogue, said, "Many years have elapsed since the Rohingya crisis began. The problem they faced right at the beginning of the crisis no longer exists. However, the need for more financial help remains necessary to deal with the Rohingya crisis."

He also urged the relevant authorities to take the security issue seriously.

Brac Executive Director Asif Saleh said, "The reality is the population scenario in the Rohingya camps is changing fast. There is also a change in solidarity and endurance between the host community and the Rohingya"

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

Fraudsters exploit former justice's good nature
Defraud him of Tk 41 lakh

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

Former justice Bhabani Prasad Singha is well known for his humanitarian work. And due to this very renown, a fraud gang decided to target him six months ago.

On the evening of May 30, the former judge of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court got a call from an unknown number. The caller introduced himself as Rezaul Karim.

The man first talked about the charitable activities Bhabani is involved in and praised him profusely. Rezaul mentioned that he also does various kinds of work for public welfare.

Rezaul said he had a company jointly owned by people in Canada and Japan. Through the company, located in the capital's Mirpur, he runs the welfare activities. He requested Bhabani to visit the company office. Bhabani, without thinking much, agreed to do so.

Two days later, Bhabani and his driver Mohsin Miah went to the man's office, where they met two more men, who introduced themselves as Dr Intiaz Ali Khan alias Shahnewaz and Bikash Chakrabarty.

At that time, Intiaz talked about their philanthropic work. He told the former justice that they were doing such work with involvement of respected persons in society.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

GM Quader can't partake in JP activities till Dec 5
Says SC chamber judge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court chamber judge yesterday stayed till December 5 a High Court order that cleared the way for Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader to perform the responsibilities of his post.

Justice M Enayetur Rahim, chamber judge of the Appellate Division, passed the order following a petition filed by former JP leader Ziaul Haque Mridha seeking stay on the HC order.

The judge also sent the petition to its full bench for further hearing.

Senior lawyer Mohammad Sayeed Ahmed Raza appeared for Mridha while senior lawyer Sheikh Muhammed Serajul Islam stood for GM Quader

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



RISKING LIVES TO SAVE MINUTES... Disregarding traffic laws and passengers' safety, two battery-run three-wheelers move through the wrong side of the busy Amin Bazar Road in the capital, where heavy vehicles, including buses and trucks, ply regularly.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Bangladesh seeks ease of visa process
Momen in conversation with Guatemala foreign minister

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen yesterday proposed to ease the Guatemalan visa application process for Bangladeshi nationals, and explore the possibility to sign a visa waiver agreement for the diplomatic and official passport holders between the two countries.

During a telephone conversation with Guatemala Foreign Minister Mario Adolfo Bucaro Flores, Momen also encouraged more Guatemalan investors to invest in Bangladesh, while seeking the country's continuous support

for a sustainable solution to the Rohingya crisis by ensuring their repatriation to Myanmar.

The Guatemalan foreign minister called Momen to seek Bangladesh's support for his country's nomination of "Holy Week in Guatemala" to be included in Unesco's list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In response, Momen assured his Guatemalan counterpart of Bangladesh's full support, considering the excellent bilateral relations between the two countries.

Momen expressed satisfaction

over the ever-growing bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, based on similar values and principles. He expressed Bangladesh's willingness to further strengthen the bilateral ties.

Flores hoped to develop a much stronger relationship with Bangladesh in the coming days.

They invited each other to visit their respective countries and reiterated their commitment to work together on the multilateral front to address global issues like climate change, displacement of people and sustainable development.

Tk 8,000 a month not enough
RMG workers demand new wage board

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The minimum wage for readymade garment workers has to be increased through forming a new wage board, demanded leaders and workers yesterday.

National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) raised the demand from a human chain in front of the capita's Jatiya Press Club.

Presiding over the programme, Amirul Haque Amin, president of the federation, said, "If the demand is not met in the next 30 days, we will start a countrywide movement."

After the human chain, a four-member delegation of the NGWF submitted a memorandum to the labour ministry around 2:00pm.

Earlier, the RMG workers tried to besiege the ministry, but faced obstacles from police.

The speaker said the minimum wage for the workers was last raise to Tk 8,000 in December, 2018.

Although the wage is re-fixed after every five years, according to the Bangladesh Labour Act, there is also an option for the government to do so after three years, under exceptional conditions.

Nasima Akhter, treasurer of NGWF, said Tk 8,000 monthly wage is not enough to maintain a family these days.

Another discussant, Rafiqul Islam, general secretary of NGWF, said the government has increased pay and benefits for its employees, but are not doing so for the RMG workers -- who play an important role in earning foreign exchange for the country's development.

Rashedul Alom Raju, general secretary of IndustriALL Bangladesh Council, said four months ago they also submitted memorandums to the labour ministry, labour secretary, Prime Minister's Office, garment owners, and Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association regarding their demand.

The government has increased pay and benefits for its employees, but is not doing so for the RMG workers -- who play an important role in earning foreign exchange for the country's development.



Mr. Ebrahim Dawood Mamoon (Imran) has been appointed as the Hon'y Consul for the Republic of Ghana to the People's Republic of Bangladesh with effect from 28 November 2022. Mr. M Amanul Haq, Chief of Protocol of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the Exequatur on behalf of the Government which launches Mr. Mamoon as the first Hon'y Consul of Ghana in Bangladesh.

The commencement of the Consulate of Ghana will further expand and cement the bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Ghana.

Mr. Mamoon comes from a respectable Muslim family based in Dhaka. He is a businessman and industrialist of repute and is a Director of Bilal Trading Limited (BTL) and Chairman of KAI Bangladesh Aluminium Ltd, ALTECH Aluminium Industries Ltd, Steeltech Industries Ltd, PAPERTECH Industries Ltd, Garda Shield Security Services Ltd, Prince Electricals Ltd, Paragon Export Ltd, Kyros Footwear Industries Ltd, etc. He is also a member of Dhaka Stock Exchange Ltd.

PRAYER
TIMING
DECEMBER 1

Fazr

Zohr

Asr

Maghrib

Esha

AZAN 5-15

12-45

3-45

5-19

7-00

JAMAAT 5-50

1-15

4-00

5-22

7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION