



Clockwise from left, amidst the scorching summer sun, holidaymakers at Dhaka’s Kamalapur Railway Station struggle to board overcrowded trains. Some were even seen squeezing into the goods compartment after buying standing tickets. A mother’s love is evident as she fans her child, while another holds a table fan in front of the baby. These scenes from yesterday showcase the journeys of those who yearn to be with their loved ones during Eid.

### Take measure to deal with fire incidents CAAB issues warning to all airports

RASHIDUL HASAN

Fire incidents are taking place one after another in Dhaka, and amid this situation, Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh has been put on high alert to take measures to deal with such incidents. Warnings have been issued at all airports of the country, including Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (HSIA), considering those places as sensitive and important facilities that have to deal with fire risk. Meanwhile, Commissioner of Dhaka Customs in a letter to CAAB on Sunday said the fire risk level is very high in the customs houses and warehouses, which are under the control of CAAB. “If adequate precautions are not taken, there is potential for major revenue risks,” warned the notice. CAAB has already beefed up security at various locations, especially at Dhaka airport’s customs house, airfreight warehouses and the import and export cargo village. The authority has also issued three directives to prevent fire at HSIA.

Group Captain Kamrul Islam, executive director of HSIA, told The Daily Star that the directives stated that everyone should have their own fire extinguisher, be trained in fire control, and keep contact number of the nearest fire station. “We are very alert about dealing with fire outbreaks. We have already issued a warning notice to all airport authorities,” a CAAB official said. Kamrul Islam said few days ago, they have already conducted a fire-extinguishing programme to ensure everyone is prepared to deal with a fire. “We are always vigilant and conducting inspections, and have been training personnel for fire extinguishing over the last few days.”

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING					
APRIL 20					
Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha	
AZAN 4:14	12:45	4:45	6:26	8:00	
JAMAAT 4:24	1:15	5:00	6:36	8:30	
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION					
SEHRI, IFTAR TIMING					
RAMADAN	APRIL	SEHRI	IFTAR		
28	20		6:26		
29	21	4:08	6:26		
30	22	4:07	6:27		

## RECRUITMENT TO MALAYSIA Still marred by irregularities

JAMIL MAHMUD

Recruitment of new Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia has been tainted by a number of irregularities, with a few dozen workers falling into trouble, which includes joblessness. The anomalies surfaced amid allegations of high recruitment costs and “syndication”, factors which plagued the recruitment process and led to a suspension in the past. Malaysia reopened its labour market for Bangladesh last year, after nearly four years of suspension, with the first batch of new migrants reaching there in early August under a new arrangement. Between August 2022 and February 2023, around 1.04 lakh migrant workers went to Malaysia for employment, according to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET). However, the Malaysian authorities sent 19 workers home from Kuala Lumpur International Airport on February 17, after the migrants’ data were not found in the computerised system.

**On March 16, news outlet Free Malaysia Today reported that 10 Bangladeshi workers were detained there after their supposed employer failed to provide them with jobs. The migrants entered Malaysia last December and were detained for “not possessing valid documents”.**

On March 16, news outlet Free Malaysia Today reported that 10 Bangladeshi workers were detained there after their supposed employer failed to provide them with jobs. The migrants entered Malaysia last December and were detained for “not possessing valid documents”, the report said.

They were among 95 workers who paid around RM 20,000 or Tk 4.75 lakh (RM 1 equivalent to Tk 23.76) each in recruitment fees to an agency in Bangladesh, which promised them jobs at an engineering company in Selangor, it added. Contacted, Nazmus Sadat Salim, minister (labour) of Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, recently said the mission learnt about the incidents and took prompt

lifting the embargo and agreeing to send and receive workers under a new arrangement. However, a section of recruiting agencies questioned the new arrangement, alleging that a “syndicate” of only 25 agencies were given permission to send workers to Malaysia. Currently, the number of agencies has been increased to 100, according to sector insiders. The expatriates’ welfare ministry fixed the



- 11.61 lakh workers hired from 1978 to Feb 2023
- Recruitment stopped in Sep 2018, following allegations of ‘scams’ by agencies
- MoU signed in Dec 2021, lifting embargo
- Around 1.04 lakh workers migrated between Aug 2022 and Feb 2023
- 19 workers detained on Feb 17, for absence of data in computerised system

TIMELINE

steps to resolve the issues. Multiple stakeholders both in Bangladesh and Malaysia are involved in the recruitment of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. All parties need to be committed and sincere to ensure safe and orderly migration, he said. A large labour market for Bangladesh, Malaysia hired about 11.61 lakh workers from Bangladesh from 1978 till February this year, shows BMET data. The Southeast Asian country stopped recruiting Bangladeshi workers in September 2018, after media reports in Malaysia revealed a financial scam involving a “syndicate” of 10 Bangladeshi agencies and a Malaysian businessman who charged up to Tk 4 lakh against each worker. After prolonged negotiations, the two countries signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December 2021,

maximum migration cost at Tk 78,990 at the Bangladesh end to send a worker to Malaysia. After a meeting with Malaysian Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in Dhaka on February 5, Expatriates’ Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said the MoU is likely to be amended to make the recruitment process easier. The Bangladeshi minister pointed out the political change in Malaysia, as a new government was formed following a general election in November last year. He said, “... There will be significant changes in whatever issues we had agreed upon with the previous government.” Labour migration expert Shariful Hasan said there has been information regarding the joblessness of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

### ‘Reinstate Selina, repeal DSA’ Eminent citizens, activists demand at programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens and cultural activists of Dhaka and Chattogram at separate programmes yesterday demanded the cancellation of the suspension order of Selina Akhter, acting principal of Chattogram Port Authority Women’s College, for a comment she made on Facebook. They also demanded repeal of Digital Security Act (DSA) as it is muzzling people’s freedom of speech. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) on Sunday suspended Selina Akhter, alleging that her Facebook status on the Arabic word Ramadan has “hurt” religious sentiments. “Due to your Facebook post, the law-and-order situation in the port area could deteriorate as the religious sentiment of the Muslim community was hurt. Such an act is a punishable offence under the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

### Secure your belongings before leaving the capital IGP tells Eid vacationers

STAR REPORT

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun has reminded the capital’s residents to be extra cautious with their belongings before leaving for their home districts for the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation. Speaking at a press conference at the Sayedabad bus terminal yesterday, the IGP requested residents to either take their cash, jewellery and other valuables with them or leave those with relatives before departing Dhaka. He said there is a possibility that many areas of the capital will be vulnerable to theft if a large number of the city population left for Eid. The IGP also advised outbound passengers not to consume food given to them by strangers or co-passengers.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



A resident finds solace in a makeshift oasis amid the sweltering weather in Dhaka. Using a pipe that was meant for watering plants, he washes his face in the middle of the road, seeking relief from the intense temperature. This photo was taken in Bijoy Sarani area on Tuesday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## How he became guardian to Gonoshasthaya family Aleya Chowdhury in conversation with Star on brother Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury

STAR REPORT

Relinquishing the allurements of a luxurious lifestyle and personal interests, he became a companion of the destitute and helpless. Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury fought for the country’s independence in 1971. Later, he devoted himself to developing the country’s public health system, women empowerment and establishing equality. Zafrullah played a pioneering role in improving the public health sector of the newly independent Bangladesh by establishing Gonoshasthaya Kendra. He was popularly known as “Goriber Dakta (doctor of the poor)”. He fought for establishing the rights of those afflicted with poverty till his death on April 12. How was Dr Zafrullah’s familial life? What kind of role did he play in the family of 10 siblings? How did he pass his last days?

The Daily Star talked to Zafrullah’s sister Aleya Chowdhury at Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhaka recently, to highlight these aspects of the visionary’s life. The Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder was born in Chattogram’s Rauzan upazila on December 27, 1941. He was the eldest and Aleya was the fourth among 10 siblings.

**“He [Zafrullah] was the most respectful person in our family. He loved all of our siblings too much. He performed his responsibilities towards us like a parent would for his children.**

“He [Zafrullah] was the most respectful person in our family. He loved all of our siblings too much. He performed his responsibilities towards us like a parent

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2