

BANGLADESH MISSIONS
Govt launches
remittance
campaign

JAMIL MAHMUD

Labour welfare wings at Bangladesh missions abroad have been working on different initiatives to encourage more migrant workers to send remittance home using formal channels.

The initiatives include promoting remittance-related app-based services, giving priority to remitters using banking channels, and raising awareness among migrant workers.

At present, there are 30 labour welfare wings under the expatriates' welfare ministry at Bangladesh missions in 27 countries.

A dozen of these wings are in nine countries from where Bangladesh received 64.13 percent of the total US \$21.6 billion in remittance in FY 2022-2023.

Labour officials at a number of missions said they have been holding formal programmes and interacting during services to inform migrant workers about the initiatives, alongside online publicity.

In the last fiscal year, the country saw a 2.75 percent year-on-year remittance growth, according to Bangladesh Bank.

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However, inward remittance month-on-month declined by 10.27 percent, 18.93, and 16 percent in July, August and September respectively in the current fiscal.

There is concern that many Bangladeshis in different countries use unauthorised channels like hundi to send money home, depriving the country of valuable foreign currency.

Nazmus Sadat Salim, minister (labour) at the Bangladesh mission in Kuala Lumpur, said three Bangladeshi banks have remittance services there and two of them introduced app-based services last year, while the third bank is working to launch its own app.

"Our focus is to popularise the apps. If migrant workers learn to use the apps successfully, they can save time and money," he added.

He noted that since many new workers have migrated to Malaysia in recent months, their contributions will be crucial towards remittance growth.

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After weeks of preparation, the Durga Puja commenced yesterday with Shashthi puja at mandaps across the country. The photo was taken in the capital's Khamarbari area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Even veggies too pricey

MD ABBAS and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Azizul Haque, a resident of Mirpur-14, went to a nearby kitchen market to buy vegetables yesterday morning.

"Due to the rise in vegetable prices, papaya was the only option I could afford. However, even its price nearly doubled to Tk 30-35 in the past 10 days from Tk 10-15 per kg," Azizul, a day-labourer, told The Daily Star.

"Prices of most vegetables are now more than Tk 100 per kg. We cannot even afford vegetables any more. My children were asking me to bring at least some fresh vegetables, but I could not," he added.

Habibur Rahman, a private firm employee who came to Karwan Bazar Kitchen Market, said the prices of leafy greens have also gone up.

"Seeing the high prices of vegetables, I was thinking of buying



leafy greens. But a bundle of red amaranth is being sold at Tk 40, which was earlier Tk 20."

Amanullah, owner of a roadside hotel in Tejgaon Industrial area, said, "I used to buy low-quality vegetables for my hotel. But the prices of even those have gone up. Although prices of all essentials increased, we cannot increase

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Take to streets for
'one last time'
Fakhrul tells BNP leaders,
activists

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday urged the party rank and file to take to the streets with courage just for a few more days after the Durga Puja to oust the government.

Speaking at a seminar on agriculture, he also criticised the prime minister for branding BNP as a terrorist party, and said Awami League is the godfather of terrorism.

He urged their party leaders and activists not to be worried about the ruling party's threats and attacks since they have been facing such repression for one and a half decades.

He said the government arrested 77 BNP leaders and activists in the capital just on Thursday.

"For the last time I would like to ask the government: you please resign peacefully with dignity and put power in the hands of a neutral

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'Oct 28 will be
the new Dec 10'
Quader on BNP's grand rally

STAR REPORT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP's October 28 rally in the capital would face a similar outcome like December 10.

Mentionable, after protracted negotiations, the BNP got permission for its last year's December 10 rally in Golapbagh field – a ground which was not its first choice by any means.

The permission came at the cost of a life, injuries to around 100 people, and arrest of dozens of party stalwarts. Quader mentioned about the rally while talking to journalists following a meeting with the leaders of the Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad in the morning.

He also instructed the party's leaders and activists to ensure the security of puja mandaps and residences of Hindu community during Durga Puja, reports UNB.

"The recent violence in Cumilla has come to

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YABA SMUGGLING

Kuakata now
a major entry point

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN, back from Kuakata

Yaba pills are now being smuggled through Kuakata sea routes after law enforcers have increased their vigilance in Teknaf and Cox's Bazar, primary entry points for the drug from Myanmar into Bangladesh.

The smugglers have convinced a section of fishermen to venture deep into the sea and transport yaba, and share a fraction of the profits based on the sizes of consignments, according to insiders.

There are two buoys (floating objects anchored at a definite

"Sometimes, fishing trawlers set out solely for the purpose of smuggling yaba pills," said Jahangir Shikder, a trader at Mohipur wholesale fish market.

He said that the situation intensified over the last two years.

Md Yousuf, a hilsha trader in Alipur area, and his associates were arrested recently and are now in Patuakhali jail for carrying yaba pills from deep sea to land, added Jahangir.

On July 23 this year, two drug traders – Md Younus, 44, and Asma Begum, 33, – were arrested by the Coast Guard with 10,000 pieces

job."

The commission is determined based on an estimated wholesale price of Tk 80-100 per pill.

Mentionable, there is mobile network coverage up to 35 kilometres from Kuakata beach into the sea, according to the fisheries department. Fishermen, however, claim they can access the network for around 45 to 50 kilometres into the sea.

After the fishermen bring in the consignments to the shore, the smugglers distribute the pills across different districts in the country using various modes of



Fishing boats, goods-laden trawlers being used as transport

Increase surveillance in Teknaf making Kuakata new entry point

There are two buoys – one on the eastern side and another on the western side – approximately 60 to 80 kilometres offshore from Kuakata sea beach. Fishing trawlers from Bangladesh and Myanmar meet there after fixing the time over phone and exchange the consignments.

location to guide or warn mariners) – one on the eastern side and another on the western side – approximately 60 to 80 kilometres offshore from Kuakata sea beach. Fishing trawlers from Bangladesh and Myanmar meet there after fixing the time over phone and exchange the consignments of the illegal drug, typically concealed within bamboo boxes and further enveloped in polythene bags.

Each fishing trawler features a specialised chamber for preserving fish with ice, where the pills are kept to evade law enforcers.

of yaba. On September 22, Coast Guard recovered around 1,000 yaba pills from a trawler in the Bishkhali river near Patharghata, and arrested one trader named Rustom in this connection.

Contacted, Md Jamil Hossain, deputy inspector general of police (Barishal range), said, "We are aware of the smuggling activities and have already increased our drives."

Wishing anonymity, a fisher said, "Fishermen receive five percent for larger consignments and 10 percent for smaller consignments. The trawlers receive at least Tk 50,000 and a maximum Tk five lakh for the

transportation such as trucks, buses, and motorcycles.

In Kuakata's Mohipur and Lemburchar areas, where tourists gather, these pills are sold at three times the price, with each pill fetching Tk 350-400. However, in local markets like Barishal or Patuakhali, the price of each pill ranges from Tk 150 to Tk 200, according to sources.

Data from the Barishal Range DIG office shows that at least 2.66 lakh pills were seized between November 1 last year to September 24 this year, with 2,310 narcotics cases being filed against 2,829 individuals.

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