

'It's not war, it's genocide'

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury on Israel's brutality in Gaza

DU CORRESPONDENT

What Israel is doing in Gaza is not a war, rather it's a genocide, said Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday.

Although once Israeli people were victims of the Nazi Germany perpetrated holocaust, now Israel is carrying out holocaust on the people of Gaza and Palestine forgetting their past, he added.

He termed Israel's policy on Gaza "an example of occupation in the modern times", while speaking at a mass rally arranged by the Palestine Solidarity Committee in Bangladesh in front of the Shahbagh National Museum.

The rally was titled "Stop Genocide, End Occupation, Free Palestine".

"We protested against Israel's brutal activities in Gaza and expressed

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8



Condemning Israel's brutality in Gaza, Palestine Solidarity Committee in Bangladesh held a rally -- "Stop Genocide, End Occupation, Free Palestine" -- in front of the National Museum yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Workplace deaths see 48pc rise this year

1,432 workers died till Dec 28, up from 967 last year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of deaths related to workplace accidents rose by 48 percent in 2023 compared to last year, according to a survey.

This year, a total of 1,432 people met such deaths till December 28, up from 967 in last year, according to the survey by Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health, and Environment Foundation.

Of the victims, 1,103 worked in informal sector while 329 were in the formal sector of the economy, the report adds.

Dr SM Morshed, vice-chairman of the OSHE Foundation, unveiled the report at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium.

Transport sector recorded the highest 637 deaths, followed by 220 deaths among day labourers, 149 in construction, 146 in agriculture, and 94 in manufacturing sectors.

Besides, 502 others sustained serious injuries in workplace-related accidents this year, compared to 228 in last year, it added.

At least 9,263 people died in workplace-related

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

SECTOR	DEATHS
Transport	637
Service	220
Construction	149
Agriculture	46
Manufacture	94

NATIONAL EXPATRIATES DAY

Getting expatriates involved in country's development

JAMIL MAHMUD

The government is going to mark National Expatriates Day for the first time today with the objective of honouring millions of Bangladeshis living abroad and involving them more in the country's development.

On the day, the expatriates' welfare ministry will host a programme in the capital and honour expatriates with "CIP (NRB) Awards" for their economic contributions. Besides, Bangladesh missions in different countries have chalked out separate programmes to mark the day.

The cabinet approved December 30 for observing the day every year, starting from 2023, during a meeting on December 27 last year, according to media reports.

Later, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters, "We have 1.20 crore expatriates in different countries. We will observe the day in their honour."

Currently, Bangladesh observes December 18 as International Migrants Day which is proclaimed by the UN General Assembly.

Scholars Bangladesh Society and Center for NRB Foundation had been celebrating "NRB Day" on December 30 since 2017.

Syed Saiful Haque, chairman of Warbe Development Foundation, said having a dedicated national day and its observance for the expatriates is something commendable.

"However, issues related to expatriates and their wellbeing should come forward and be addressed adequately while observing the day," he said.

While it's important to connect second and third-generation Bangladeshis born overseas to their roots, it is also important to bring expatriates under a common platform, as their involvement is crucial for the country's development, said Saiful.

Bangladesh has sent over 1.5 crore migrant workers abroad since 1976, shows government data.

International Organisation for Migration's report "Ensuring Active Inclusion of Diaspora in Bangladesh's National Development", published in 2021, estimates about 2.4 million Bangladeshi diaspora population,

SEE PAGE 4 COL 7

Enhance services for them: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government needs to ease and increase its different services for the expatriates including those related to remittance as their contributions are crucial for the country's economy, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They also said expatriates should be recognised accordingly for their contributions to the country.

Scholars Bangladesh Society and Center for NRB Foundation organised the discussion as part of a two-day celebration on "National Expatriates Day (NRB Day-2023)" at a city hotel.

Last year, the government announced December 30 as National Expatriates Day which will be observed for the first time this year.

Addressing the discussion as chief guest, Planning Minister MA Mannan, who joined virtually, said remittance sent by expatriates contribute positively in two ways -- by boosting the country's foreign exchange reserve and also playing a crucial role in changing the lives of their family members back home.

He stressed opening more service related offices under the expatriates' welfare ministry in the country's migration-prone areas.

Besides, expatriates should get priority in receiving different government services, he added.

On getting more remittance through formal channels, former

It is the responsibility of the Bangladesh government as well as governments of those countries to look after them [expatriates].

PROF ATIQUUL ISLAM
VC of North South University

There is a need for a government step to reduce the difference between exchange rate and market rate to get foreign currency.

ATIUR RAHMAN
Former governor of Bangladesh Bank

Bangladesh Bank governor Atiur Rahman said there was a need for a government step to reduce the difference between exchange rate and market rate to get foreign currency.

Prof Atiql Islam, vice chancellor of North South University, said by sending its workforce abroad, Bangladesh is "doing favour" to the receiving countries as many countries are in need of foreign workers due to

their ageing population.

It is the responsibility of the Bangladesh government as well as governments of those countries to look after them, he added.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said the government is committed to promote safe, regular and orderly migration. "Migration remains a central element of our foreign policy priorities," he said.

As Bangladesh is going to graduate from the least developed country status by 2026, the government has emphasised on upskilling the country's human resources to meet the needs of global markets, he added.

At the programme, Prof Pema Gyalpo of Institute of International Japanese Studies at Takushoku University was felicitated for his contribution as a "fundraiser and organiser" for refugees during the Liberation War in 1971.

Chairing the session, Center for NRB Foundation President ME Chowdhury Shameem lauded the government for announcing a national day for expatriates.

On the concluding day on Saturday, a ceremony for "NRB Day Award" and "NRB Day Special Award" will take place, alongside a discussion, at the same venue.

Besides, the book "Bangabandhu and Japan's Relationship", written by Prabir Bikash Sarkar, a Bangladeshi author residing in Japan, will be launched during the programme.

'AL trying to turn Bangladesh into a vassal state'

Alleges Rizvi

UNB, Dhaka

A "neighbouring country" is directly interfering in Bangladesh's affairs to hold a "dummy" election on January 7, alleged BNP Secretary Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday.

Talking to reporters while distributing leaflets in the city's Dhanmondi area, he also called upon the people to boycott the upcoming polls.

"The prime minister yesterday [Thursday] said conspiracies are going on in the country and abroad regarding the election. You [PM] are conspiring against the election. A neighbouring country is directly interfering to hold a dummy election in Bangladesh," he said.

Rizvi also accused the government of trying to turn Bangladesh into a vassal state by sacrificing the country's sovereignty only to retain power. "But people won't let their blueprint to succeed," he added.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan yesterday alleged the AL government is not willing to hold a fair election only because of its fear of losing power.

He made the remarks while addressing the inaugural function of the biannual council of a faction of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists at Jatiya Press Club.

Moyeen said the media can play a strong role in holding the government accountable to the country's people.

"The newspaper is called the Fourth State. The major duty of the media is to hold those who run the country accountable to the people. For this reason, all governments across the world fear the media," he said.

He called upon the journalists to get united to ensure press freedom.



Campaigns wrapped in pollution

Many Dhaka candidates putting up laminated, polythene-coated posters ahead of polls

DIPAN NANDY

Defying the ban on using plastic for election campaigns, candidates have put up a huge number of laminated and polythene coated posters in different areas across the capital ahead of the national polls.

Environmentalists opined that the usage of such plastic materials is posing a serious threat to the environment, while candidates and their supporters have claimed they are using these to protect posters from being ruined by dense fog.

Such posters can be seen across Dhaka city, displaying faces and electoral symbols of candidates, mostly of Awami League, and some from other smaller parties or independents.

During a recent visit to areas that fall under Dhaka 6, 7, and 10 constituencies, plastic-coated posters of the respective ruling party nominees for those constituencies, Sayeed Khokon, Mohammad Solaiman Salim, and actor Ferdous Ahmed, were seen.

The same was the case for Dhaka-8 and 9 as well. Meanwhile, other political party candidates like SM Sarwar of Bangladesh Islami Front, a candidate from Dhaka-8, were also seen using laminated posters.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 5



Despite a ban on plastic, many candidates are using laminated and polythene-coated posters in the capital. The photos were taken in Panthapath and Jurain areas yesterday.

PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON



Mahfuz Sadique passes away

STAR REPORT

Mahfuz Sadique, the chief communications officer of mobile financial services company bKash, passed away in the capital yesterday. He was 40.

A senior bKash official confirmed that Mahfuz died while undergoing treatment at Square Hospitals.

He was hospitalised around 7:00am after he complained of chest pain. Around 9:00am, doctors said he died of cardiac arrest.

Mahfuz left behind his wife and a son, and a host of well-wishers.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after the Maghrib prayers at Taqwa Jame Mosque in Dhanmondi. He was buried at Rayerbazar graveyard. Mahfuz Sadique joined bKash as the chief communications officer in 2021. Previously, he was a senior journalist at BBC News from 2007 to 2021.

