



## TO EUROPE VIA LIBYA A voyage fraught with peril

ZYMA ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

An undocumented Bangladeshi migrant worker choosing to enter Europe from Libya, will almost certainly be held captive by armed militias, tortured, and their families extorted for lakhs of taka.

This is likely to happen even before the perilous boat journey across the Mediterranean, where hundreds perish every year. As much as 63.2 percent of undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers in Libya were forcibly held captive in torture camps by the traffickers at the North African state.

This was found by BRAC's Migration Programme, which interviewed 629 survivors who were rescued and repatriated to Bangladesh in 2022. Of them, 557 were rescued from Libya alone. A large section of them intended to illegally migrate to Europe.

Libya is a key entry-point to Europe.

Data shows that 93 percent were held captive in Libya by the “middlemen” or human smugglers who the migrants had entrusted their passages with.

About 78 percent of the survivors reported that they were physically tortured while 125 said they were given only one meal a day.

According to sources in the law enforcement agencies, migrant workers spend Tk 5-7 lakh for this passage to Europe. Out of this, Tk 2-3 lakh are taken before the trip and the rest is extorted when the workers are held captive in the detention camps.

**As much as 63.2 percent of undocumented Bangladeshi migrant workers in Libya were forcibly held captive in torture camps by the traffickers at the North African state.**

The Counter Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of police previously identified a Libya-based Bangladeshi named Sharif Hossain as one of the traffickers in Libya. He has around 40 agents spread across Bangladesh who allure people with promises of a better life in Europe.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## Healthcare plagued by lack of anaesthesiologists

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Bangladesh's healthcare system suffers from an acute shortage of anaesthesiologists even though their service is required in surgical and emergency care.

Health experts say low pay, lack of recognition compared to surgeons, and the government not recruiting enough anaesthesiologists are the reasons why many doctors do not specialise in the field.

According to the Bangladesh Society of Anaesthesiologists, Critical Care and Pain Physicians (BSACCPP), there are approximately 2,400 anaesthesiologists in the country.

The World Federation of Societies

of Anaesthesiologists, a global alliance, says there must be five anaesthesiologists for every 1 lakh people. There are fewer than one in Bangladesh.

**“Compared to surgeons and other specialist doctors, anaesthesiologists earn very little. But the job they do involves a great deal of risk.”**

PROF KAWSAR SARDAR  
secretary general of BSACCPP

“The field has always been neglected in the country. Compared to surgeons and other specialist doctors, anaesthesiologists earn very little. But the job they do involves a great deal of risk,” Prof Kawsar Sardar, secretary general of the BSACCPP, told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that anaesthesiologists

were highly paid in the developed countries.

Operation theatres at most of the hospitals in Dhaka lack proper

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## 9 Rohingyas turned away from Teknaf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,  
Cox's Bazar

Amid tension in Myanmar's Rakhine state along the Bandarban and Cox's Bazar border, nine Rohingyas tried to enter Bangladesh and were turned back yesterday morning.

Border Guard Bangladesh sent them back to Myanmar near the Shahporir Dwip jetty around 10:00am, said Lt Col Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of BGB-2 Battalion in Teknaf, adding that the Myanmar nationals were on a small boat.

For the last three days, no gunfire or explosions have been heard across the border, providing some relief to the people of the area.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



RECIPE FOR DISASTER: Caught in the sudden downpour yesterday afternoon, several bikers take shelter under the metro rail viaducts on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. However, it is dangerous to stop on the fast lane, more so on wet roads, as it significantly increases the chance of accidents.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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