

MIGRATION SECTOR

'Sub-agents must operate within a framework'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sub-agents and representatives of foreign recruiters must operate within a framework to make the migration sector "humane, transparent, and free of harassment", said Tanvir Shakil Joy, chairperson of Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development.

Those who will be sub-agents must be registered, and the expatriates' welfare ministry and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training will look after such matter.

TANVIR SHAKIL JOY Chairperson of Bangladesh Parliamentarians' Caucus on Migration and Development

"Those who will be sub-agents must be registered, and the expatriates' welfare ministry and Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training will look after such matter," he said. He was addressing a consultation to analyse the Overseas Employment and Migrants (Amendment) Act 2023 at the BMET in Dhaka.

Migrant rights group Warbe Development Foundation organised the consultation, participated by BPCMD members, government officials, recruiting agents, and members of migrant advocacy groups, among others.

Tanvir, also a ruling Awami League lawmaker, said there can be further discussions to find out the best way for sub-agents' registration.

BPCMD wants to work as a support group in the sector, he added.

Meanwhile, BMET Director General Saleh Ahmed Mujaffor said the institution has been providing training to workers as demand for skilled workers is growing abroad.

Warbe chairman Syed Saiful Haque also spoke at the event among others.

After years of advocacy from migrant rights groups, the government amended the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act by publishing a gazette on September 21 last year.

The act defines a "sub-agent" or "representative" as a registered person who collects migrant workers for overseas employment as per the recruiting agent's demand.

It says a recruiting agent will be able to appoint a person registered as a sub-agent under a process determined by rules, and their role and responsibility will also be determined by rules.

The Daily Star published a report in this regard titled "Making the middlemen visible" in November 2023.

Thousands of dead jellyfish on Kuakata beach

Fishing activities, tourism disrupted



PHOTO: STAR

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Thousands of dead jellyfish are piling up on Kuakata sea beach in Patuakhali after being cast ashore by tidal waves of the Bay for the past four weeks.

The situation has turned alarming over the last 8-10 days, significantly disrupting fishing and tourism activities near the shore.

Visiting the beach recently, it was seen that the dead jellyfish, each weighing around 12-15 kilogrammes, are lying across a vast stretch of the beach in huge numbers, and spreading bad odour as those are decomposing in the open.

Tourists were also seen extremely annoyed by the dead jellyfish and the stench coming from those.

According to experts, declining

numbers of sea turtles alongside rising sea temperatures have paved the way for jellyfish to proliferate in numbers. Jellyfish are the main food of sea turtles.

"Over the last 20-25 days, these dead jellyfish are being washed ashore and piling up at different points from Lembu Char area in the west to Gangamati area in the east of Kuakata beach," said Bachchu Kazi, 45, a local fisherman.

"We cannot catch fish in the sea now as many dead jellyfish are also floating in the water and getting stuck in the fishing nets. As we touch the jellyfish to remove those from the net, it causes unbearable itching," he added.

Arif Hossain, another fisherman, echoed him.

Abdur Berek Molla, a fish trader in Alipur area, said fishermen in

his three fishing trawlers have not been able to cast their nets in the sea for nearly a month.

"The fishermen are in great trouble with bearing their family expenses ahead of Eid," he added.

Talking to this correspondent, Sagarika Smriti, an associate researcher at Ecofish, a research institute in Kalapara where marine fish species are studied, said that jellyfish increases in number if the temperature and salinity of water in the deep sea increase.

"Jellyfish is the main food of marine turtles. So, if the turtle population goes down, it causes jellyfish to rise in number," she added.

Apu Saha, senior fisheries officer in Kalapara upazila, said, "Jellyfish are seen near the shore this time every year, as they come

to eat small fish and eggs. During this time, many are stuck in sand and die. But this year their numbers are higher than usual."

"After a month, if the number decreases, then fishermen will be able to return to catching fish normally," he added.

Patuakhali district fisheries officer Md Kamrul echoed him.

Shakil Ahmed, managing officer of Alipur Fish Landing Station said, "As fishermen are unable to catch fish due to jellyfish infesting the water, it is having a negative impact on the supply of sea fish in the local market."

Motaleb Sharif, general secretary of Kuakata Hotel-Motel Owners Association, said, "Local volunteers are working to bury the dead jellyfish at Zero Point area to reduce the stench."

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TRAWLER CAPSIZE All 9 bodies recovered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

The Fire Service and Civil Defence yesterday officially ended the rescue operation after recovering all nine bodies of missing passengers of a trawler which capsized in Meghna river four days back.

Earlier in the morning, divers of the fire service recovered the bodies of remaining three persons, said Mohammad Enamul Haque, who led the rescue operation.

A total nine bodies have been recovered in the four-day joint operation by River Police, BIWTA and Fire Service, said KM Moniruzzaman Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Bhairab River Police unit.

All the bodies have been handed over to families. A case was filed in connection with the incident on Sunday accusing two persons.

Nine envoys to return

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Preparations are on to appoint several new envoys of Bangladesh in missions abroad. The development came after the foreign ministry issued orders to at least nine ambassadors and high commissioners to return to Dhaka since February.

The returning envoys are: Khalilur Rahman, high commissioner to Canada; Md Mosharrar Hossain Bhuiyan, ambassador to Germany; Md Monirul Islam, ambassador to Italy; Sultana Laila Hossain, ambassador to Poland; Maj Gen SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

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