

Bangladesh: Expatriate Bank soon

London: Bangladesh will set up an Expatriate Bank soon for the welfare of the expatriate Bangladeshis as per announcement of the government made earlier. The announcement was made by the visiting Chief Whip of Bangladesh Parliament, Abdus Shaheed when he was addressing a reception in East London on 30 April. The reception was organised by Probashi Palli, a forum of Bangladeshi expatriates in the U.K. Probashi Palli has already undertaken a program to invest Tk 120 crore (approximately €10,5) million in Bangladesh in land, banking and information technology sectors.

British treasury secretary Stefan Teams, MP, Baroness Paula Uddin, acting high commissioner of Bangladesh to the U.K. Allama Siddiqui, chairman of Probashi Palli, Sheikh Nurul Islam Jitu, mayor of Hamlet Tower Abdullah Salik, Noor-e Alam Liton MP, president of advisory council of UK unit of AL Sultan Mahmud Sharif, UK AL president Shamsuddin Khan and director of Probashi Palli Habibur Rahman Habib, among others, spoke on the occasion. It may be mentioned that Probashi Palli has initiated two residential projects at Purbachal and Uttara in Bangladesh for creating safe housing for the expatriates.

Separate Wings in Expatriate Ministry

The government would also set up two separate wings in the Expatriates Ministry, namely administrative and planning, with precise focus on particular areas for sending Bangladeshi jobseekers abroad in a 'synchronised fashion'. The expatriates' welfare ministry has requested the establishment ministry to give it more officers and staffers to enable it to be more effective. The establishment ministry has already approved the recruitment of some 39 officers and staffers for the Expatriates' ministry and the process is now waiting to get the final nod of the finance ministry, which may take a few months.

Project Remittance: BASUG –Oxfam Novib-INAFI Bangladesh

As part of the on-going Remittance project of BASUG, being supported by Oxfam Novib and in collaboration with INAFI Bangladesh, a workshop will be held in the last week of July this year in Dhaka. BASUG's local partner, INAFI Bangladesh will also organise a series of financial literacy training for the family members of the migrants who receive remittance. INAFI Bangladesh will organise the events in collaboration with its partner organisations, WARBE, Uddipon and Shakti. Separate ToR has already been signed with them in this regard. President of BASUG, Bikash Chowdhury Barua will attend the workshop which will be held at the BRAC Inn in Dhaka. He will also take part in one of the financial literacy trainings in Bangladesh.

In connection with the Remittance project, a documentary film on Remittance is being made by a professional film maker in Dhaka. INAFI Bangladesh and BASUG have already finalised the script of the film and an agreement with the film maker has been signed this week. The objective of the film is to encourage the migrants to send remittance through proper channel and discourage sending money through 'hundi' or other illegal means. *(Photo: BASUG Board meeting reviewing the on-going Remittance project on 21 Feb at Mondriaan conference room in Den Haag)*

The film will also give ideas on investment in productive sectors. As of the project BASUG also hold similar financial trainings in the Netherlands in end-June/mid-Aug and a



workshop. With the completion of the training module being developed by INAFI Bangladesh, work on the training in the Netherlands will start. Similar workshop will also be organised in London involving the local Bangladeshi migrants there. BASUG UK chapter Coordinator, Ansar Ahmed Ullah is already working on this involving the Bangladeshi money sending companies and local high commission officials.

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Plight of Bangladeshis : several died in sea on way to Malaysia

A total of 49 Bangladeshi nationals who were rescued from sea near the Andaman island of India last December were handed over to Bangladesh border security force (BDR) in March this year by the Indian border security force.



BDR sources and the victims said, Indian coast guard rescued 105 Bangladeshis from the sea while they were going to Malaysia. They set out for Malaysia through some middlemen. Thai navy caught them in their territory as the middlemen left them in the mid-sea in six trawlers. Thai police kept them confined for 15 days and after taking off the engines of the trawlers set them drifting in the deep sea. After floating in the sea for 12 days, they were rescued by the Indian coast guard and navy. *(Photo: Bangladeshis rescued by the Indian coast guards returning home with utter frustration.)*

Bangladesh government identified 49 out of 67 who claimed themselves Bangladeshis as its citizens from the list the Indian government sent them. Atique, a victim, said, the middlemen took Tk 13,000 from each of them and sent 405 Bangladeshis to Malaysia. Of them, 300 drowned in the deep sea. His two brothers also died in the sea, he said. Another victim Syed Amin alleged that the middlemen assured them of lucrative jobs in Malaysia. Most of the returnees hail from Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts.

Bangladesh to set up 4 new labour consulates abroad

The Bangladesh government plans to set up four new labour consulates in overseas missions and two new wings in the overseas employment ministry for addressing the problems of Bangladeshi jobseekers and creating more jobs. The new four consulates will be in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Italy. These offices will be opened within a few months.

The overseas employment in 2009 might touch the 500,000. In next several years Bangladesh hopes to get new destinations like Libya and some East European countries. Everyday the Dhaka Libyan embassy issues between 350 and 400 visas for Bangladeshi workers, and the figure will increase in the future. As the African nation is isolated from the world due to embargo by the US, the ongoing global meltdown will not affect Libya's planned construction projects which require more than a million overseas workers. So it will be a boon for us,' said the ministry secretary to the press.

No bailout package for the Poor- Professor Yunus on economic crisis

Nobel Peace Prize winner, Professor Muhammad Yunus has warned that the global economic crisis will hit the world's poorest people the hardest and that "there is no bailout package for them." The microfinance pioneer, speaking during a visit to Tokyo, said the ongoing build a more people-focused financial system, not



"The financial system has to be totally redesigned," for the people anyway. It worked for the rich people, in general." Professor Yunus and his Grameen Bank award in 2006 for efforts to lift people out of extreme poverty by giving them small loans. He said the fact that "a small number of people in one country (the US) can create such a disastrous situation for all the people of the world" shows "how fragile our system is, how weak the foundation of our system is." "The real victims of the crisis are the people who have made no contribution whatsoever to this crisis, the bottom half of the world population," he said. "They will be the ones who will lose their jobs, the ones who will lose income and livelihood and food... There is no bailout package for them."

worldwide downturn is an opportunity to one "based in a fantasy economic world."

he said. "This financial system didn't work yes. Big business, yes. But not for people were honoured with the Nobel peace

award in 2006 for efforts to lift people out of extreme poverty by giving them small loans. He said the fact that "a small number of people in one country (the US) can create such a disastrous situation for all the people of the world" shows "how fragile our system is, how weak the foundation of our system is." "The real victims of the crisis are the people who have made no contribution whatsoever to this crisis, the bottom half of the world population," he said. "They will be the ones who will lose their jobs, the ones who will lose income and livelihood and food... There is no bailout package for them."

MDG 5: Case maternal health

2 women die each hour in Bangladesh

Two women die every hour in Bangladesh owing to pregnancy- and childbirth-related complications in Bangladesh for lack of skilled attendants during delivery, said speakers in a rally organised in Dhaka in observance of the International Day of the Midwife. The Nations Millennium Development health. The goal, supported by the per cent the number of women who 2015. Midwives, nurses and nursing



Bangladesh is in acute shortage of pregnant women deliver their babies deliveries conducted by skilled backbones of antenatal, birth-time and essential for any pregnant women for roundtable discussion held at IDB observe the day. In 2008, the UNFPA national capacity in low resource all births by scaling up the capacity of Confederation of Midwives.

day was observed highlighting the United Goal 5, which aims to improve maternal Bangladesh government, is to reduce by 75 die during pregnancy or at childbirth by students took part in the rally.

these professionals as majority of the at home, with only 18 per cent of the attendants. Trained midwives are the postnatal cares. These three cares are safe motherhood, said speakers at a Bhaban with the support of UNFPA to launched a new global initiative to build countries to increase skilled attendants at midwives with the International

Computer Centre for poor children set up in Dhaka

The Netherlands-based foundation, Expanding Horizon set up a Computer training Centre in Dhaka, Bangladesh under its project, IT exploration for children on 1 April 2009 . The objectives of the two year pilot project are to provide basic computer skills to 800 underprivileged children and give them access to the 'digital age'.

According to the chairman of Expanding Horizon, Koos Palmboom, after the completion of the project similar courses will be introduced in other locations across Bangladesh with the idea of 'Share the Power of Knowledge'. Children who never dreamt of being able to find their way on digital media, will be trained in basic computer skills. If they finish the course successfully, they can take part in an advanced course and will be able to run the computer on a professional level. BASUG acted as a go-between organization between Expanding Horizon and its Bangladesh counterpart, BCCP-Bangladesh Center for Communication Programs in Dhaka. Finding a third partner in grassroots organization, CPD their mutual interests and combined efforts resulted in setting up a course curriculum, setting up a venue, acquisition of equipment and assignment and training of an enthusiastic staff of instructors. BCCP is giving technical and organizational assistance and is planning follow up projects after the pilot. *(Picture shows Koos Palmboom at the Centre in Dhaka)* Expanding Horizon was involved in setting up the project concept, designing the course and in collecting the necessary finances.



BASUG's new project 'Basic Education for Children' starts in June



The new project of BASUG titled 'Basic Education for Children' begins in June this year in North Bengal of Bangladesh at Badalgachi upazila under Naogaon district. Supported by Seva Network Foundation the project will provide basic education to a total of 150 children in one year period. The project will cover mainly the ethnic minority (Adibashi) children who do not have access to formal education system. Under the project the mothers of the children will also receive information on children's health, hygiene and food. The project will be implemented by a local organization, Bukkyo Adibashi Unnayan Foundation. It may be mentioned that Seva Network Foundation also supported similar project in Laksham last year. A project of BASUG on 'Women Entrepreneurship' which was supported by Seva Network Foundation and Zwarte Zaken Vrouwen Nederland was nominated last year by EC-UN as one of the Best Practices across the world and showcased in the 'Knowledge Fair' in Brussels in November 2008.

Bangladesh Independence Day celebrated in Netherlands

In observance of the Independence Day of Bangladesh, Embassy of Bangladesh in the Netherlands organized a reception on 26th March at the reception hall of the chamber of Commerce in the Hague. On this very day in 1971 Bangladesh liberation war started against the Pakistani occupation forces which culminated with the emergence of Independent Bangladesh on 16th December the same year. Bangladesh ambassador, Mizanur Rahman welcomed the



guests at the reception. It was also addressed by the Secretary General of the Dutch Foreign Ministry, E. Kronenburg. First Secretary of the embassy A.T.M. Rokebul Haque was also present. Diplomats, representatives from different organizations, businessmen and a sizeable number of Bangladeshi diasporas living in the Netherlands attended the Independence Day program. After the formal program the ambassador approached the Bangladeshi community, talked to them and enquired about their well-being. This gesture of the Bangladesh envoy impressed the Bangladeshis who attended the reception. *(Picture shows: Dutch Foreign Ministry Secretary General speaking on the day while the Bangladesh ambassador and the First Secretary look on)*

BASUG youngest member joins Euroscola in European Parliament

The 2009 Euroscola and Europe Day will be held at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, Germany on 9 May. Students from a number of educational institutions of Europe will take part in the debate and discussion at the European Parliament. The main theme of this year Euroscola is: “the significance of the European Elections”. It may be mentioned that the next elections of the European Parliament is due to be held in June this year.



BASUG's youngest member, Saptarshi Chowdhury Barua (16) will participate in the Euroscola. She is one of the 10 students selected from her school, HML. Saptarshi is also the Chief Editor of her school magazine for the last three years which won the “Best School Magazine of the Netherlands 2008” award. *(Photo: former Foreign Minister & currently Mayor of the Hague city Van Aarsten is being received by Saptarshi Chowdhury on his arrival at the school).*

Last week Saptarshi was one of the two students to receive the former Dutch Foreign Minister and present Mayor of the Hague city, J. Van Aartsen when he arrived at the school on 17 April to attend a program, “The Hague Bridge” aimed at the promotion of the Hague as ‘International city of Peace and Justice’. Besides the students of HML (Haags Montessori Lyceum, the meeting was also attended by students from the British School and Aloysius College.

Change attitude to expatriate Bangladeshi- govt ask diplomats

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday directed the Bangladeshi diplomats in different countries to change their attitude towards expatriate Bangladeshis and do their best to help them. She issued the directives from a regular cabinet meeting held at Cabinet Division's conference room. The PM's directive to the Bangladesh diplomats was issued in response to allegations of the Bangladeshi mission's indifference and unhelpful attitude to Bangladeshi expatriates in Saudi Arabia. Quoting the prime minister, press secretary Abul Kalam Azad said, ‘This kind of allegation is not only against our mission in Saudi Arabia but other missions as well. The diplomats should change their mindset and pay more attention to the well-being of the expatriates.’ She also asked the ministers to keep their eyes on the activities of the Bangladesh missions

Bengali New Year celebrated in the Netherlands

In Bangladesh and some parts of Europe including the U.K. it is a big festivity- Pahela Baishak, the first day of the Bengali New Year. But the day never goes unnoticed here in the Netherlands. The Bangladeshi community in the Netherlands celebrated the new Bengali year at a function on 18 April in Eindhoven. A sizeable number of Bangladeshis and Indians (Bengali speaking) from different cities of the Netherlands and Belgium thronged at Eindhoven to welcome the day. *(Photo right shows, BASUG member Tanbira Talukder presenting a Bengali dance, on left Bangladeshi singer Rahil khandker is signing.)*



A number of Bangladeshi students who are staying in the Netherlands on higher studies also attended the program. Traditional Bangladeshi food including Hilsha, 'panta bhat', music, jokes and 'adda' gave a new dimension to the whole program. Interesting part of the whole program was that each Bangladeshi family came with a home-made Bangladesh dish.

Musical School set up by Nasima Falguni in A'dam



Moved by the excellence of her music the celebrated music director and singer, Bhupen Hazarika once commented, "the Bengali and Hindi singer Nasima Falguni is a miracle in the field of classical music". Flute master, Hari Prashad Chaurasia added to this appreciation saying, "Now in Europe, Nasima is a genius as a classical singer".

Both remarks were made on Nasima Falguni, a celebrated Bangladeshi singer, who has now settled down in the Netherlands. Despite all limitations of facilities Nasima continued her practice in music side by side with her performance in and outside the Netherlands. What makes Nasima different from other Bangladeshi artists in Europe is that she can equally sing in Hindi, Urdu, English and Persian language. She has already earned name and fame by her 'heart-touching' voice and tune. Falguni has already set up a music school styled, 'Tapasya Kala Sampradaya', where students take lessons from her on classical, base music and harmonium as instrument. Interested persons may visit the school site www.tapasyaks.nl or contact her at 020-528.75.00, mobile 06-237.21.760



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