

# **The Unloved Remittance Warriors**

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# Core findings from the WP chapter on International migration

- In Asia, Bangladeshi migrants face the highest migration costs, paying 4 to 5 times more than Nepali workers. It may take a Bangladeshi migrant 17 months to recover these costs.
- Powerful recruiting agencies, policymakers, and bureaucrats siphoned off USD 2 billion from migrants between mid-2021 and mid-2024 by creating a recruitment syndicate for Malaysia.
- Over the past decade, recruiting agencies and intermediaries have transferred BDT 1.34 trillion via unofficial channels for visa purchases, as outward remittances are not allowed for this purpose.
- Bangladesh's labour market is limited to six to ten countries, which are prone to fluctuations. Countries that are major markets for Bangladeshi workers may suddenly stop or reduce intake.
- Migrants are discouraged from acquiring skills due to the low employability of TTC trainees. Until training aligns with labour market needs, Bangladesh will continue sending low-skilled workers vulnerable to exploitation.

# An update on the policy context and actions

## Actions

- A 22% increase in remittance flow in 2024 (vs. 2023) suggests migrants are regaining trust in formal channels.
- The Anti-Corruption Commission filed cases against four parliamentarians involved in a Malaysian migration syndicate.
- The Home Ministry has formally requested Malaysian authorities to arrest and extradite the two main individuals behind the syndication for money laundering, extortion, and migrant trafficking.
- Steps to improve data on return migration is an important initiative of the MoEWOE

## Inactions

- The interim government has not formed a dedicated commission for international migration governance, potentially signaling a lack of emphasis on the sector
- No major break-through in pertinent migration governance areas such as overlapping of functions of institutions under different laws, unprecedented growth of recruiting agencies, unnecessary privatisation, transparency of WEWF, composition of PKB directors, effective control over visa-trading, streamlining recruitment clearance, bilateral negotiations in market exploration, reorganisation of labour Attaches offices, enhancing the quality of TTC trainings etc.

# Recommendations for the budget and beyond

## **Budget**

- The allocation for international labour migration, Bangladesh's highest net foreign exchange-earning sector, stands at a mere 0.08% of the national budget for fiscal years 2020-2022 to 2023-2024. Allocation of 1 per cent of the annual national budget is a minimum requirement for this sector.

## **Beyond the Budget:**

- Declare a Migration Decade to develop a comprehensive migration governance system with short, medium and long-term programmes that establishes the rights of male and female migrants and their left behind families covering all phases of migration, before during and upon return to Bangladesh

# Thank You



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