



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**Migrants' rights advocates march from the National Museum in Dhaka to the National Press Club in celebration of International Migrants' Day. Bangladesh, 18 December 2003.**

## BANGLADESH

*This report was contributed by Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE).*

### Political and Economic Update

**T**he year 2003-2004 witnessed a sharp deterioration in law and order, while violent incidents and intolerance of opposing viewpoints continued to mar the national political culture. Throughout the year, both the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the opposition Awami League (AL) were locked in disagreement on various issues. AL continued to boycott parliament, while their attempts to whip up anti-government movement ended mostly in a whimper. Little or no debate on important legisla-

tion or other matters of national concern have taken place in the parliament due to the nature of Bangladeshi politics, which is often confrontational and inimical to reform.

Further exacerbating the situation of the Bangladeshi people, severe floods and droughts in northern Bangladesh created a famine-like situation. The floods killed several people and displaced hundreds of thousands. The year also saw public displeasure due to soaring prices of essentials and frequent rises in utility tariffs, including water and electricity.

In international relations, Bangladesh clashed with India over the presence of purported Bangladeshis in India. On 31 January 2003, Indian officials claimed they had detained and pushed across the border some 213 people who they alleged had entered India illegally from Bangladesh. The Bangladeshi Government, however, denied India's claims that they were

Bangladeshis. It alleged that these persons were Indian Muslims, who had been rounded up and taken to the border so as to be pushed into Bangladesh as “illegal immigrants”. The 213 people were reportedly held for six days in the so-called “no man’s land” near Satgachi under Mathabhangra police station in Cooch Behar district, West Bengal, India. Security forces on both sides of the border refused to let the people enter their respective territory, each side claiming that the stranded people were nationals of the other country. The 213 was said to include 68 women and 80 children. The group was reportedly left without adequate shelter, appropriate food, and with no sanitation or medical facilities. While the two countries were refusing to take responsibility for the group, many among them – particularly young children – were said to have become ill with pneumonia due to the harsh conditions to which they were exposed. This incident was not an isolated case. Over the past year other groups of people whose nationality was unclear and disputed were pushed out and then pushed back in across the border by India and Bangladesh.

The US-led war in Iraq also caused great consternation in Bangladesh for the welfare of Bangladeshi citizens overseas, as some 1.7 million Bangladeshi migrants work in the Gulf region. The government also worried about the impact of a prolonged war in Iraq on the Bangladeshi economy, which is greatly propped up by migrants’ remittances, particularly migrants working in the Middle East.

The government devised plans for the emergency evacuation of these workers as it closed its embassy in Iraq, moving staff to Jordan. The Bangladeshi Embassy in Riyadh, however, issued an appeal to Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to continue their work, and many stayed put. Over the year, reports were issued that Bangladeshi workers were being sent to Iraq under the guise of deployment to Jordan. In June 2004, the government warned that private recruitment agencies found sending workers to Iraq could have their licenses suspended.<sup>1</sup>

On the economic front, Bangladesh Bank estimated 5.3% real GDP growth in 2002-2003, up from 4.8% in 2001-2002. The increase in GDP growth was largely the result of macro-economic stability. The major policy players reported that current trends in monetary management, bank interest rates, inflation, reforms in the banking sector and remittances are encouraging. The growth rate in agriculture, which comprises 23.5% of GDP, was 3.3% in 2002-2003. In fiscal measures, revenue receipts rose by 12.5% in 2002-2003, while the budget deficit narrowed down to 4.2% of GDP in 2002-2003. In trade and commerce, exports rose by 9.4% to USD6.49 billion from USD5.93 billion the previous fiscal year. Gross foreign exchange reserves stood at USD2.53 billion as of December 2003.

Remittances from Bangladeshi migrant workers continue to contribute heavily to the country’s socio-economic development. In 2002-2003, migrant workers sent over USD3 billion in remittances – more than Bangladesh received in foreign aid. The steady flow of remittances has improved the country’s balance of payments and helped increase savings. Labor migration has also contributed to the creation of jobs within Bangladesh related to the facilitation of the migration process. Private recruiting agencies, their agents and sub-agents, travel agencies, medical centers, and interstate transportation owners and workers all earn their livelihood by processing labor migration to



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**Migrants and advocates form a human chain as part of WARBE’s International Migrants’ Day celebrations.**

## Bangladesh Significant

**2003****January**

Severe cold wave sweeps across the country in the first and second weeks of January, claiming more than 200 lives.

**February**

(6) Bangladesh ends its standoff with India over the issue of the deportation of Bangladesh undocumented migrants when Bangladesh accepted 213 of the migrants in controversy.

(23) The Joint Drive Indemnity Act 2003 for Operation Clean Heart is passed by the parliament amidst severe controversy. The Army-led joint forces conducted Operation Clean Heart from November 2002 through January 2003; 58 people were killed while in the custody of the joint forces during the operation.

**March**

(8) International Women's Day was observed with various programs and activities organized by NGOs and human

rights organizations.

(10) Bangladesh High Court bans the government from detaining any persons under the Special Powers Act.

**April**

Bangladesh relaxes restrictions on the deployment of female domestic workers abroad.

**September**

(11) Opposition party Awami League boycotts Parliament sessions, after walking out on 25 June in protest of statements made by State minister of Public Works Alamgir Kabir.

**October**

(22) Bangladesh and Malaysia sign an MOU on the deployment of Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia.

**November**

(20) 11 members of a Hindu family were burned alive in a planned plot of arson at Banskhali in Chittagong.

**December**

(10) World Human Rights Day is observed on 10 December. Human rights groups, NGOs and associations organize seminars, symposiums, discussion meetings, and the like. To uphold migrants human rights, WARBE submits a memorandum to the government through Director General of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in the morning and organizes a press conference at the National Press Club, Dhaka in the afternoon.

(18) A colorful IMD Rally and a Human Chain is organized on the eve of International Migrants Day on 18 December 2003. The rally starts from the gate of the National Museum and ends in front of the National Press Club, Dhaka. Then a Human Chain is formed peacefully at the opposite side of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; participants joined hands with posters and banners demanding the

other countries.

Migrants' remittances in 2003-2004 were equivalent to about 85% of the net export earnings of the country. Remittance flows for the first time crossed the threshold level of USD3.06 billion in FY03, 22.4% higher than FY02. During the period July-November 2003, Bangladesh received about USD1.285 billion as foreign remittances recorded 4.33% point to point growth. It is reckoned that the improved post-9/11 global situation, along with government's steps to improve the efficiency of formal channels of transfer, played an important role in accelerating the growth of remittances to

Bangladesh.

In financial year 2003 foreign aid committed to Bangladesh amounted to about USD2.18 billion, while actual disbursement was USD1.58 billion. After a secular decline in the volume of foreign aid disbursement since FY99, a growth of more than 26% was recorded in FY03 compared to the preceding year. The recent increase in foreign aid inflows to Bangladesh was largely due to the Development Support Credit (DSC) contracted with the World Bank. Under the DSC, USD300 million was disbursed to Bangladesh as the country promised to implement a time-bound Structural

## Events 2003 - June 2004

immediate ratification of the 1990 UN Migrants' Rights Convention and relevant ILO Conventions.

(25) 15 Bangladesh Army officers engaged in a UN peacekeeping mission in Liberia and Sierra Leon die in a tragic plane crash in Benin on their way to the country for a vacation.

### 2004

#### January

(9) Director-generals from the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) close their annual meeting without coming to an agreement on proposed joint border patrols.

#### February

Opposition leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury of the Awami League is injured in a clash between police and demonstrators during a general strike.

#### March

(29) Delegations from Bangladesh and Burma attend a four-day border conference to discuss border relations, including issues such as fishing, arms trade and the drug trade.

#### May

Parliament amends the constitution to reserve 45 seats for women in proportion to party support.

#### June

(6) Police fire shots into a group of refugees demonstrating in Kutupaalong camp, who were protesting the government's forced repatriation and mistreatment by police.

(16) Prospective migrants must now register with Bangladesh Manpower Export and Training (BMET) and the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA).

(18) OneWorld reports that the US put Bangladesh on its

trafficking blacklist, classifying it as a Tier 3 country; which may cause Bangladesh to face non-trade sanctions.

*This section was contributed by WARBE, with additional information sourced from Scalabrini Asian Migration News; BBC News; U.S. Department of State, Bangladesh Country report on Human Rights Practice; Narinjara News; OneWorld; Geert Bekaert and Campbell R. Harvey's Chronology of Economic, Political and Financial Events in Emerging Markets.*

### Policy Reform Matrix.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) also pledged to give Bangladesh about USD490 million as a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) loan, of which USD70 million has been disbursed as a first tranche. The second tranche will be available once Bangladesh services a number of commitments in the area of budgetary and financial sector reforms. One major problem for Bangladesh, however, originates in its weak capacity to utilize the already committed foreign aid. Thus, the aid pipeline amounts to more than USD6.2 billion as of June 2003.

The somewhat optimistic development trend may make many hopeful of a brighter future for the country, but it does not ensure a reasonable distribution of wealth and resources. The normal distribution of resources will depend on the creation of employment for about 30% of the population, which remains unemployed or underemployed. The issue of employment generation, however, has yet to receive proper attention or effective initiatives. Industrial development, particularly in the small and medium sectors, may generate employment, but will require access to markets, proper regulation, elimination of corruption and

access to finance. The process of poverty alleviation requires sustaining employment and regular inflow of income in the family. The macroeconomic reforms may support overall economic recovery, while its reflection in individual families will fully depend on the ability of the people to avail themselves of the opportunity.

### Migration Update

#### *Migration Flow*

Bangladesh is a sending country with a large labor surplus, and the migration of labor has been a significant factor in its growth and development. More than four million migrant workers have been employed abroad through regular channels since Bangladesh's independence. In the year 2003, a total of 254,190 Bangladeshi migrants were deployed to various overseas countries; of these, 15,862 were deployed as professionals, 74,530 as skilled workers, 29,236 as semi-skilled workers, and 134,562 as low-skilled workers. These migrant workers were employed respectively by Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) (456), and recruiting agents (82,507), while 171,227 migrants were working abroad individually. As in past years, the bulk of migrant workers, totaling 162,131, went to Saudi Arabia. 37,346 went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), 26,722 to Kuwait, and 7,482 to Bahrain and other countries. For the first time, the United Kingdom (UK) (166) and Mauritius (637) officially received migrant workers deployed from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh primarily participates in the semi-skilled and unskilled labor market, and in recent years started to face tough competition from other labor sending countries like Nepal, Cambodia and Indonesia. Such competition among the sending countries has resulted in the continuous lowering of wages and conditions of work. Another factor impacting Bangladeshi migrants is the increasing unemployment rate in a number of the labor receiving countries of Middle East. This led some of the countries to formulate policies working towards the indigenization of the labor force. To discourage dependence on overseas labor, some others have introduced a levy to be paid by employers who recruit foreign workers.

Bangladesh worked to promote the deployment of women abroad, particularly to the Middle East, where there is a large demand. New regulations issued in 2003 stipulate that married women above the age of 35 may work as domestic workers abroad if accompanied by their spouses.<sup>2</sup> The government also announced plans in 2004 to begin deploying women to work as security guards in primarily female institutions.<sup>3</sup>

In 2003, the Bangladeshi government signed new MOUs with Malaysia and South Korea, however, significant labor migration to these countries did not actually take place. Although Bangladesh and Malaysia executed an MOU in October 2003, the resumption of deployment was delayed.<sup>4</sup> In South Korea, changes to its labor laws shook up the system. In addition to South Korea's much-opposed trainee system, the country implemented the Employment Permit System which now recognizes unskilled foreign workers as legal laborers (See Korea Country Report for more details). As part of the new rules, however, some categories of migrant workers had to leave the country. Late in the year, a number of Bangladeshis with expired work permits were required to return to Bangladesh in order to get new work permits before they could return to their jobs in South Korea.<sup>5</sup>

In August 2003 and March 2004, Japanese and Bangladeshi delegates ironed out arrangements to open up job opportunities for Bangladeshi migrant workers in Japan. The program involves a one-year training period followed by a two-year work tenure.<sup>6</sup>

#### *Laws and Migration-related Regulations*

Bangladesh has legislated only the Emigration Ordinance 1982 to regulate the country's labor migration process. Since the 1980s, however, global migration has undergone major changes, and the Ordinance is now less effective in protecting the rights of migrant workers in light of the current political and economic global situation. Many migrants' rights NGOs and advocates believe the Emigration Ordinance 1982 needs to be replaced by rights-based legislation reflecting the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (MWC) as well as ILO conventions 97 and 143 pertinent to migrant workers. Although the Bangladesh government signed the MWC in 1998, the country still has not yet ratified it

despite continued calls from migrants' rights advocates and others who have stressed the need for the government to adopt and implement the instruments.

### **Visa Trading**

The buying and selling of visas has become a business for a number of people. Competition amongst recruiting agencies to obtain these visas has grown, and it has become extremely difficult to secure a visa through regular channels. A nexus of interest has developed among high level state functionaries of the receiving countries, their recruiting agents and section of Bangladeshi recruiting agents, which has become involved in visa transactions through irregular practices. The visas are then put into auction to other agents who have less access to visas. It has become extremely difficult to take action against these people, who often have high social and political connections. Recruiting agencies that purchase visas, in turn, keep their margins and sell them to individual migrants at high placement fees.

### **Trafficking**

Trafficking continues to be a major problem in Bangladesh, with recent studies indicating that the incidence of trafficking has been increasing.<sup>7</sup> Every year hundreds of thousands of people become homeless and landless due to river-bank erosion. A large number of people face economic hardship due to floods, droughts and cyclones. Families become rootless, as they have to migrate to survive. In the process, families disintegrate, leaving females and children in particularly vulnerable situations, which puts them at risk of being trafficked.

There have been a number of studies and conferences on trafficking in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh Development Partnership Center



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**Many migrants gather to attend an awareness-raising training session.**



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**WARBE conducts training for prospective female migrant workers.**

(BDPS) targeted six districts, Jessore, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Megerpur, Kushtia and Satkhira, as major trafficking routes.<sup>8</sup> In its efforts to combat trafficking, on 28 April 2004 the Ministry of Home Affairs mandated the establishment of a monitoring cell at the police headquarters to gather data on trafficking in women and children.<sup>9</sup> The US also announced plans to help Bangladesh monitor its borders through an electronic immigration control system, in part to help combat trafficking.



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**WARBE meets with Special Rapporteur in Geneva, Switzerland.**

***HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh***

According to official government data published in 2003, Bangladesh has only 363 HIV-infected people, of whom 51% are migrants. The World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS, however, estimate the number of HIV-infected people in Bangladesh to be between 13,000 and 30,000. 26 Bangladeshis are reported to have died of AIDS-related causes since the first case was identified in 1989. Overall, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh is still low, but a recent study found that it has reached 4% among the Injectible Drug Users (IDUs). About 33% of IDUs in Bangladesh visit female sex workers, which could lead to the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS to other sectors of the population unless preventive measures are taken immediately. Human trafficking has also increased the risk of HIV/AIDS, as a number of trafficked women and children are sexually abused during the trafficking process, and trafficking often ends in forced prostitution.

Lawmakers from both the ruling and opposition parties in the national parliament have formed a parliamentary caucus called the Bangladesh Parliamentary Support Group on Prevention of HIV/AIDS and Trafficking in the year 2003 to launch a social movement against the deadly disease.

**Responses**

***Government***

Two ministries in Bangladesh, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the Ministry of Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE), carry out functions related to labor migration. The main functions of the MEWOE are to ensure welfare of the expatriate workers and enhancement of the overseas employment. As a newly created Ministry, it faces different impediments such as shortage of manpower, equipment and setting up of

offices. The function of the Ministry is primarily divided into two areas: (a) enhancement of overseas employment, and (b) solving the problems and welfare activities of expatriates. Tasks under these functions include protecting the rights of Bangladeshi migrants, liaising with associations of Bangladeshis abroad, receiving complaints from migrants and working towards redress, registration and monitoring the various agencies providing overseas employment services, maintaining statistics relating to migration, and increasing overseas employment, among others.

According to MEWOE, its future plans include using the welfare fund for poverty alleviation projects and to generate self-employment, establishing a range of service centers, developing housing and pension schemes for migrant workers, and introducing a photo passport.

BMET was established in 1976 with a view to expediting employment opportunities and to deploy workers, taking nominal fees as service charges. Up to 1984 BMET arranged overseas employment for a significant number of persons. To encourage the private sector the recruiting agents are allowed to send workers under regulatory control of BMET. BMET issues emigration clearance in favor of recruitment permission approved by the MEWOE. Beside this, BMET performs all functions relating to migration process, including the licensing of recruiting agents. Through 14 Technical Training Centers (TTC), one Institute of Marine Technology

## Women and Brokers: Case study of Hosne Ara

Hosne Ara worked in a garment factory, sharing her income with her family. She married an old man in her childhood, however, who had another wife. Every day the woman would shout at her. The situation became unbearable, and Hosne Ara decided to leave her husband's house. She returned to Dhaka and got a job in a garment factory. After work, she would go to the garments trade union office to attend classes every day. There she met Shathi, and a friendship developed between the two. Shathi encouraged Hosne Ara to go abroad; Shathi said that one of her relatives could help her get a good job overseas. Shathi told Hosne Ara that she could earn lot of money and it would cost only BDT30,000 to go abroad. Hosne Ara eventually agreed.

Shathi took Hosne Ara to her father, Abdul Hannan. Hannan helped her to meet an agent named Aulad. Aulad took BDT20,000 from her, plus BDT5,000 for a passport. Hosne Ara gave Aulad a total of BDT25,000 without any receipt. The only eye witness was Hannan. After a few days, Aulad asked for more money for a visa document, but Hosne Ara refused. As a result, Aulad told her that he would do nothing more for Hosne Ara. She asked for her money back, but Aulad refused. Hosne Ara went to Hannan to ask his help in getting her money back, but Hannan told her that Aulad was a fraud. Without a written contract, however, Hannan said he couldn't help her to get the money back.

and three Apprenticeship Training Offices, BMET conducts training in various employable trades.

Registration procedures were stepped up in 2003, as it became mandatory for all prospective migrant workers to register with BMET and BAIRA.<sup>10</sup>

### IGOs

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) Dhaka office continues to carry out a number of projects relating to labor migration and trafficking. Some of these projects include building capacity of MEWOE and BMET officials, particularly in regard to migrants' health; building the capacity of the Bangladeshi Women Migrant Association; building

capacity of law enforcement agencies, local officials and NGOs to combat trafficking; and an awareness-raising campaign on the dangers of trafficking. IOM also conducted a project in coordination with Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE) to raise awareness on safe migration. Other awareness raising campaigns include a public information campaign to fight trafficking, as well as a road march campaign to stop violence against women and girls. IOM also supports an English training center run by BMET to improve English skills.

### NGOs

The Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) has been functioning as a research, training and advocacy institution in Bangladesh since 1995. Its primary focus has been on refugees, migrants and the displaced. Over the years, the Unit has been involved in a range of activities to further its objectives.

RMMRU has conducted research on the working conditions of Bangladeshi factory workers in the Middle East, together with Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE). RMMRU also conducted a study on the use of wage earners' welfare fund.

In addition, RMMRU has held several training workshops and conferences. A three-day residential workshop on Social Science Research and Migration was organized from 19 – 21 October 2003, attended by members of the academe. RMMRU also co-organized the DFID-RMMRU Conference on Migration, Development and Pro-poor Policy Choices in Asia on 22-24 June 2003 at Dhaka. About 100 participants attended the conference, 80 of whom were from overseas. Papers on internal and international migration on India, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Vietnam were presented.

RMMRU held several seminars and talks, including a round-table discussion on Bangladesh's Inclusion in INS Category 4: Meeting the Challenge, 8 February 2003, a stakeholders' meeting on Migration, Development and Pro-poor Policy Choices, and a consultation on Media and Migration.

RMMRU also acts as the Secretariat of the South Asia Migration Resource Network (SAM-REn), which gathers and disseminates information,

TABLE 1: MIGRATION FLOW

Year	Name of Country*														Remittance USD (millions)
	K.S.A.	Kuwait	U.A.E	Qatar	Libya	Bahrain	Oman	Malaysia	S.Korea	S.Pore	Brunei	Jordan	Other	Misc.	
2000	144,618	594	34,034	1433	1,010	4,637	5,258	17,237	990	11,095	1,420		89		1,954.95
2001	137,248	5,341	16,252	223	450	4,371	4,561	4,921	1,561	9,615	2,958		1,192		2,071.03
2002	163,269	15,769	25,462	552	1,574	5,421	3,854	85	28	6,856	154	1,829	204		2,847.79
2003	162,131	26,722	37,246	94	2,855	7,482	4,029	28	3,771	5,304	980	2,128	211		3,177.15
2004	139,031	41,108	47,012	1,268	606	9,194	4,435	224	215	6,948	1,802	6,022	3,424	8,582	3,571.15

Source: BMET

\*Includes selected Asian countries only, see [http://www.bmet.org.bd/Flow\\_Migration.htm](http://www.bmet.org.bd/Flow_Migration.htm) for full table.

conducts research and advocacy on refugee, migration and displacement issues.

The Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladeshi Employees (WARBE) is an organization comprised and directly governed by the migrant community, including returned migrants, migrants’ family members, migrant workers and immigrants working in various countries throughout the world. As a grassroots community-based organization, WARBE has taken the lead to promote safe migration and migrants’ rights through awareness-raising activities, advocacy and campaigns. WARBE produces information and educational materials for advocacy, public awareness, lobbying for grassroots migrants’ education, and has strengthened its capacity to carry out region-wide campaigns. In particular, WARBE has actively worked for the ratification of the MWC. WARBE also organizes various trainings and counseling to raise the awareness of returning migrants, their family members, and prospective migrants about the migration process, problems and risks, as well as on migrants’ and human rights.

In addition, WARBE has undertaken various programs and activities through its project on Migrants Savings and Alternative Investment (MSAI) for Development of Migrant Community (DMC) at the grassroots level, organizing several meetings in MSAI in 2003. Organizational strengthening and future strategic planning or action planning were some of the major activities at those meetings.

In the year 2003, WARBE organized five rallies: in observance of May Day, Women’s Day, AIDS Day, International Migrants Day and World

Social Forum (WSF) Bangladesh. In December 2003, WARBE organized a one-month program of events, including a rally and human chain where participants joined hands, displaying banners demanding the immediate ratification of the MWC. They also submitted a statement with their demands to the Bangladesh government through the Director-General of BMET.

WARBE also organized several seminars and workshops, at which participants identified several problems and provided recommendations and a strategic road map for the development of the migrant community in Bangladesh.

On 29 October 2003 during the Regional Conference on “Migration, Development and Pro Poor Policy Choices” jointly organized by DFID and RMMRU at Dhaka, a migration group was launched to work towards a comprehensive migration approach. A comprehensive approach was viewed as essential in order to take into consideration all types of movement and develop conceptual clarity on the various forms of migration. The group was also intended to provide a platform through which all stakeholders could share their concepts as well as advocate on different policy issues. The group was initiated by Action Aid Bangladesh in collaboration with the IOM.

During the first meeting, participants discussed the need to form a migration group, and decided to regularly meet under the banner of “Bangladesh Migration and Development Forum (BMDF)”. Some of the member organizations of BMDF are ADB, Asia Foundation, BCCP, BOMSA, BDRCS, CWCS, INCIDIN Bangladesh, Jesh Foundation, Lokunyan, Ovibashi Sramik Kalayan Forum, Pop-



Discussion meeting during Migrants' Month. Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2003.

ulation Council, RMMRU, SHISHUK, and WARBE, among others. There are also various academicians and experts who participate in the Forum meetings on a regular basis. The Forum is an open, flexible and evolving group. It is expected that the Forum would be able to contribute towards developing a new paradigm for migration management in Bangladesh. The BMDF has identified three broad objectives: to bring clarity of concepts on migration and migration related issues; to share and disseminate knowledge and best practices; and to provide a platform for policy advocacy.

In addition, it was reported that two NGOs, one in India and one in Bangladesh, have agreed to provide free legal aid to each other's nationals. The Bangladesh Legal Aid Services Trust will give legal aid to Indians in Bangladesh, while Legal Aid Services in West Bengal will provide aid to Bangladeshis there.<sup>11</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>"Recruiters warned against sending workers to Iraq," *The Daily Star*, 16 June 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>2</sup>"Curbs on sending female workers abroad relaxed," *Gulf News*, 12 April 2003, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>3</sup>"Women to soon take security jobs abroad," *The Daily Star*, 28 March 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>4</sup>"Manpower export to Malaysia gets delayed," *The Daily Star*, 5 March 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>5</sup>"Deported workers to go back to Korea on fresh work permit," *The Daily Star*, 2 December 2003, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>6</sup>"Japan to recruit Bangladeshis," *The Daily Star*, 4 April 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.



Photo courtesy of WARBE

**World AIDS Day discussion meeting. Dhaka, Bangladesh, December 2003.**

<sup>7</sup>“Kidnapping, trafficking on the rise,” *Independent-Bangladesh*, 4 November 2003, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>8</sup>“No let up in human trafficking in 6 dists.,” *The Independent*, 16 July 2003, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>9</sup>“Countertrafficking training for law enforcement agencies,” IOM Press Briefing Notes, 4 May 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>10</sup>“Registration of overseas job seekers mandatory from tomorrow,” *The Daily Star*, 15 June 2004, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

<sup>11</sup>“Free legal aid for Bangladeshis in India,” *The Daily Star*, 2 December 2003, cited by Scalabrini *Asian Migration News*.

