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In coffins, from faraway lands

Migrant worker deaths see a disturbing rise

MD ABBAS

Kazi Salauddin, a 44-year-old man from Cumilla, migrated to Saudi Arabia in October 2022, hoping to secure a bright future for his family. But barely a year later, Salauddin, the father of two daughters and a son, died suddenly.

His death certificate, issued by the Saudi authorities, mentioned heart attack as the cause of death. But his family finds this hard to believe as the middle-aged man had no history of heart-related problems or any other ailments.

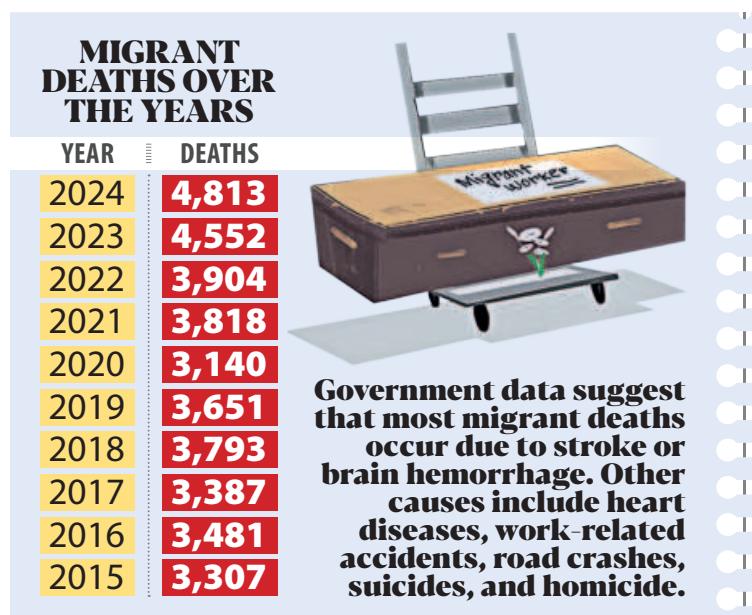
His wife, Yasmin Begum, said she was awaiting an explanation for the sudden death of her husband, whose body was brought home in June last year.

"I want to know why my husband, who was in good health, died suddenly. I went from one office to another of relevant government agencies, but I'm yet to get an answer. If I could know the real cause of his death, it would at least ease my pain a little," she told The Daily Star.

Salauddin was among the 4,813 migrant workers whose bodies were brought home last year, according to data of the Wage Earners' Welfare Board under the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry.

Statistics show a steady rise in deaths of migrant workers since 2020. The number rose to 4,813 last year from 4,552 in 2023, which was 3,904 in 2022; 3,818 in 2021; and 3,140 in 2020.

On average, 400 bodies arrived each month, equating to about 13 per



day. In January this year, 447 bodies were brought home.

Since 1993, bodies of at least 57,216 migrant workers have been repatriated to Bangladesh. Most deaths occurred in Middle Eastern countries, with Saudi Arabia topping the list, followed by Malaysia, the UAE, Oman and Kuwait.

Of the 4,813 migrant deaths last year, 1,626 occurred in Saudi Arabia that employs around 30 lakh Bangladeshi expatriates. In 2023, at least 1,241 migrant workers died in the Kingdom.

Officials at the Welfare Board acknowledge that many more workers were buried on foreign soil. Some families choose not to bring home the bodies of their loved ones, allowing Bangladeshi embassies to arrange burials abroad.

When a body is repatriated, the Welfare Board provides Tk 35,000 to the family of the deceased worker for burial and transportation.

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Above the parliament building on Pahela Baishakh, a drone show illuminated the night sky, recreating the iconic moment of Mir Mugdho -- a martyr of the July uprising -- distributing water to fellow protesters, just moments before he was fatally shot. This was part of a dozen motifs that also portrayed the heroism of Abu Sayed and the stirring role of women in the movement.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

BNP meets CA today to press for election roadmap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At its meeting with the chief adviser, the BNP will demand a specific roadmap to the election.

The party will submit a written statement to Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, which would say that unless a roadmap was announced, the BNP would begin street protests, insiders said after a BNP standing committee meeting last night.

If a roadmap mentioning specific time for the polls is announced, the party will begin preparing for the election, they added.

The party leaders will urge the CA to make sure that reforms are done by June.

The BNP has already outlined a series of peaceful programmes for the next three months. These programmes are likely to be rallies, marches, and processions, beginning at the grassroots.

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Soybean, palm oil prices spike

Bottled soybean oil now Tk 14 more per litre

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government raised the retail prices of soybean and palm oil yesterday amid concerns that this would raise the cost of living.

The price of each litre of bottled soybean oil is now Tk 189, a Tk 14 increase, and non-bottled soybean and palm oil is Tk 169, a Tk 12 increase.

Inflation increased slightly in March, driven by a rise in non-food prices. However, it had declined in the three previous months.

Overall inflation stood at 9.35 percent in March, up from 9.32 percent in February, according to data released by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics.

Following a meeting with oil refiners yesterday, Commerce Adviser Sheikh Bashir Uddin admitted that the new oil prices would pose challenges for consumers.

He added that the rise in soybean oil prices was temporary.

The new prices correspond to the international market rates, he said.

According to World Bank data, the price of soybean oil was \$1,101 per tonne in December last year and \$1,040 in January this year in the international market.

Although it slightly increased in February, it fell again in March to \$1,005 per tonne.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



US officials arrive to discuss polls, reforms, tariffs

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka and Washington will discuss tariffs, the reforms undertaken by the interim government, democratic transition, and the Rohingya and Myanmar crises as two high officials of the US begin their engagement with Bangladesh officials and political actors today.

This is the first official visit by the US officials under the Trump administration, which is making drastic policy changes in both trade and diplomatic fronts that have caught global economies off guard.

Nicole Chulick, deputy assistant secretary at the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs (SCA), arrived in Dhaka yesterday, while Andrew R Herrup, deputy assistant secretary at the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, is scheduled to arrive today. The Daily Star has learnt from people involved with the proceedings.

US Chargé d'Affaires to Myanmar Susan Stevenson will accompany Herrup during his visit to Bangladesh, highlighting the importance of the Myanmar crisis.

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A teen breaks down in tears as he embraces his mother after returning from Myanmar, where he had been detained along with 19 others while attempting to reach Malaysia. The photo was taken at port city's Circuit House yesterday.



How to mitigate the impact of Trump's tariffs

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A vital chapter in the fight for justice

P9



Israel makes new Gaza truce proposal

P7

Fitch flags risk to Bangladesh after Trump tariffs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh is among several Asia-Pacific economies at risk of credit pressure from escalating US tariffs, Fitch Ratings warned yesterday, as trade tensions continue to rattle global markets.

In a report released from its Hong Kong office, the rating agency said the US tariff hikes will weigh on the credit profiles of many sovereigns in the region, particularly those

with high external debt and limited foreign exchange reserves.

Bangladesh (B+/Stable), along with Vietnam and Sri Lanka, was singled out as having "relatively low external buffers". These countries may come under further strain if export earnings decline and central banks are forced to defend their currencies, according to Fitch.

For these nations, that risk is "credit negative".

"Foreign-exchange reserves could

shrink if authorities intervene to support their currencies in the face of market pressure to depreciate following the tariff increases," Fitch said.

Fitch said those nations' vulnerability stems from their narrow external buffers and the potential impact of a stronger US dollar, which could raise the cost of servicing foreign-currency debt. While a weaker exchange rate could

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

কলোরেকটাল সার্জারির ৩০ বছর

(১৯৯৫-২০২৫)



পাইলস, ফিস্টুলা, ফিশার, লেজার অপারেশন, ল্যাপারোক্ষিপি, কলোরেকটাল ক্যাপার, কোলনিক পলিপ, কোলনক্ষপি, কোষ্টকাঠিন্য, আইবিএস, রক্ত আমাশয় চিকিৎসায় নিবেদিত।



ডাঃ আসিফ আলমাস হক

এমবিবিএস (এসএসএমসি), এফসিপিএস (সার্জারি), এফসিপিএস (কলোরেকটাল সার্জারি) এফআরসিএস (ইংলান্ড), এফএসিএস (যুক্তরাষ্ট্র), এফএসিএসআরএস (যুক্তরাষ্ট্র), কনসালট্যান্ট ল্যাপারোক্ষপি, লেজার ও কলোরেকটাল সার্জন

ডাঃ এ. কে. এম. ফজলুল হক

এমবিবিএস, এফসিপিএস, এফআইসিএস
ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ক্লিনিক (সিংগাপুর)
কেন্দ্রীয় কলোরেকটাল সার্জারি বিভাগ, প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান (অব:), কলোরেকটাল সার্জারি বিভাগ, বাংলাদেশ মেডিকেল ইউনিভার্সিটি।

ডাঃ সাকিব সারওয়াত হক

এমবি�বিএস, এফসিপিএস(সার্জারি), এমআরসিএস (ডিনবরা), কনসালট্যান্ট সার্জন

বাংলাদেশের প্রথম আন্তর্জাতিক মানের কলোরেকটাল হসপিটাল

ডাঃ ফজলুল হক কলোরেকটাল হসপিটাল লি:

৭২৬/এ, সাত-মসজিদ রোড, (ঈদগাহ মসজিদের বিপরীতে), ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা।
০১৬৪৬৭১০৭২০, ০১৫৫-৬৯৭১৭৩-৬, ০২ ৮১০২৩১৫৫, ০২ ৮১০২৩১৬৮