



LIFE IN RAIN-SOAKED DHAKA

Despite relentless downpours throughout the day yesterday, life in the capital moved on. Dhaka residents braved the rain and the city's notorious waterlogging, undeterred in their daily routines. Raincoats and umbrellas became essential for schoolchildren, commuters, and even protesters. The persistent rainfall was triggered by a deep depression over the Bay of Bengal, affecting several districts.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN, PRABIR DAS, RASHED SHUMON, FIROZ AHMED

Secretariat staff observe one-hour work abstention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employees from various ministries at the Secretariat observed a one-hour work abstention yesterday morning, in protest against the newly issued Government Service (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025.

The protest, held from 10:00am to 11:00am, was organised by the Bangladesh Secretariat Officers and Employees Unity Forum.

The forum on Wednesday announced a fresh round of protests, declaring a daily one-hour work stoppage beginning yesterday until the ordinance is withdrawn.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Nazrul Islam, a leader of the unity forum, said, "We believe in peaceful protest. We have observed a one-hour work abstention today [yesterday], demanding the repeal of the controversial ordinance. This programme will continue."

The government issued and enforced the Public Service (Amendment) Ordinance, 2025, on Sunday evening. The draft amendment to the Public Service Act, 2018, was approved by the interim government's advisory council on May 22.

Secretariat employees have been staging

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PLIGHT OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Coming home in coffins

Grief, questions haunt families

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Balram's mother left for Lebanon in search of a better life. Nur Mohammad's sister made the same journey with a lot of hope to Jordan. Both returned in coffins.

Their families still do not know why.

The official medical certificates from the destination countries say the same thing -- suicide.

But their loved ones had left healthy and full of purpose. To the families, the explanation doesn't make sense -- and they are not alone.

According to a 2022 study by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), nearly half -- 48 percent -- of the families of deceased migrant workers do not believe the causes of death listed on the certificates.

Their doubts stem from what they saw: injury marks on the bodies, disturbing phone calls describing abuse, and signs of physical and psychological torture.

The study shows that 31 percent of repatriated bodies of migrant workers died due to accidents, suicides, or suspected homicides.

In 2024 alone, 4,813 bodies of Bangladeshi migrants were brought back home. Among them, 94.4% were men and 3.6% were women.

These findings were shared at a national dialogue titled "Dignity and Honour for Deceased Migrant Workers", held at a hotel in the capital.

The event, which was jointly organised by the National Human

48% of families reject official causes of deaths

Over 4,800 bodies returned in 2024

Families report injury marks, missing organs, signs of abuse

National dialogue calls for dignity, answers, reforms

Rights Commission (NHRC) and RMMRU, gave bereaved families a rare chance to be heard. "We are losing our workers in silence. Their deaths deserve answers, as well as dignity," said Prof Tasneem Siddiqui, executive director of RMMRU, who also shared firsthand testimonies from families.

NHRC Secretary Shebastian Rema called migrant deaths "especially painful," urging that the issues be raised in labour-receiving countries and international forums.

"These deaths are not just statistics. They are stories of

dreams being cut short," he said, proposing that death-related protocols be included in future bilateral agreements.

Neyamat Ullah Bhuiyan, senior secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, stressed the need for inter-ministerial coordination to ensure dignified handling of bodies.

"While we cannot control the global context, we can at least act responsibly at home," he said.

Former Secretary Selim Reza acknowledged progress in reducing repatriation delays but stressed the need for more awareness to prevent avoidable deaths -- such as those caused by improper road crossing.

Masud Rana, director at BMET, highlighted the importance of including families of deceased migrants in reintegration programmes like the RAISE project, to help them rebuild their lives.

ATM Abdur Rouf Mondol from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Bangladeshi missions abroad will soon be authorised to use the ministry's own budget for repatriation if funding from the Wage Earners' Welfare Board is unavailable.

He also addressed past indignities -- such as coffins being treated as cargo and families waiting for hours without a place to sit -- and noted that designated spaces have now been established for storing bodies and comforting families.

Still, harrowing incidents continue to emerge.

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Prof Anowara sent to jail over attempted murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Professor SM Anowara Begum, a freedom fighter and retired political science teacher at Jagannath University (JnU), was sent to jail yesterday in an attempted murder case after her bail plea was rejected.

The case was filed over an attack on protesters during the anti-discrimination student movement on July 19 last year.

According to the case, she is 69 years old.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mostafizur Rahman passed the order after AKM Mahmudul Kabir, sub-inspector of Sutrapur Police Station and investigation officer in the case, produced her before the court and sought her detention until the investigation is complete.

In the forwarding report, the investigation officer said that Anowara is named in the FIR, and preliminary findings suggest her involvement in the incident. He argued that granting her bail could result in her fleeing.

Defence lawyers, however, appealed for bail citing her age and her role in the Liberation War.

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Japan to recruit 1,00,000 workers from Bangladesh

Two MoUs signed with BMET; Prof Yunus urges Japanese companies to enhance support

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Japanese authorities and businesses have announced plans to recruit at least 1,00,000 skilled workers from Bangladesh over the next five years to address Japan's growing worker shortage.

"In the coming five years, we are prepared to welcome more than 1,00,000 Bangladeshi workers," said Mikio Kesagayama, chairman of Japan's National Business Support Combined Cooperatives (NBCC), a federation of over 65 companies.

He was speaking at the "Bangladesh Seminar on Human Resources" organised by the Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus also attended the seminar after participating in the Nikkei Asia Forum.

"This is the most exciting and inspiring day for me. This will open the door for Bangladeshis not only to work but also to know Japan," he said.

Prof Yunus witnessed the signing of two MoUs -- one between Bangladesh's Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and Kaicom Dream Street, a Japan-Bangladesh joint venture; the other between BMET, Japan's NBCC, and the Japan Bangla Bridge Recruiting Agency (JBBRA).



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Decentralise power to prevent authoritarianism

Speakers tell Shujan roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concentrating power in the hands of a single person has long been a reality in Bangladesh, weakening state institutions through corruption and abuse of power, speakers said at a roundtable yesterday.

They emphasised that one of the key goals of the July uprising was to push for reforms to prevent authoritarian rule, and no reform will be effective unless the spirit of anti-discrimination movements is upheld.

The prime minister is supposed to be the head of the executive branch, while the parliament is the legislative branch. When the same person leads both, it violates the theory of separation of powers.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, Shujan Secretary

The event, titled "Citizen Charter and Civic Expectations", was organised by Sushashoner Jonno Nagorik (Shujan) at the CIRDAP Auditorium in the capital.

At the discussion, Prof Ali Riaz, co-chair of the National Consensus Commission, said any constitutional amendment must reflect public opinion and aspirations, as the constitution is a social contract between the state and its citizens.

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Police issue guidelines ahead of Eid

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Police have issued a set of safety guidelines for citizens to ensure a safe and smooth celebration of the upcoming festival of Eid-ul-Azha.

In a press release issued yesterday, police advised citizens -- especially those traveling home during the holidays -- to plan their journeys with ample time to avoid last-minute rush at train stations, and bus, launch and ferry terminals.

Travelers have been urged to avoid risky travel practices, such as riding on rooftops of buses, trains, launches, steamers or traveling on trucks, pickups or other cargo vehicles.

Use of unsafe vehicles such as Nosimon, Korimon and Bhotbhoti on highways has also been discouraged.

Passengers are advised not to pressure drivers into speeding. To ensure that vehicles are operated by professional, healthy and well-rested drivers

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FOUR MURDERS IN CITY

Cops say personal grievances led to the killings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least four people, including a married couple, were killed in separate incidents in the capital on Wednesday.

Police yesterday found that the motives behind the murders were personal.

In Kamalapur, police recovered the body of a woman from a hotel.

The man who allegedly strangled her to death had checked in using the name of the victim's husband, according to the victim's family.

The suspect, identified as Rubel, a fruit seller from Old Dhaka, has been on the run since the incident.

Police are trying to arrest him, Shahriar Ali, deputy commissioner of Motijheel Division, told The Daily Star yesterday.

On Wednesday, police recovered the body of Sumi Rani Roy, 36, a resident of Dinajpur, from a hotel room in Kamalapur. Officers suspect she was suffocated to death.

"Rubel used my name while checking into the hotel," said Manik Chandra Roy, Sumi's husband. He said he was in Dinajpur at the time.

Family members said Sumi met Rubel on TikTok about a year ago. She left for Dhaka last Friday, telling her family she would stay at her sister's home in Keraniganj.

"She called me Tuesday and said she came to Dhaka

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PHOTO: STAR

Signs of a clash visible inside a ward at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital in Dhaka yesterday. *Inset*, the facility remained padlocked as the authorities suspended all medical services following 'tripartite clashes' on Wednesday, when a group of injured July protesters receiving treatment attacked staff members, sparking confrontations with other patients and their attendants.

