

29 More Bangladeshis repatriated from US over illegal immigration

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: As part of an ongoing crackdown on undocumented migrants, the United States has deported 29 more Bangladeshi nationals. The returnees arrived at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 10:45am on Saturday, February 28, aboard a special chartered flight arranged by US authorities, read a press release.

Upon arrival, the returnees were received with assistance from the Expatriates' Welfare Desk and Aviation Security (AVSEC). The BRAC Migration Programme provided emergency support and transportation to help them return to their respective homes.

With this latest batch, the total number of Bangladeshis deported from the United States since the beginning of 2025 has risen to 322. The previous repatriation took place on January 20, when 36 Bangladeshis

were sent back.

Of the 29 returnees, 14 are from Noakhali, seven from Dhaka, two from Cumilla, three from Munshiganj, and one each from Feni, Moulvibazar, Sylhet, and Madaripur.

Route Through Brazil and Mexico

According to officials and returnees, most of them initially traveled legally to Brazil after obtaining clearance from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment, and Training (BMET). From Brazil, they attempted to enter the United States irregularly via Mexico, often through human traffickers.

The cost of the journey reportedly ranged between Tk 4.5 million and Tk 5 million per person, while some spent as much as Tk 6–7 million. After entering the US, many applied for political asylum. However, following lengthy legal proceedings, their applications were rejected, prompting US authorities to order their deportation.

One returnee from Noakhali, Saiful Islam, said he traveled to Brazil in 2024 with BMET clearance and was later arrested while attempting to cross into the United States through Mexico with the help of brokers.

Another deportee, Diyad Chowdhury, said he spent Tk 2.2 million to travel to Brazil in late 2024 and later entered the United States via Mexico. He was detained for nearly a year before being deported.

Abdul Sabur from Barlekha upazila in Moulvibazar said he went to Brazil on a visit visa on October 28, 2023, spending Tk 6.4 million. He reached the United States on December 11, 2024, after traveling through several countries. His asylum application was later rejected.

Rising Trend

Data show that since the beginning of 2025, a total of 1,410 Bangladeshis have traveled to Brazil with BMET clearance, including 990 from Noakhali alone. Authorities suspect that a significant number of them attempted to use Brazil as a transit point to enter the United States via Mexico.

The deportations have intensified following the return of Donald Trump to the presidency for a second term, with stricter enforcement measures

against undocumented migrants.

Previously, 31 Bangladeshis were repatriated on December 8 last year, 39 on November 28 via chartered flight, and 42 on June 8 on another chartered flight. Additionally, between March 6 and April 21 this year, at least 34 Bangladeshis were sent back on multiple flights.

Under US law, undocumented migrants can be deported following court rulings or administrative orders. If asylum applications fail, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arranges repatriation. Recently, the use of chartered and military flights for deportation has increased as the process has been expedited.

Shariful Hasan, Associate Director (Migration and Youth Platform) at BRAC, said the trend of Bangladeshis legally traveling to Brazil with BMET clearance and then attempting to reach the United States through irregular channels is rising significantly.

He stressed the need to examine whether those granted approval to work in Brazil were genuinely seeking employment there or using it as a transit route to the United States. Hasan called for greater oversight and accountability in the approval process and urged the government to exercise caution before granting further permissions for workers to travel to Brazil.

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