

Bangladesh flags migrant worker exploitation at Abu Dhabi Dialogue 2026

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Dhaka: Bangladesh has raised concerns over the continued exploitation and rights violations faced by migrant workers, calling for stronger joint action by labor-sending and destination countries at the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) 2026.

Adviser to the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Dr. Asif Nazrul represented Bangladesh at the forum and addressed the ministerial meeting during the opening session of the second day, according to a press release published on February 1.

In his speech, the adviser described the Abu Dhabi Dialogue as a trusted and effective platform for promoting safe, orderly, and ethical labor migration. While highlighting Bangladesh's role as one of the world's largest labor-sending countries, he noted that migrant workers continue to face exploitation despite their significant contributions to both origin

and destination economies.

“Bangladeshi expatriates contribute substantially to national development through remittances and to the economic growth of host countries. Yet, some workers still experience exploitation and violations of rights,” Dr. Nazrul said, stressing that addressing these challenges is a shared responsibility of both sending and receiving nations.

He underscored the need for ethical recruitment practices, decent working conditions, and the protection of migrant workers’ dignity, calling for closer cooperation among ADD member states to eliminate abusive practices in labor migration.

The adviser also highlighted recent government initiatives aimed at protecting migrant workers, including the launch of a fully digital overseas employment portal, strengthened pre-departure support, enhanced overseas welfare services, upgraded skills training aligned with international standards, and stricter enforcement against fraudulent recruitment agencies.

On the sidelines of the dialogue, Dr. Nazrul held a bilateral meeting with UAE Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation Dr. Abdulrahman Abdulmanan Al Awar, during which he expressed gratitude for the UAE’s amnesty granted to 212 convicted Bangladeshi expatriates.

During the meeting, the adviser raised concerns over declining labor inflows from Bangladesh due to visa restrictions and discussed visa-related difficulties faced by Bangladeshi workers currently residing in the UAE. He sought cooperation to resolve complications related to family, seafarer, and transfer visas.

Earlier, on January 31, Dr. Nazrul also held separate meetings with Pakistan’s Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain and the Philippines’ Department of Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Leo Cacdac, focusing on ethical recruitment, skill development, migrant welfare, and bilateral cooperation.

The 8th Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue was inaugurated on January 31 at the InterContinental Dubai Festival City, with participation from representatives of 17 member states, senior officials, and international organizations. Representatives from the OIC Labour Centre joined the dialogue for the first time this year.

Bangladesh reiterated its commitment to safeguarding migrant workers through ethical recruitment, rights protection, skill recognition, and stronger collaboration with destination countries.

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