

Foreign jobs of Bangladeshis fall 21pc in January

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Dhaka: Overseas employment opportunities for Bangladeshi workers saw a notable slowdown in January 2026, with the number of outbound workers dropping by just over 21 percent from the previous month, according to official statistics.

Data from the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) show that 94,189 Bangladeshis went abroad for work in January, down from 119,389 in December 2025. The month-on-month decline amounts to 25,200 workers, representing a fall of about 21.1 percent.

Officials and industry insiders said the sharp contrast between the two months largely reflects seasonal factors. December's figure was boosted by year-end processing of pending applications and clearances, while January marked a return to more typical migration levels.

Saudi Arabia continued to dominate as the leading destination for

Bangladeshi migrant workers despite the decline. The number of workers heading to the Kingdom fell from 83,876 in December to 64,567 in January.

Other major labor destinations also reported lower intakes. Migration to Qatar dropped to 5,904 in January from 7,161 a month earlier, while Singapore received 5,283 workers, down from 5,856 in December.

The Maldives saw a sharper contraction, with arrivals of Bangladeshi workers falling from 4,320 in December to 2,934 in January. Similar downward trends were observed in Kuwait, Cambodia, Jordan, Iraq and several other destinations.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE), however, stood out as an exception. While it received 1,002 Bangladeshi workers in December, the figure rose to 1,441 in January, making it one of the few markets to record growth during the period.

A notable development in January was the entry of Portugal into the list of top ten destinations, as the European country recruited 732 Bangladeshi workers during the month.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Bangladesh used to send around 60,000 to 70,000 workers overseas each month. In recent years, however, monthly deployment has frequently hovered close to the 100,000 mark.

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