

Protest

24

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Bangladesh Tactical: Rickshaw drivers to hold nationwide demonstrations, including in Dhaka, on June 25-27; maintain vigilance

Please be advised:

- Demonstrations led by the Rickshaw-van Sramik Union, a workers' union representing rickshaw drivers, are scheduled to be held across the country on June 25-27, including in Dhaka.
- Per local sources, the union has called for gatherings outside sub-district police stations across the country on June 25 while organizers have called for district-level protests on June 26.
- On June 27, a march towards the Ministry of Home Affairs in Dhaka will be held.
- The protests seek to demand the withdrawal of the government-imposed ban on battery-powered rickshaws, vans, and easy bikes, which was announced on June 20
- On June 23, large-scale rallies were held outside Dhaka's National Press Club by multiple groups, including the Rickshaw-van Sramik Union, to demand the withdrawal of the ban.



Assessments:

1. Based on the union's mobilizing capabilities, turnout is expected to be most pronounced in Dhaka's June 27 rally, with participation levels potentially reaching up to the high hundreds. Participation levels at the district and sub-district level events may range from high dozens to low hundreds. Turnouts may be further amplified by the sustained grievances over the ongoing COVID-19-related restrictions on public transportation. Further, support from other unions and opposition parties may boost participation.
2. As such, enhanced security measures are likely to be enforced in the vicinity of such gatherings, particularly near the Ministry of Home Affairs building. Although the June 23 rally transpired peacefully, given the heightened sensitivity around the issue and the anti-government stance, clashes between security personnel and protesters may occur should the latter attempt to forcibly disperse the gatherings. There is also a high potential for mass arrests if the event turns unruly. Travel disruptions are expected in and around Dhaka on June 27.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in Bangladesh on June 25-27 are advised to maintain vigilance due to the slated protests and the potential for unrest.