

Unicef on child labour

'Bangladesh caught between need & good intentions'

Bangladesh is an example of the potential conflict between good intentions and the poverty-driven need for children to work, without viable alternatives, reports UNB.

United Nations Children Fund (Unicef) portrays this helpless situation pertaining to the child labour issue in its annual report of 1995 made available to the media yesterday.

The official figure of children working in various sectors of the economy is 5.7 million. But Unicef estimates the number of 10 to 14-year-old ranges from 5.7 million to almost three times.

The Unicef report referred to a 1994 survey in garment industry of Asian-American Free Labour Institute (AAFLI) that found children, like adult workers, were frequently locked in the factories, working 10 to 14 hours days with a half day off on Friday.

However, the export garment industry, which employs as many as 55,000 child workers and exported US dollar 750 million worth of clothing to the United States in 1993, is especially vulnerable to outside pressure.

In 1993, fearing US legislation to ban import of garments made with child labour, employers dismissed about 75 per cent of their child workers, causing great financial hardship to the children and their families.

A Unicef/ILO (International Labour Organisation) study later found many of the children "wound up in situations far worse than those they had left," the report said.

The UN body, however, expressed satisfaction over the agreement they signed with Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and ILO early last month.

Under the agreement, to be fully implemented from November this year, all the underaged children working in the readymade garment sector would be placed in education programmes.

Ershad's appeals: Next hearing on Aug 27

The hearing on two appeals by deposed president Hussain Mohammad Ershad against the judgements by the Special Judges Court, Dhaka, in two corruption cases was adjourned till August 27, reports BSS.

Gen Ershad filed appeals against both the judgements of the Special Judges Court, Dhaka, before the High Court division of the Supreme Court.

Rafique

Constitution says: An election to fill the seat of a member of Parliament shall be held within ninety days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

The BNP leader maintained that during the period of applying that constitutional provision, those two special rights of the House would not be effective, but for that, the majority party cannot lose its right to rule.

"If Awami League's contention is considered, then the minority will prevail upon the majority," he said asking, "what type of democracy would that be?"

Rejecting AL's demand for dissolving the Parliament, the BNP leader said, "we cannot lose our constitutional right for their fault — the Opposition MPs were given five years' mandate by the electorate, but they have violated that."

Barrister Rafique pointed out that the President has no constitutional power to dissolve the parliament without the advice of the Prime Minister.

"Inviting the President to dissolve the Parliament is a total disregard to our parliamentary democracy," said Rafique quoting Article 48 (3) of the Constitution where President's function has been clearly defined.

Article 48 (3) says: In the exercise of all his functions, save only that of appointing the Prime Minister pursuant to clause (3) of Article 56 and the Chief Justice pursuant to clause (1) of Article 95, the President shall act in accordance with the advice of the Prime Minister.

Street urchins

When they discovered that the attackers were children, they chased them and arrested caught an eight-year-old boy, Sayeed. Others fled away.

Sayed was taken to the police where he confessed that he was involved with a pick-pocket group in the area. Others in his group also belonged to the pick-pocket ring. However, Sayeed could not explain to the police why the group had attacked the market.

A case was filed with the town police in this connection.

Rayerbazar incident

24, Abdus Salam, 22, and Khokon, 25, arrested Sunday night were taken on a 2-day police remand.

A group of about 30 armed men opened fire and hurled several crackers at the police patrol when Havilder Abul Kashem, along with a constable from the Rayerbazar outpost, picked up Jahangir alias Kala Jahangir from the area. The armed gang snatched Jahangir from police.

Police said, an organised gang, which includes those arrested was involved in extortion and other criminal activities in Mohammadpur, Dhanmondi and Lalbagh areas.

Father, step mother arrested for killing baby

The police arrested one Idris Ali and his second wife for allegedly killing the one and a half-year-old child of the first wife here today.

Monwara Begum of New Hajiganj under Fatullah thana at around 11.15 am filed a case with the police accusing her husband Idris Ali and his second wife, Sajeda Begum, of killing her baby — Shanta — earlier today. Idris Ali lives with his wives in the same house.

Dhaka Board

The board will conduct results for their respective examination centres or schools.

The board said the results of the current year's SSC examinations will not be available at the Education Board, Education Ministry or newspaper offices.

Meanwhile, the results of the Rajshahi and Comilla boards will be published simultaneously from all examination centres at 10 am tomorrow.

BDR-BSF flag meet held

The meeting between the BDR and the BSF was held at the Jakiganj thana headquarters today.

Border problems were discussed in the sector-commander level meeting held at the Jakiganj Dak Bungalow, an official source informed.

Colonel Md Nurul Islam sector-commander, Sylhet, led the 6-member team of BDR while S B Katati, deputy inspector-general of BSF, Cachhar and Mizoram led the 6-member BSF team.

Protest in London against Golam Azam's visit

The United Kingdom chapter of Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee held a meeting at Altar Ali Park in East London on Sunday protesting the visit of Golam Azam to the UK, reports UNB.

Several hundred Nirmul activists from different cities attended the meeting, according to a fax message reached here yesterday.

Later, they also brought out a procession which marched on the streets of the British capital.

Meanwhile, acting convener of Nirmul Committee Shahriar Kabir and convener of Jatiya Samannaya Committee Hasan Imam in separate statements congratulated them for demonstrating against the visit of Golam Azam in London.

BCL leader

shot at Sheikh Mohammad Firoz in his left leg at about 2:30 pm when he was chatting with his friends in the TSC compound.

Firoz is a masters final year student of Economics. Four rounds of gunshot were fired during the incident.

Firoz, a BCL central committee member, was known as a supporter of the 'Barisal group'. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital and then taken to the Pangu Hospital.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over a high-level meeting that reviewed the post-flood rehabilitation programme at the International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

Bosnian troops

Conflict, said today he had invited the Serbian and Croatian presidents to meet in Moscow.

Interfax news agency quoted Yeltsin as telling reporters at the Kremlin that talks were already underway for Croatia's Franjo Tudjman and Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic to meet him in the Russian capital.

Croatian Defence Minister Gokko Susak told Croatian radio: "The Serbs in the area (south of Zagreb and on the way to Bosnia) have refused to surrender."

The Serbs attempted to trick us, taking heavy weapons into Bosnia," he said.

The United Nations had earlier announced the accord, negotiated early today, for the surrender and withdrawal of the rebel Serb soldiers. Under the agreement, the Serbs were to hand in their heavy weapons to sites monitored by the United Nations.

A UN official said the Croatian defence ministry informed the United Nations at midday that the deal negotiated early today for the Serbs to surrender, hand over their heavy weapons and join the flow of civilian refugees out of the area "is no longer valid."

Young man found in Abahani ground dies in hospital

The young man, rescued by police from Abahani ground in an unconscious state Sunday, died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital at about 11:30 pm yesterday.

Medical sources said, the youth, whose identity could not be ascertained, died from poisoning.

Eyewitnesses said Sunday the youth was left on the Abahani ground by some youths who came there in an auto-rickshaw at around 8:30 pm.

The youth struggled hard for breath but bubbles came out of his mouth. He was wearing jeans trousers and a full-sleeve T-shirt.

Suicide

A housewife who allegedly took poison died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

The housewife, Lina Akhter, 25, took poison at her residence at Mirbagh in the morning, it was alleged. She was admitted to the DMCH immediately. Lina died at about 2:30 pm.

Source alleged that Lina committed suicide following a family feud.

Manzur murder

Chittagong District and Sessions Judge's court received the ministry's 'order copy' this morning. The copy was sent from Dhaka by a special messenger.

Mentionably, the Chittagong Sessions Judge's court was scheduled to hear the 'cognizance matter' of the case today. The Sessions Judge's court here took up the case on July 24 and fixed August 7 for hearing the 'cognizance matter'.

Deposed president H M Ershad is the main accused in the case. Four retired army officers have also been chargesheeted in the case.

UNB adds: Meanwhile, Jatiya Party brought out a procession in the port city and held a rally at the court premises in the morning protesting the government decision to shift the case from Chittagong to Dhaka.

It held a press conference at the Panchlaish residence of city JP president and former city mayor Mahmudul Islam Chowdhury in the evening.

Chowdhury read out a written statement at the press conference terming the shifting of the case as a "bad example for justice."

Post-flood rehabilitation

Besides, the meeting was informed that measures have been taken to import seedlings of wheat and maize from abroad.

It was further informed that flood water had already receded from the affected areas and that all the rivers were flowing normally.

For ensuring employment of the affected poor people, the meeting was informed that the Test Relief works were going on in full-swing throughout the country.

In the flood affected areas, the OMS (Open Market Sale) programme had already been launched and it would be spread in other parts of the country soon.

Besides, the meeting was told that the government had decided to sanction about 50 metric tons of wheat under the VGD programme. Of the amount, 25 MT had already been allocated and the VGD programme is expected to start within a few days.

The Food for Works Programme will also begin soon and government allocated Tk 700 crore for this purpose.

In addition, Tk 500 crore has been allocated for the purpose of maintenance and repair works in sectors like road communication, health, education, flood control, irrigation, food and agriculture.

Dissolve 'unrepresentative' parliament: LDF

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) yesterday demanded immediate dissolution of 'unrepresentative' Parliament and general elections under a caretaker government to rid the nation of the 'grave' political crisis, reports UNB.

At this stage, the nation would not accept any elections other than general vote, leaders of the combine said at a press conference, rejecting the reported government move towards byelections in the opposition-vacated seats.

"It will be a great blunder for the government to go ahead with byelections instead of finding a reasonable solution to the current political crisis," said the LDF statement at the news conference.

"Holding such byelections only a few months before general elections will be an exercise in futility devoid of reality," said the alliance.

The Left Front will observe Demand Day on August 20 by holding meetings, processions and demonstrations as part of its ongoing agitation for realising its demands.

Nayeem Jahangir read out the statement and Rashed Khan Menon, Shahidullah Chowdhury, Mojahidul Islam Selim, among others, replied to questions at the press conference at the Shaheed Taher Auditorium. It was also attended by Moshed Ali, Hasanul Haq Inu, A F M Mahbubul Haq and Dilip Bana.

20 injured as BNP, JP clash in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Aug 7: At least 20 people were injured, two seriously, in a series of clashes between the activists of BNP and Jatiya Party in Kazipur thana in the last two days, reports UNB.

Seriously injured Zahurul Haque, 26, of the BNP and Abdul Mannan, 25, of the JP, both the students of Meghal Monsur Ali Government College, were admitted to Kazipur Health Complex.



A Malaysian woman in traditional costume stands in front of the partly constructed Petronas Twin towers during a ceremony yesterday to mark the raising of 4.4 million dollar skybridge which will join the towers on the 41st and 42nd floors when it reaches its resting place today.

Gold seized at ZIA

Customs officials at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized gold bars and chains worth about Taka 18 lakh from a Bangladeshi passenger yesterday.

Airport sources said that the customs surveillance team seized 34 gold bars and 380 gms of gold chains from one Motin, 35. He arrived Dhaka from Bangkok by a Thai International flight at 12:30 pm.

Police yet to rescue kidnapped businessman

CHITTAGONG, Aug 7: Police is yet to trace out businessman Taher Ali Fakri three days after his abduction.

Police officials however said today that efforts were on to find him and nab the kidnapers.

Abduction of Fakri by the gunmen from a busy place here during day time has worried the business community and city dwellers.

President of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sarwar Jamal Nizam in a statement today expressed grave concern at the incident. Deterioration of law and order will not only affect trade and business but also foreign investment, he said.

Stampede tragedy Rajuk, DCC probe on

The Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakha (RAJUK) and the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) are investigating whether the two garment factories, in the city, where 9 teenaged workers died Saturday and the building which housed those who fulfilled the required legal formalities, a senior police official said yesterday.

The DC (North) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Waliur Rahman told The Daily Star that the police were looking for the owners of Lusaka Fashion and Faa Apparels. They have already questioned Khondoker Mobarak, the owner of the building, he added.

Meanwhile, according to official sources, the government is also taking measures to establish a special committee comprising officials from the labour ministry to inspect the garments factories and recommend measures to stop the recurrence of such incidents.

Colombo

Lanka will announce a separate state tomorrow, the Independent Lankadeepa newspaper reported.

Quoting northern political sources, it said today the state would combine the northern Jaffna Peninsula, where the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) already have control, and parts of the east.

Move to privatise WASA protested

The officials and employees of the Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) yesterday announced a 5-point programme to protest the reported government move to privatise the WASA.

The programmes decided by the Karmakarta Karma-chari Otkya Parishad at its extra ordinary general meeting include the wearing of black badges during office hours and work stoppage and rallies and processions from 9 to 10 am and from 12 pm to 1 pm in the regional centres and the WASA building respectively. The agitation programme will begin on August 12.

Member secretary of the parishad Md Harun-or-Rashid Khan Majnu briefed the meeting about the latest situation. The meeting was addressed, among others, by the parishad leaders Mirza Abdur Razzak, Md Hafizuddin, Fazul Haq, A K M A Azad, Md Saiful Islam and Rafiqul Islam.

The Midnight File

Arafat meets Mubarak today

CAIRO, Aug 7: PLO chief Yasser Arafat will meet tomorrow with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to brief him on progress in talks with Israel, officials here said. The two will discuss Israeli-Palestinian talk on extending autonomy in the West Bank at the Egyptian resort of Burg Al-Arab 45 kilometers east of Alexandria on the Mediterranean coast, the officials said today, reports AFP.

Jute, textile workers

statement of those retrenched or sacked earlier, reopening of the closed mills and implementation of the accords signed between the government and trade unions.

The jute and textile mills workers enforced a 72-hour strike and blockade in January and another 96-hour programme in February which were marked by wide-scale violence.

They also observed a 120-hour strike programme last month in the private-sector jute, textile and spinning mills demanding a minimum wage of Tk 950.

Claiming that the private-sector workers are working at a pay of Tk 560 fixed in 1985, Abul Bashar alleged that the private owners peddled back from implementing the minimum wages under the influence of the government.

The 'plunderer'-owners have already laid off some mills, retrenched hundreds of workers and are now hatching conspiracy to close down Muklabar Rahman Jute, Kohinor Jute, Afli Jute and Ajax Jute Mills without paying the salaries of workers.

EC preparing for by-polls

The Election Commission (EC) is yet to set the date for by-elections in the 142 vacant parliamentary seats, sources in the Commission said yesterday.

Sources in the Commission, however, said the EC was taking all preparations for holding by-elections in time.

As per the constitutional provisions, the EC would have to hold by-elections in those seats by September 17. The Opposition seats fell vacant as the MPs remained absent for 90 consecutive sitting days.

Two other seats also fell vacant due to death of two ruling party MPs. The EC has a plan to hold by-elections in these seats simultaneously.

Women's confce

being attended by over 300 representatives of different NGOs all over the country.

The participants called for enacting Uniform Personal Law based on the principles of equality and justice for men and women.

On the health care of women, they said the womenfolk need proper health-care throughout their life, not only during their reproductive period.

The speakers identified the lack of woman's control over her own life and body, emerging out of her subordinate position in the society, as one of the major problems.

Shireen Huq of Naripaksha raised the issue of capital punishment which sparked a debate between its supporters and opponents.

Those opposing the capital punishment termed it as a "violation of human rights". Others felt that capital punishment would be just punishment for a crime against humanity.

ঢাকায় জাপানী বিশেষজ্ঞ সার্জন দল

সেত ম্যা ক্রিপল ইন্টারন্যাশনাল এর উদ্যোগে জাপানী বিশেষজ্ঞ সার্জন দল বিনা পারিশ্রমিকে অপারেশন, চিকিৎসা ও পরামর্শ প্রদান করবেন। চিকিৎসার অন্যান্য আনুসঙ্গিক ব্যয় রোগীকে বহন করতে হবে।

প্রাথমিক রোগী বাছাই: ৯ থেকে ১২ই আগস্ট সকাল ৯ টা থেকে বিকাল ৫ টা।

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