



Members of the Central Kachi Kanchar Mela recite at the closing session of the three-day workshop on recitation for children at its office in the city on June 11.

Children demand an end to child labour

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Hundreds of children working in different industries brought out processions and held rallies in the city yesterday in observance of the World Day Against Child Labour.

They carried banners and placards that read "Adults will work, children will go to school" demanding an end to child labour.

Different non-government organisations and bodies organised programmes in the city and some other parts of the country.

About five million children aged

5-17 work in tannery, welding, chemical industries, bidi factories, farms, houses as domestic help, makeshift shops and workshops in the country to support their families, ILO said in its report.

State Minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman at a discussion in the city yesterday said the government is trying to root out child labour as it has been obstructing the human resource development.

He said the government initiated micro-credit scheme to the parents of child labourers so that these people can come out of dependence on the income of their children.

Tk 35.60 million has been distributed to them so far through employment bank.

Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) organised a rally at Mirpur area in the city under the auspices of its Child Labour Elimination Project.

Hundreds of child labourers who are taking technical training from the project participated in the rally. Main theme of the rally was to employ the elders so that the children could go to school.

Ahsania Mission works to get

employers to send their child workers to the school and make factory work safer. It also encourages parents to send their children to school instead of work.

"We are trying to bring a change, but it's really difficult to be successful here," an official of the mission's school.

He said, "Poverty is the main reason for such a dreadful situation. Still, the situation has improved substantially."

"Our first mission is to eliminate hazardous environments at work places," Mahub Morshed, who mobilises employers to improve work environment, told the rally.

"Child labour in Bangladesh is a reality, but we want to eliminate it," Morshed said.

Children in Bangladesh are engaged in about 430 forms of child labour, of which 67 forms are hazardous and dangerous for children, according to United Nations Children's Fund.

Morshed said about 1.2 million children are engaged in hazardous work in tobacco, tanneries or chemical factories and welding workshops.

UNICEF EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETS Dhaka seeks fund for child welfare

UNB, Dhaka

The Bangladesh Country Programme was discussed at the Unicef Executive Board meeting that is currently taking place at the UN headquarters in New York.

According to a message received here, the Unicef officials and donors also praised Bangladesh's achievement and progress in child welfare and some related key social areas.

Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to United Nations, was present on the occasion, and made a statement describing

Unicef-government cooperation as a "model worthy of emulation".

He sought cooperation of the donors in the funding of the programme. The board has been requested to approve a budget of 60,490,000 US dollar from regular resources, subject to availability and 210,000,000 US dollar in other resources. Donors like Sweden, Japan and UK made interventions.

Iftekhar, however, pointed to the menace posed by arsenic contamination of drinking water which is threatening over 35 million people.

He urged redoubling of efforts to tackle this problem. Celcilia Lotse, director of Unicef for South Asia Region who introduced the country programme, assured that this issue is receiving top priority.

Ann Veneman, new Executive Director of Unicef, who recently succeeded Carol Bellamy was present at the discussion.

Child journos to write on their rights

Thirteen children were selected as journalist at the MMC office in the city on June 10 for Shishu Prokash, a news agency for children, says a press release.

Of them, seven are girls and six boys. The children are -- Rooyah Ashraf, Marjana Khanam, Noor-E-Chashti-Meem, Sabrina Hussain, Farah Tasnim Ahmed, Tahmida Hussain Shimu, Afrin Hussain Rimu, Tanveer Ahmed, Tarek Mehedi, Md Rakibul Hassan, Md Shajib, Aslamul Haque and Shakub Hassan. They were selected for Dhaka.

Shishu Prokash took initiatives to select 640 child journalists all over the country. The selection at district level has already been done.

The child journalists will work under the central office of Shishu Prokash and prepare child rights related report/features, which will be sent to the national dailies for publication. Shishu Prokash will start providing child rights-based news from June 15.

MMC established the news agency with the support of Unicef with a view to strengthening children's participation in the media and enhance the flow of information on child and adolescent rights.

Outgoing Pak HC meets Speaker

UNB, Dhaka

The outgoing Pakistan High Commissioner Manzar Shafiq yesterday called on Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar and discussed matters of mutual interest.

They hoped that the existing friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened in days to come.

The Speaker said he was hopeful that the parliamentary delegations of the two brotherly countries would play unanimous role in the upcoming CPA and IPU conference.

Manzar Shafiq thanked the government and the people for all-out assistance during his tenure in Bangladesh.

8 members disown Sramik League Titas Gas body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight members of the newly formed Jatiya Sramik League Convenor Committee of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited (TGDC) unit in a press release disowned the unit committee.

They expressed surprise over exclusion of a 'die-hard' Sramik League leader from the committee and condemned the new-members for their alleged involvement in metre tempering and corruption.

Jatiya Sramik League approved the 48-member unit convenor committee on April 23 this year ignoring its registered trade union 'Titas Gas Karmachari Union', they alleged.

Titas employees said some Sramik League activists of the unit joined their anti-party before 2001 national election and targeted the committed activists of Titas Gas Karmachari Union, the release read.

They compelled some of its leaders to resign from the Sramik League union and join its anti-union, transferred many Sramik League employees to different zones, harassed them physically and forced them to support taking tolls with the corrupted officials.

Jatiya Sramik League Secretary Roy Ramesh Chandra, however, denied the inclusion of any corrupted persons in the committee. "We did not have any such allegations about the committee members," he told The Daily Star yesterday.



Women's Voluntary Association (WVA) President Ruby Rahman hands over a cheque to Chandra Munasinghe, wife of High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, for the Tsunami victims at Sonargaon Hotel in the city recently.

'Research works a must to ensure quality edn'

DU CORRESPONDENT

University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof M Asaduzzaman yesterday said the private universities in the country should pay special attention in creating more opportunities for research works for the faculty members to ensure quality education in the sector.

Addressing as chief guest at the scholarship distribution and orientation ceremony of Northern University Bangladesh (NUB) at the National Museum Auditorium, he said quality education can not be ensured without excellent research works at the higher levels.

Later, the UGC Chairman awarded scholarships to 170 NUB students.

NUB Vice Chancellor Prof Mohammad Ali, Treasurer M Abu Bakar Siddique, IBAT Trust Chairman Prof Shamsul Haque also spoke at the ceremony.