

Ensure free movement of workers to dev countries

Migration experts make the call at media campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Migration experts at a media campaign yesterday called for liberalisation of Mode-4 of Global Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) to ensure free movement of semiskilled and unskilled workers to the developed countries.

They said Mode-4 of GATS, a part of World Trade Organisation, allows the movement of only skilled workers which contradicts the UN Convention on protecting the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families and violates the interests of the least developed countries (LDCs).

The media campaign was organised by Welfare Association of Repatriated Bangladesh Employees (Warbe) at Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium to mark the Enforcement Day of UN Convention on Migrant Workers which is being observed since July 1, 1990.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and Migrant Forum Asia (MFA) assisted the Warbe to organise the campaign participated by Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU) of Dhaka University and Bangladesh Obhobashi Mahila Samik Association (BOMSA).

"The other modes of GATS are fully in favour of the trades and services of the developed countries, but the movement of semiskilled and unskilled migrant workers, who are the major source of income of the LDCs, has been indiscriminately violated by Mode-4," said Warbe Chairman Syed Saiful Haque.

The movement of capitals, products and services has been made free as part of globalisation process, but the movement of labour force to the developed countries is gradually being made stricter imposing various conditions, he added.

The developed countries are also hindering the export of products of LDCs by imposing conditions on their standard and environment, he observed.

"Modernisation of service sector is a vital factor in increasing the GDP of a country," Saiful Haque said, adding that the free movement of Bangladeshi labours could also contribute to the increase of export in service sector.

The migrant workers of Bangladesh sent remittance of US\$ 3.5 billion in 2004, which is double of the total foreign loan and grant during the period, and 48.5 percent of the total export earnings, he noted.

Warbe Vice-chairman Masud Parvez demanded of the government to ratify the UN Convention on migrant workers and frame a national migration policy in a bid to negotiate free movement of labour forces at national, regional and international level.

He also urged the government to uphold the rights of the migrant workers by providing legal and logistic support, fully activating the Bangladesh missions abroad, simplifying the migration process, and rehabilitating the repatriated workers.

The migrant workers who are cheated by recruiting agencies or intermediaries should be given more legal aid so that they themselves can go to the court for legal action, he said.

Under the Migration Ordinance 1990, a cheated worker has to complain to the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training before going to the court. "This system does not work properly for bureaucratic tangle," he added.

IOM National Programme Officer Nurul Islam Mollah, Bomsa General Secretary Sheikh Romana, and relatives of those who died in the Mediterranean tragedy were present at the media campaign.

Hasina returns home today

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will return home today after a 13-day trip to France, Russia and the United Kingdom.

She is expected to arrive at the Zia International Airport at 5:45am by a British Airways (BA) flight.

Party sources said, Sheikh Hasina reached London from Moscow on Tuesday night. After a three-day stay there, she will board a BA flight for Dhaka Friday.

AL presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, MP, and former ambassador Ziauddin are accompanying Hasina.

Hasina left Dhaka for France on June 19.



Save ailing Buet student Redoy

Atikur Rahman (Redoy), a meritorious student of computer science and engineering department of Buet, has been suffering from acute lymphoblast leukemia, commonly known as blood cancer, says a press release.

He is now under the treatment of Dr ABM Yunus at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib University Hospital.

Doctors have said he should be flown to Bangkok within two weeks for treatment which involves about Tk 40 lakh.

As for his father, an assistant manager in Bangladesh Bank, it is impossible to afford such expensive treatment within this short period of time.

But Redoy's friends did not give up hope. They are trying to raise funds for his treatment. They appealed to the generous people to extend a helping hand to save the life of their friend.

Contributions can be sent to the following account: Md Manirul Islam, Account No.-34004384, The City Bank (Islamic Banking Branch), Motijheel, Dhaka.

Interested people can also contact the following persons for further information: Shahrier (0189-479919), Rupom (0189-429106) and Chunnun (0172-886699).



Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) stages a demonstration in front of the High Court in the city yesterday protesting the failure of the authorities to protect the natural gas and check environmental disaster.

Boycott main obstacle to making JS effective

Speakers tell publication ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Boycott of parliament by the opposition party's lawmakers is the main obstacle to making the Jatiya Sangsad effective, speakers at a publication ceremony said yesterday.

The publication ceremony of a book titled 'Sangsad Katha Bala Jai' written by Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain was held at the National Press Club in the city.

The speakers said the book is a pathfinder for the nation and it also provides a guideline on how to make parliament effective.

The author has focussed on various problems facing the Jatiya Sangsad and tried to offer solutions, they said.

They also urged all the legislators to attend parliament for the

greater interest of the nation, putting an end to the boycott culture.

The health minister said, "The allegation that the opposition lawmakers are not allowed to speak in parliament is not true."

The Opposition Leader and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressed the Jatiya Sangsad for one hour and 22 minutes in the last budget session," he added.

"There is no single prescription for resolving all the problems facing parliament, but this book has tried to

offer solutions to all types of problems," said Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who was the chief guest at the function.

Begum Salina Rahman, state minister for cultural affairs, was present as special guest.

Kazi Shahed Ahmed, editor of the Ajker Kagoj, Reaz Uddin Ahmed, president of the National Press Club, and Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, also spoke.

'Expel Niko after realising compensation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday demanded expulsion of Niko after realising compensation.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) formed a human chain and held a rally demanding exemplary punishment to those responsible for huge wastage of natural gas as well as human and environmental disaster.

Presided over by Bapa executive member and former vice-chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Kazi Saleh Ahmad, the rally demanded a neutral investigation into the blowup.

They also demanded immediate steps to protect the rest of the gas in Tengratia gas field.

It is not a natural disaster, rather it is an example of looting the country's resources through deliberate negligence of the authorities concerned, the speakers said, adding that dubious design and lack of Niko's experience are the main reasons for the second time blaze in the gas field.

National Committee to Protect Oil-Gas Resources and Electricity-Port, at a rally at Muktagong, urged all to continue the movement for cancellation of all contracts with foreign companies that goes against the country.

Presided over by Anu Muhammad, the rally was addressed by Mujahidul Islam Selim, Nurul Hasan, Diip Barua, and Ruhin Hossain Prince.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) also staged a demonstration at Muktagong.

JSD General Secretary Abdul Malek Ratan spoke as chief guest.

Sylhet Division Development Action Council began a long march from Muktagong to Tangrila to protect the country's natural resources.

Earlier, the council held a rally which was addressed by former minister ASM Abdur Rab, former advisor Zakaria Khan Chowdhury, Syed Khalilur Rahman, and Advocate Selim Newaz.

More than one thousand leaders and activists took part in the long march.

Int'l symposium on nutrition begins tomorrow

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A two-day international symposium titled "Professor Kamaluddin Ahmad: Creating and translating Nutrition & Biochemical Sciences for the benefit of mankind" will begin at Hotel Sheraton in the city tomorrow.

The symposium was arranged in observance of the first death anniversary of scientist Prof Kamaluddin Ahmad, who founded the study of biochemistry and nutrition in Bangladesh and made the landmark discovery of the role of Vitamin C in preventing and curing lathyrism.

ICDDR,B and Prof Kamaluddin Ahmad Trust Fund jointly organised the symposium. President Iajuddin Ahmed is expected to inaugurate the function.

A series of scientific and policy sessions will be held at ICDDR,B on Monday.

Late Prof Kamaluddin Ahmad was the founder of department of Bio-chemistry and Pharmacy and Institute of Nutrition and Food Science in Dhaka university. He was first scientist who discovered that Vitamin E protect liver from becoming fatty that turns into cancer induced by Aflatoxin.



Qulkhwani of Dr Sitara Parvin, a professor of mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University, was held at her father's residence at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

Barisal Girls College students protest meal charge hike

BDNEWS, Barisal

Resident students of Barisal Government Girls College protested the sudden decision of increasing meal charge and demanded resignation of hostel superintendent.

They brought out a procession on the campus on Thursday night and chanted slogans against the decision.

Sources said, on Thursday night resident students of Barisal

Government Girls College found, all on a sudden, that the authorities without informing them increased the meal charge by Tk 3 (from Tk 22 to Tk 25).

This sparked agitation among the students. They went to Hostel super Sahadeb Chandra Roy to lodge their protest against the decision.

The hostel Super Sahadeb Chandra Roy was not available for comments.

Five receive AAA Awards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five distinguished persons have been awarded the first American Alumni Association (AAA) Awards-2005 in recognition of their outstanding contribution to different fields in the country.

They are Dr Noazesh Ahmed (art and culture), Dr Hafiz G A Siddiqui, vice-chancellor of North South University, (education), Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, head of the department of computer science and engineering of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, (science and technology), Lailun Nahar Ekram, chairperson of Bangladesh Women Entrepreneurs' Forum, (business) and M Mahbubuzzaman, chairman of Bangladesh Medical College Hospital, (public service).

Outgoing US Ambassador Harry K Thomas gave away the awards at a function at a city hotel on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, Thomas said in Bangla: "I am very sad that I have to go back to Washington soon. Bangladesh is a good country and I have enjoyed my stay here."

"Many people say that the USA helps Bangladesh, but I say Bangladesh helps the USA," said the US envoy.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said Thomas played an important role in strengthening the relationship between the two countries as well as peoples.

American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) President Aftabul Islam, AAA President Syed Almas Kabir, former president Dr AKM Mashiur Rahman and AAA executive committee member Prof Akhter Sultana were also present.

Ansar VDP men urged to work with sincerity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ansar VDP Director General Major General M Akbar Aktar on Wednesday called upon the field workers of Ansar VDP (Village Defence Party) to work with sincerity to strengthen its rural base.

He was addressing the three-day assembly of Upazila Ansar Commander and VDP Union leaders at the Ansar VDP Academy held on June 27 to 29. The assembly was held to provide a guideline to the field level workers and leaders.

A total of 512 Upazila Ansar Commander and VDP Union leaders participated in the assembly.

General Akbar Aktar stressed the need for stronger leadership capacity of the Ansar commanders and VDP leaders.

Deputy Director General, Commandant Academy and Training Director and others high officials also spoke at the assembly.

Rab nabs 3

BSS, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-5 in two separate drives here arrested three alleged criminals and seized 50 bottles of phensyde and one bottle of whisky yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the elite force raided the Harirampur area under Bagha upazila and seized the phensyde in an abandoned state. Rab officials said.

Another RAB team at Talaimari area under Boalia thana of the city arrested three alleged criminals with one bottle of whisky and a motorbike, they said.

Qulkhwani

BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhwani of Saleha Khatun, mother of K M Kutubuddin, a news editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), will be held at her Badarpur village home in Mehendiganj upazila in Barisal district after Zohr prayers today.

Relatives and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Saleha Khatun, who had been suffering from cancer, died at her Badarpur village home on Wednesday morning at the age of

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The representatives from India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan at a two-day meeting at Mumbai in India recently agreed to establish a permanent regional forum on harmonising energy efficiency standards and labelling (EES&L).

The workshop was held under the auspices of the USAID.

The representatives from state electricity authorities, power corporations, and R&D and testing organisations from the five South Asian countries at the South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy (SARI/Energy) meeting discussed the need and benefits of the harmonisation of EES&L programmes.

The speakers described EES&L as one of the most effective strategies for regional governments to spur large gains in energy conservation. They agreed that a primary benefit of the

forum's efforts to harmonise standards and labelling throughout the region would be to help revitalise and facilitate regional trade between the countries of South Asia.

The forum will meet periodically to encourage regular exchange of energy testing and labelling programme experience and to explore areas for a consensus-based approach to developing harmonised test procedures, standards and labelling.

SARI/Energy's effort to encourage involvement and agreement by the national organisations in the region to take full ownership of the EES&L harmonisation process has been brought to successful fruition with the decision to form the permanent Regional EES&L Forum.

Speaking on the importance of harmonising energy efficiency standards, Lloyd Harrington, Director of Energy Efficient Strategies for

Australia said "The experience of over 55 countries who have adopted at least one mandatory energy-efficiency standard, harmonised with standards adopted by other countries, indicate that the cumulative energy savings to consumers and national economies have been immense, demonstrating the effectiveness of this policy measure."

The participants said that the Saarc nations would be able to fully leverage the benefits of the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), scheduled to take effect on January 1, 2006. They said regional governments must step up their commitment and take the leading role in driving the process of regional harmonisation.

The Indian will host and coordinate the forum's first formal meeting to be held in India in August.

The primary agenda item for that meeting will be to agree on the forum's objectives and terms of reference.

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at many places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over Dhaka, Chittagong and Barisal divisions is expected during the period, Met office said.

Highest temperature 35.1 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 24.6 degree Celsius at Khepupara.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:15am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	29.2	25.9	82	85
Chittagong	27.5	24.8	92	95
Rajshahi	32.7	25.5	89	98
Khulna	29.4	26.0	88	80
Barisal	27.2	25.4	100	100
Sylhet	30.7	25.8	84	91
Cox's Bazar	28.0	--	--	91



The American Alumni Association (AAA) Award winners pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony in the city on Thursday. From left are Dr Noazesh Ahmed, M Mahbubuzzaman, Lailun Nahar Ekram, US Ambassador Harry K Thomas, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Dr Hafiz G A Siddiqui, Syed Almas Kabir and Muhammad Zafar Iqbal.