



PHOTO: STAR
Outgoing Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri calls on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city yesterday.

River transport workers' strike from Oct 14

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Noutjan Sramik Federation (BNSF) at a meeting on Tuesday decided to go for an indefinite strike across the country from October 14 to realise their various demands, including minimum wages for the fishing trawler labourers.

The Noutjan Sramik (river transport workers) leaders at the meeting at its central office at Bangla Bazar also announced that they would start their non-stop strike just after 12:00 noon on October 13. BNSF President Alhaj Golam Maola presided over the meeting.

Their other demands include introducing five years certificate system changing the present master/driver certificate system, suspending the master/drivers' certificate and stopping survey and providing registration to the ships having no master/driver.

BNSF also demanded scrapping of all the black regulations of Directorate of Marine Transport and Ministry of Shipping and elimination of all the undemocratic provisions of the newly introduced labour law.

Reform talks to pave way for strengthening democracy

Says Veena Sikri

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outgoing Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri yesterday said the ongoing dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition would pave the way for strengthening democracy through a free and fair election.

"I hope the current dialogue will be successful. Both the parties will be benefit from it and it will pave the way for strengthening democracy through free and fair elections," Sikri told reporters after a meeting with Awami League President Sheikh Hasina at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city.

The Indian envoy paid a farewell call on Hasina and discussed bilateral issues and the ways to strengthen cooperation between

the two countries.

Sikri also observed that democracy in the country is getting stronger day by day.

She also expressed gratitude to Hasina, also leader of the opposition in parliament, for extending support to her during her tenure as the high commissioner here and assured that her government would provide all-out support for overall development of Bangladesh.

Briefing the newsmen, AL president member Kazi Zafrullah said bilateral relations and means of removing trade imbalance were discussed during the meeting that lasted an hour.

India wants free and fair elections in Bangladesh to help strengthen the democratic process, he said.

'RMG workers not involved in destructive activities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the National Platform for Protection of Garment Workers and Industries yesterday claimed that the garment workers were not involved in vandalising apparel-manufacturing units and looting shopping complexes during Tuesday's strike.

They said that they were carrying out peaceful movement to realise their demands, including repeal of the new labour law and implementation of the tripartite agreement.

They also demanded withdrawal of false cases against garment workers and their leaders and payment of salaries and bonus before the Eid.

Condemning the Tuesday's destructive activities in Dhaka and Gazipur, the leaders alleged that the goons hired by the factory owners are responsible for such activities.

At a press conference in the city, Shafiudin Mollah, convenor of the National Platform, reiterated the demand for review of the minimum wage declared recently.

The leaders also called on the garment workers to make the strike on October 15 and 16 a success. Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) called the strike for October 15 and the National Platform the next day to press home the demands.

They also demanded the right to free trade union activities, a share of the profit and uninterrupted power supply in the garment industries.

National Platform leaders Abul Hossain, Kamrul Ahsan, Rafikul Islam Sujon, Joynal Abdin, Lovely Yasmin and Sadia Islam Bakul were present at the press conference.

Seven foreign ministry officials get promotion

UNB, Dhaka

Seven Foreign Ministry officials, now posted in Bangladesh missions abroad, have been recommended for their elevation to Director General (Joint Secretary) with postings at the ministry.

They are Sabbir Ahmed, Zulfiquer Rahman, Tareq Ahsan, Mashfi Binte Sams, Sofia Rahman, Sheikh Sekandar Ali and Wahidur Rahman.

Official sources said they are now awaiting approval of their promotions by the Prime Minister.

Tk 13 crore to protect bank of Karnaphuli

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday sanctioned Tk 13 crore to protect the left bank of the Karnaphuli River in Charandwip and Kadurkhil under Boalkhali upazila of Chittagong district.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan, an MP from this constituency, said people in this area have been suffering from erosion by the Karnaphuli for the last 20 years.

He said implementation of the Karnaphuli Left Bank Protection Project would protect agricultural lands, homesteads, local markets and educational institutions from the erosion.

Morshed Khan said the work on the project with the sanction of funds would also fulfill one of his election commitments made to the people of his constituency.

President assents to seven bills

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday assented to seven bills passed in the just-concluded 23rd session of the 8th Parliament.

The bills are the Bangladesh Labour Bill, 2006, the Islamic University (Amendment) Bill, 2006, the Madrasa Education (Amendment) Bill, 2006, the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman University Barisal Bill, 2006, Rangpur Karmichael University Bill, 2006, the Sylhet Agriculture University Bill, 2006 and the Special Facilities Bill for the Convicted Women in Prison, 2006.

44.19 pc brands of breast milk substitutes unregistered

Reveals Cab survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 44.19 per cent brands of substitutes for breast milk available in the market are unregistered and have no legal existence but the government body responsible for monitoring this irregularity is indifferent about it causing huge loss of revenues for the government, according to a survey report of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh (Cab) revealed yesterday.

Cab conducted the survey on breast milk substitutes in the capital during the months of July-August.

It was found in the survey that a total of 43 brands of breast milk substitutes of nine foreign companies are being

sold in the market. Of them, 53.49 brands did not mention the names of local agents and 58.13 did not write the addresses of the local agents on the labels of the products.

"An ordinance on breast-milk substitutes said no person shall promote any breast milk substitutes either by advertisement or by offering any gift, prize, discount coupon, or other free items or by any other means," said Borhan Ahmed, president of Cab while addressing a view exchange meeting on the survey at its office in Shegunbagicha in the city.

"But, according to the Cab survey, 97.67 per cent labels of the breast-milk substitutes use persuasive languages

and 53.48 per cent labels display feeder pictures ignoring the existing law', he added.

Cab General Secretary Quazi Faruque said 24 brands of breast milk substitutes are being sold without registration for years.

He also said the government is losing good amount of revenues due to indifference of Institute of Public Health

and Nutrition (IPHN) about the registration of breast milk substitutes.

Cab leaders urged the government to take strong measures to stop the non-registration of breast milk substitutes, as most of them have lack of proper ingredients, which is affecting the children's physical and mental growth.



Former home minister Maj. (retd.) Rafiqul Islam Bir Uttam draws a raffle ticket number from a container during a raffle draw at the reunion of Dhaka Prabasi Muktijoddha, Chittagong Region, at the Officers' Club in the city recently. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Cabinet Secretary Abu Solaiman Chowdhury, Dr Anisuzzaman, Air Vice Marshal (retd.) Sultan Mahmud, Maj. Gen. (retd.) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim Bir Pratik, former army chief Lt. Gen. (retd.) Harun-or-Rashid and Mainuddin Khan Badal attended the reunion.