

Reduce int'l migration costs, control intermediaries

Speakers tell workshop

Speakers at a workshop yesterday underscored the need for reducing international migration costs and controlling the activities of intermediaries and sub-agents, says a press release.

They also laid emphasis on raising the professional skills of the migrants.

The national workshop titled 'Challenges and opportunities of recruitment industry of Bangladesh' was organised jointly by the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) of Dhaka University and Development Research Centre (DRC) on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty based at the University of Sussex, UK at the National Press Club in the capital.

In his address as chief guest Abdul Matin Chowdhury, secretary to expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry, emphasised the need for partnership between sending and receiving

countries, and government and non-government sectors.

He felt that in the competitive international labour market, the negotiating skills of both the government functionaries and the recruiting industry leaders need to be substantially improved.

The success in sending higher number of workers must be matched by sending highly skilled workers, he added.

In his keynote address, Dr CR Abrar of RMMRU said the existence of ties of intermediaries at both sending and receiving ends has led to massive increase in the cost of migration.

He regretted that the recruiters of the receiving countries are largely unaccountable for their ill-practices and their governments are reluctant to streamline them.

He proposed that the government should immediately investigate the activities of the intermediaries at the receiving end, many of

whom are Bangladeshis, and demanded that the sub-agents at home be brought under legal framework.

Abdul Malek, director general of Bangladesh Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), told the workshop that there had been a major increase in the number of skilled migration from Bangladesh in the last two years.

He urged the recruitment agencies to be more active in securing markets for skilled labour.

In his address, President of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) Ghulam Mostafa deplored that the contribution of recruiting agents continue to remain unacknowledged by the broader community.

He informed that more than one hundred agencies now operate technical training centres to increase the skills of migrants.

He demanded that the government should be more active to regulate the airlines industry that arbitrarily fix the airfares and investigate the activities of GAMCA formal practices.

Supradip Chakma of the foreign ministry, highlighted the need to bring about transparency in the sector.

Dr Nurul Islam, director of BMET, underscored the need for relaxing the rules for emigration of professionals and highly skilled persons.

Another BMET Director Selim Reza suggested introducing one stop service on the BMET premises.

Former labour secretary Dalil Uddin Mandal, recruitment industry leaders Minhajuddin, Abdul Alim, Reaz ul Islam and Zainul Abedin Zafar and Warbe leaders Saiful Haque and Anisur Rahman Khan also took part in the discussion.



British Development Minister for South Asia Shahid Malik and MJF Treasurer Rokia Afzal Rahman exchange documents after signing an agreement on Rights and Governance Challenge Fund at Gulshan Club in the city yesterday. On their left is Chris Austin, head of DFID, Bangladesh, and on their right is Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF.

Tribute paid to Dr Neelima Ibrahim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Neelima Ibrahim was a pioneer of women's rights in the country and also contributed to the women's rights movement globally through her works, speakers said at a discussion marking her 6th death anniversary yesterday.

Bangladesh Mahila Samity organised the discussion at its auditorium to pay tribute to the noted academic, writer and social worker.

"Everybody's life is a novel but Dr Neelima's life is a big novel," said Prof Nowshaba Khatun, who had worked with her to find out the heroic women who were tortured during the Liberation War to document their tales.

"Nilima Apawa was a fearless woman. She always encouraged people to explore their potentials," she said.

Dr Neelima's foresightedness led her to work for the repressed heroic women whose contribution to the Liberation War has not been recognised, she said.

Through her work, Dr Neelima created a platform for these repressed women, she added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Director General of Bangla Academy Syed Mohammad Shahed said Dr Neelima also worked towards rehabilitating the war children.

"General Secretary of the Mahila Samity Advocate Shihara Khatun also spoke at the discussion presided over by Samity President Selina Khaleque.

Later, a drama based on Dr Neelima's famous novel titled 'Ami Beerangana Bolchhi' was staged at a Samity auditorium.

At the programme, the Mahila Samity also distributed membership forms for 'Neelima Ibrahim Bangladesh Study Centre' yesterday.

DCC demolishes shops to build wholesale kitchen market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) officials yesterday evicted around 100 shops from Jatra Bari kitchen market as per a government plan to construct a wholesale kitchen market in the area.

DCC Executive Magistrate Khalil Ahmed led the drive along with 30 labourers, a bulldozer, 250 policemen and 100 cleaners.

A DCC official said they demolished around 100 tin-shed shops and other structures of the market will also be evicted shortly.

The wholesale kitchen market will be constructed on 5.5 acres of land in the area which was acquired earlier and a portion of the total land was recovered by the drive, added the official.

Executive Officer of zone-1 Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Project Director of constructing four wholesale kitchen markets in the city engineer Abdus Salam and Assistant Estate Officer Shamsul Alam took part in the drive.

The DCC has also selected land to construct three more wholesale kitchen markets in the city which include 13 acres at Gabtali, 7 acres at Teigaon and 5.27 acres of land at Lalbagh.

Call to introduce food rationing for RMG workers

UNB, Dhaka

Leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Workers' Trade Union Centre yesterday demanded budgetary allocation to introduce food rationing for 2.5 million workers in the sector.

In a statement the Centre leaders said the government and the factory owners should create a joint fund to begin the factory-based rationing of food.

Faced with soaring prices of daily commodities, they said the low-paid workers are struggling to meet their daily needs.

The workers, mostly female, are enormously contributing to the national economy but their lives are at stake, they added.

The country has some 4,000 garment factories and the sector annually earns some US\$10 billion in exports, mainly to the United States and Europe.

\$60m British support to protect HR, promote good governance

MJF, DFID sign agreement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) will provide \$60 million to Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) to help protect human rights and promote good governance in the country.

Visiting British Development Minister for South Asia Shahid Malik and MJF Treasurer and Governing Board member Rokia Afzal Rahman signed an agreement to this effect in the city yesterday.

The fund of \$30 million (approximately \$60 million), called the Rights and Governance Challenge Fund, will be provided over the next five years.

The fund would improve access to social services for 2.3 crore marginal and vulnerable people, the British minister told reporters at the signing ceremony.

GF fund raising fortnight begins tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gono Forum will observe organisational and fund raising fortnight across the country from tomorrow.

Ten teams comprising central leaders will take part in the tour starting from tomorrow to July 4, says a party press release.

The programmes will be inaugurated in Rajshahi and Chapainawabganj by party chief Dr Kamal Hossain and other central leaders.

The decision came at a party meeting in the city with Dr Kamal in the chair.

DIALOGUE WITH CG Hold referendum on proposed nat'l charter

JSD leaders urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of the ongoing pre-poll dialogue, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Z-R) yesterday called on the government to hold a referendum on the proposed national charter to reform 'politics and governance' and form a National Security Council (NSC).

General Secretary of the faction Abdul Malek Ratan told the post-dialogue press briefing that they also asked the government to hold the local government elections before the general polls.

They recommended the government to re-balance presidential and prime ministerial power, prevent a return to pre-1/11 days, form the NSC, carry on the anti-corruption drive and form a Constitution Reform Commission to bring wide-ranging changes to the 1972 constitution.

The JSD faction wants a bicameral parliament and a 'provincial government', he added.

Ratan further said they want local government elections to be held before the national polls to strengthen and institutionalise grassroots democracy and state administration.

Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman told the briefing that the government would ensure that local polls do not hamper efforts to hold national elections.

He said all political stakeholders should move forward 'without wasting time' to push through proposed reforms to politics, governance and the constitution.

But further discussions with political parties and civil society are needed to hold a national referendum, added the adviser.

Zillur dismissed charges that the interim government is not authorised to hold local polls, saying that it will do what is required within the bounds of its constitutional mandate.

He further said the government will hold its first regional dialogue in Chittagong on June 28, but could not confirm the presence of the chief adviser there.

The government will sit with Khelafat Majlish today.

Man found unconscious on RU campus

RU CORRESPONDENT

An unidentified man was found lying unconscious in front of Kazia Police Box on Rajshahi University campus early morning yesterday.

The victim, aged around 45, was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) with serious head injuries, Mother police said.

Later, Police also seized a rickshaw in an abandoned state from the same area.

Police suspect that miscreants might have had an attempt to murder.

\$50m ADB loan to improve vocational education

UNB, Dhaka

Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a 50 million US dollar loan to help improve Bangladesh's technical skills training system and create better wage and employment prospects.

ERD secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan and ADB Country Director Hua Du signed an agreement at Economic Relations Division in this regard yesterday.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) will co-finance the country's 'skills Development Project' of 66.7 million US dollar with a grant of 6 million US dollar, which is now under the process of approval.

The ADB loan from the concessional lending window of ADF will have a maturity of 32 years, including a grace period of 8 years, with one percent interest for the grace period and 1.5 percent after the grace period.

The loan aims at helping the Ministry of Education make technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes market-oriented, short-term and relevant, especially for thousands of unemployed and underemployed adult poor, who were not able to finish the eighth grade.

The project supports the government's plan to reduce poverty and promote economic growth by providing market-relevant skills training to more Bangladeshis, including the poor and the disadvantaged," Hua Du said while signing the loan agreement.

The project targeted providing training to around 70,000 people over the five years to be completed by May 2013.

Under the project, experts in the three main employment sectors - RMG and textiles, light engineering and construction industries - would provide training.

Non-govt teachers' memo to CA today for 50pc DA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of non-government high schools, colleges and madrasas under the banner of Bangladesh Shikshak Samity will submit memorandum to the chief adviser (CA) today demanding funds for 50 percent dearness allowance in the national budget.

Beside, leaders of National Front of Teachers and Employees (NFTE), another platform of 11 teachers and employees' organisations, yesterday submitted memorandums to the CA through deputy commissioners (DCs) demanding the same.

Teachers of non-government educational institutions said they are very disappointed as the finance adviser did not mention dearness allowance in his budgetary speech.

NFTE Chief Coordinator Prof Kazi Faruque Ahmed said they would announce programmes for tougher movement at a press conference on July 2 if the government does not declare dearness allowance for non-government teachers and employees by June 30.

Earlier, NFTE declared a series of programmes including memorandums to the CA through the DCs on June 18, human chain at all districts on June 22, view exchange meeting with lawyers, journalists, engineers and other professionals from June 23 to 28 and a token hunger strike on June 24.

Bangladesh Shikshak Samity President M Abul Bashir Hawlader said they would also go for tougher movement if their demand is not met immediately.



Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed hands over 'Sword of Honour' to the best all round cadet in the 58th BMA Long Course Battalion Senior Under Officer, S M Ahsan Ullah, at the President Parade at BMA, Chittagong yesterday.

SOB makes digital maps for country's geo-information

Participants tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Survey of Bangladesh (SOB) with the help of Japan is implementing a digital mapping system project to prepare countrywide baseline map.

The SOB has already completed a digital map for the capital while the digital maps for other metropolitan cities Chittagong, Khulna, Sylhet, Rajshahi and Barisal will be completed very soon.

This was stated by the participants at a seminar titled 'Geo-information and digital mapping in Bangladesh: Present and future' organised by the SOB at a city hotel.

The speakers said the SOB is implementing the six-year-long project beginning from 2007 to modernise the mapping system by introducing 1: 25000 scale topographic database instead of 1: 50000 scale.

Around 50 government organisations, 60 private survey companies, 15 departments of public and private universities, some research organisations from home and abroad and non-government organisations are involved in the project.

Speaking as chief guest, LGRD Adviser Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal said geo-information is one of the crucial primary data sources for analysing and planning for critical national issues of development,

disaster management, adaptability and resilience to climate change.

"In the present perspective of global climate change, Bangladesh is the worst victim of natural disasters like cyclone, drought, recurrent floods and sea level rise. Geo-information technology can be helpful in this regard," he added.

Brig Gen M Habibur Rahman Khan, surveyor general of Bangladesh, said the SOB can produce hardcopy paper map of 1:25k for the entire country and 1:5k for five divisional cities after establishing geo-database.

"All the government and non-government organisations will have the same mapping standard and access to geo-database, digital elevation model and contour information for the whole country," he added.

Lt Col Mohammad Alauddin, project coordinator and director of defence survey, said the digital mapping will be used for disaster preparedness and prevention of natural calamities.

"Tidal information from the tidal gauge will be used for monitoring sea level rise and predicted Tsunami and potential coastal inundation due to global warming. Private transportation agencies including land, river and air, police, Rapid Action Battalion and other intelligence agencies will be able to integrate topographic database in

its vehicle and criminal tracking system," he added.

Defence Secretary M Kamrul Hasan and Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Masayuki Inoue also addressed the seminar.

Trust Bank launches passport activities thru' 13 more branches today

Trust Bank Ltd is going to launch the passport processing activities from today through its additional 13 branches across the country as per the government's gazette notification, says a press release.

The new branches for passport processing coverage are: Mirpur branch, Millenium branch, Karwan Bazar branch, Joypara branch, Dohar, Agrabad branch, Chittagong; CDA Avenue branch, Chittagong; Feni branch, Feni; Comilla branch, Comilla; Sylhet corporate branch, Sylhet; Goala Bazar branch, Sylhet; Beani Bazar branch, Sylhet; Moulvi Bazar branch, Moulvi Bazar and Khawja Yunus Ali Medical College branch, Sirajganj.

Besides, four branches of the bank - Dilkusha corporate branch, Dhamondri branch, Uttara branch and Gulshan corporate branch -- are receiving passport applications covering 14 police stations of the city.



LGRD Adviser Mohammad Anwarul Iqbal speaks at a seminar at Sonargaon Hotel in the city yesterday. On his right is Defence Secretary M Kamrul Hasan and on his left are Brig Gen M Habibur Rahman Khan and Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue.



TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a press conference on National Household Survey on Corruption 2007 at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is M Hafizuddin Khan and on his left is Dr Iftekharuzzaman. (Story on Page 1)

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Kalabagan: 166/1, Mirpur Road (beside Dolphin Gull), 9131828, 8132727, 01713243401-3

Mouchak: 128/2, New Circular Rd (West of Mouchak Market), 9348059, 01713243404-5

Uttara: Plot 2, Sector 9 (Opposite to Masco Plaza), 8939796, 01713243438-9

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