

Fix minimum wages for migrant workers to ensure their rights

Speakers say at consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a consultation yesterday called for fixing minimum wages for migrant workers and increasing cooperation between the labour sending and receiving countries to ensure rights of the workers who are the lifeline of the national economy.

Terming that the rights of the migrant labourers should be the cornerstone of the overseas employment policy of Bangladesh, they said increasing collaboration among the government, civil society and the private sector is a must to promote the causes of the workers.

Bangladesh chapter of Migrants' Forum in Asia organ-

ised the national consultation on 'Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)'.

WARBE Development Foundation, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), Ain O Salish Kendra and Association for Community Development are the members of the chapter. The 2nd GFMD consultation will be held in October in the Philippines.

Speaking as the chief guest, Foreign Secretary Touhid Hossain said employers in the labour receiving countries should ensure that migrant workers receive minimum wages to make their temporary migration a success.

Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training Director General Abdul Malek said all the stakeholders -- the

government, private sector and civil society organisations -- should work together to promote the interest of migrant workers, because they are playing a significant role for the national economy.

Former adviser Sultana Kamal said large-scale campaign should be initiated to create mass awareness on the process of migration and their rights.

Prof Tasneem Siddiqui of RMMRU emphasised on developing a database of returned migrants so that their skills can be better utilised at home.

RMMRU Coordinator Dr CR Abrar underscored the need for developing a platform of the labour sending countries to effectively negotiate with the receiving countries about a common minimum wage.

WARBE Development Foundation Chair Syed Saiful Haque said the consultation provided an important opportunity to develop a national policy on migration and development that will include the voices of affected migrants together with advocates, government officials, media, remittance companies, recruitment agencies and trade unions.

MFA Project Coordinator Debayani Kar presented a keynote paper, while BAIRA President Ghulam Mustafa, Salima Sarwar of Association for Community Development, BMET directors Selim Reza and Dr Nurul Islam, Dr Hamid Rashid and BAIRA member Abdul Alim also spoke.

Pry teachers threaten to boycott local body elections

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Primary schools teachers yesterday vowed not to work as presiding and polling officers in the upcoming four cities and nine municipal elections if caretaker government (CG) does not cancel the decision of allowing Brac to supervise all the primary schools in 20 upazilas by July 30.

The decision came at a view exchange meeting where primary teachers, academicians and politicians reiterated to cancel the decision and said the CG has no right to engage Brac in supervising primary schools.

The CG has violated the constitutions especially in sections 58 (gha) and 17 through approving the Brac pilot project on May 23 this year, they added.

The tasks of Brac under the pilot project include training teachers, activating the school managing committees (SMCs) and improving the overall education environment of the classrooms.

Four teachers' organisations -- Bangladesh Primary Teachers' Association (BPTA), Bangladesh Private Primary Teachers' Association (BPPTA), Bangladesh Graduate Primary Teachers' Association (BGPPTA) and Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers' Association (BCPTA) -- jointly organised the meeting on 'The responsible of implementing quality primary education is only for government, not Brac' at the National Press Club in the city.

"We will not attend the upcoming local elections, including four city corporation and nine municipality elections and the national election, if our demand is not met by July 31," BPPTA President Muhammad Samsul Alam said.

Dhaka University Prof Abul Barakat, Workers Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan, BPTA General Secretary BM Asad Ullah also spoke at the meeting which was moderated by BPTA Adviser Prof Abul Kalam Azad.

National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP) of the Directorate General of Health Services in collaboration with Engender Health Bangladesh and RTM International prepared the national guidelines and manuals and the technical report on behavioural surveillance survey.

At an opinion sharing meeting on 'National Guidelines and Manuals for Clinical Management of HIV/AIDS and Technical Report on Behavioural Surveillance Survey 2006-07' at a city hotel yesterday, the speakers said the manuals would be helpful for the support providers working on HIV/AIDS.

National AIDS/STD Programme (NASP) of the Directorate General of Health Services in collaboration with Engender Health Bangladesh and RTM International prepared the national guidelines and manuals and the technical report on behavioural surveillance survey.

The report revealed that more than 50 percent of the injectable drug users (IDUs) shared needles/syringes last time and the IDUs living on the street were 4.9 times more likely to share while most of them failed to assess the risk.

The surveillance, which was conducted from August 2006 to February 2007 covering 7,167 people who are at risk, also revealed that

consistent use of condoms has been increased but very slowly.

Three presentations on the national guidelines and manuals on clinical management of HIV/AIDS and technical report on behavioural surveillance survey were made by NASP Deputy Programme Manager Dr Mohammad Hanif Uddin, Country Representative of Engender Health Bangladesh, Dr Abu Jamil Faisel and RTM International Director (research and evaluation) Jamil H Chowdhury.

Health Secretary Zafar Ullah Khan said, "Although our achievement in many cases in combating HIV/AIDS is very affirmative, there is no room of complacency as Bangladesh has all the risk factors for increasing HIV/AIDS."

However, the manuals would strengthen the interventions taken by the government and non-government organisations, said Dr Mohammad Abu Faiz, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Additional Secretary of the health and family welfare ministry Abul Kalam Azad, acting Director of Population Health and Nutrition, USAID Lois Bradshaw, acting Country Director of Family Health International Aranya Ngamwong also took part in the meeting organised by the health ministry.

The Army Headquarters has requested all concerned not to be frightened of any kind of explosion.

DEBATE CONTEST TIB invites applications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has invited applications from debaters for its anti-corruption shadow parliamentary debate.

Students at higher secondary and university levels would be able to take part in the debate competition on their own. The last date for receiving applications is July 22, says a press release.

This debate is organised with an aim to projecting an ideal, effective and desired parliament.

Each contestant should apply to TIB with ID card, attested photocopy of mark sheet, a copy of passport size photo and telephone no (if available).

The application should be sent to Advocacy department, Progress Tower, House-1 (6th floor), Road-13, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.



Awami League leader Abdur Razzak speaks at a meeting in memory of Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are Prof AK Azad Chowdhury and Dipak Mittal and on his right is Sajid Rahman. Bangladesh-Bharat Maitree Samity organised the meeting. (Story on Page 2)

Akbar new envoy to Bahrain

METRO DESK

The government has decided to appoint Md Ali Akbar, currently serving as consul general at the Consulate General in Jeddah, as the next Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Kingdom of Bahrain, says a press release.

Akbar is a career diplomat who joined the Bangladesh Civil Service Foreign Affairs Cadre in 1988. He completed his Masters degree in English from the University of Dhaka.

He represented Bangladesh in many international meetings and conferences of Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Commonwealth.

Maroof Zaman

UNB, Dhaka

The government has decided to appoint Maroof Zaman, currently serving as ambassador of Bangladesh to Qatar, as the next ambassador to Vietnam.

He had joined as Gentleman cadet in the Bangladesh Army on July 18, 1977 and later absorbed in Bangladesh Civil Service (Foreign Affairs).

Earlier, he had served as Counsellor in Bangladesh missions in Vietnam, Thailand and the UK and as director general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

HIV COUNSELLING

'Nat'l guidelines to be helpful for health professionals'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has developed a number of national guidelines on management of opportunistic infections (OIs) and manuals on clinical management of HIV/AIDS and technical report on behavioural surveillance survey were made by NASP Deputy Programme Manager Dr Mohammad Hanif Uddin, Country Representative of Engender Health Bangladesh, Dr Abu Jamil Faisel and RTM International Director (research and evaluation) Jamil H Chowdhury.

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METRO DESK

Combined exercise of 14 Independent Engineer Brigade

METRO DESK

All units under 14 Independent Engineer Brigade of Bangladesh Army are taking part in Summer Combined Exercise in Kanchpurnagar-Meghnagar-Rupganj area from July 6 to 17, says an ISPR release.

Blank ammunition and explosives of different types are being used during the exercise.

The Army Headquarters has requested all concerned not to be frightened of any kind of explosion.

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Former and present students of Dhaka Medical College take out a colourful procession in the city yesterday to mark the 62nd founding anniversary of the institution.



Debaters pose with the guests at the inaugural ceremony of The Mutual Trust Bank-The Daily Star Debate Contest 2008 at the Theatre Institute auditorium in Chittagong yesterday. Sitting from right are Saif Chowdhury, Shah Muhammad Akhter Uddin, Abul Momen, Mahfuz Anam, Mohammad Nazrul Islam and Masud Bakul.

MTB-DAILY STAR DEBATE CONTEST BEGINS

Call to build enlightened society thru' practice of logic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Mutual Trust Bank-The Daily Star Debate Contest 2008 began in Chittagong yesterday with a call to build an enlightened society through practice of logic and free thinking.

It is high time to move forward by setting the thinking on the right track with the help of logic and knowledge, speakers at the opening ceremony said.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, inaugurated the 10-day competition as the chief guest at the Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC) auditorium.

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhter Uddin, Prothom Alo Resident Editor in Chittagong Abul Momen and Mutual Trust Bank Senior Vice-President Mohammad Nazrul Islam were present as the special guests.

Drishy Chittagong organised the debate in association with CDA, Mutual Trust Bank (MTB) and The Daily Star sponsored the event.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mahfuz Anam called on the students to practise debate as a means of acquiring the skill of thinking and making judgments in a logical way.

Debate also helps students develop their skill of crafting language to bring clarity and accuracy into their thoughts, he said.

The absence of logic is strongly felt everywhere in our daily life nowadays, Anam said and called for practising debate to present any issue in a most acceptable way and establish it with logic.

Speaking as the special guest, CDA Chairman Akhter Uddin said debate can make one conscious and aware of their social responsibilities.

Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) President Prof Muzaffar Ahmad speaks at a view exchange meeting at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Shujan Secretary Dr Badil Alam Majumder and on his right is Brotee Chief Executive Officer Sharmin Murshid. Shujan organised the meeting in cooperation with The Hunger Project-Bangladesh.

ties.

He also said that the practice of logic in daily life can also help prevent one from indulging in activities that damage the environment such as hill cutting and filling up rivers and canals.

Akhter Uddin thanked The Daily Star for its initiatives to hold debate and other activities which contribute to the process of building an enlightened society and developing future leadership.

Such debates would help develop future leadership with logical minds, he said.

Drishy Chittagong President

Masud Bakul presided over the

inaugural ceremony and General

Secretary Saif Chowdhury and Joint

Secretary Adnan Mannan also

spoke.

Thirty schools and seven universities are taking part in the debate competition.

Six debates were held on the first day and the winners are Collegiate School, Silver Bells Girls' High School, Chittagong Government High School, Dr Kastagir (Government) Girls' High School, Agrabad Girls' High School and Chittagong Residential School and College.

BBC World Service

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