

# Ratify UN, ILO conventions to ensure migrant workers' rights

Speakers urge govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Speakers at a discussion on Thursday called on the government to immediately ratify the UN and ILO conventions to protect the rights of migrant workers who are contributing to the country's economy.

They also underscored the need for decentralising formal sources of information about the recruiting procedures or international labour market so that intending workers can get correct information from different parts of the country and avoid exploitation by fake sources.

The speakers said this at the discussion on 'Streamlining the labour migration from Bangladesh with ratification of UN and ILO conventions on migration rights' jointly organised by Welfare Association for the Rights of Bangladesh Emigrants (WARBE).

Brac and Development Foundation and Young Power in Social Action (YPSA) at the Chittagong Press Club.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Jafar Alam was present on the occasion as the chief guest while WARBE Chairman Syed Saiful Hoque was in the chair.

The speakers also urged the government to highlight the campaign for the ratification of 1990 UN Convention on 'Protection of the rights of all the migrant workers and their families' and ILO convention related to migration no 143, 97 and 181 with the adaptation of its framework on labour migration.

Presenting his keynote paper, Saiful Hoque termed the UN convention the most important international instrument regarding migrant workers.

The convention came into force

in June 2005 with the ratification of 20 countries, he said, adding that a total of 37 countries have already ratified the convention.

He further said although Bangladesh signed the convention on October 7 in 1998, the country has not yet ratified it.

In the fiscal 2007-08, Bangladesh received \$8.0 billion as remittance from the migrant workers, he said, adding that the amount is double of the total foreign aid and is equivalent to 48.5 percent of the country's total export earnings.

They have become vulnerable section of our labour force since they are facing many hardships both at home and in the destination countries, he added.

Pointing to the importance of mass awareness about migration, Jafar Alam stressed on incorporating the rules and procedures

regarding passport, visa and recruitment in the academic curricula so that students from their early ages can be educated with these procedures.

Chittagong Press Club General Secretary Ejaz Eusofi said as the population is increasing day by day and the country is failing to create new jobs, people have no alternative but to go abroad in search of their livelihoods.

Underscoring the need for bringing the activities of the recruiting agencies under the rules and regulations and monitoring their activities, he urged the government to bring the fake recruiting agencies under trial.

Tapan Datta of Trade Union Centre, Khondoker Rezaunul Karim of Manusher Jonno Foundation and YPSA Director (field operation) Mahbubur Rahman also spoke.

## Call to save Rupnagar canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local residents and Save the Environment Movement formed a human chain in the city's Rupnagar area yesterday demanding immediate steps to protect Rupnagar-Duaripara canal from land grabbers.

The canal has now turned into a narrow drain due to continued earth filling by the encroachers, said Md Touhidul Bashar, general secretary of Rupnagar Abasik Janakalyan Samity.

He said the land grabbers started filling the canal again on the roads 20, 21, 27 and 28 of Rupnagar residential area.

The grabbers already filled up 70 percent of the canal on roads 20 and 21 and about 50 percent on roads 27 and 28.

If the authorities concerned fail to recover the canal from the encroachers, Rupnagar, Arambagh, Arifabad and Pallabi extension areas will be submerged even after a light shower, he added.

Due to its importance the government has included the canal into its priority list of recovering 26 canals in the city, he said.

National Housing Authority has already handed over the canal to the Wasa for maintenance, he said.

Abu Naser Khan, chairman of Save the Environment Movement, urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps against the land grabbers and demanded the canal is recovered from their grip immediately.



Members of the Rupnagar Abasik Janakalyan Samity form a human chain at Mirpur in the city yesterday demanding immediate steps to protect Rupnagar-Duaripara canal from the land grabbers.

## 'Tax-sticker' for car owners likely

UNB, Dhaka

National Board of Revenue (NBR) is likely to introduce 'tax-sticker' for car owners to promptly identify if the owner of a particular car is taxpayer or not.

"The tax-sticker will be pasted on the windshield of a car," NBR chairman Muhammad Abdul Mazid told the news agency.

Mazid said the NBR will ask the BRTA to provide a list of car owners. "We'll then go through the list to check how many car owners are taxpayers... the number of taxpayers having cars is very insignificant," he said without specifying the number of car owners who pay taxes.

About the new system, he said car is a wealth and one must pay tax for such wealth.

The NBR chairman has urged the eligible taxpayers to pay taxes in due time to avoid trouble in the future.

## Fire in textile mills in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Fire damaged six lakh yards of cloth and machinery at two textile mills at Shastapur in Faruall yesterday.

Witnesses and fire fighters said the fire originated from an electric short circuit in the dyeing section of Dhaka Textile mills at around 2:30pm and soon engulfed the other sections of the unit.

Over five lakh yards of cloth and machinery were gutted in the fire, claimed the owner of the mills.

He said ten workers of his mills received injuries while they were trying to bring the blaze under control.

At one stage, the fire spread to the adjacent Samsuddin Dyeing factory, gutting one lakh yard cloth.

On information, fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze at around 4:30pm.

## Removal of CA's special assistant Tamim demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port yesterday announced a countrywide agitation programme on September 29 with a call not to lease out the country's oil and gas fields to foreign companies.

At a press conference at Mukti Bhaban at Paltan in the city, they also demanded removal of Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Power and Energy Ministry Dr M Tamim, accusing him of serving the purpose of the foreign companies.

The national committee will hold a protest rally at city's Mukhtangan at 11:00am on September 29 and then they will take out a procession towards the energy ministry. The committee will also lay siege to the energy ministry and hand over a memorandum to the chief adviser and to the office of the energy ministry.

Protest rallies and processions will be held across the country on the day and the copy of the memorandum will be handed over to the deputy commissioners.

Convener of the committee Engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, Workers' Party General Secretary Bimal Biswas, its politburo member Nurul Hasan, Communist Party of Bangladesh leader Morshed Ali, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal leader Bazul Rashid Firoz, coordinator of Gono Sanghati Andolan Zonaid Saki and Engineer Enamul Haque were present at the press conference.



Vehicles on a road near Sadarghat launch terminal in the city get stuck in a gridlock yesterday as holidaymakers rushed to the terminal to go to their village homes to celebrate Eid with their near and dear ones.

## 'Impose ban on activities of anti-liberation forces'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Tariqat Federation (BTF), a political organisation, yesterday demanded ban on the activities of political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, which are ineligible to get registered as per the registration act for political parties introduced by the government.

BTF leaders placed the demands at a roundtable at the National Press Club in the city moderated by its President Syed Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari.

Veteran leaders, lawyers, teachers, writers and Islamic scholars expressed their solidarity with the demands.

The speakers said the ideology

of the liberation war cannot be established unless the anti-liberation forces, including Jamaat-e-Islami, are uprooted socially and politically.

BTF also placed a nine-point declaration at the discussion where they called upon all the political parties to boycott militant organisations.

It alleged that Jamaat is now hatching conspiracy against the registration act and trying to foil the next general polls, as it knows that it would be declared ineligible for getting registered as its constitution goes against the basic structure of the country's constitution.

BTF also demanded ban on the activities of Jatiya Muktiyoddha

Parishad and Hizb ut-Tahrir.

Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu said mobilisation of greater public support is a must to try the war criminals and imposing ban on Jamaat.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the anti-liberation forces are hatching conspiracy against the country since its independence and it is disgraceful that they ruled the country for a long time after the independence.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal Chairman Hasanul Haq Inu, Barrister Tania Amir, Prof Harun-Rashid, Prof Abul Barakat and Bangladesh Jaker Party Secretary General Munshi Abdul Latif also spoke at the programme.

## Two workers injured falling from Rangs Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two workers were injured after falling from the sixth floor on to the second floor of the Rangs Bhaban in the city yesterday.

The workers, engaged in demolition work of the building, were identified as Muhammad Bhutto, 35, and Mizanur Rahman, 25.

They were rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital and later admitted to Pangu Hospital.

Rajuk started the demolition work on August 3, 2007. At least 13 workers were killed and several others injured since then.

## Mahalaya on Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindus will celebrate Mahalaya, the auspicious occasion heralding the advent of goddess Durga, on Monday.

This auspicious ceremony is observed seven days before the Durga Puja, the biggest religious festival of Hindus.

Devotees will gather at different puja mandaps, including Dhakeswari Temple and Ramkrishna Mission, in the early morning on Monday to take part in various religious programmes.

On the occasion, special puja will be held at Ramkrishna Mission at 5:00am on Monday and at Dhakeswari National Temple at 5:00pm on Sunday where devotees will chant mantras and sing devotional songs.

Official sources said around 20,000 puja mandaps, including 162 in the capital, will be set up to celebrate the Durga Puja.

The five-day long festival will begin on October 5, amid wispy autumn clouds in the translucent blue sky and fragrance of Sheuli flowers that will mark the arrival of the goddess.

## One kg heroin seized, 1 held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials of the Department of Narcotics Control seized one kilogram of heroin and held one person from a hotel in the city on Thursday night, says a press release.

A team of the department led by Director (operations) Safat Ahmed Chowdhury raided a five-storey residential hotel near Fakirapal kitchen market and seized the heroin from a room at around 11:00pm.

The arrestee was identified as Abdus Salam of West Gonodondi Moillabari at Boalia in Chittagong. The team seized heroin in 10 polythene bags with 100 grams of each inside a bread.

Salam primarily told the team that the heroin was brought to the country from India through Benapole border in order to send it to Chittagong.

A case was filed with Motijheel Police Station in this connection.

## GP launches 'Tathyo Tori' to provide livelihood information

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Grameenphone in association with Care Bangladesh has launched 'Tathyo Tori' (Information boat) with an aim to provide information about livelihoods to the riverine communities in the country.

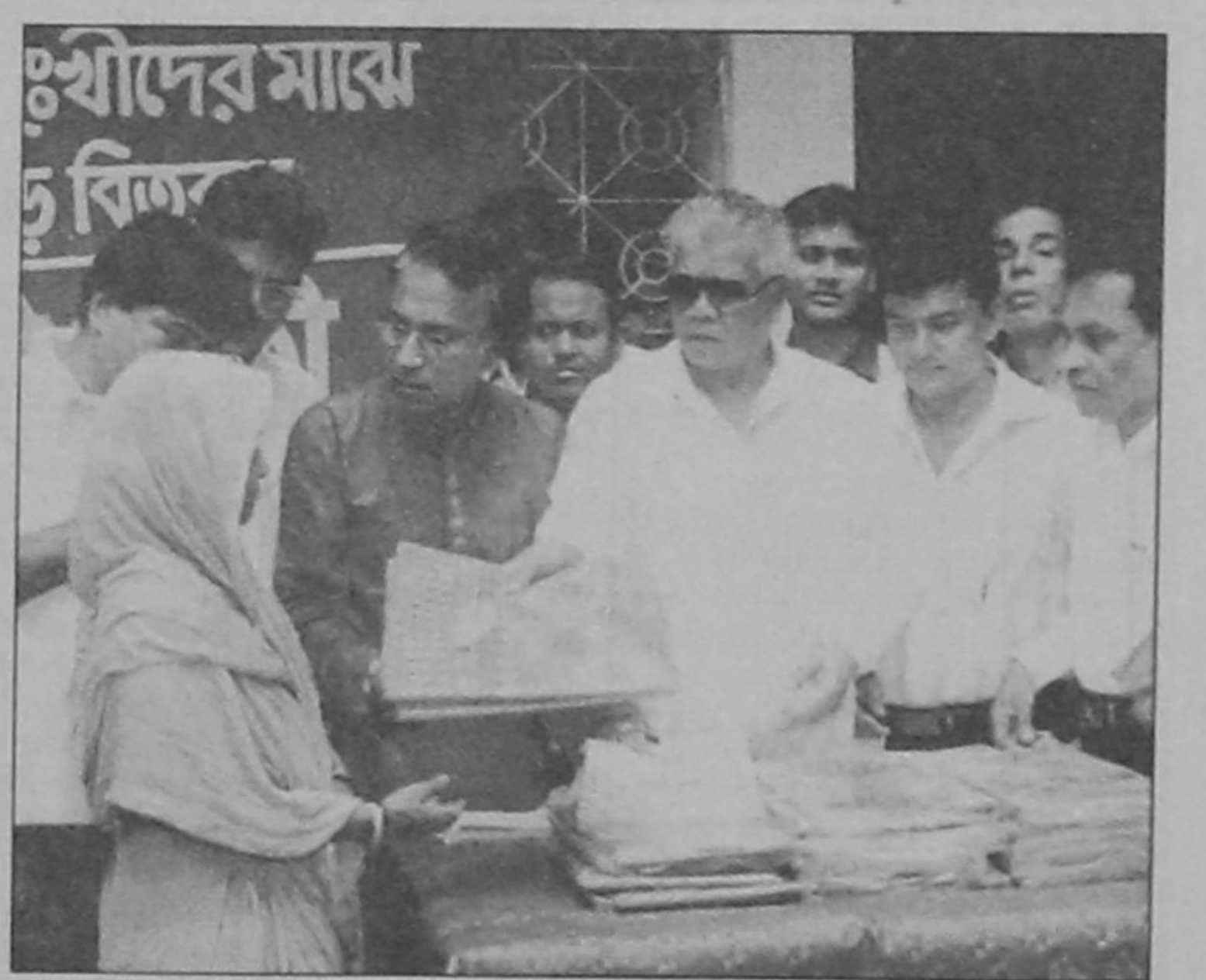
The boats, which will move from one place to another on a fixed schedule, will work as an information hub to meet the communication needs of rural communities, especially in the Char and Haor areas, who have limited access to up-to-date livelihoods and other information due to their remoteness, said a press release.

The first information boat was launched at Dhira in Sunamganj on September 22. Grameenphone hopes to launch three such boats by the end of the year.

Shuvashish Priya Barua, head of corporate social responsibility (CSR), Debashish Roy, deputy general manager (DGM Projects and Partnership, CSR) and Shafquat Hossain, DGM (Social Communication, CSR) of Grameenphone and Stav Zotalis, assistant country director, and Asif U Ahmed, program director of Care Bangladesh were present at the launching ceremony.

The Tathyo Tori will be equipped with digital contents, such as livelihood and agricultural information, suited for the specific areas. A typical Information Boat will have computers, Internet and email facilities, photocopyers, fax machines, printers, TV cameras and video machines, scanners, and more, depending on the needs of the community.

The main objective of this project is to both educate and empower the rural people with the necessary information for their livelihoods. The project will place specific focus on poor and marginalised people of the communities.



Awami Shilpi Goshthi members, on behalf of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, distributed new sarees among destitute women yesterday on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The photo shows AL leader Amir Hossain Amu handing out a saree to a woman on the Silver Dale High School premises at Wari in the city.

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## Bangladeshi Gastroenterologist Awarded Internationally

The largest conference of Gastroenterologist, Asia Pacific Digestive Week 2008 (APDW-2008) recently held in New Delhi (13th-16th September). APDW committee awarded Dr. Hafeza Aftab Rosie with 'Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology Foundation Award 2008' for outstanding career development and research works. Earlier she was the first Bangladeshi Gastroenterologist who received 'JSGE Research Fellowship 2004' in Asia and got training opportunity on advanced Gastroenterology in Japan. Currently she is working as Assistant Professor (Gastroenterology) in Dhaka Medical College Hospital. C-2620