

Frame nat'l policy to ensure occupational safety

Speakers urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday urged the government to ensure occupational safety and health at workplace through strict enforcement of the existing laws and formulation of a national occupational safety and health (OSH) policy.

Bangladesh Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Foundation (OSHE), a specialised NGO, organised the seminar on 'Health and life at work: A basic human right' at the National Press Club in the city to mark the World Day for Safety and Health at Work-2009.

Speaking as the chief guest, Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour and Employment Ministry Shahjahan Khan MP said most of the workplace incidents take place due to lack of awareness of workers as well as negligence of employers.

Terming the present government worker-friendly, he said it is committed

to ensuring rights of the workers.

Admitting to some flaws in the Labour Law 2006, the lawmaker said, "We have already made a committee to review the law to ensure the protection and rights of labourers."

He also called on the government and non-government organisations to place their recommendations related to labour rights issues to the ministry to help the review of the labour law."

Highlighting the significance of the day, OSHE Chairperson Saki Rezwana placed a set of recommendations to ensure occupational safety and health at workplace in the country, including immediate formulation of a national industry, health and safety council.

Other recommendations include proper implementation of Bangladesh national building code with formulation of 'code enforcement agency', increase of compensation for workplace deaths

and injuries and enhancement of labour inspection system with recruitment of skilled inspectors.

Skop Coordinator Dr Wajedul Islam Khan as the special guest urged the government to take stern action against the employers who do not ensure good workplace environment, including workers' safety and security.

The speakers said violations of Bangladesh national building code and other rules, lack of effective inspection system, absence of committee on occupational safety and health, ignorance of employers and lack of knowledge of the workers towards health and safety issues are among the main reasons behind the workplace accidents and health hazards.

National Consultant of WHO Dr Salamat Khandker and researcher Shakila Matin Mridula presented papers at the seminar, while Bangladesh Labour Federation President Shah Md Abu Zafar, among others, spoke at the programme.

Sweater factory workers clash with Ansars 7 injured in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

Seven people, including three Ansar members, were injured in a clash between the workers of Pioneer Sweater Factory and Ansar members at Panchabati in Fatullah yesterday.

The clash ensued when the workers were demonstrating demanding payment of salary arrears and reinstatement of workers.

Police and workers said Pioneer Sweater factory authorities terminated workers Didarul, Rakibul, Jewel and Zulhas yesterday on charges of violating rules.

Other workers of the factory demanded reinstatement of the four workers. At one stage, the workers began a demonstration instead of joining work.

At that time, Ansar members who were deployed there to maintain security tried to prevent the agitating workers from staging demonstration, resulting in clashes.

Ansar members Abdur Rahim, 30, Siraj, 28, and Monwar, 35, knitting supervisor Moshir Rahman, 28, supervisor Abu Sayeed, 35, Selim Mollah, 35, and operator Milton, 25, were injured during the clash. They were sent to hospital.

Later, the workers and the factory authorities reached an understanding on the issues through negotiations.

More students likely to get chance to study in Japan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Member of the Japan's House of Councillors Aiko Shimajiri on Monday said that more Bangladeshi students are likely to get the opportunity to pursue higher studies in her country.

She said this during a meeting with State Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Hasan Mahmud at the foreign ministry.

Shimajiri said every year 3 lakh foreign students get the chance to study in Japan.

Hasan Mahmud said 2.5 percent of the world's total population live in Bangladesh.

He hoped that Japan would grant a quota to Bangladeshi students considering this ratio.

The Japanese lawmaker assured to consider the issue positively.

A Japanese trade delegation would visit Bangladesh soon, she added.



PHOTO: STAR

Head of News of Channel i Shykh Seraj and Managing Director Faridur Reza Sagar show a publication of Superbrands at the 'Meet the Press' programme at a city hotel yesterday. The channel has been voted the country's most favourite electronic media brand.

Channel i voted favourite electronic media brand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Channel i has been voted a favourite electronic media brand of Bangladesh in a survey carried out by Superbrands, a UK-based independent authority on branding.

The satellite channel became the first organisation in the country to be featured in Superbrands' hardcover book that pays tribute to the strongest and most valuable brands in each country.

The feature book will be published in November this year with a rundown of the top brands in different brand categories.

The presenters said this at a 'Meet the Press' programme at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in the city yesterday.

"Channel i has been relentlessly working to promote the country's culture, values and ideals, and in the process it has earned the people's love as their favourite media channel. Its acknowledgement as a superbrand is a proof of that affection," Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director of the channel, said at the event.

Superbrands is a global media and publishing business operating in 62 countries throughout the world, said Md Wasfi Tamim, marketing manager of Bangla Superbrands.

"The organisation [Superbrands] identifies the strongest and most valuable brands in a country recognising, rewarding and enforcing them through a series of publishing and marketing

activities," he added.

"It will showcase the best of Bangladesh business through the elite brands in the country. These brands will then be promoted both locally and internationally giving them exposure and acknowledgement that will inspire these organisations as well as their competitors to thrive at what they do," Wasfi said.

The brands that will be presented in the Superbrands publications will be selected through independent and voluntary panels of business and academic professionals from the country.

The council made a list of 3,300 brands from different brand categories shortlisting 436 stronger brands. Their profiles were then sent to the Superbrands' UK office for further assessment. Out of the list, Channel i is the first organisation in the country to be acknowledged by the Superbrands, said the presenters.

"This acknowledgement has given us a benchmark of where we stand right now, and how can we improve further in the future," said Shykh Seraj, news director and founding member of Channel i.

On release of each Superbrands publication, a major awards event is held in each market to pay tribute to the most successful brand owners. These events often bring together the country's leading advertising and marketing executives, and the awards are presented to the strongest brands in each category, said Wasfi.

Channel i newscaster Apu Mahmud was also present at the event.



PHOTO: STAR

Firefighters take part in a fire drill at the inaugural ceremony of the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) Week 2009 at its training complex at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Firefighters to get risk allowances, increased rations: Minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday declared that the firefighters would be given risk allowances and enhanced rations.

She also said that fire services will be modernised and fire stations will be established at all the upazilas.

Speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) Week 2009 at FSCD training complex at Mirpur in the city, the minister also said that the government has decided principally to award the President Padak to the fire fighters.

The firefighters also demonstrated a fire drill on the occasion.

State Minister for Home

1,992 arrested on various charges

UNB, Dhaka

Police in separate raids arrested 1,992 people on various charges from different parts across the country in the last 24 hours as of 6:00am yesterday.

Eleven firearms, eight cocktails, four bombs and 151 rounds of bullet were also recovered during the country-wide drive, said a release of Police Headquarters.

Three cases were filed under Arms Act, it said.

Besides, 26 motorcycles without valid documents were seized and 249 cases were filed in this connection.

Tests for SI posts from May 8

UNB, Dhaka

The written tests for the posts of police Sub-Inspectors (male/female) will begin on May 8.

The exam of English and Bengali comprehensive & composition will be held from 10:00am to 1:00pm on May 8 while the exam of psychology on May 9 and the exam of general knowledge and math on May 10, said a press release.

Affairs Tanjim Ahmed Sohel and Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikdar were also present at the programme presided over by FSCD Director General Brig Gen Abu Naim Mohammad Shahidullah.

Sahara Khatun said the FSCD would be equipped with modern logistic support and its members would be given more training.

The policies to appoint FSCD personnel would also be amended while their uniforms would also be changed in

course of time, the minister said.

"The fire fighters douse the fire risking their lives and therefore they deserve risk allowances and the President Padak," she said.

Sources said at present there are a total of 201 fire stations across the country and the ministry has a plan to increase the number to 372.

Besides, if the government establishes fire stations at all the upazilas, the number of the fire stations would rise to over 550.



Catherine Makino, president of the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan, hands over the Bibek Literary Award to litterateur Imdadul Haque Milon at an award giving ceremony in Tokyo, Japan, recently.

BANGLADESH-UK NAVY TRAINING OPERATION Exercise Shomudro Torongo arrives today

UNB, Dhaka

Exercise Shomudro Torongo (TAURUS 09), the routine deployment of the British Royal Navy's Amphibious Task Group, arrives in the Bay of Bengal today to conduct a wide range of activities.

The activities will include a five-day joint collaborative training operation and exercising amphibious and anti-submarine warfare drills with the Bangladesh Navy.

Exercise Shomudro Torongo, the name given to the Bangladesh element of the deployment, aims to maintain the Royal Navy's fighting capability as well as develop the UK's capacity to operate with key partners and other nations' enhanced interoperability.

"It also demonstrates the

UK's commitments to the stability and security of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and South East Asia," said a British High Commission release.

Lt Col Philip Spicer, defence adviser at the British High Commission in Dhaka, said, "This deployment will provide a unique opportunity for some joint collaborative exercises between the Bangladesh Navy and their UK counterparts, the first such interaction in more than a decade."

"But, more than this, it also renews a deep-rooted historical tie and furthers the defence engagement between our two nations," he said. The taskforce comprises ships, although only two will participate in training with the Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard.

HC grants bail to ex-BNP MP Wadud Bhuiyan for six months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted an interim bail for six months to former BNP lawmaker Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan from Khagrachhari in a corruption case.

Wadud was sentenced to 20 years' jail in this case filed by the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC).

A division bench of the HC comprising Justice AFM Abdur Rahman and Justice SM Emdadul Hoque granted the bail upon a pending appeal filed by Wadud against his conviction.

His lawyer Barrister Anwarul Islam Shahin yesterday told reporters that there is no legal bar to his client's release on bail following the HC order.

He also said Wadud has secured bail in the other cases against him.

On July 22, 2007, Chittagong Divisional Court sentenced Wadud Bhuiyan to 20 years' imprisonment and fined Tk 10,000 for concealing information about Tk 6.36 crore of his assets in the wealth statement submitted to the ACC during a massive anti-graft drive.

Bhuiyan was arrested on February 4, 2007 at the start of the crackdown on corruption launched by the previous caretaker government.

Barrister Moudud Ahmed appeared for Bhuiyan.

Reception to doctors

METRO DESK

Aristopharma Ltd accorded a reception to 128 doctors who have achieved FCPS in different disciplines from Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons in January, says a press release.

MA Hasan, chairman and managing director of Aristopharma, was the chief guest at the reception held at Sonargaon Hotel in the city on Monday. He distributed crest among the new fellows.

Director (Marketing & Commercial) Mahboob Hasan, Director (Finance & Administration) Sahid Hasan and Marketing Manager Noor Hossain spoke at the ceremony.

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