

Be more humane to workers

PM urges industrialists at May Day discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday called upon the industrialists to be humane to the workers and meet their fundamental needs, and requested the labourers not to create any anarchy during the country's exports.

"I request the garment owners to be more humane to the workers who should also be patient and solve all problems through discussions so that the export-oriented industry is not affected during global economic recession," she said at a May Day discussion, greeting the workers at home and abroad on the historic day.

This year the theme of May Day was 'Let us workers and owners unite and try to change days'.

At the programme organised by the labour and employment ministry at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the capital, the prime minister said the government would gradually open all the closed mills to increase productivity and create employment.

Hasina announced that the government would increase retirement age of factory workers from 57 to 60 and ensure their wages in line with market prices and set up dormitories for the garment workers and arrange rationing system for them.

She also assured that the government would do everything possible to ensure that people do not suffer for food.

"The rich are rich because of the workers' toil. So the industrialists should be attentive to the needs of the workers, and education and healthcare of their children," the prime minister reminded.

She also urged the workers to remember that they live on the industries saying, "I request both the labourers and the industrialists to create a congenial work environment so that we can prosper together."

"We want to reach our goal of change through industrialisation, employment, workers' welfare and increase in production," the premier said, adding that the global economic recession has some opportunities, which must be utilised to face the downturn.

The present government believes that agriculture and industry are the keys to economic development of the country where farmers and workers play the major role, she said.

"Therefore, it is not possible to keep the development wheel running unless the welfare of those contributing directly to production and development is ensured, especially in this competitive world," Hasina added.

She said the government is soon going to declare a new industrial policy under which the closed mills will be opened and operated either by the government or on the basis of public-private partnership.

Criticising that many mills, including the Adamjee Jute Mills, were closed by the BNP-Jamaat alliance government, Hasina said, "We have decided to establish economic zones in different areas of the country on the basis of local resources."

Referring to the pledge that the government would arrange employment of at least one from each family, she said the government is working to that end.

She also sought cooperation of all in this regard.

Stating that the government would give highest priority to agriculture and industry in the next budget, the premier said it would

increase fertiliser subsidy, ease its distribution, and reduce fuel price for irrigation.

Turning to migrant workers, Hasina said the government is very aware of their problems and taking necessary measures to solve them.

Many of the migrant workers are unskilled, she said, adding that the expatriates' welfare ministry will take steps to train more people for employment abroad.

Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Musharraf Hossain, State Minister for Labour Monnujan Sufian, ILO Director in Dhaka Panudda Boonpala, Bangladesh Employers' Federation President Kamran T Chowdhury, and Jatya Samik League President Abdul Matin Master also spoke at the discussion presided over by Secretary-in-charge of labour ministry Ataharul Islam.

After the discussion and a cultural function, the prime minister inaugurated a three-day May Day Fair at the Osmani Memorial Hall.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visits a stall at the May Day fair at Osmani Memorial Auditorium in the city on Friday.

C'WEALTH MINISTERS' MEET MAY 17

Climate change, public health to be high on agenda

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Health ministers from Commonwealth countries will meet in Geneva, Switzerland on May 17 to discuss 'Health and climate change', a theme of special relevance to the Commonwealth's developing countries and its small island states.

The meeting, which takes place annually on eve of the World Health Assembly, is for the Commonwealth health ministers, senior officials and delegates from non-governmental organisations, says a press release.

Developing countries and small island states in the Commonwealth are already experiencing some of the negative impacts of climate change, but lack the capacity to plan and mitigate for its predicted effects on public

health. The meeting aims at providing a platform for discussion on the issue and an opportunity for ministers to share experiences and expertise.

According to the United Nations, an estimated 200,000 deaths each year in the world's low income countries can be linked to the impact of climate change on health, through crop failure and malnutrition, diarrhoeal disease, malaria and flooding.

Secretary General of the intergovernmental organisation Kamallesh Sharma said, "Climate change could reverse progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in human development. Tomorrow will be too late to regain the progress we have lost today."

The meeting's keynote speaker is Prof Sir Andrew Haines, director of London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He is an expert on epidemiology and the study of environmental influences on health, including the potential effects of global environmental change.

Prof Tony McMichael, a world authority on health and climate change, will deliver a paper on 'Issues for risk assessment, risk management and mitigation'. He is a professor at the National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health at the Australian National University in Canberra.

During the one-day meeting, Dr Margaret Chan, director general of the World Health Organisation, will hold a dialogue with ministers.

Call to build pro-people healthcare system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seven-week course titled 'Executive certificate in public health management' was launched at a ceremony at Brac Centre in the city yesterday.

James P Grant School of Public Health at Brac University in collaboration with AusAid is offering the course tailored especially for public health professionals working in upazila level. The course will begin today and continue till June this year.

The course will mainly focus on providing management skills essential for effective and efficient management of healthcare facilities, said Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, vice chancellor of Brac University, at the programme.

Prof Dr Syed Modasser Ali, adviser on health to prime minister, spoke as the chief guest at the programme. He emphasised the need for a sustainable quality management to build a pro-people healthcare system with optimum utilisation of available limited resources of the country.

Australian High Commissioner Justin Lee, Prof Dr Anwar Islam, director of James P Grant School of Public Health, and Mahbub Hossain, executive director of Brac, spoke on the occasion.

The course will focus on maternal and child health, natural disaster, principal of hospital management in the context of Bangladesh, and health information system.

Three noted citizens honoured

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate yesterday called on the guardians and child organisers to make children aware of some certain quarters who distort the real history of the liberation war.

"Children have to be conscious of the quarters who distort history and they should be grown up with the real history of the liberation war and spirit of secularism," said the Speaker.

The Speaker was addressing a gala ceremony organised to celebrate the 57th founding anniversary of Kendriyo Khelaghar Asar, a juvenile organisation, at Central Public Library auditorium in the city.

Three noted citizens -- journalist Mozammel Hossain Manju, juvenile litterateur Kaiser Chowdhury and singer Mita Haque -- were conferred with 'Journalist Bazlur Rahman Memorial Medal' for their outstanding contributions to the society.

A total of 20 children also received prizes for participating in a writing competition on 'Amader Muktiuddho' (Our Liberation War) organised by Kendriyo Khelaghar Asar across the country.

Speaker Hamid also called on the young generation to know the rich cultural tradition of the country and work from their own position to build up the country with the spirit of liberation war.

Expressing instant reactions, the awardees said children should be grown up with the real history of the liberation war and secular spirit, adding that Khelaghar is doing exactly the same in the last 57 years.

Educationist Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid formally inaugurated the ceremony with Khelaghar Asar Chairman Prof Panna Kaiser in the chair, while its presidium members and other cultural personalities also addressed the programme.

Children of the organisation performed a cultural session at the function.



Winners of Journalist Bazlur Rahman Memorial Award pose with the guests at the award giving ceremony yesterday. From left are Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid, Speaker Abdul Hamid, Mita Haque, Panna Kaiser, Kaiser Chowdhury and Mozammel Hossain Manju.

PHOTO: STAR

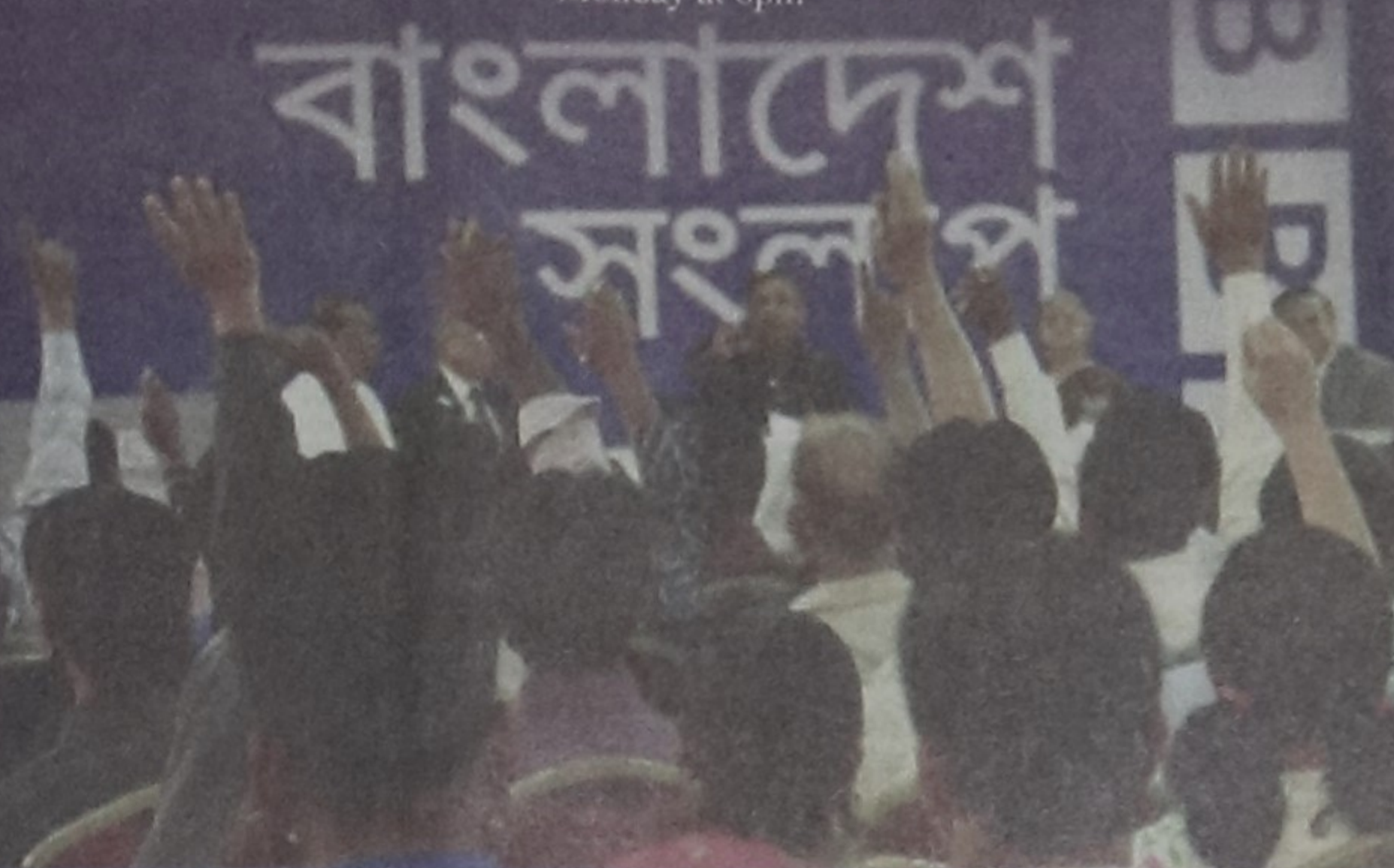
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