

Germany continues to be major dev partner of Bangladesh

New envoy tells president

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed German Ambassador to Bangladesh Holger Michael yesterday said Germany continues to be one of the major development partners of Bangladesh, says a press release.

"My country is worldwide the second most important export market for goods 'Made in Bangladesh', he added.

The envoy said this while presenting his credentials to President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban.

The letter from President of Federal Republic of Germany Dr Horst Köhler accredits him as ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Germany to Bangladesh.

Michael conveyed the friendly greetings of the German president to the

people of Bangladesh, saying: "Germany and Bangladesh are united in a long and uninterrupted tradition of friendship and cooperation."

He also congratulated Bangladesh on its achievements in the fight against poverty and said the German government acknowledges the significant challenges facing Bangladesh, including climate change.

The envoy said, "Germany sees still scope for increased trade and investment in both directions and are, therefore, committed to further expanding our vibrant trade links."

In this respect, Michael said German promotes ecologically and socially responsible business activities, adding that Germany is determined to support all efforts to strengthen democracy and

human rights in Bangladesh.

He pointed out that Germany appreciates the constructive role of Bangladesh in international politics. It supports Bangladesh's efforts in the promotion of regional cooperation and stability in South Asia, Bangladesh's engagement in the UN peacekeeping missions and the role as a speaker for the group of least developed countries (LDCs).

Prior to his assignment in Dhaka, the ambassador was head of trade promotion at the Federal Foreign Office.

He served as deputy head of mission in Bangkok and Hong Kong. His other assignments include postings in Korea, Nicaragua and Turkey.

BGMEA's demand an evil strategy

CPB tells view exchange meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan at a meeting yesterday said Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has undertaken an evil strategy to realise money from the government.

The tendency BGMEA showed is illegal and illogical as there is no such instance anywhere in the world of giving salaries and benefits to private employees from the government treasury, he added.

The CPB president said this at the view exchange meeting with Garment Sramik Oikya Parishad at the party's central office in the city.

He also mentioned that owners pocket the whole benefit without even giving five percent share of the benefits to their employees.

The owners have not given thousands of crores of taka to workers in this way and now they demand money from the government holding the workers hostage at a time when they suffer a subtle loss.

Garment Sramik Oikya Parishad demanded payment of salary arrears to workers, fixing minimum wage at Tk 5,000 and implementation of democratic labour law and labour court at each district.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of CPB; Sahidullah Chowdhury, president member and president of Trade Union Centre; and KM Ruhul Amin, general secretary of Garment Sramik Trade Union; were present at the meeting, among others.

Pabna road crashes kill 3

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least three people were killed and 13 others injured in separate road accidents in Pabna during the last two days.

Two people were killed and 10 others injured as a passenger bus collided head-on with an overloaded truck on Pabna-Rajshahi highway at village Kalikapur of Ishwardi upazila yesterday.

The dead were identified as Md Ajmat Hossain, 35, of village Bangabari in Pabna Sadar upazila and Gulzar Hossain, 50, of village Khidirpur of Atghoria upazila of the district.

Police and the locals said the accident occurred when a Kushtia-bound passenger bus of 'Fuljhori Paribahan' collided head-on with a truck as the truck driver lost his control over the steering, leaving Ajmat dead on the spot.

Gulzar succumbed to his injuries at Ishwardi health complex while the injured were rushed to Ishwardi Health Complex.

Meanwhile, an identified person was killed and three others were injured as a human hauler popularly known as Nasiman turned upside down on Tuesday night at the village Tolot in Santhia upazila in the district.

The injured identified as Rawshan, 18, Romon, 35, and Mohammed Ali, 25, were admitted to Santhia upazila health complex.



PHOTO: STAR

Recipients of Dean's Award of Faculty of Social Sciences pose for photograph with Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique at the award giving ceremony at the Teacher-Student Centre auditorium yesterday.

SWINE FLU STRAIN

Recruit pharmacists in dispensaries

BPS urges govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Pharmaceutical Society (BPS) yesterday demanded the government recruit graduate pharmacists in pharmacies where the drug would be sold to ensure rational use of the antiviral drug of swine flu.

Those pharmacists could prescribe the patients and would keep record whether the patients are using it rationally and completing the course, they added.

The speakers said this at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city, adding that irrational use of drug would create resistance among the virus. The government should keep an eye on it.

They also demanded the government waive import duty and value added tax (VAT) from the imported raw material of Oseltamivir to reach the drug to the people at low cost.

BPS General Secretary Selim Al Azad Chowdhury said currently the drug is being sold at Tk 180 per capsule. But soon it would come down to Tk 150. But still the price is higher for most of the people and the government should consider it.

"If the price of raw material could be reduced, the price of the drug would be reduced to 25 percent to 30 percent," he said.

The speakers said people need not get panicked about it

as since September 6 this year, some 105 patients among 3987 swine flu cases were died in India while the deaths are 72 among 7000 in Malaysia, eight among 1055 in Indonesia and seven among 7544 in Japan.

In Bangladesh, three people have so far been died of swine flu, they said suggesting that what people need is just to maintain personal hygiene,

hospitals have been providing treatment of swine flu.

ICDDR,B has also started to treat the patients with swine flu strains along with its research activities.

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), most patients infected with the pandemic virus continue to experience typical influenza symptoms and fully recover



PHOTO: STAR

BPS General Secretary Selim Al Azad Chowdhury addresses a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city yesterday.

covering mouth and nose while they are sneezing and coughing and seeking treatment if flu-like illness is felt.

They also urged the owners of private hospitals to provide treatment at reduced or free of cost.

However, currently the entire district-level hospitals and some 15 medical colleges and hospitals and eight private

within a week, even without any form of medical treatment. Healthy patients need not be treated with antivirals.

Dr Abu Shara Shamsur Rouf of the department of Pharmaceutical Technology of Dhaka University, Dr Shitesh Chandra Basar, Assistant Prof AK Lutful Kabir and Joyonto Kumer Dev also spoke.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Former adviser to a caretaker government Rasheda K Chowdhury speaks at a three-day international conference on 'Consultation on Interfaith Dialogue: Building Communities of Solidarity and Mutual Interest Across Faith Boundaries' at Brac Centre for Development Management at Rajendrapur in Gazipur yesterday.

Enhance commitment to respect other faiths

Speakers ask religious leaders, int'l bodies

METRO DESK

Speakers at a conference yesterday observed that religious leaders and international organisations will have to play the key role in enhancing commitment to respect and value people of other faiths.

They were speaking at the sessions on the second day of a three-day international conference on 'Consultation on Interfaith Dialogue: Building Communities of Solidarity and Mutual Interest Across Faith Boundaries' at Brac Centre for Development Management at Rajendrapur in Gazipur, says a press release.

The Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Department for Mission and Development (DMD) in cooperation with RDRS Bangladesh, Bangladesh Lutheran Church (BLC) and Bangladesh Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (BNELC) organised the conference attended by more than 50 participants from Hong Kong, India, Nepal, Indonesia, Jordan, Korea, Thailand, Israel

as well as from different parts of Bangladesh.

"People of Bangladesh always have the respect for people of other faiths and the practice has developed over a long period of time," former adviser to a caretaker government Rasheda K Chowdhury said while moderating a session yesterday.

Vice Chancellor of South East University Prof Shamsher Ali urged the media all over the world to project on communalities of different faiths to bring harmony and peace among the people of diverse faiths.

Lutheran World Federation Vice President Dr Munib A Younan, General Secretary of Interfaith Coalition for Peace in India Packaim Samuel, RDRS Bangladesh Executive Director Kamaluddin Akbar and KOINONIA Bangladesh Executive Director Dr Dennis D Datta spoke on the occasion.

Stressing the need for continued dialogue among the people of different faiths, Munib Younan said, "By adopt-

ing this kind of prophetic dialogue for life, we engage our faiths in ways that address people's sufferings, challenge structures of injustice and build modern civil society."

Packaim Samuel said around the world the need for interfaith dialogue was identified as an urgent solution to counterbalance extremist religious violence.

He underscored the need for the continuation of the interfaith movement and to this end, he put forward some suggestions that included fostering greater cooperation between religious communities and international organisations, especially those working within the UN system, by strengthening inter-religious organisations and becoming more effective at translating the new international discourse of standards into a language that speaks to the respective religious visions of peace that religious communities have been fostering for centuries if not millennium.



PHOTO: STAR

Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain gives away sewing machine to a participant of a vocational training programme for child workers at Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.

3rd phase of project to eliminate child labour after Ramadan

Says labour minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday said his ministry would start laying groundwork for third phase of its ongoing project 'to eliminate child labour from hazardous work' after the holy month of Ramadan.

Explicit planning and evaluation activities would be conducted based on recommendations from experts and stakeholders to start activities for the next phase, he added.

The minister said this as the chief guest at the 'Tools and machinery distribution ceremony' organised by Padakkhep, a non-government organisation, for laudable performers at the vocational training programme for child workers.

"As a part of the action plan, the ministry has been operating the project under which around 30,000 child labour engaged in hazardous work were provided with vocational and skill training from 2006 to 2009," he said.

The minister said, "I will speak to experts at the ministry and elsewhere to come up with explicit plans for the next phase of the project," adding that it is not possible to eliminate child labour overnight.

Terming hazardous child labour a social

disgrace, he stressed the need to identify the causes of child labour first and then action plan would be taken accordingly to eliminate child labour gradually.

Speakers at the programme put emphasis on the importance of providing underprivileged and deprived children with proper guidelines and directions towards a bright future.

Wahida Banu, director (programmes) of Aparajeyo Bangladesh, said: "There have been plethora of instances where children are being provided with training but there have been hardly any initiative to help them get established and direct their lives towards a secure, bright future."

The second phase of the project ended on June 30 under which around 30,000 child workers from Dhaka and Narayanganj received vocational training in skills development through 76 non-government organisations.

A total of 482 child workers were given tools and machines at the programme for their notable performances in the vocational training in the second phase of the project.

Secretary for Labour and Employment and Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Mohammad Ataharul Islam presided over the programme.

Teachers' salary stopped for not buying DC's books in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

As the private school teachers did not buy six poetry books authored by Bogra Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Iftekharul Islam the upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) are not allegedly signing the salary bills of the teachers.

The DC admitted that he had sent his books to the UNOs for sale but denied the reports that the UNOs are not signing the salary bill for not buying the books.

Sources say salary bills of 30 institutions at Adamdighi upazila were returned till yesterday saying that those would not be signed if six books worth Tk 1125 are not bought.

Head of an institution, whose bills were not signed by Adamdighi upazila nirbahi officer Ibrahim Hossain, alleged that despite repeated requests the UNO did not sign the salary bills of his teachers.

UNOs of Dhanat, Bogra Sadar and other upazilas have also admitted that six books written by Iftekharul Islam were sent to them for sale.

But they denied any attempt to sell the books forcibly to anybody.

1,540 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,540 people on various charges in separate drives across the country in 24 hours until 6:00am yesterday.

SKILLED MIGRANTS UNDER TIER 2 UK govt accepts MAC recommendations

UNB, Dhaka

The UK government on September 7 announced decided to accept the recent recommendations by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) for skilled migrants under Tier 2 of the points based system.

The MAC, an independent body of economists that provides the UK government with evidence-based advice on migration, made 17 recommendations in its report of August 19.

The government has considered these carefully and decided to accept all the MAC's recommendations, said a release of British High Commission in Dhaka.

UK Home Secretary Alan Johnson said, "The introduction of the points based system has radically improved our ability to respond quickly to changing economic circumstances. We have now accepted all of the Committee's recommendations and we will continue to work with them to make sure that we use the flexibility in the points based system to the best advantage of society and the economy."

"These changes will ensure that businesses can recruit the skilled workers that the economy needs, but not at the expense of British workers, nor as a cheaper alternative to investing in the skills of the

existing workforce," said Alan.

There will be no immediate changes to Tier 2 while the government consults key stakeholders, including business, on the details of implementation. The changes are expected to come into force in the spring of 2010.

The MAC found that Tier 2 is, as a whole, well designed for achieving its economic aims; the resident labour market test (RLMT) route plays a key role in supporting public services; and the intra-company transfer route (ICT) is important in ensuring the UK remains globally competitive and continues to attract high levels of inward investment.

It did, however, recommend adjustments to the design and regulation of Tier 2. The recommendations are that:

- All jobs must be advertised in the UK for 4 weeks (extended from 2 weeks) before companies can seek to employ individuals from outside Europe.

- An individual must work for the company for 12 months (raised from 6 months) to qualify for an intra-company transfer.

- The minimum prospective salary that will allow an individual to qualify as a skilled worker and be eligible to work in the UK will also rise from 17,000 to 20,000 British Pound.

18 DU students get Dean's Award

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Faculty of Social Sciences at Dhaka University (DU) yesterday conferred Dean's Award on 18 students of different departments under the faculty for their outstanding academic performances.

Each student, who obtained the best result in their honours and masters examinations in 2005 and 2006, received a certificate and a crest at a ceremony at the Teacher-Student Centre auditorium in the morning.

Congratulating the awardees Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said a knowledge-based society is essential to face the challenges of 21st century.

The DU students will have to pave the way for establishing the knowledge-based society, he added.

Prof Arefin called upon the awardees to work for the people of backward community in the society and work honestly in their professional life.

The awardees of 2006 are SM Abdullah of Economics, Mohammad Moynul Haque of Political Science, Humayun Kabir of Sociology, Ibrahim Bin Harun of Mass Communication and Journalism, Mohammad Bashir Mia Khadem of Public Administration, Fahmid Al Ziad of Anthropology, Ziaul Haque of Peace and Conflict Studies, Nafisa Tandem of Women and Gender Studies, Abul Bashir Md Omar Faruque and Khandaker Farah Nayer Zabeen of Development Studies.

The awardees of 2005 are Ahmed Tariq Aziz of Economics, Muhammad Badrul Hasan of Political Science, Jalal Uddin of Sociology, Mohammad Raisul Islam of Mass Communication and Journalism, Syeda Nuzhat-e-Ibrat of Public Administration, Sumiya Habib of Anthropology, Charaj Ahmed of Peace and Conflict Studies and Umme Busra Fateha Sultana of Women and Gender Studies.

All awardees obtained first position in first class or secured the highest CGPA not below 3.75 out of 4 without any break of study in their honours or masters examinations.

The dean's award for the students under the faculty was introduced in 2006 with a view to appreciating and recognising the highest merit of the students.

Acting dean of the faculty Prof Shaikh Abdus Salam presided over the function while Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman were present on the occasion.

Gazi, Afzal new president, secy of DJHC

UNB, Dhaka

Ruhul Amin Gazi and Afzal Hossain Palash were elected president and secretary of Dhaka Journalists' Housing Cooperatives Ltd (DJHC) on Tuesday.

The election, followed by the annual general meeting of the Samity, was held at the Samity Bhaban at Mirpur in the city.

Other office-bearers are Vice President Mir Mustafiz Ahmed, Joint Secretary Moazzem Hossain Chowdhury and Treasurer Rafique Uddin.

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