

'Enact law to ensure rights of domestic workers'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday called for enactment of a new law recognising domestic workers as formal labourers with a view to ensuring their rights.

The Labour Act 2006 excludes domestic workers and an amendment to it might not serve the purpose of protecting their rights, as the labour act was designed specially for workers of the formal sectors, they added.

Domestic workers are especially vulnerable. So, a separate law is needed to protect their certain rights, they stressed.

Gender Resource Centre of Democracywatch organised the meeting titled 'Safeguarding the rights of the domestic workers: Existing laws and ways to move forward' at the National Press Club.

Dr Naim Ahmed, an advocate of Supreme Court, presented the keynote paper at the

meeting.

In his paper, Dr Naim said that section 1 (4) (Na) of the Labour Act 2006 expressly says that the law shall not be applicable to domestic workers, which means domestic workers cannot claim any of the rights guaranteed by the act. There is no scope for them to go to labour court either.

The existing laws including the Penal Code, The Children Act 1974, Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000 are not sufficient to protect their rights either, he added.

There are no national data on the domestic workers in Bangladesh. Different NGOs working with the issue often put the number in between 20 to 30 lakh. Of the total number, about 80 percent are women and girls.

Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain O Shalish Kendra (ASK), said, "Domestic workers are indispensable members of our family,

but we often take them for granted and we do not give them the respect they deserve."

They should be recognised as formal labourers and brought under the protection of law, she added.

Lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said that people join the undignified profession of domestic workers due to poverty. Poverty alleviation with employment generation and education is the only way to make their lives better.

Mahbubul Alam, editor of The Independent, Gagan Rajbhandari of International Labour Organisation, Dr Faustina Pereira, director, Human Rights and Legal Services, Brac, Taleya Rahman, executive director of Democracywatch, Tahrunisa Abdullah, project director, Democracywatch, and Mansura Akter, coordinator of Gender Resource Centre of Democracywatch, also spoke.



British Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government John Denham calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office in the city yesterday.

Tarique to lead future politics

Say pro-BNP intellectuals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pro-BNP intellectuals yesterday said Tarique Rahman would lead the future politics of the country as he made 'multifaceted contribution' to the political arena.

Termining Tarique, senior vice chairman of the main opposition party, a 'matured politician', they said he would soon return home as a 'piece of gold'.

"Tarique must understand if he made any mistake. He is now staying outside the country due to some particular reasons. But I hope he will return home as a piece of gold," said Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman, former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University.

BNP was detached from the grass roots but Tarique came to forefront and took lead of them, he added.

Prof Rahman said this at a discussion and video show organised on the occasion of 5th anniversary of union representatives' conference of BNP at the National Press Club in the city.

Ajker Projonmo Forum, a pro-BNP organisation, organised the programme.

Tarique Rahman, elder son of Khaleida Zia, initiated the conference in 2005 from Thakurgaon when he was senior joint secretary general of the party.

Former Dhaka University (DU) VCs Prof Emajuddin Ahmed and Moniruzzaman Mian, Prof Mahbubullah, Prof Sadrul Amin and Prof Nazrul Islam and journalist Rejwan Siddique took part in the discussion.

"Late president Zia started the politics of the grass roots and Tarique initiated new politics in BNP following his father's directions," said Prof Emajuddin.

Prof Mahbubullah said the beginning of Tarique in politics was good and he was the necessity to take the party forward to future.

A number of BNP leader, including Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and Abdullah Al Noman, and hundreds of grassroots-level leaders were also present at the programme.



Prof Emajuddin Ahmed speaks at a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

BANGABANDHU MURDER

Govt urged to find out masterminds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion urged the government to find out the masterminds behind the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The killers who executed the assassination plan have been sentenced to death, but the masterminds behind the plan still remain untouched, they said.

Krishak Sramik Janata League organised the discussion to mark its 10th founding anniversary at the National Press Club in the city.

If the government fails to try the masterminds, the trial of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Raman murder case would remain incomplete, Krishak Sramik Janata League President Kader Siddiqui said.

Demanding immediate trial of the war criminals, he said the

government might face difficulties in trying the war criminals, because they are strong both socially and nationally. So, the government will have to step forward carefully.

About the prime minister's upcoming India visit, Kader Siddiqui said it would be better for her, if she discussed with opposition political parties in parliament or with experts and civil society members the issues, which

she will raise during the talk with the Indian government.

CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim said a new alliance will be formed with the pro-liberation and left-leaning forces to defeat the anti-liberation and fundamentalist forces.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Rob) President ASM Abdur Rob, Prof Syed Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University and columnist Abul Maksud also spoke.

Call to fight domestic violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday made a call to fight domestic violence in the country.

They made the call at the meeting titled 'Raising voices against domestic violence: Let's unite our efforts' jointly organised by Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) and Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at LGED Bhaban in the city.

The meeting had brought representatives from different professional organisations, civil society members from 64 districts across the country who have records of working for the rights of women and children.

'National Alliance against Domestic Violence (NADV)', a network of organisations working on the issue, will work as a service providing organisation under BNWLA to implement the proposed law to check domestic violence.

NADV will take initiatives to prevent domestic violence and sensitise the grass roots to the issue. It will also submit an annual report on the implementation of the prepared law along with collecting necessary data on domestic violence in respective fields.

UPPR-UNDP Project Director Md Azhar Ali, Arpita Das of MJF and BNWLA Executive Director Advocate Salma Ali spoke at the meeting.



Summit Industrial and Mercantile Corporation (Pvt) Ltd (SIMCL) donated a microbus to Assistance for Blind Children (ABC) recently as part of their social obligation. Aziza Aziz Khan and Anjuman Aziz Khan, directors of SIMCL, and Lutfa Islam, president of ABC, pose for photograph at the key handover ceremony. The microbus will help ABC conduct eyesight restoration programme to prevent blindness among women and children in rural Bangladesh.

EDUCATION POLICY

Publicity vital to beat propaganda

Speakers tell roundtable

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said the government and progressive forces should conduct a massive publicity supporting the proposed education policy in a bid to counter the anti-liberation forces' propaganda against the policy.

The proposed education policy should be implemented immediately coming out from the previous bad reputation of not implementation of any education policy after formulation in the country, they added.

The roundtable titled 'Limitations of the proposed education policy and achievements of students' movement' was organised by Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree, a left-leaning student body, at Ducus building at Dhaka University.

The speakers called on the progressive student bodies to play a vital role in letting people know about the positive sides of the education policy and resist propaganda against it.

Nuh-ul-Alam Lenin, publication secretary of Awami League, said: "There is a tragedy in our country that no education policy is implemented finally."

He stressed the importance of implementing the policy, saying that its limitations will come out after implementation.

Prof Sadeka Halim, member of the education policy formulation committee, said one limitation of the proposed policy is "the lack of a specific philosophy".

She also underscored the importance of implementing the policy and said through implementation, its limitations will be evident.

Bangladesh Chhatra Andolon President Kanak Barua said progressive forces should work unitedly to protect the policy from the conspiracy hatched by the anti-liberation and communal forces.

Marking the limitations of the policy, Bangladesh Chhatra Union President Manabendra Deb said there is no specific direction in the proposed policy to curb commercialisation of education in the private universities.

Progressive student bodies will have to continue movement against the commercialisation of education unless the trend is stopped, he added.

Reading out a keynote paper, Assistant Vice-President of Chhatra Moitree Bappa Basu placed a few characteristics of a democratic education policy. These include untrack and equal system, secularism, scope for creating patriotism among students and science-based education.

14 sugar traders asked to appear before trial court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday directed 14 sugar traders to appear before the trial court in Jessore within four weeks in connection with two cases filed on charge of illegally stocking huge quantity of sugar in September last year.

A four-member bench headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam, however, directed the government not to harass or arrest them in connection with the cases within this period.

The apex court passed the direction after hearing two petitions filed by the government against the High Court (HC) verdict granting them bail in the cases.

On October 1 last year, district marketing officer of Jessore Sujat Hossain Khan

filed the cases with Abhaynagar Police Station against 14 sugar traders of Jessore and Khulna.

In the case statement, he said the defendants hoarded 71,010 sacks of sugar instead of supplying them to markets in September the same year.

The traders are Abdul Wahab, Anisur Rahman alias Boro Anis, Anisur Rahman alias Chhoto Anis, Abdul Wadud, Modhusudan Saha, Raju Ahmed, Mohammad Amin, Chitta Ranjan Kundu, Hafizur Rahman Babu, Safer Rahman, Rafiqul Islam, Alok Kumar Kundu, Sirajul Islam and Sarwar Hossain.

The HC on November 15 last year in two separate verdicts granted them bail in the cases.

Additional Attorney General AKM Zahurul Hoque appeared for the government while Barrister Rafique-Ul stood for the sugar traders.

United International University

FIRST CONVOCATION

The first Convocation of the United International University (UIU) is going to be held very soon. Students who have already completed their Bachelor and Master's degree at UIU are advised to register themselves for the convocation by filling up the **Registration Form** available from Office of the Registrar/UIU website by January 20, 2010. The form may be submitted between 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on work days.

Note: Students failing to register within deadline may not be allowed to attend the convocation.

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EDEXCEL JAN 10

Exams Start on 7 January

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