

Ctg realtors woo huge domestic migrant workers

ARUN BIAKSH DEY

Domestic migrant workers from different parts of the country muster up confidence in the real estate sector in the port city of Chittagong.

The real estate companies see the port city as the most favourable place for their business next to the capital city. Hundreds of projects are being implemented in the city as well as on the outskirts involving thousands of workers.

Sources said about two lakh workers are working under different projects in the sector in the port city and 80 percent of them are domestic migrant workers. They come here from different districts of the country with their relatives.

Besides, child labour is a common scenario in most of the construction sites.

Belal Hossain, a 22-year-old mason of Mymensingh, said he has been working for seven years here. "At first I worked as a helping hand of the workers for Tk 75 a day," Belal said, adding that he earns Tk 200 a day as an apprentice while a senior mason gets Tk 400 a day.

Harun, a 24-year-old rod fabricator of Cox's Bazar, said they are living in the city amid hardship as the wage is too poor compared with the price hike of the daily necessities.

Moreover, the contractors and the owners delay in proving the full salary to the workers. They pay the workers half of the wages everyday and the rest give in their needs. Many of the workers complain that they do not get the money on time.

The workers do not get any money if they do not come to work due to illness or any other problem, said the workers.

If a worker falls sick for five to seven days and fails to attend the site, he will not get any payment for those days, Harun said.

Besides, no risk allowance is given though they work without any safety measures.

Even workers who have been working with the construction firm for years do not get any bonus or incentives.

Faruk, a pile-head breaker, said they are to buy drinking water as well as water for domestic uses.

Osman, an earth-cutter, said some realtors present them clothes including sharees, lungis



Workers at work without safety measures in a construction site in the port city.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

and money in cash on different occasions like Eid-ul-Fitr.

A good number of female workers are also seen alongside the male workers who are engaged in breaking bricks for making concrete. Although they work as same as their male partners but not paid as much as the male worker.

Sheuli of Noakhali said she gets the half wage of a male worker although she works

more than them.

Suranjit Mahajan, a civil engineer, said government should make a policy to ensure rights of the labourers working in the real estate sector.

The workers in the sector are not organised to realise their demands, he added.

Kazi Aynul Hoque, former chairman and member of the executive committee of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh

(REHAB), Chittagong chapter, said the realtors have taken some initiatives for workers' welfare but they lose their interest in this regard as the workers do not stay at one site for a long time.

Aynul stressed the need for a training institution in Bangladesh to train up the workers of the sector. "Why would you give subsidy to someone if you do not get feedback from him?" Aynul said.

Sources said most of the workers in piling section are from Gaibandha and Shariatpur, in

demolition from Noakhali, majority in rod fabrication section are from Bhola, Rajshahi, Thakurgaon, Netrakona, Rangpur and Noakhali, majority of masons are from Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Mymensingh, Rangpur and Bhola, majority in casting section from Barisal and Bhola, majority in carpentry from Rajshahi, Gopalganj, Faridpur and Bikrampur, in plumbing section from Barisal and Comilla and in painting section are from Madaripur, Barisal and Dhaka.

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CSE support for Mirsarai road crash victim families

Chittagong Stock exchange (CSE) donated Tk10,000 on Friday to each family of the deceased and the injured students in the recent road accident in Mirsarai.

CSE Vice President Tareq Kamal, Director Abu Sayed Md Shahidullah, CEO(Current Charge) Syed Sajid Husain and member Akhter Parvez handed over cheques to victims' family at Mayani Union Parishad.

CSE Company Secretary Ahmad Dawood, Mirsarai UNO Sayed Kutub, UP Chairmen Master Kabir Nizami and Shahidul Kader Chowdhury were present on the occasion.

Need for standard education underscored

Speakers on Friday at a roundtable underscored the need for establishing quality education.

They said though standard of education has been achieved in many aspects like primary education and in rate of passing but establishing standard universal education still could not be achieved across the country.

Fifty percent of problems can be solved with the initiative of the institutions itself, they said.

Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC) Chittagong Research Initiative organised the roundtable titled "Collective effort in developing standard of education -- strategy to progress collecting experiences of successful institutions" with the support of AK Khan Foundation Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) auditorium.

They said only four percent students, from 17 to 23 age groups, get admission for the higher education that is alarming for the society.

Father Benjamin Costa, principal of Notre Dame College, Dr Shahanara Begum, principal of Ideal School and College, Kanij Mahmuda Akhtar, principal of Siddeshwari School and College, Salehuddin Kasem Khan, trustee of AK Khan Group, Prof Abul Kasem of Chittagong University, Suman Barua, College Inspector of Chittagong Board, spoke at the programme.

PPRC Chittagong Research Initiative Executive Chairman Hossain Zillur Rahman moderated the roundtable.

Fame cultural festival ends

A five-day cultural festival was concluded on Friday in the port city.

Fame, a school of dance, drama and music, organised the festival at Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC), marking its 12 years with a slogan "Cultivate culture and beauty in practice and mind".

The festival featured dance drama, classical dance, dramas and performances of kids.

First day of the festival started with the drama 'The lesson' staged by the students of drama department of Fame.

The second day showcased the drama "Sab Jhare Jai", based on Samuel Becket's play 'All that fall'.

The third day started with classical 'Kathak' dance performed by Tilottama Sengupta. Artists of Fame staged the drama "Amriter Sandhane".

Raktakorabi, a famous drama of poet Rabindranath

rendered classical songs.

Prama convocation held

The convocation of a four-month long workshop on standard pronunciation and recitation of the 28th batch of Prama Abritti Sagthan was held on Friday in the port city.

The Dainik Azadi Editor MA Malek was present as the chief guest with Prama President Rashed Hasan in the



Children from Fame, school of dance, drama and music, stage a drama titled 'Ichchhepuran' at Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC) on July 22.

PHOTO: STAR

Tagore, was staged on the third day of the festival.

Dance drama 'Krisna Kali' and the play 'Trio' were also staged at the festival.

Children from Fame staged "Ichchhepuran" on the last day of the festival.

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Classical music evening held

Classical Students Forum, an organisation working on classical music in the port city, arranged the music evening at city's Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC) on Sunday.

The programme was organised on the 42nd birth anniversary of Ustad Swarnamoy Chakraborty.

Prof Jamal Nazrul Islam inaugurated the programme as the chief guest while Pandit Bijon Chowdhury, Prof Rita Dutta and Prof Nasim Banu were present as the special guests.

Tanzina Alam Riya, Pramit Barua, Anamika Das Chowdhury, Kanak Chanpa Kaystha, and Litan Das

chair. Prof Golam Mostafa was present as the special guest at the event.

MA Malek said healthy cultural activities will give proper direction to the young generation through which creativity will flourish.

Prama General Secretary Bishwajit Paul, Tajul Islam, Mohit Biswas also spoke at the event.

Body to monitor hawkers' business

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) formed a ten-member committee on Tuesday to bring discipline in the business of hawkers on the footpaths in the port city during the Ramadan and Eid-ul-Fitr.

Chairman of CCC Standing Committee on Communication Mohammad Ismail was elected convener of the committee, said a press release.

The committee will monitor the situation on roads and footpaths and ensure smooth traffic. CCC will also deploy volunteers and community police from the hawkers to control the situation on roads.

No sign of CU senate elections shortly

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN

The senate of Chittagong University (CU) is being run by the registered graduate representatives elected 25 years ago and the teachers' representatives elected 10 years ago.

Members of senate, the highest policy-making body, urged the authorities at its 23rd session on June 29 to hold elections in two categories (registered graduate and teachers' representatives) to accommodate freshers. Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Anwarul Azim Arif presided over the session.

Election for the registered graduate category was held in November 2 in 1986 that expired in 1989 and teachers' categories on February 10 in 2001, said Prof Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, a senate member.

In these two categories, there are now around 30 to 35 representatives only, out of 58 posts, he said, adding that election in these two categories should be held immediately and regularly to give place for the new ones.

He said CU Central Students Union (CUCSU) election should also be held to ensure student representatives in senate for their interest as well as the university's.

Prof Dr Imran Hossain, also a senate member, said election in the two categories is not being held for long due to lack of sincerity of the university authority. He emphasised on holding elections as most of the existing members in the two categories are irregular in holding meetings. Of the teachers' representatives, many of them are now on deputation, few have gone on education leave and few have retired.

Student's representatives never got place in the senate although there is a provision for five student representatives, he said.

University sources said there are 86 members in seven categories and in four categories -- 20 members are selected directly. Of the four categories, government nominates five officials, speaker five parliament members, chancellor five noted educationists and university syndicate nominates five members from various research institutions for the senate. In these categories, new members are being nominated on a regular basis.

In the rest three categories, there are 25 elected registered graduate representatives, 33 elected teachers' representatives and five students nominated by CUCSU. But in these categories, elections are not being held for long.

Moreover, VC, Pro-VC and chairman of Secondary and Higher-secondary Education Board, Comilla, are ex-officio members.

The CUCSU election is not being held for more than 20 years and there are no student representatives in senate too since then.

Mir Kamrul Hasan Tutul, a student of communication and journalism department, said their actual problems are being overlooked as there is no student representatives in senate. To put up their demands to the university authorities, student representatives should be in the senate, Tutul added.

Prof Dr Md Sekander Chowdhury, general secretary of Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA), said elections in the two categories as well as CUCSU should be held immediately.

Prof Azim said initiatives to hold election to teachers and registered graduate representatives of senate will be taken as soon as possible in the light of the University Act-1973. He said they have also plan to hold CUCSU election and cooperation of different student organisations on the campus is needed in this regard.