

Cabinet okays draft labour policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft of National Labour Policy 2012 to ensure rights, welfare and dignity of both local and expatriate labourers.

The approval came at the weekly cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was in the chair.

"Following a brief discussion, the cabinet decided to finalise the draft incorporating expatriate labourers into it," Cabinet Secretary Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told reporters after the meeting.

A labour policy was last introduced in 1980 with no update or amendment since then, though there has been a considerable change in the sector at national and international level.

Mosharraf also said the draft of the new labour policy has incorporated expatriate workers into it, put emphasis on the women and child labourers.

He mentioned that the cabinet emphasised declaration of expatriate workers as a separate sector and said the draft policy incorporated labour welfare issue into CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) apart from including the Vision 2021.

Mosharraf said the draft labour policy has been prepared in consultation with all the stakeholders, including government, workers and the owners.

"The policy will be implemented through various instruments," he told the reporters, adding, if needed, laws will be enacted to implement the policy.



The atmosphere in schools around the country was filled with clamour and peals of joyous laughter and achievement as SSC examinees celebrated their successes after the results were published yesterday. (Clockwise from top left) Shamsul Hoque Khan High School, Demra, Ideal School and College, Viqarunnisa Noon School, Dhaka Residential Model College, Motijheel Government Boys' High School, Monipur High School, Willes Little Flower School and College and Dhaka Cantonment Girls' Public School and College. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR, FOCUS BANGLA, ISPR



Dipu Moni joins NAM meet tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

After attending the first meeting of the Bangladesh-India Joint Commission in New Delhi today, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni will travel to Egypt to join the NAM Ministerial Meeting and then fly to Turkmenistan to attend an OIC meeting on Muslim refugees.

Today, she is scheduled to call on Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh at 5:30pm. She will also meet Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal and Home Minister P Chidambaram, said foreign ministry officials.

The opening ceremony of the two-day Ministerial Meeting for the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) will be held at the Red Sea resorts, Sharm-el-Sheikh, tomorrow.

A meeting of senior NAM officials kicked off yesterday.

During her stay, Dipu Moni will hold bilateral meetings with Egyptian Foreign Affairs Minister Mohamed Amr on Thursday and is expected to meet ministers of NAM member states, said the officials. As of 2012, the NAM has 120 member states.

On Thursday, Dipu Moni will fly for Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan, to attend the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) sponsored two-day international ministerial conference on "Refugees in the Muslim World", beginning on May 11.

Indo-Bangla team's Tripura visit in June

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

A joint team of Indian and Bangladeshi officials will visit northeastern Indian state of Tripura next month to make an on-the-spot study of infrastructure for trade including Border Haat.

Tripura Industries and Commerce Minister Jiten Chowdhury yesterday said the team would visit various Land Custom Stations (LCS) and the places selected for border haats.

Border haats are free trade zones where people from 10km radius of border of both the countries can sell their products.

Putin's new term to bolster Dhaka-Moscow ties

Hope eminent citizens

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some eminent personalities yesterday hoped that the relationship between Bangladesh and Russia would be strengthened during the new term of President Vladimir Putin.

For stronger relations, they stressed joint ventures to have "visible development" in Bangladesh in the sectors of energy, science-technology, education and culture.

The discussants also hoped that Russia would play a significant role in maintaining global peace and stability in the future.

The hopes came at a discussion organised in the capital on the occasion of Putin's oath taking as Russia's president for the third term yesterday.

"We hope that Russia would play an important role in the development of our energy sector", said Asaduzzaman Noor, a lawmaker and noted theatre personality.

Noor, also secretary general of Bangladesh-Russia Friendship Society, urged Russia to open scholarships for Bangladesh students to facilitate their higher education in Russia.

Russian Ambassador in Dhaka Alexander A Nikolaev said bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Russia increased by 40 percent from 2010 to 2011 in terms of cur-

rencies.

Describing the current status of joint-venture Nuclear Power Project, he said the project's agreement was being delayed because it was very complicated.

He informed that Russian government's high-ups may visit Bangladesh after "appropriate" invitation from Bangladesh government.

Moderating the discussion, noted economist Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya said Russia needed to modernise its economy and move towards commodity-dependent economy.

"I think Russia will add a new dimension to international relations with much more importance to Asia and Asian economy".

Former ambassadors Harun ur Rashid, Maj Gen (retd) Amsa Amin, Dhaka Wasa Board Chairman Golam Mostafa, among others, also spoke at the discussion.

Russian Embassy in Bangladesh and the Russian Centre of Science and Culture jointly organised the discussion on "election of Vladimir Putin and Russia-Bangladesh relations".

Before the discussion, Putin's swearing-in ceremony was screened live from Moscow. Putin swore to respect and protect the rights and freedoms of the people. He was elected as president for the third term this March.

Gone are the days of hartal

Says Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gone are the days of hartal.

So said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

"You cannot call hartal anymore even if you want it, because the pace of economic progress will stop hartal," Muhith said after a foundation-laying ceremony of the second building of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) in the city's Hatkhola area yesterday.

There is no chance to look behind as the economy is progressing at a faster rate, he said. Echoing the views of the minister, FBCCI President AK Azad said the political unrest will paralysed the economy.

"We want both the government and the opposition party to get rid of the hartal culture," Azad said.

"We, along with foreign investors, are in a dilemma whether we will invest further or not due to frequent strikes," he said.

"People don't want the democracy that allows killing of human beings. Businesspeople don't want the democracy that does not allow business activities," Azad said.

"Please think for a while about the businesses before calling a hartal," he said.

Azad said, even four years ago the size of the national budget was at around Tk 92,000 crore of which Tk 64,000 crore was collected from the

businesses as revenues.

The size of the national budget for the upcoming fiscal year will be at Tk 198,000 crore of which Tk 112,000 crore will come from the businesses as revenues, he said.

Azad also urged the government to maintain a stable bank interest rate for the sake of economic growth and investment.

Former FBCCI president Annisul Huq called for a neutral role of the apex trade body in the political affairs of the country.

Businesspeople across the country face a lot of troubles due to the absence of chamber offices at the district level, Huq said.

The federation has already bought lands for 33 chambers in different districts, he said.

Another former FBCCI president, Salman F Rahman, said the trade body will have to be financially strong to play more roles in the economy.

Kazi Akramuddin Ahmed, a representative of the Bangladesh Association of Banks, said the bank interest rate is stable now.

Akram Hossain, another former FBCCI president, said the culture of strikes will take a toll on the economy.

The FBCCI bought 14 kathas of land with a government's fund at Hatkhola in Dhaka at a cost of Tk 15 crore and it has a plan to construct a 10-storey building mainly to accommodate the trade associations and chambers across the country.

Ilias tried to contact lawyer before missing: IO

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP leader M Ilias Ali had repeatedly tried to communicate with one of his lawyers over cell phone an hour before his missing but failed, an investigation officer (IO) told a Dhaka court yesterday.

Banani Police Station Officer-in-Charge and also the IO of the case Kazi Mainul Islam said this while he was submitting his eight reports on the progress of investigation into disappearances of

former lawmaker Ilias Ali and his driver.

Ilias, BNP organising secretary (Sylhet Division), and his driver remained missing since April 18.

In his report, Mainul said before his missing on the night of April 17, Ilias along with his five supporters had been staying at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel for over an hour and had repeatedly tried to contact his lawyer, Khondaker Ahsan Tarique. But Ahsan did not response to it.

Moreover, Ilias had talked to one of his relatives, businessman Mohammad Sajal, and his family members at the hotel. Later, he went out of the hotel at 12:15am on that night and left there with his driver on a private car, Mainul added.

On April 19, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Moniruzzaman directed Banani police to submit reports on the progress of investigation into their disappearances, in every 48 hours.

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