

Set up rehab centre for RMG workers

TIB urges BGMEA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has urged the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) to set up a permanent rehabilitation centre for garment factory workers.

It also urged the government to ensure exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for Savar tragedy, said a TIB press release issued yesterday on the occasion of May Day.

The government should publish the full list of the dead and injured in Rana Plaza collapse, it said adding that the BGMEA should establish a specialised hospital to provide emergency treatment and to introduce life insurance for the garment workers.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said, "The process of disbursing compensation money should be transparent and free from bureaucratic tangle."

He also demanded implementation of labour act in line with the international labour organization's standard and trade unions for ensuring workers' rights.

Good political will is needed to get garment industry rid from the crisis, he said.

Urging foreign companies involved in garment industry to be more responsible and to play more active role he said in the face of a corrupt portion of factory owners who have tendency to remain above law, foreign companies have no scope to remain silent.

If the industry face set back on charge of violation of workers right, it would be a punishment to workers especially to female workers, he added.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Hundreds of stick-wielding garment workers protest the deaths in the Rana Plaza collapse just a few hundred metres from the site of the disaster yesterday. Inset, a policeman charges baton on a demonstrator.



HC questions legality of placing held bloggers before media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday questioned the legality of law enforcers' action to produce three detained suspected bloggers before the media earlier this month.

The law enforcers held Subrata Adhikari Shuvo, Russel Parvez and Mashiur Rahman Biplob on charge of making "derogatory comments about Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)" on the internet and produced them before the media on April 2.

Yesterday, the HC issued a rule upon the government to explain in three weeks producing the suspected bloggers before the media should not be declared illegal.

It came up with the rule after hearing a writ petition filed by human rights activist Sultana Kamal, four Dhaka University teachers and a Jahangirnagar University teacher saying that exposing the three in front of the media was illegal and violation of their constitutional rights to fair trial.

In December last year, the HC had directed the Rapid Action Battalion director general and Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner not to present any accused, under investigation or trial, before the media.

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

Govt hid truth from int'l community

Claims Odhikar

STAR REPORT

Odhikar, a rights organisation, in a joint statement with Asian Legal Resource Centre said the government hid facts about the human rights situation in the country from the international community and the UN at the second Universal Periodic Review (UPR) being held in Geneva.

The statement said Odhikar documents show that at least 539 people have been killed extra-judicially in the last four years and another 81 were victims of "forced disappearance". Not a single case has been credibly investigated.

But Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, who leads the Bangladesh delegation, just repeated what she said at the first UPR in 2009 without corroborative facts or substantial evidence, the statement added.

In her opening speech, Dipu Moni said the government was sincere about implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord, Sanjeeb Dron, defender of rights of indigenous people, told The Daily Star in a report sent from Geneva yesterday.

However, representatives from over 12 countries, including Canada, Australia and Thailand, raised concerns regarding rights and development of religious and ethnic minorities in Bangladesh.

"Indigenous people in the plain land are also deprived," said Danish Ambassador to Bangladesh Svend Olling in Geneva, added the report.

Meanwhile, a press release of the foreign ministry said Dipu Moni presented the bold steps the government took to protect rights of Bangladeshis.

SAVAR BUILDING COLLAPSE Students cut classes for punishment to culpable

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of different educational institutions in the capital boycotted classes yesterday responding to the call of Progressive Students Alliance, a platform of seven student bodies, demanding exemplary punishment for the people responsible for the Savar building collapse.

No academic activities were held at Dhaka University as leaders and activists of the alliance as kept the main gates of arts, business and science faculty buildings under lock and key since morning.

Later, they held a rally before the arts faculty building to press home their demand.

Bangladesh Chhatra Union President SM Shuva, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front President Saifuzzaman Shakon, Biplabi Chhatra Moitri General Secretary Sadikur-Rahman also addressed the rally.

Meanwhile, students of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University and Chittagong University, and Eden Women's College, Titumir College, Dhaka College and other institutions expressed solidarity with the demand, the organisers said.

On April 28, the alliance announced the call to press home the demand.

SAVAR TRAGEDY Punishment for Rana, factory owners sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garments Sramik Oikya Parishad yesterday demanded punishment for Rana Plaza owner Sohel Rana and the owners of the factories the building housed.

The parishad also demanded adequate compensations for the victims' family members and proper treatment for the workers injured in the building collapse.

Sirajul Islam Roni, coordinator of the parishad, raised the demands at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the capital.

The government should bring the owners, who were violating the rules over workers' safety, under stern legal actions, said Roni.

The nine-storey Rana Plaza building collapsed in Savar on the outskirts of the capital on April 24, killing hundreds of garment workers and injuring thousands.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the second death anniversary of Tushar Guha,

photographer of Chittagong Metropolitan Sports Association.

He died of a heart attack on this day in 2011. He was 59.

Tushar, also founder of Studio Tushar in Chittagong city, served as a listed photographer of Chittagong Metropolitan Police for about 40 years.

Relatives and well-wishers are requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

A krishnachura tree in full bloom in Laldighi area of Chittagong city yesterday.

Hefajat's demands challenge to secularism

Says German envoy

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The 13-point demand put forward by Hefajat-e-Islam is a challenge to the country's secular ideal, German Ambassador Dr Albrecht Conze said yesterday.

He underscored the need for bipartisanship to deal with the challenge and called upon the secularist elements in political parties to unite and raise voice against it.

"What we are seeing these days, I must say, does puzzle my colleagues not just from the west, what we have seen is a challenge to secularism," he told a panel discussion at the capital's Goethe-Institut.

The demands of Hefajat contradict the country's constitution and the very spirit upon which it was born through a war, said Dr Conze.

He said complying with the demands would mean thwarting women's empowerment.

The two leaders of the two major political parties might not continue any longer if the arguments of the demands are accepted, he said.

About attacks on minorities, the envoy said the threats against them in the past weeks disturbed them all and they expressed worry, saying some of those were unprecedented in the country's history.

Bangladesh can attract foreign students for edn

Says UGC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh can attract international students to tertiary level of education through substantial investment by the corporations as it is "ideally located to be a global education hub," said University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman Prof Dr AK Azad Chowdhury yesterday.

The UGC chairman was speaking at a press conference, organised by the British Council to share the council's "Going Global 2013 Conference" experiences. The global event was held from March 4 to 6 in Dubai.

The country has to overcome numerous challenges to compete globally though enrolment in the universities and other institutions doubled in the last three years, said Azad.

Less than one percent of the country's GDP is provided to the UGC, which makes it difficult to ensure quality education in the universities, he added.

Vice-Chancellor of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology Prof AMM Safiullah called for sharing of resources of local universities with international universities through the internet so that students reap the benefits of holistic knowledge.

"Going Global", an annual conference hosted by the British Council, offers an open forum for global leaders of national and international education to help develop higher education globally.

A ten-member Bangladeshi delegation from the UGC, public and private universities and corporations attended the going global conference.

More than 1,000 registered delegates from 80 countries took part in this year's conference.

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