

MAY DAY 2015

Most Needed and Most Neglected

NO STRINGS ATTACHED



AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

ONE of the most cherished privileges many expat Bangladeshis miss about their motherland is the comfort of having others do all their household chores...

Labour Studies (BILS), 797 incidents of inhuman torture on domestic workers took place in the last 10 years. Of them, 398 died of torture, 299 were wounded and 100 others faced other forms of torture.

is the reason why we use terms like 'servant', 'chakor' and 'menials'. According to the ILO, UNICEF, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum (BSAF) and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS), there are more than 4 million young and adult domestic workers.

given fifteen days leave every year to go to their village home?" asks the indignant Begum Shaheb. Oh well, it's simple - THEY ARE HUMAN BEINGS!

The truth is while most employers may not take a burning spatula to scald their thirteen-year-old maid for breaking a tea cup, many of them do not honour even the most basic rights of a domestic worker.

Is the new model of trade unions the answer?

NAZNEEN SHIFA, SAYDIA GULRUKH and MAHMUDIUL SUMON

THE history and development of trade unions in the garment sector is different from other industrial sectors of Bangladesh. We know that the trade union in the garment sector has never been allowed to grow at the same pace since the development of the industry.



tory setting, one organisation in Nischintapur distributed relief goods such as blankets, powder milk etc. to the workers after a few days of the fire. It can be argued based on observations of their activities that by not organising the workers, the organisations were only upholding their own interests.

As far as trade unionism is concerned, of late we are witnessing curious initiatives by various donors and NGO partners to promote labour union in this sector. Suddenly, there is a rise of registration of trade unions and we find the rise in number rather drastic.

sector have to work in the factory for 12-16 hours on a regular basis. While overtime means extra work for higher payment, this can be a misnomer in a Bangladeshi context. Here 10 hours work is considered as regular working hours.

barriers to get work in a factory." This is the lived reality of the workers. Should we ignore it? If not, then we should ask this question: how is the "standard model" of trade union (which ideally begins at the factory and culminates into federation) to be implemented?

negotiating international trade. In addition to this, the fact that the heads of these organisations were former garments workers often gives them more credibility amongst different groups. It is appalling to see these organisations receiving funding from a brand's CSR money.

The sudden increase in the number of trade registration is actually meeting bureaucratic requirements. In the aftermath of recent catastrophes, it is a measure taken by the state, tolerated by the BGMEA to improve 'the image', to prove their keenness to ensure workers' rights.

QUOTABLE Quote: Enable every woman who can work to take her place on the labour front, under the principle of equal pay for equal work. Mao Zedong

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH: ACROSS 1 High point, 5 Soda flavor, 10 Calls out, 12 Competitor, 13 Deli request, 15 Genesis woman, 16 Use oars, 17 Kid's spinner, 18 Sowing machine, 20 Hay bundle, 21 Snide look, 22 Important times, 23 City on the Mohawk river, 25 Blueprint number, 28 Viper's weapons, 31 Make roads, 32 Detail maps, 34 Top card, 35 Bear's lair, 36 Court concern, 37 Mexican holiday, 40 Door sign, 41 Hinder, 42 Athlete-actor Grier, 43 Network Junction.

YESTERDAY'S CRYPTOQUOTE: CONCENTRATE ALL YOUR THOUGHTS UPON THE WORK AT HAND. THE SUN'S RAYS DO NOT BURN UNTIL BROUGHT TO A FOCUS. -- ALEXANDER G. BELL

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER: VATS STRIP, ALOE TRACED, POKE RIGHTO, ONESTOP AND RENTALS BAG, SHARK RUDER, KORS TAN, ANT TACTICS, TED ABYSMAL, EYEFUL MADE, RECIPE AGED, DOTTED NETS.

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker: GIZMO FINALLY FOUND THE GIRL OF HIS DREAMS. WHERE DID HE FIND HER? IN THE ROBOTICS LAB!

HENRY by Don Trachte: HOW DID YOU DO IN SCHOOL TODAY, HENRY?