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Shantamoni sprinkles water to keep her roses, which she sells for Tk 20-30 each, fresh in the heat. The eight-year-old, along with her mother and brother, sells flowers to visitors at Muktijoddha Park in Barishal Sadar to look after her father who has been sick for the past one year. She said she makes around Tk 300 every day, but also misses going to school. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Including diaspora in ‘march towards dev’

Govt plans policy to increase expatriates’ involvement with the country

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to formulate a policy with the broad objective to include Bangladeshi diaspora community in the country’s “march towards development” and ensure their wellbeing.

As per the draft “Bangladesh National Diaspora Policy-2023”, Bangladeshi diaspora are those “Bangladeshi individuals who obtain citizenship of another country or their citizenship status is under process or are permanently living in another country or were born as Bangladeshi-origin or grew up in another country”.

The draft policy categorises Bangladeshi diaspora in two groups – “Non-Resident Bangladeshi” and “people of Bangladeshi origin”, representing two generations – the “first-generation diaspora” and “next-generation diaspora”.

The draft policy was discussed yesterday during a validation workshop organised by the expatriates’ welfare ministry at a city hotel.

According to a 2021 study of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), there could be an estimated 2.4 million Bangladeshi diaspora with the

United Kingdom and the United States of America – two key host countries.

Expatriates’ Welfare Minister Imran Ahmad said the aim behind the policy is “very high” and that is to get the Bangladeshis living abroad involved in the country’s development.

To attract the diaspora community for investing in Bangladesh, strategic partnership will be developed through establishing a tripartite network among relevant government bodies, private sector and diaspora trade organisations.

“This is the big scene,” he said, addressing the workshop as chief guest.

He said the draft policy will go through changes and it will be discussed with the relevant ministries, NRBs, NGOs, media and other stakeholders.

As per the draft policy, a diaspora engagement board will be formed under the ministry.

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Protect farmers to ensure food security

Speakers tell conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eco-friendly agricultural practices and safeguarding the rights of marginalised farmers are essential to ensure secure and sufficient food supply, stressed speakers at a conference yesterday.

They made the remarks at “Asia-Pacific Conference on the Right to Food and Agri-Food System Conference 2023”, a two-day event organised by Right to Food Bangladesh in collaboration with their national and international networks at Dhaka University’s Senate Bhaban.

Present as chief guest, Speaker Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury said population growth, urbanisation and food scarcity are major challenges in ensuring food for all. Along with increased food production, assuring nutritious food is one of the most important issues for Asian nations.

“Bangladesh is advancing with the goal of becoming a country with excess food production compared to demand by 2030,” she added.

The government is working to assure that farmers are paid the right price for their produce. However, a collaborative effort is needed to safeguard their rights, asserted Planning Minister MA Mannan.

Almost all the coastal countries of the region, including Bangladesh, are victims of climate change, which has created challenges in securing food rights.

DR KAZI KHALIQUZZAMAN AHMED
Chairman of Right to Food Bangladesh

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Efforts on to tackle the crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the death toll and hospitalisations due to dengue continue to surge, Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) is active across the country to address the escalating outbreak.

Meanwhile, the two Dhaka city corporations are also implementing measures to combat the alarming rise in dengue cases and fatalities in the capital.

The BDRCS, in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), is taking urgent measures to combat the spread of the mosquito-borne disease and providing much-needed support to affected communities, reads a press release.

To address the crisis, more than 150 BDRCS volunteers trained in Epidemic Control for Volunteers and Community-Based Health and First Aid are mobilised to address this health emergency,” it said.

One of the major concerns is the

shortage of concentrated platelet supplies, given the significant increase in dengue cases. The BDRCS, with its nationwide blood bank system, is ensuring continuous support to meet the rising demand.

The Holy Family Red Crescent Medical College and Hospital has admitted and treated 714 dengue patients as of July 25, with 220 patients still receiving medical care.

In addition, BDRCS Chattogram Blood Bank distributed 462 concentrated platelets this year, while BDRCS Blood Bank

Dhaka distributed 1,561 concentrated platelets.

“Our dedicated volunteers are working to disseminate vital awareness messages and distribute necessary resources to support public health services,” said Kazi Shofiqul Azam, secretary general of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society.

“To further strengthen the dengue response operation of BDRCS in

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Set Tk 25,000 as minimum wage for RMG workers

Speakers tell event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must fix a minimum wage of Tk 25,000 for garment workers considering the increased cost of living, said noted economists and rights leaders at a discussion yesterday.

The discussion was organised by Bangladesh Garment Sramik Sanghati at Jatiya Press Club.

The speakers also called for an end to abrupt termination of workers, filing of fake cases, and suppression of rights. They also urged the government to scrap the Essential Services Bill 2023.

Speaking at the programme, garment worker Shahida Akter expressed concern over inadequate wages, which leads to financial instability among the workers’ families.

“The minimum wage should be immediately increased to Tk 25,000 per month. Otherwise, the workers will be unable to sustain themselves,” she said.

Noting the inflation, Taslima Akhtar, organisation president, said, “Even though prices of essentials as well as RMG products are increasing, the workers’ wages are not.”

She blamed low wages for the decreasing number of female employees in the sector.

“We cannot call these working women self-dependent as it is nearly impossible to survive with this salary,” she added.

Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of Centre for Policy Dialogue, stressed the need for revising the wage structure of RMG workers.

Sabina Yasmin of Naripokkho said those who protests in this regard are often silenced.

We have to ensure that existing policies on preventing sexual harassment are implemented properly. Besides, facilities like daycare centres should be made available for female workers.

PROF ANU MUHAMMAD

Author and anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed said, “We have been making these demands for a long time, but to no avail. A stronger fight is required to press home the issue.”

Barrister Sara Hossain said, “Incidents of workers being sued under false cases has to be stopped.”

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Amid speeding vehicles, a man rides a motorbike, which has four people, including two children. The children had no helmets on. Such careless acts often lead to accidents. This photo was taken in the capital’s Moghbazar area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS