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# BD garment workers abroad least benefited due to language problem

Rights activists, experts tell workshop  
 By RMG Bangladesh - Feb 15, 2018 95



Bangladeshis, working in garment sector abroad, are the least benefited in comparison to the workers of other Asian countries due to lack of their awareness and bargaining capacity, speakers said at a workshop on Wednesday. Language problem is a big barrier before them to be aware about their benefits abroad, they said. The rights activists and civil society members were speaking at a workshop on 'Workers Perspective on Working and Living Condition in the Garment Work Abroad' at a city hotel. The two-day workshop was organised by the Awaj Foundation with the support of UKaid and International Labour Organisation (ILO). Indian workers get more wages than that of their Bangladeshi counterparts as they can bargain with employers in Mauritius. Indian mission officials are also pro-active to help ensure their workers' benefits, according to the rights campaigners. Nilambar Bhuinya, director of Paradigm Shift said Bangladeshi women workers go to Mauritius without necessary information about wages and other facilities. So they don't get desired benefits which they hoped before migrating to the country, he added. Bangladeshi workers are living in a miserable condition there in absence of standard accommodation, health facilities and insurances. Very often employers fire them without assigning any reason, he mentioned. Bangladeshi garment workers also are deprived of their due rights in Jordan. One year ago some 70 women workers were sacked without any logical reason. Some 11 women were suspended in Mauritius as they used mobile phone, he also added. Bangladeshi workers don't get cooperation from their mission office, he further said. Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Nurul Islam, who was the chief guest at the closing event of the workshop, said the problems that were identified at the workshop will be addressed by his ministry. His government is sincerely working for the wellbeing of the country's outbound workers, he added. Dr.CR Abrar, executive director of Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) moderating the programme said coordination between foreign affairs and expatriates' welfare ministries is very important to secure workers' protection. He also stressed the need for ensuring representation of workers in the existing Wage Earners' Welfare Board for proper utilisation of its fund for the wellbeing of workers. Anannaya Bhattacharje, representative of Asia Floor Wage Alliance said brands are the principal employers and manufacturers are the sub contractors. So it is necessary to induct the global apparel brands and manufacturers in the wage hike process. Nazma Aktar, general secretary and executive director of Awaj Foundation said employers are not fulfilling their commitments to workers' facilities. They have to be accountable for workers' protection. Gagan Rajbhadari, deputy country director and officer in-charge of ILO Dhaka was the special guest. He said female migrant workers are not aware of their contract signed before migrating abroad. Combined efforts are necessary to protect their rights, she added.

VIDEO PROFILES OF BANGLADESH GARMENTS FACTORY  
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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

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