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Prof Mamun Habib launches research project report on labour and sustainable growth

The Business Standard

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THE BUSINESS STANDARD

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Prof Habib, who is involved as a researcher with various industry-driven research projects such as USAID and BAFFA, was the lead researcher of the project, which was sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) and supported by LRG Asset Management

Press Release

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Photo: Courtesy

Prof Dr Md Mamun Habib, Head of the Department of General Management under the School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), has launched a groundbreaking research project report titled "Development of Labour Conditions in Bangladesh for Sustainable Growth".

Prof Habib, who is involved as a researcher with various industry-driven research projects such as USAID and BAFFA, was the lead researcher of the project, which was sponsored by the American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh (AmCham) and supported by LRG Asset Management.

Ikram Hasan, a PhD scholar at Unirazak, Malaysia, was the Research Assistant, while Syed Ershad Ahmed, President of AmCham, and D Forrest E Cookson, former President of AmCham, served as advisors.

The report was unveiled on May 26, 2024, at a hotel in Dhaka during AmCham's May Luncheon event. Prof Habib, who has more than 250 research publications including Scopus and WoS indexed journals, delivered the keynote presentation and also moderated a panel discussion.

The panel featured Md Humayun Kabir, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Bangladesh; John Fay, Commercial Counselor, US Embassy, Dhaka; Leena Khan, Labour Attaché, US Embassy, Dhaka; and Neeran Ramjuthan, Program Manager, ILO Labour Administration and Working Conditions Cluster.

The discussion was followed by a lively question-and-answer session with participants from organisations such as BGMEA, BKMEA, Dhaka Stock Exchange, various US companies in Bangladesh, and IUB. Dhaka University Development Studies Supernumerary Professor Dr Atiur Rahman, also a former governor of Bangladesh Bank, was the Guest of Honor at the event.

Commencing in July 2023, Prof Habib's study delves into labour conditions in Bangladesh, emphasising their alignment with international standards and relationships, particularly with the EU and the USA. Through extensive analysis, the research offers a nuanced understanding of the historical evolution, current challenges, and future prospects of the Bangladesh labour market.

Key areas of discussion included the enforcement of labour laws, complexities in unionisation, the roles of government and international bodies in implementing labour laws, and the discrepancies in wage policies and worker demands. The research underscores the necessity of aligning Bangladesh's laws with international standards to ensure sustainable growth.

The methodology was bifurcated into two primary segments: secondary research and primary data collection. Primary data collection included interviews with key stakeholders such as the Solidarity Center, US Embassy Dhaka, Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, International Labour Organization (ILO), Bangladesh, and insights from a focus group discussion involving 16 industry leaders.

The report made several key recommendations, including recognizing the diverse wage system and its impacts; reforming labour unions; clarifying labour definitions and roles; advocating for a dedicated Ministry of Human Resource Development; broadening the focus beyond the garments industry; and revising wage adjustment policies.

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