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## Knit exporters call for army deployment in N'ganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) has urged the authorities to deploy army in Narayanganj and industrial areas near the town to ensure security to garment factories.

Leaders of the BKMEA made the call at a meeting with the deputy commissioner of Narayanganj last night.

They also demanded punishment to those creating 'anarchy' in the export-oriented garment sector and called for government intervention.

President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Abdul Awal Mintoo was present at the meeting.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## 50 more factories attacked in N'ganj

8-hr hartal called today in the town; pitched battles leave 50 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Waves of violence shook Narayanganj for a second straight day yesterday, as frenzied garment workers damaged around 50 garment factories and fought pitched battles with law-enforcers leaving 50 of them injured.

After a peaceful rally at Chashara in the town, the garment workers turned unruly and attacked the factories at Hajiganj, Shiddirganj,

Godnail, Mission Para, Khanpur, Chashara, Tunbazar, Charmber Road, DIT commercial area and in Narayanganj Press Club areas.

At least 50 people, 15 seriously, were injured in clashes with the law enforcers in town yesterday. Twenty-five garment employees were wounded in an attack on Rocky Textiles at Hajiganj. The attackers set afire some bundles of cloths of the factory. They also vandalised seven vehicles and set fire to a motorbike

of RK Textile at Godnail in Shiddirganj.

They also allegedly looted valuables from some garment factories.

A garment factory worker was killed and 200 others were injured in Monday's violence.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Police enquiry finds no proof of custodial death, Sumon's family, locals reject report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A police probe committee on the killing of Shakil Ahmed Chowdhury Sumon yesterday said it found no evidence that he was killed in police custody but suggested departmental action against the then officer-in-charge (OC) of Khilgaon Police Station.

Sumon's family, however, dismissed the report and said they would gather before court tomorrow to ask for a judicial probe into the 'killing in police custody'.

"We rejecting this report and demanding judicial probe into the

## Lanka in turmoil as president suspends parliament

3 key ministers sacked

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka was in political turmoil yesterday after President Chandrika Kumaratunga sacked three cabinet ministers, suspended parliament and placed troops and police on red alert after rejecting a Tamil rebel blueprint for peace.

Kumaratunga dismissed the defence, interior and information

ministers while her political rival Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was in Washington for a meeting Wednesday with President George W. Bush on the peace process.

The president also suspended parliament for two weeks in a move seen by analysts as an attempt to head off an early attempt to challenge the sackings on the floor of the

house and set the stage for snap parliamentary elections.

It means the national budget, which was to be presented on November 12, will be delayed.

Wickremesinghe accused Kumaratunga of trying to scuttle the peace process and plunge the country into chaos and anarchy and urged police and security forces to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Starvation stalks 7m in northern districts

ANWAR ALI, from Kurigram

Severe joblessness and food crunch twinned with skyrocketing prices of essentials during the *monga* (famine) period have threatened the lives of about seven million people in eight northern districts.

Women, children and men are either starving or living on a single meal a day, while workers are leaving home in their hundreds every day for jobs in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country.

Of the eight districts, Kurigram, Gaibandha, Rangpur and Nilphamari have been hit the hardest by *monga*, admitted sources at the Rajshahi divisional commissioner's office. The other *monga*-stricken districts are Lalmonirhat, Dinajpur, Panchagarh and Thakurgaon.

Labourers wearing a lifeless look spend all day at bazaars with no-one willing to hire them even at a price four times cheaper than usual.

"You can easily hire a labourer for

a day's work at only Tk 20," said NGO worker Abdul Mannan in Kurigram. "Our credit distribution in Ulipur upazila has dropped by Tk 1 lakh this year," said Mannan, a field supervisor of Chhinna Mukul Bangladesh, an NGO.

*Monga*, the period of extreme penury, torments the poor in the agro-based northern region during Bangla months of Bhadra and Kartik every year when peasants have no crop to harvest.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4



For this shopkeeper in Panchabati village, Narayanganj, business stands still after his shop was vandalised by angry garment workers following the death of a co-worker in Fatullah Monday.

## 3 slaughtered at Shyampur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assassins slaughtered three youths near the railway line at Shyampur WASA gate early yesterday.

The dead are Mofizul Islam Sarder, 24, an employee of furniture company Otobi, Ratan, 26, an employee of Rahman Re-rolling Factory, and Montu, 20, a rickshawpuller.

"Shyampur police informed us at 2:30am that they found three bodies beside the rails near Shyampur Namapara railway slum," said Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kamalapur Railway Police Station, ABM Siddiqur Rahman.

Railway police also recovered a machete from the spot and said the killers chopped the three indiscriminately before slaughtering them sometime in the first one hour of

yesterday. They sent the bodies to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for post-mortem yesterday morning.

Abdul Mannan, who lives in a shanty near the spot, said he did not hear any noise at night to suspect the murders.

Mofizul went to his shanty at Baraitola Raigate at 10:00pm to take meal and went out within a short time, his elder brother Rafiqul said.

Rafiqul did not have any idea why his brother was killed.

Ratan, the other victim, went out of his shanty at Shyampur Namapara after meal at around 11:00pm Monday night, his brother Sattar said.

"I learnt at around 2:30am that three people were killed near the rail line and went there to find him lying

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

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## Wholesale market down, retail not

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of vegetables came down further on the wholesale market yesterday, but retailers stuck to the high price curve that has continued from Sunday.

Both wholesalers and retailers sold some spices, including local and Indian onions, garlic, dried chilli, turmeric, green chilli and ginger, at unchanged prices that soared high from the beginning of Ramadan.

The prices of bean, aubergine, long bean, tomato and cucumber curved down at Karwan Bazar wholesale market: a kilogram of beans sold at Tk 55, down from Tk 60, aubergines at Tk 12-15, down from Tk 16, long beans at Tk 16-18, down from Tk 20, tomatoes at Tk 30, down from Tk 35, cucumbers at Tk 20-22, down from Tk 25.

"Over the last five days, the supply of vegetables has increased and their prices might come down further if the current supply continues," said Momin, a trader at Karwan Bazar.

But retailers at Palashi and Hatirpul kitchen markets sold a kilogram of beans at Tk 60, cucumbers at Tk 26-28, tomatoes at Tk 40, aubergines at Tk 28-30, recently arrived potatoes at Tk 30-32, old potatoes at Tk 13-15.

On the big difference between wholesale and retail prices, Nasir, a trader at Palashi kitchen market, said, "The prices on the retail market

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Dengue comes back much early

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dengue is back again much before the season starts this year, indicating a new turn in the transmittable disease.

Eighteen dengue suspect patients were admitted to various city hospitals and clinics since Sunday, sources said.

According to various city hospitals and private clinics, five dengue suspect patients were diagnosed at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) in the last three days.

At the DMCH male (medicine)



Aedes mosquito

ward No. 2, two dengue patients were admitted Sunday where two more patients are already being treated.

At Dhaka Shishu Hospital, three children having dengue symptoms were to be diagnosed yesterday.

A doctor of the hospital said, "We have not been able to confirm the cases as their blood test results are yet to come. But the children had high fever for more than five days, severe headache, pain behind eyes, muscle and joint pains and mild rash. We have treated them for dengue."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## JAMAL UDDIN ABDUCTION PM assures family of rescue efforts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday assured the family of abducted magnate Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury of government efforts to rescue him and hoped operations would yield a positive result.

At an 18-minute meeting with Khaleda, Nazma Akhter Khanom, accompanied by her sons Chowdhury Farman Reza Liton and Chowdhury Forkan Reza Miton, reportedly named eight suspected abductors of her husband who was kidnapped on July 24.

Nazma told Khaleda that her

husband could be traced if the suspected eight, including Fatikchhari Union Parishad Chairman Abul Kashem Chowdhury, Anwar Shahidul and Rahimul, were arrested.

"I'm helpless. I don't know where and how he (Jamal) is now. I have been waiting for him day and night... with my two sons. But he doesn't come back," she was quoted as saying to the prime minister.

Law enforcers launched a massive hunt after Jamal, also vice-president of BNP Chittagong (south) unit, was abducted on his way back

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Trader abducted, killed in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Abductors on Monday killed a local trader after abduction as his family failed to pay them ransom.

Police and family sources said a gang of 10 abducted Elahi Box, 40, from his house at village Ambaria in Mirpur upazila at about 8:30pm Sunday.

Later, the abductors demanded Tk 2 lakh in ransom from Elahi's family. As his family failed to pay the money, the abductors beat Elahi to death and dumped the body in a paddy field of the village.

Police recovered the body from the field in the morning and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

A case was filed with Mirpur Police Station. Police arrested four people in connection with the murder.

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