

TO People's Right to Know

Today's issue 24 pages

RMG workers rampage again for higher pay

Major roads blocked for hours; around 100 factories ransacked; shopping malls looted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of garment workers staged violent demonstrations in Dhaka and Gazipur yesterday, barricading major thoroughfares in Mirpur and Uttara for around four hours and vandalising around 100 apparel-manufacturing units and looting shopping complexes. Law-enforcers were very late to show up in the site of destruction, allowing the workers to run amok practically without any resistance. When a few policemen arrived at last, the demonstrators locked in fierce clashes with them at Azampur in Uttara and Shewrapara in Mirpur, leaving over 100 people including 15 policemen injured. They beat up the officer-in-charge (OC) of Uttara Police Station and snatched his pistol and walkie-talkie. The police could not recover those as of 7:00pm yesterday. A group of agitating garment

workers set fire to apparel at the Woodland garment factory in Mirpur while another group burned four vehicles at Azampur bus stand in Uttara. Around 100 vehicles were set on fire in different areas of Mirpur and Uttara. Reports of demonstrations also came from Hatirpool, Shyamoli and Mohammadpur in the city and Abdullahpur and Tongi industrial area in Gazipur. Police sources said the number of policemen was very small at the spots while the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) present also remained almost inactive. Despite a countrywide half-day strike called by Garments Stramik Sangram Parishad, an alliance of 11 garment workers' associations, demanding Tk 3,000 as minimum wage, many owners opened their factories at different places in the capital yesterday morning. The clashes between the law

enforcers and the agitating workers ensued as the latter attacked the industrial units to force the management to shut down. However, many of the stick and iron rod yielding garment workers agitating in Mirpur could not clearly say why they were agitating. Some of them said they are protesting against the non-payment of their last month's salary. They said the delay was only to dodge the payment of the bonus. The garment workers threw stones at the doors and window glasses of all garment factories and a few shopping malls on both sides of Rokeya Sarani from Mirpur-12 to Shewrapara, and of the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway in Uttara. Witnesses said thousands of agitators took to the streets around 8:30am blocking around the three-kilometre road from Azampur to Abdullahpur while several thousand others barricaded the main

streets from Mirpur-12 to Taltola on Rokeya Sarani. Commuters including officials and students found it difficult to reach their destinations due to the barricades. Vehicles remained stranded in long queues on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway and Rokeya Sarani. **UTTARA** More than one thousand workers took out a procession in Uttara around 8:00am. At one stage, they attacked the Maskat Plaza and started looting goods. As police came forward to disperse the garment workers and outsiders, the workers started throwing stones at the law enforcers and chased them to the Uttara Police Station. Another group started vandalising vehicles at Abdullahpur. They also pelted brickbats and attacked with sticks as around 30 policemen tried to disperse them.

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BGMEA threatens to close down factories

Demands punishment of attackers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) yesterday threatened to close down their factories for an indefinite period if the government failed to punish the people responsible for ransacking different factories in the capital yesterday within 48 hours. BGMEA President SM Fazlul Hoque gave the ultimatum at a hurriedly called press conference at the association's office yesterday evening after workers rampaged through around 100 factories in Dhaka and Gazipur. He also demanded immediate

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Hasina terms alliance rule black era, makes poll pledges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday described the BNP-led alliance's five years' rule as a "dark episode" and outlined her party's election pledges that include ensuring good governance, bringing prices of essentials within people's buying capacity, reducing power crisis, and curbing militancy and criminal activities. Addressing a gathering of eminent personalities at a hotel in the capital, the opposition leader in parliament also promised to ensure separation of the judiciary in a short time, hold elections to zila and upazila parishads in a year, and direct election to women's reserved seats in parliament, if



voted to power. "The countrymen have passed five years in darkness and nightmare. We want to free the country from the darkened state," Hasina said, after dwelling on the gloom

during the five years of the alliance government. Hasina, also leader of the 14-party opposition combine, came down heavily on the alliance government for the ongoing acute power crisis, skyrocketing prices of essentials, unbridled corruption, politicisation of the judiciary and civil administration, killing of eminent political leaders, rise of militancy, grenade attacks, and failure to make the Jatiya Sangsad effective. "Actually, there was no governance in the country in the last five years. This government could not give the nation anything but failures, crises and distress," Hasina, also former prime minister, said in

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PM on project opening spree

Inaugurates 10 in Rangpur, Dinajpur, goes to CHT today

STAR REPORT

On the eve of handing over power to a caretaker government after five years of the coalition rule, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has now become busy with inaugurating a number of development projects in different districts. Yesterday, the prime minister inaugurated as many as ten institutions and buildings during her daylong tour of Rangpur and Dinajpur districts. The institutions include a new education board, heart foundation, kidney institute, women's vocational training centre and sports training centre.

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AL, BNP 'very close' to consensus

Jalil, Bhuiyan decline to elaborate, meet again Oct 16

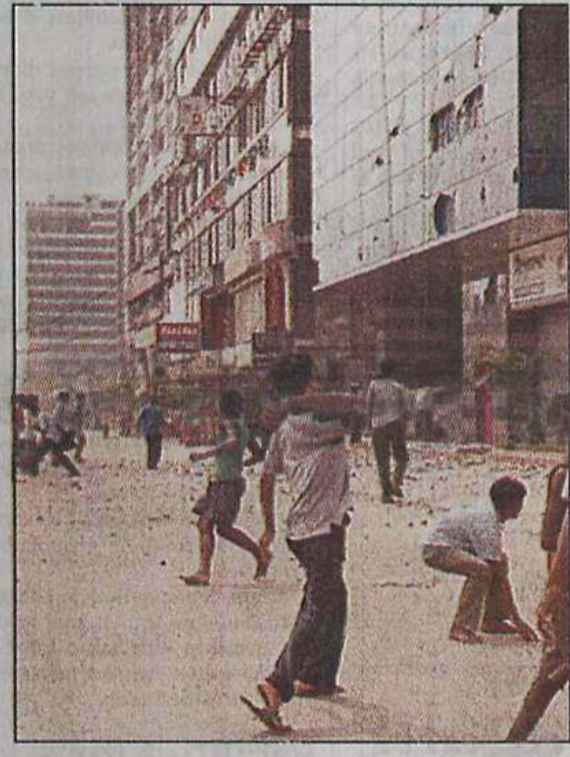
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fourth day of the dialogue on electoral reforms between ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday reportedly reached "very close" to consensus on many points, which now need to be discussed within the two parties and their alliances for taking decisions. But BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil did not say on which issues they have come "closer". At a joint press conference after their 50-minute discussion at the

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BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, left, and Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil shake hands after yesterday's talks on reforms.



FROM LEFT... Garment workers hurl stones at a shopping arcade in Uttara in the capital during their half-day strike yesterday. A number of workers torch a human haulier at Uttara as at least a hundred others chant slogans for minimum wage of Tk 3,000.

AL statement on Star editor's commentary

Referring to a commentary by The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam titled 'A little respect for truth would help', Awami League (AL) yesterday in a statement called upon all to contribute to the success of ongoing secretary-level dialogue in this critical moment of the country. The statement says Mr Anam in his commentary published on October 9, analysed in detail a part

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Tigers' must-win match against Windies today

With high hopes of keeping their chances alive for a second round berth, an unchanged Bangladesh take on defending champions West Indies in a preliminary round match of the ICC Champions Trophy at the Saijal Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur today. The Tigers are in a must-win situation following a 37-run loss to

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Anger brews at REB over contractual appointments

Resentment among the employees of the Rural Electrification Board (REB) continues to deepen over contractual appointments to the top-level posts once again, sources said. The government on Thursday appointed a retired officer as the

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Mahmudul sought extension of judge's retirement age

Says Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The controversial amendment to the constitution on extension of retirement age of the Supreme Court judges was put forward by the then chief justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, Law Minister Moudud Ahmad said yesterday while claiming his ministry's 'successes' in framing 185 laws in the last five years of the alliance government's tenure. Refusing to term the Joint Drive Indemnity Act, 2003 a black law, Moudud also claimed progress in separating the judiciary despite the government's failure to implement this election pledge as also many other polls pledges. "Chief Justice (then) Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury, representative of the stakeholders, submitted the application seeking extension of retirement age of the higher court judges to 67 from 65," the minister said at his last formal meet journalists at his ministry.

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Mahmudul's proposal on hold, implemented after his retirement

Show documents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Contrary to the law minister's claims, facts show that the government had shelved Justice Mahmudul Amin Chowdhury's proposal for retirement age extension till a certain point, making KM Hasan eligible to head the next caretaker government. Had former chief justice Mahmudul's proposal been implemented before his retirement, he would have been the natural choice for the post of chief adviser of the caretaker government while KM Hasan would still have been in service. Mahmudul put forward a proposal for increasing the retirement age by three years on March 6, 2002 and retired on June 18 the same year. If his proposal were implemented, he would have retired on June 18, 2005, turning out to be the last retired top judge. But the government sat on the proposal until May 2004 and then upped the age by two years instead of the proposed three years. This step was taken when

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SIDDHIRGANJ 240MW PLANT Harbin lobby out to cancel project

SHARIER KHAN


An influential business lobby is trying to convince the government to cancel the tender for the 240 megawatt peaking power project in Siddhirganj, which may be awarded to Indian power company Bhel, instead of the blacklisted Chinese company Harbin. Sources said this lobby has approached the parliamentary standing committee on power and energy with the argument that Bhel's bid offer is Tk 100 crore

higher than that of Harbin. But in reality, Harbin's tricky but invalid offer is costlier than Bhel's offer by at least Tk 7 crore. The parliamentary committee has convened a meeting today asking the authorities concerned to explain the status of the project that is being financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Sources said the committee is likely to recommend cancellation of the tender. The alliance government has so far signed only two power project contracts -- both with

Harbin -- and approved two more, one with Harbin and the other with Orion-Belhasa. The two approved projects have been cancelled for various reasons while Harbin has brought its Tongi power project into operation. The 80 MW Tongi plant tripped over 90 times since its inception in early 2005. The country is now reeling under more than 2,200 MW load shedding as the government failed to set up adequate power plants in the last five years of its tenure.

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আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত



আকিজ গ্রুপের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা চেয়ারম্যান জনাব আমরাজ্জ্ব মেথ্র আকিজ ভূদ্দিন আহমেদ গত ১০ অক্টোবর সকাল ১১:১৫ ঘটিকায় সিঙ্গাপুরের মার্ভেট এনিজাবেথ হামপাটানে চিকিৎসাধীন অবস্থায় ইন্তেকাম করেছেন (ইন্নাল্লাইহি স্তয়া ইন্নাইহি রাজিউন)। মুহুরতম তঁর বয়স হয়েছিল ৭৭ বছর। তঁর মুহুরতে আমরা গভীরভাবে শোকাহত।

নামাজে জানাযার স্থান ও সময় :
প্রথম জানাযা : ১১ অক্টোবর সকাল ১০:০০। খানমন্ডি মসজিদে তঁর তাকভুয়া , গেড নং ১২/এ, খানমন্ডি, ঢাকা।
দ্বিতীয় জানাযা : ১১ অক্টোবর বাদ জোহর, আকিজ কলেজিয়েট স্কুল মাঠে, নাজরা, যশোর।
তৃতীয় জানাযা : ১১ অক্টোবর বাদ আছর, তঁর নিজ গ্রাম খুননার ফুলতলা খানাবীন বেজেরডাঙ্গায় বুকিয়ারডাঙ্গায় জুজোকেটে ইন্তেকাম ময়দানে। মরশুমের নিজগ্রাম বুকিয়ারডাঙ্গায় পরিবারিক ব্যবস্থাসে দাফন করা হবে।

তঁর বিদেহী আত্মার মাগফেরাত কামিনায়—
শোকাহত পরিবার বর্গ ও আকিজ গ্রুপের সকল কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী বৃন্দ।

আকিজ গ্রুপ