

# SKOP shutdown

From Page 1 Col 5  
 claimed that about 50 per cent of the 29 jute mills in the sector operated without any disturbances.

The SKOP and four jute-textile-cotton-sugar workers federations called the strike to press for announcement of the national minimum wages, implementation of the Wages and Productivity Commission report, stoppage of denationalisation and retrenchment of workers and release of detained labour leaders.

Clashes between police and agitated workers were reported from Tongi, Sirajganj, Chittagong, Barisal, Satkhira and other places in which more than 60 people sustained injuries.

Inter-district road and rail communications were affected as striking workers put up barricades at a number of highways including the Dhaka-Narayanganj, Narayanganj-Demra, Dhaka-Mymensingh, Dhaka-Chittagong and Khulna-Jessore highways.

Inter-district buses started from the capital but were detained at various places leaving thousands of passenger stranded.

Striking workers obstructed trains at a number of places like Tongi in Dhaka, Barabkundu in Chittagong and Darsana hat at Poradaha in Kushtia which disrupted railway communications.

The Railway authorities, however, said that the obstructions was cleared by the members of the law enforcing agencies.

However, both domestic and international flights operated normally on the day, according to Biman officials. River transport services also remained normal at the Sadarghat terminal in the city.

Meanwhile, the government described the strike as "illegal and contrary to labour laws". The government expects the striking workers to return to work. Otherwise, legal action would be taken against them according to an official hand-out.

Leaders of SKOP in a joint statement last night claimed successful strike in mills and factories throughout the country. In a statement they alleged that police and hired hoodlums of the owners had attacked the workers at Rampura, Malibagh and Elephant Road.

They said police arrested some workers and demanded their unconditional release.

The signatories to the statement included Abdus Salam Khan, Rahmatullah Chowdhury, Nazrul Islam Khan and Mokhlesur Rahman.

Our Gazipur Correspondent reports: Stick-wielding and stone-throwing workers of Tongi industrial belt sporadically clashed with police all the day long during the strike.

At least 20 people were wounded in baton charges by police during several rounds of clashes. Five of the injured were admitted to hospitals.

Scattered processions were brought out in the industrial areas where the marchers shouted anti-government slogans.

With the start of the strike at 6 am Monday, workers of different private and autonomous mills and factories at Tongi took to the streets and put barricades on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near the Mill Gate, Tongi bridge, railway station and the Cherag Ali Market.

The striking workers launched attacks on the Telephone Shilpa Sangstha, Bata Shoe Factory, Rhone-Poulenc Factory and on a number of smaller factories at the Tongi BSCIC industrial plot.

They stoned the windows of the factories and damaged the gates, witnesses said.

A total of 15 cars parked in front of these mills were brickbatted, they said.

The agitating workers dumped, unused rails and sleepers on the tracks near the railway station at about 10 in the morning.

Railway link was restored after a two-hour suspension as police re-informed and swung into action to clear the tracks. Scores of trucks carrying vegetables, fish and other perishables remained stranded at Tongi because of the strike.

The industrial workers carrying sticks, iron bars and bricks were guarding the highway till writing of the report.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent adds: 48-hour strike called by SKOP was observed in the district peacefully.

The workers of Adamjee Jute Mills, Bawa Jute Mills, Lakshminarayan Cotton Mills, Adarsha Cotton Mills, and Maola Textile Mills of Fatulla abstained from work during

the strike. The small industries in the private sector, however, operated as usual.

No vehicles other than rickshaws and autorickshaws plied the Dhaka-Narayanganj and Narayanganj-Demra roads during the strike.

A move by the Adamjee workers to create barricade on the Chittagong road was, however, dropped in response to a request by the police.

Our Staff Correspondent from Barisal reports: Inter-district communication remained suspended here Monday.

During incidents, at least 10 people suffered minor injuries when workers of Barisal Textile Mills clashed with some anti-strike elements in the city at around 11 am.

Police immediately brought the situation under control and arrested three persons on the spot, said police.

UNB from Sirajganj says: At least 10 people were injured in a clash between striking workers and police near Raypur railway station Monday.

Witnesses said the trouble erupted at about 11 am after some 200 workers halted a local train coming from Ishwardi near the station at about 8 am in their bid to enforce a 48-hour shutdown to press for wage hike.

They said Kammi Jute Mills, the largest in the northern region, remained shut while the Sirajganj Cotton and Spinning Mills was reportedly running.

Besides, all modes of vehicles, excepting a few rickshaws, went off the road and shopkeepers kept their shutters down.

Another report from Feni says: The striking workers put up barricades on the Feni-Belulia and Feni-Shuvapur roads and attacked two buses on the roads.

Workers said all the textile mills in the district remained closed and vehicular traffic on different roads was thin.

Intercity trains, including Mohanagar Prabhathi, from Chittagong reached Feni station two hours behind schedule.

Angry workers also blocked the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Shitakunda and Barakunda, the industrial belt of Chittagong district.

Our Staff Correspondent from Rajshahi adds: All the textile mills, jute mills, sugar mills and sericulture factory in the district were closed Monday during the strike called by the SKOP.

No long route buses and mini buses other than those of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) left or arrived Rajshahi during the strike.

SKOP leaders claimed that train communication was disrupted in many places to and from Rajshahi by the workers, although the railway authority denied the claim.

Railway sources said a few trains could not arrive Rajshahi because of the strike.

Another UNB report from Khulna says: All jute mills in the industrial city and in Khalspur area remained under a shutdown Monday the first day of a 48-hour countrywide strike enforced by SKOP.

Rajshahi Jute Mills was the lone jute mills in the Khulna zone which reportedly operated.

The five privately owned jute mills at Khalishpur did not run Monday.

Traffic was snarled in the long-distance routes but was normal within the town. Dhaka-bound coaches moved via Khulna-Satkhira route.

Interdistrict and local train services were suspended. The interdistrict trains, however, ran Monday through Jessore route where they were stationed earlier to avoid disruption. Launch services were normal.

Processions and meeting were held in Khalishpur town in the morning.

A report from Satkhira says: At least two people were injured and four vehicles damaged when bus workers and the labourers of Sundarban Textile Mills clashed during enforcement of the SKOP-sponsored strike Monday.

The trouble started when the strikers allegedly attacked two trucks and two minibuses on the Khulna-Satkhira road near Khulna Textile Mills at noon when the driver and the helper of a minibus were injured. The clash continued until police intervened.

Traffic was snarled in long-distance routes while movement of vehicles was thin in the town on the first day of the two-day shutdown.

Sundarban Textile Mills did not run. Other institutions in the district reportedly functioned.



INSIDE ORTHOPAEDIC HOSPITAL: (Clockwise from the left top): Patients waiting for doctors at the Out Patient Department closed by the Class Four employees, rush at the Casualty Department also under lock and key, a nurse attending a patient, doctors at a meeting, police guarding the hospital and patients waiting outside the Physiotherapy Department which has also been locked.

## Employees push a hospital into disarray

By Staff Correspondent

Patients in the Orthopaedic Hospital have been in miserable condition since four days ago when its Class Four employees, after a dispute with doctors, struck work and locked up different departments of the hospital including the therapy unit and operation theatre.

The employees have also blocked the utility lines of the hospital, closed the two main gates, the rooms of the professors, the administration and the casualty departments.

The hospital is now functioning under police guards. The doctors are, however, keeping up services with the help of the nurses but the patients are not getting adequate services as some departments are under lock and key.

According to doctors and others, Ahsanullah, a Class Four employee of the hospital forcefully took possession of the Room No 1569 of the

hospital located in the Shishu Hospital premises. Dr Shamim who had been using the room was not present at the hospital at that moment. Upon coming back, he found out Ahsanullah along with his wife and some outsiders in his room.

At night Dr Shamim managed to evict Ahsanullah and his group with the help of the police.

The next morning, the Class Four employees locked up the different units of the hospital in protest against the incident. On Saturday, they barred the doctors from entering the hospital. At one time, they beat up one doctor by the name of Osman for trying to get in to the hospital. Dr Osman was later taken to a clinic for treatment.

At about 1.30 pm Saturday, the doctors with the help of police entered the hospital and broke up several locks. Hundreds of patients, who can hardly move around are now staying at the hospital filled with filth. The Class Four employees have stopped sweeping the hospital floors while the authorities have failed to get the water supply started. The doctors said that they hired some sweepers yesterday.

The nurses are carrying out the jobs of the fourth class employees to some extent to the relief of many patients.

The doctors told The Daily Star despite many threats from employees they had decided to continue their duties.

The Director General and Director (Administration) of the Health Directorate Prof Kazi Moshirur Rahman and Dr Ashraf Ali visited the hospital on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the Doctors Welfare Association of the Orthopaedic Hospital in a press statement denounced the Class Four employees for

## Chittagong

From Page 1 Col 5  
 problems there, police said. The transports bound for remote places of Chittagong could not ply.

Chase and counter-chase and stone throwing took place at Kumira when police went to remove the barricade there, Railway sources said. Later BDR personnel were deployed at Kumira and the barricade was removed after 3 pm.

Railway sources said with the removal of barricade from Kumira point the stranded trains left for destinations.

Police said the transport movement was restored on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway after the removal of the barricade from Kumira point. But other barricades could not be removed till writing of this report.



Munna Textile Mill during strike hour yesterday. --Star photo

## Bombay police arrest two suspects

From Page 1 Col 4  
 area this afternoon as an old one in the sale of which the duo were apparently not involved.

The Joint Police Commissioner, MN Singh, said six members of the Mmoon family, whose Maruti van containing seven AK-56 rifles and four hand grenades found abandoned in Worli on Friday night, had left the city for Dubai. The possibility of their links in the blast was not ruled out.

A city newspaper reported today that two Muslim brothers allegedly involved in smuggling had emerged as suspects in the bombings.

Yaqub and Tiger Momen abandoned their expensive flats in Mahim district and escaped, apparently to Dubai, after the bombings Friday, it said in a front-page report adding that police 'strongly suspect' their involvement.

The newspaper quoted senior Inspector of Police Prabhakar Jadhav as saying a brown van found abandoned Friday night with seven assault rifles and four grenades near Bombay's Century Bazaar belonged to Yaqub Momen.

Century Bazaar was one of the sites rocked by the explo-

sions. Neighbours told the newspaper they had seen hectic activity in the early hours of Friday on the ground floor of the building where the brothers lived.

"I saw a lineup of around 15 cars and vans," one said "at least 50 to 60 persons were hurriedly packing small cardboard boxes into blue suitcases. These suitcases were then placed in the cars."

The operation went on till around 5.45 am. The garage was later washed," the witness told the daily.

Residents said both Yaqub and Tiger Momen were present when the boxes were being loaded into the cars and that the families of the two brothers had not been seen for some days.

Police raided the Momen's flats after the discovery of the van but found no one there. They seized 400,000 rupees (13,333 dollars) an album of photographs and some documents.

The daily quoted police as describing the brothers as 'notorious smugglers'.

In another development, an Indian newspaper reported that the United States will send 10 experts here on Tuesday to compare the Bombay explosions with the huge blast that rocked the 110-story World Trade Center in New York City on Feb 26. The US Embassy in New Delhi refused to confirm the report.

The Independent reported that Washington already has sent vital information concerning leading terrorists from the Middle East who would be capable of executing the synchronized bombing wave.

The newspaper said the information concerned the nature of the explosives used in the World Trade Center and the two Muslim fundamentalists, both Palestinians, who were arrested in the case.

Meanwhile, Bombay bounced back to business today.

After a tense weekend following Friday's chain of explosions, government offices, banks, shops and markets reopened, commuter trains were packed and city traffic as chaotic as ever.

Shared Pawar presided over the reopening of the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). In the basement of which a massive car bomb went off, the first of the explosions.

Bombay has remained peaceful since Friday, but officials are obviously concerned that the explosions could cause another round of Hindu-Muslim riots in the city.

Meanwhile, Pakistan today expressed 'anguish and bewilderment' over statements by senior politicians including the BJP leader, L K Advani, 'implicating' Islamabad for the bomb blasts.

A Foreign Office spokesman regretted the 'tendency' on the part of Indian politicians to blame Pakistan for every unpleasant event in India.

"Such wild, unfounded and mischievous statements accusing Pakistan of involvement in terrorist activities do not help in solving the problems and adversely affect efforts for establishing tension-free and good neighbourly relations between Pakistan and India," the spokesman added.

One robbed of Tk 50,000  
 By DMCH Correspondent

A brick-field manager, Ramiz Uddin, was stabbed and robbed of Taka 50,000 at Mohanmadpur in city Monday afternoon.

Ramiz was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with severe stab injuries.

## The Midnight File

### Advani wants change in Delhi's Kashmir policy

NEW DELHI, Mar 15: The BJP today called for an immediate review of the government's policy on Kashmir in light of the bomb blasts in Bombay. The party leader, L K Advani told newsmen that there had been a major shift of policy on Kashmir with the change of governor. "It is not a mere change of governor but avowedly a change of policy," the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha said, commenting on the reappointment of Gen K V Krishna Rao as the J and K governor, reports PTI.

### Uzbekistan blames Pak Jamiat for fomenting unrest

TASHKENT, Mar 15: The central Asian Republic of Uzbekistan accused Islamic fundamentalists in Pakistan today of fomenting unrest in the region. Uzbek Foreign Minister Sadyk Safayev told journalists that the hardline Jamiat-i-Islami Party of Pakistan was supporting Islamic rebels in the neighbouring Republic of Tajikistan, which has been torn by civil strife for almost a year. It was the first time Uzbekistan, increasingly worried by the prospect of the Tajik unrest spreading, had named those it holds responsible for helping Islamic rebels mount a resistance campaign against the country's new pro-communist rulers, reports Reuter.

### Assaulted DU student dies

By DU Correspondent  
 Kazi Hamidul Islam Pavel, a Dhaka University student and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal activist physically assaulted allegedly by other activists of his party on March 6, died yesterday. Pavel, a second year student of the Department of Psychology of the DU had been in coma at the Dhaka Medical College hospital.

A group of unidentified youth gheraoed Pavel in front of the Arts Building of the University and took him to the Mohsin Hall where he was beaten up mercilessly, the sources added. Pavel was also a resident of the Mohsin Hall.

His body was taken to his village home Monohardi in the afternoon after autopsy.

### Rajshahi lawyers start boycott of magistrate courts

From Staff Correspondent  
 RAJSHAHI, Mar 15: Lawyers in Rajshahi Monday started in-finitive boycott of the Magistrate Court demanding removal of a Magistrate.

Some 500 lawyers of Rajshahi Bar Association took the decision demanding removal of First Class Magistrate M A Marzun who fined a senior advocate Ali Ashraf for his alleged contempt of court and sentenced him for one month about a month ago, a press release issued by the Bar Association said.

The Bar Association earlier sent a memorandum to the Ministry of Establishment giving March 15 ultimatum for his removal.

### Cost of living for middle class declines

Cost of living for the middle class in Dhaka has declined by more than 3 per cent during the first half of current fiscal year while the wage rate increased by about 2 per cent, reports UNB.

### APSU move in RU

From Page 1 Col 7  
 party forum excluding the Jamaat-e-Islami, formed 16 months ago, was still alive and would work together.

The Mayor said that there was no political killing since the forum came into effect and that "we resolved most of the bilateral problems through negotiations."

"But we never talk with the Jamaat directly on any issue," the Mayor added.

Ekhlaque Hossain said that "We will follow our national politics, the student leaders were asked to refrain from taking any step without our decision."

He said that the problem first generated in the government college between the Shibir and the JCD and later the greater unity against the Shibir was forged.

It was formed in the interest of all student organisations, not only the JCD, he added.

He expressed ignorance about the armed training camps allegedly being run by the Shibir but said that the Shibir brought its armed cadres from the upazila level before any planned clash.

He admitted to a factional feud in the local JCD as "problem of a big family."

The other political parties and organizations however said that their unity still existed.

Meanwhile, the politically conscious people in this city were still confused and failed to explain how the rare polarisation took place and why the Shibir had become an enemy of the JCD.

One source said that it became a prestige issue for the Shibir when one of its activists was killed January 14 in the Rajshahi Government College in a rivalry over admissions in the college.

The Shibir locked the College offices over the dispute centering seat distributions among the political parties and the JCD helped the administration in opening the college after several weeks.

As part of its retaliation the Shibir attacked the JCD in the university campus January 16 midnight and was resisted by the JCD and other student organisations.

Another source said that the Shibir wanted to crush the JCD to dominate the campus like Chittagong University. The JCD is considered a major force in the Rajshahi University and holds the VP post in RUCSU. The other organisations thought that Shibir would be crushed by the unity, the source added.

Another source said that the teachers' association and Syndicate elections in the Rajshahi University might have been a major cause for such action by Shibir.

After several years, the anti-Jamaat teachers occupied all the five teachers representative posts in the 15-member Syndicate, the main policy making body of the university. That group also swept the teachers' association election, both held in mid-January.

Losing ground among the teachers and in the administration, the Shibir terminated the campus to create panic, the source said.

But sources said that after the February 6 incident that killed five students and forced the closure of the university sine die, the Shibirites were ostracised by the major section of people in Rajshahi.

The Shibirites have started moving recently after several weeks of living in hiding.

Mitterrand's aide  
 From Page 1 Col 8  
 slaughters of the floods," Madame Lauergeon said.

Madame Lauergeon paid handsome tributes to Bangladesh, saying this country was a leader of the least developed countries. Its quest for democracy and efforts for developments could be an example for other such nations, she said.

The Special Adviser to the French President said her country was opening up to Bangladesh products like textiles and agriculture and said France was buying more from this country than selling its own products.

Madame Lauergeon, left here yesterday evening at the end of her two-day visit.