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DHAKA TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 1995

5 garments workers' feds renew six-point demand

Five garment workers federations yesterday renewed their six-point demand, including immediate implementation of the minimum wages announced by the government, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference here in the morning, federation leaders also demanded a 10 per cent raise in wages and 30 per cent dearness allowance.

They urged the government and garment factory owners to fulfil their demand within October, failing which they would launch a greater movement to realise the demands.

They also demanded implementation of ILO Convention-18 including labour and industrial law in the garment industry and ensuring congenial atmospheres and security of labour in the factory. They further demanded implementation of the child labour-related tripartite agreement and increase in children's education allowance up to Tk 500.

Maternity leave, weekly holiday, trade union rights, stopping retrenchment and harassment of labourers in the factories were also demanded by the trade unions.

They demanded Tk 100,000 as compensation for the family of each worker killed in the Lusaka garment incident and Tk 25,000 for the injured workers.

The leaders also extended solidarity with the 96-hour strike and siege programme

CAB seminar held

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said yesterday, the welfare of the consumers and the people at large is the prime goal of the present government, reports BSS.

The Health Minister was speaking as the chief guest at the regional summit cum training seminar on "Implications of international trade agreements on South Asian countries" organised by Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) held at a local hotel.

Presided over by CAB President Borhan Ahmed the inaugural session was also addressed by Director-General of NGO affairs bureau MA Mannan, and Additional Secretary, Ministry of Industries Syed Yusuf Hossain.

The health minister said, the basic aim of the economic policy, the development programme and social uplift schemes undertaken by the government is to enhance the standard of living and quality of life of the vast masses.

Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said, the present government firmly believes that maximum benefit of the development efforts must reach the maximum number of people.

Referring to the frequent hartals and agitational programmes the Health Minister said, these types of activities dislocate the production and supply channels resulting in shortage of goods with consequential price increase. He called upon all opposition parties to refrain from programme that causes miseries to the fellow countrymen.



M Zamal Hoque, Executive Director and Chief Executive of Eastland Insurance Company Limited, inaugurated the Rajshahi Branch of the company on Saturday. Director (Planning) Ghulam Rahman and Secretary Hafez Ahmad are also seen in the picture.

Iran keen to strengthen trade relations

Iran has shown keen interest in strengthening trade relations with Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Visiting Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Alauddin Brujerdi expressed his country's interest Monday when he called on Minister for Information and Commerce M Shamsul Islam at his office here.

During the meeting, Shamsul Islam described the existing relations between the two countries as excellent and said the bilateral relations would be further consolidated in future with the increase in cooperation in trade and economic fields.

Shamsul Islam said that the liberal trade policy of Bangladesh would help expand the bilateral trade relations between the two countries.

He also stressed cooperation in investment programmes, shipping, manpower export and trade under the joint economic commission.

The Iranian Minister lauded the recent success of Bangladesh in the economic sector and expressed the hope that the Iranian government would continue its cooperation towards the development of Bangladesh.

Brujerdi also showed interest in importing non-traditional items side by side with traditional items from Bangladesh in view of the increasing demand of Bangladeshi items in the world market.

He laid stress on the need for discussion and exchange of views between private entrepreneurs of both the countries side by side with the initiatives from government levels to enhance the economic cooperation.

Iraq, Jordan to sign oil pipeline deal

BAGHDAD, Sept 11: Iraq and Jordan are to sign an accord to develop petroleum projects, including the establishment of a joint company to build an oil pipeline, Iraqi Oil Minister Amr Al-Rashid said Sunday, reports AFP.

Rashid told reporters after talks with Jordanian Energy Minister Samih Al-Darwazah that Iraq and Jordan would "jointly establish a petroleum company and build an oil pipeline connecting the two countries."

Baghdad would also provide aid to Amman to develop Jordan's oil fields, he added.

Darwazah, who arrived Saturday, said: "Iraq has begun technical studies for the construction of the joint oil pipeline and we are studying the profitability of such a project."

Iraqi officials had also assured him that "everything would proceed normally," regarding Iraq's supply of oil to Jordan, he said.

Iraq is the sole supplier of oil to Jordan providing about 70,000 barrels of per day under a special exemption to UN sanctions.

Darwazah is on the first

visit to Baghdad by a senior Jordanian official since the defection to Amman on August 8 of former Iraqi industry minister general Hussein Kamel Hassan.

Before his meeting with the Iraqi minister, Darwazah denied Jordan was looking for alternative oil sources.

"There have been reports of Saudi Arabia providing oil as well as an offer of Kuwaiti petroleum, but Jordan will continue to import Iraqi oil and we are not thinking of changing," Darwazah said.

The United States has tried to pressure Amman to stop importing oil from Iraq and cut off links to squeeze the Baghdad government.

According to a recent report by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the 590 kilometer (375 mile) long pipeline would cost 1.4 billion dollars to build and connect the Iraqi town of Haditha with Zarka in Jordan. It would have a capacity of 250,000 barrels per day, the OPEC report said.

Jordan's King Hussein, who attacked the government of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in televised speech last month, said he did not want to close the border with neighbouring Iraq to avoid starving the people there.

Jordan has been Iraq's only lifeline to the outside world since the United Nations imposed sanctions after Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

King Hussein said, however, that Jordan would seek alternative oil supplies as a precautionary measure.

US dollar slips in Tokyo

TOKYO, Sept 11: The US dollar slipped against the Japanese yen Monday reports AP.

The dollar gradually weakened on selling by Japanese exporters, said a Sakura Bank trader, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The dollar's slip also was a reaction to failure by the US and German central banks Friday to back the Bank of Japan's dollar-buying intervention to push the currency higher.

US labour movement getting new lease of life

WASHINGTON, Sept 11: Wages are sinking, free time is dwindling and job security is history. Do these conditions portend a rebound for the American labour movement as they did 60 years ago when union membership started its great rise?

While it may be farfetched to conclude that workers will seek union representation on the massive scale that they did in the 1930s and 1940s, there are signs of life — even successes — in what seemed to be a moribund union movement that represents only 15.5 per cent of the work-force.

The 1920s marked a low ebb for labour. Union membership fell from its post-war high and armies of unskilled workers in the auto, steel and food processing industries were unorganised.

Then came the great depression, a democratic president, a right to organise and a break-away movement of union dissidents who founded the Congress of Industrial Organisations.

Seizing a period of rare worker military and frustration, the CIO led an unparalleled industrial organising drive market by defining moments such as the 1936-37 sit-down strike at General Motors plants in Flint, Michigan, that peaked with unions representing a third of all workers in the 1950s and 1960s.

Can it happen again?

A quick look around suggests that the original causes for the creation and support of unions have returned for a growing number of people in this country, an observation not lost on the unions.

Futurist Jeffrey Hallett wrote in a publication of the Management-Oriented Society for Human Resource Management.

Conditions making unions more attractive include a widening paygap in which most workers are losing ground to inflation.

Labour Secretary Robert Reich, who has coined terms such as the "anxious class" and "frayed-collar workers," noted in a pre-labour day speech that workers' median weekly pay has fallen by 23 dollars since 1979 to 475 dollars after accounting for inflation.

Steady productivity gains and a surge in corporate profits to a 25-year high in 1994 suggest entrepreneurs and investors are soaking up the wealth that wage earners are losing.

A new study by the Liberal Economic Policy Institute estimates that workers' hourly compensation would have been four per cent higher last year if corporate profit rates had stayed at their 1952-79 average during the 1990s.

As profitable companies shed workers to become more profitable, employers increasingly rely on a disposable workforce of temporaries, part-timers and freelancers, and even high-tech jobs are being exported to low-wage countries as their manufacturing base shrinks. Many unions are merging to consolidate resources and are organising more, especially low-paid service workers who are often minority, female and foreign. In the last two years, unions added more members than they lost for the first time since the 1970s, growing by 2.2 per cent to 16.75 million members.

—Source: AP

Nikah fee

Taka 5.00 per Taka 1000.00 or part of it of the total 'den mohar' can be charged as fee by the nikah registrars for marriage registration, reports BSS.

According to the article 18 of the 'Muslim marriage and talaq registration rules of 1975, the lowest amount of fee should be at Taka 30.00 and the highest at Taka 2000.00, an officials' handout said here on Sunday.

The nikah registrars can charge Taka 100.00 as fee for talaq registration, the handout also said.

Notice of RHD Inviting Tenders

Gr. No	Namd of work & road with location	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time allowed for completion of work	Chargeable head	Eligibility of contractor
1	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat with surface repair at different kms of different roads under Road Division, Kushtia (As per group list).	Tk. 17,84,806/=	Tk. 35,697/=	60 days	266-Development (Feeder Road & Bridge)	"A" to "D" class under genl. category of RHD.
2	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat with surface repair at 5th (P) & 6th (P) kms of Jamjami-Atamdanga-Halboalia Road.	Tk. 21,38,706/=	Tk. 42,775/=	60 days	266-Development	-do-
3	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat with surface repair at 18th (P), 19th & 20th (P) kms of Kushtia-Poradah-Alamdanga-Chuadanga Road.	Tk. 10,00,252/=	Tk. 20,006/=	60 days	-do-	-do-
4	Primer seal coat with surface repair at 30th (P); 31st (P), 34th (P), 35th (P) & 38th (P) kms -do- -do- Road.	Tk. 10,00,252/=	Tk. 20,006/=	60 days	-do-	-do-
5	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat with surface repair at 20th (P), 21st & 22nd (P) kms of -do- -do- Road.	Tk. 16,72,590/=	Tk. 33,452/=	50 days	-do-	-do-
6	Repairing pot holes, depression & primer seal coat at 25th, 26th, 27th (P), 55th & 56th (P) kms of Kushtia-Meherpur Road.	Tk. 11,06,835/=	Tk. 22,137/=	30 days	168-RBF (Maintenance)	-do-
7	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat at 4th (P), 5th & 6th kms of Gangni-Kathuli Road.	Tk. 24,44,681/=	Tk. 48,894/=	60 days	266-Dev. (Feeder Road & Bridge)	-do-
8	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat at 7th, 8th & 9th (P) kms of -do- -do- Road.	Tk. 24,30,919/=	Tk. 48,619/=	60 days	-do-	-do-
9	Bituminous carpeting & primer seal coat with repair at 21st (P) & 22nd (P) kms of Kushtia-Meherpur Road.	Tk. 5,56,971/=	Tk. 11,140/=	30 days	168-RBF (Maintenance)	"A" to "E" -do-

Md. Mostaque Hossain
Executive Engineer, RHD
Road Division, Kushtia

Rapport holds certificate awarding ceremony

Rapport Bangladesh Limited organized recently a certificate awarding ceremony for the participants who completed training course on "Accounting, office management, training of trainers and management of change" at Dhaka Club, says a press release.

Chairman, T & T Board, M H Chowdhury distributed certificates among the successful participants as the chief guest. M Mosharrat Hossain, Managing Director, Rapport Bangladesh, presented the key-note paper and gave a description of the various courses offered by the Rapport.

Dr Atiar Rahman, Managing Director, Eara Private Limited, chaired the function which was attended by the 100 participants and their spouses.



M H Choudhury, Chairman T&T Board, seen presenting certificate to a participant of training course sponsored by Rapport Bangladesh Limited recently at Dhaka Club.

'Sino-US trade ties showing unsteady development'

BEIJING, Sept 11: Sino-US trade ties are showing an unsteady development that can only be smoothed with the removal of certain 'obstacles,' vice premier in-charge of foreign trade, Li Lanqing, was quoted as saying Monday, reports AFP.

"Despite the growth of bilateral trade in the last several years, great potentials are yet to be tapped for further development," Li told former US President George Bush in Beijing on Sunday.

Trade ties would develop faster "if obstacles can be removed," the China Daily quoted Li as saying.

It was not clear if the obstacles referred to by Li were purely economic, or also political.

China and the United States have been in a running battle over China's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

UNCTAD predicts 2.9pc world growth

GENEVA, Sept 11: An economic slowdown in the United States has helped trim predictions for global growth this year to 2.9 per cent, with little prospect of getting millions of people back to work, a UN agency said Monday, reports AP.

The growth rate forecast by UNCTAD, the UN Conference on Trade and Development, is lower than the prediction made last April by the International Monetary Fund, which said the world economic would expand by 3.8 percent this year.

Actual growth of global economic output last year was 3.7 per cent, a sharp improvement from the recession-dampened performance of previous years.

In its 212-page annual trade and development report, UNCTAD criticised the anti-inflation policy of the US Federal Reserve.

The US central bank, fearing inflation, started raising interest rates 18 months ago. But there are "still no clear signs that inflation threatened," UNCTAD said. The impact has been to slow the economy too much, it added.

Raising interest rates to head off a price rise during an economic recovery is a policy that fails to take account of changed condition, the agency said.

Inflation during an economic recovery is less inevitable than it once was, partly because labour unions are weaker and less able to win wage increases that lead to price rises elsewhere in the economy, it said.

Increased global competition also acts as a damper on workers' demands for fear of pricing themselves out of a job. The report also said little is being done to attack unemployment. The jobless rate for wealthy countries has averaged 7.3 per cent over the last 15 years, compared with 3.2 per cent during the 1960-73 "golden age" of stability.

"Unemployment is reaching politically menacing levels, threatening to bring social disintegration and beggar-my-neighbour policies and jeopardising the stability of the international trading system," UNCTAD said.

Even in Japan, "unemployment has breached the traditional barrier of 3 per cent, and the government seems helpless to stem the tide," the report said.

"Unemployment may rise to 5-6 per cent in the near future.

While some countries have been able to create new jobs, they have been poor quality on the whole, the report said.

"In the United States, for instance, employment has grown significantly faster than in most other industrial countries, but most of the new jobs created are low paid," it said.

The jobless rate only shows part of the problem, and overlooks widespread "disguised unemployment," when people lose higher paying jobs and are reduced to mental work or low paid self-employment, the report added.

Call from women confce Invest more on youth development

BEIJING, Sept 11: A strident call went out today to the United Nations and world governments to invest more on educating and nurturing young people rather than lavish money on grand projects that enhanced politicians, says AFP.

"It is time we put our priorities right and channel more funds into training and caring for our youth's health and education," said Sherril Whittington, spokesperson for the youth delegation at the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Two-thirds of the world's youth live in developing countries, said Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the conference as she launched youth day at the conference.

Governments have not paid enough attention on youth care and training, with investments mainly being channelled into grand infrastructure projects just to "glorify those in power," Whittington said.

The spotlight today was turned on youth, with several programmes lined up for the 84 members of the youth delegation at the conference representing 65 countries to highlight problems in their regions.

Wife, 2 kids of Thai worker killed

BANGKOK, Sept 11: The wife and two children of a Thai building site foreman were killed in a fire which police said on Monday may have been started by a disgruntled construction worker, reports Reuter.

The foreman at the construction site in Saraburi province, 120 km (80 miles) north of Bangkok, said he had had a heated argument with one of the workers at the site earlier on Sunday, police said.

Witnesses later told police they saw several workers approach the foreman's temporary dwelling at the site with plastic bags full of what police believe was petrol.

The foreman was not at home when the house burst into flames trapping and killing his wife, 13-year-old daughter and four-year-old son, police said.

Police said they were investigating and searching for the worker involved in the argument.