

Garments workers urge owners Stop retrenchment before implementing MOU

Five garments workers' organisations urged the owners to refrain from retrenching child labourers before implementing the tripartite agreement signed by the BGMEA, ILO and UNICEF, reports UNB.

The appeal came from a joint meeting of the five labour unions, held in Dhaka yesterday with Abul Hossain in the chair.

It was addressed, by Tauhidur Rahman, Salauddin Ahmed Swapan, Joinul Abedin and Nahid Rahman.

According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the owners are bound to arrange education and rehabilitation programmes for the retrenched children, the leaders observed. They also demanded that child education allowance be raised to Tk 500 each.

Expressing deep concern over the prevailing labour situation in the garments industry, the leaders said an organised group was hatching conspiracy to destroy the country's garment, industry and misguiding foreign buyers of readymade garments in the name of child labour.

The meeting also urged the government to form a high-powered tripartite committee to solve the problems of the garments industry which has employed more than a million workers.

The garments sector labour leaders extended their support to the demand for forming a separate ministry for garments industry earlier made by the owners.



Idol of goddess Durga being immersed in the Buriganga yesterday. — Star photo

Fresh areas flooded

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basins registered fall as almost nil rainfall was recorded in the 24 hours ending at 9 am yesterday.

The Brahmaputra and the Ganges continued to fall at all points but the Manu in Meghna basin and the Matamuhuri in the South Eastern hill basin recorded rise during the period.

All the rivers were now flowing below their respective danger levels except the Jamuna at Naogaon, the Ganges at Goalundo and Bhaigakul and the Kalganga at Taraghat.

The Kalganga in the Brahmaputra basin was flowing 25 cm above its danger level although the river registered fall by 5 cm at Taraghat.

According to official figures, the floods have so far claimed 33 lives and affected more than 72 lakh people. A government announcement yesterday said 72,01,822 people of 15,22,936 families in 95 thanas had been affected in the flash floods which also damaged 4,01,569 dwelling houses totally and 4,59,312 partially.

Standing crops on 646,714 acres of land were damaged totally and on 913,519 partially. Some 1562 livestock perished in the cataclysmic flooding.

Educational institutions numbering 614 were damaged fully and 1249 partly.

Some 2348 km roads were washed away while 7548 km damaged partially. About 247 km embankments and 1460 bridges and culverts were battered by the recurring flood onslaughts, the official estimate showed.

Our Correspondents reports: Rajshahi twenty-one more unions of Bagmara, Tanore, Poba, Durgapur and Mohanpur thanas have been inundated by flood water raising the total number of flood-affected unions in the district to 52.

In Naogaon town, electricity supply have been totally snapped as flood waters entered the Naogaon Electric

Informal contacts

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"We welcome the formula and invite the opposition leaders officially to sit across the table with a view to change the situation."

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, while speaking at a Puja Mandap in the city Monday, reiterated his willingness to discuss the formula for a caretaker government proposed by Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury to overcome the current standoff.

Hasina

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Referring to various problems facing the womenfolk, she said if returned to power, the Awami League would ensure equal rights of men and women in all spheres of national life and enact required laws to stop repression on women.

Mahila Samity president Dr Neelima Ibrahim, The 'Begum' Editor Nurjahan Begum, Shirin Huq, Dr Majduma Nargis Ratna, Ivy Rahman and other women's leaders spoke on the occasion.

Poet Sufia Kamal who could not attend the meeting sent a letter to Hasina wishing her successful leadership for the emancipation of women and wellbeing of the nation.

Awami League leaders Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed, Abdur Razzak, Shamsur Rahman and Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin were present.

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Quake toll rises to 71 in Turkey

DINAR, Turkey, Oct 3: Rescue workers have recovered the bodies of 14 more people from the wreckage of a strong earthquake in this Turkish market town, raising the death toll to 71, officials said today, reports Reuter.

Government officials told Anatolian news agency they had dug out 14 more bodies late on Monday night.

Officials have predicted a final death toll of about 100 from Sunday's quake in the southwestern town of Dinar, and at least 242 are said to be injured.

A mild earthquake shook the town early today, but caused no damage.

Hundreds of residents, still in shock and looking bewildered, spent a cold night in tents or in stables after thousands of homes were damaged in Sunday night's quake, which measured 6.0 on the Richter scale.

Yeltsin to face impeachment motion

MOSCOW, Oct 3: Communist legislators, scenting their strength in recent polls, plan to resume their quest to launch impeachment proceedings against President Boris Yeltsin, the party leader said today, reports AP.

Gennady Zyuganov said his Communist Party faction had collected more than the 150 lawmakers' signatures needed to start the complex legal procedure to remove the president from office, which Russians call impeachment.

Durga Puja ends with immersion of idols

The four-day Durga Puja festival of the country's Hindu community ended yesterday with the immersion of the idols of goddess Durga throughout the country, reports BSS.

Puja was performed in all the mandaps of the country yesterday morning marking the Bijoya Dashami. The Hindu community prayed for the peace and prosperity of the mankind of the occasion.

The day was a public holiday.

In the evening colourful processions were brought out in different parts of the country carrying the idols of goddess Durga on trucks and push carts and then immersed in nearby rivers and ponds.

In the capital Dhaka, devotees carrying images of Durga from all puja mandaps gathered at Dhakeswari Mandir and later proceeded towards the Wisheghat in a big colourful procession and immersed the deity in the Buriganga river.

Other highlights of the day included exchange of greetings on the occasion of bijoya dashami.

Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee organised a blood donation programme in the morning at Dhakeswari Mandir premises.

UNB adds from Sirajganj, as many as 224 idols have been erected in nine thanas of the district on the occasion of the Sharodiya Durga Puja.

Officials said of the idols, 35 have been erected in Sadar, 8 in Khmarchand, 31



The shattered remains of the car of Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov after a bomb exploded in central Skopje yesterday killing the driver and seriously injuring Gligorov in an assassination attempt which coincides with his government's moves to mend fences with neighbours Greece and Serbia. — AFP/UNB photo

Old man commits suicide in city

By DMCH Correspondent

A 67-year old man who was on bail after having hacked his wife to death about six months ago, reportedly committed suicide at his house at Mohammadpur in the city Monday night.

Police recovered the body of the man, Sheikh Nuruddin Ahmed, from his residence at M-12, Nurjahan Road.

His son and daughter found their father hanging from a shower pipe Monday night.

No one was in the house at the time. His son Giasuddin then informed the Mohammadpur thana.

Police sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for autopsy. An unnatural death case has been filed.

Nuruddin was arrested for killing his wife in the kitchen of their residence in March last and later released on bail.

Macedonian president survives attempt

SKOPJE (Macedonia), Oct 3: A remote-controlled car bomb exploded today as the president of Macedonia drove by, injuring the leader of the volatile former Yugoslav republic, reports AP.

President Kiro Gligorov's driver was killed and his security officer and three pedestrians were injured in the assassination attempt, police said. One of the pedestrians was in critical condition.

Doctors said the 78-year-old Gligorov had undergone surgery for head injuries, and would have to have more surgery for an eye injury. The doctors, who refused to be identified, had at first characterized the injuries as slight but later were more guarded.

They did not specify Gligorov's injuries, saying only that any head injury was serious for a man of his age.

Police said two suspects in their mid-20s were arrested, but their identities were not

Businessmen call hartal in Pabna tomorrow

PABNA, Oct 3: The District Babsayi Oikya Parishad has called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the district tomorrow to realise its two-point demand, reports UNB.

The hartal call came from a meeting of the Parishad held at Poura Bazar with Abdur Razzak Biswas in the chair today.

The Parishad demanded exemplary punishment to the former SP of the district MA Mahbud and shifting the local Chamber and Commerce and Industry's election date from December 3 to 20.

The rally was addressed by MA Kafi Sarker, Abu Rais Khan and Rezaul Hossain Minton.

The Parishad leaders threatened that they would enforce an indefinite hartal if their demands were not met by October 15.

Earlier, on September 24, the Parishad had enforced a half-day hartal in the district, demanding removal of the SP and shifting the election date.

Meanwhile, SP MA Mahbud has been transferred from the district.

16 of a family die in Pak accident

ISLAMABAD, Oct 3: An overloaded transport truck plunged into a deep ravine in western Pakistan, leaving 16 passengers from the same family dead state-run media reported today, reports AP.

The driver of the truck — carrying tons of coal along with a family of Afghan nomads — lost control of the vehicle when he tried to negotiate a sharp downhill turn, the Associated Press of Pakistan reported.

The victims, including 12 children, were found buried underneath the coal, the news agency said.

The accident occurred after the truck driver failed to climb a steep section of road and was forced to back up through a turn.

Only three members of the family of 19 survived the crash, as did the driver who fled the scene of the accident and has been charged with negligence, authorities said.

Feni BCL leader arrested

FENI, Oct 3: A leader of the Bangladesh Chhatra League was arrested today for his alleged involvement in the murder of a college student, reports UNB.

Police said Rezaul Karim Shaheen, BCL Secretary of Sadar thana unit, was picked up from the town's Station Road area this morning.

Some miscreants kidnapped Ashraf on August 25. The following day, local people found him in Sohadevpur area with fatal injuries and rushed him to the Sadar Hospital.

Later, he was shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he expired on September 8.

Ashraf's brother filed a case with Sadar thana, accusing 13 in this connection.

Actress Anju's microbus recovered

By Staff Correspondent

Police recovered the stolen microbus of film actress Anju Ghosh from Jamalpur district and arrested six persons in this connection.

The arrested were identified as Shahjahan, 30, driver of the microbus Khalil, 24, Salam, 27, Nurul Islam alias Liton, 23, Md Hossain, 30, and Abdur Rashid.

Police said the microbus was stolen from in front of the Dream Beauty Parlour at Sector-4 in Uttara on September 27. An unidentified gang later threatened the film actress that her microbus would be burnt and acid thrown at her if she failed to pay Taka 1.6 lakh.

Suspecting the involvement of the microbus driver, in the theft, Uttara police arrested him and Khalil on September 29. Following their confession, police arrested three others and recovered the vehicle from Fatepur village in Jamalpur Sadar thana.

Flogging

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The cabinet also voted to create a Ministry of Human Rights.

London-based Amnesty International in a recent study warned that extra-judicial floggings could continue unabated.

"Beatings with sticks or leather whips is frequently administered," Amnesty said. "Prisoners are hit on the back, the buttocks and the soles of their feet, resulting in open wounds."

The Midnight File

France sends troops to Comoros

PARIS, Oct 3: France sent 20 elite troops to the Comoros islands today and leaders of a military coup led by French mercenaries breached for a possible invasion. French officials said the deployment of the Intervention Group of the military police was part of a planned 'pre-positioning' of troops in the region, but would not elaborate. About 4,000 French soldiers are permanently stationed at Mayotte, in the Comoros, and at Reunion, east of Madagascar, reports AP.

Adulterated food

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given food item, said Dr Mostafizur Rahman, a senior scientist of the IPH.

In every thana and the city corporations there are sanitary officers working under the Ministry of Health and the corporations to ensure the food safety. These officers, if in doubt about the standard of any food item in the market, send a sample to the IPH which in turn has to carry out the relevant tests and submit its findings within one month, the scientist noted.

"But the existing laws of the country regarding food adulteration is more than 32 years old. If any one is found guilty of adulteration he is liable to a maximum fine of Tk 200 under the Bangladesh Pure Food Ordinance, 1959," pointed out Dr Rahman.

Many of the manufacturers of adulterated foodstuff are getting away by paying only a small fine, Institute sources said.

It was noted that there is a wide range of food items which are not at all mentioned in the legislation, and one such item is water.

"When we have to check on the industries which produce bottled mineral water we are virtually tied because the existing laws only talks about soft drinks in particular — not potable water," said the scientist.

It was learnt that in 1987 an interministerial committee was formed to update

CID probe

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partment intercity train was stopped and all its passengers robbed of their valuables by a gang of at least 20 robbers for about 45 minutes just before it entered the Arikhola station at around 8.40 pm.

According to the officials, as the train reduced its speed near a culvert, because of its poor condition, the miscreants disconnected the hose-pipe between two compartments, thus cutting off the train's 'vacuum system' which automatically activated the brakes.

The officials suspected that the robbers were travelling on the roof of the train at the time.

The miscreants then robbed the passengers in all the seven compartments of the train and disappeared in the darkness of the night," said one of the officials.

An FIR was filed with the Kamalapur GRP thana on Monday in this connection.

Lankan fighting

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cations at Atechuvelli for mortar attacks on the base.

The army captured a 21-square-kilometre (12-square-mile) area just outside the Palaly military base, the defence ministry said Monday.

Today's setback for the rebels was reminiscent of their failed attack on the northeastern Wel Oya Marmy Complex on July 28. In that battle, the LTTE lost some 430 cadres while the army lost only two soldiers and one of them was killed in a friendly fire accident.

In another confrontation in the eastern Tikodai area, police and rebels exchanged fire, leaving three commandos and six rebels killed, the military said in a separate statement today.

The LTTE's clandestine radio was silent about the latest fighting but said some 50,000 Tamil civilians have fled their homes in the face of a military offensive.

The Tigers are leading a campaign for a homeland for minority Tamils concentrated in the northern and eastern regions. More than 50,000 people have died in the conflict since it began in 1972.

Murders up

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western side of Mirpur Zoo on September 8. Medical sources said that there were marks of injuries in the body of the unidentified woman aged about 30.

Afasuddin, 28, was allegedly strangled at a hotel room in the North South Road in the old part of the city. In another incident, a gang of dacoits shot dead one Jahangir Alam Swapan, 25, when he along with some others, tried to resist the gang from committing dacoity in a house at Paragadi under Demra thana in the early hours of September 8.

A maid, Parveen, 12, was found dead in the kitchen of a house at West Tejuri Bazar under Tejaon thana on September 11. Police said that the body which bore marks of injuries was found hanging from a ceiling hook. Police on suspicion picked up the landlord of the house, his wife and brother.

Police recovered body of a teenage girl, Noor Rashida, from a ditch near her house at Meradia under Shabujbagh thana early morning on September 2. According to medical sources, marks of injuries were found on her face and legs and her hands were tied with a scarf.

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Ittefaq incident

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the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court today, police said. Police claimed that Renu was the main suspect in the incident but didn't specify his identity.

A young man, Saifulah Md Tareque alias Biplob, 24, son of Nurunnabi, chief Auditor of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC), was shot dead and another was seriously injured in the shootout.

Earlier, the father of Nurunnabi in the FIR in Sutrapur thana had alleged that two young men aged between 22 and 25 came to his residence Sunday morning and called his son Biplob. After a few minutes' chat in front of their house, his son left the house with them.

Later, at about 3 pm on that day, another young man in a motor bike came to their house and informed that his son was fatally injured and was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Detective police took over the case from Sutrapur thana yesterday, police said.