

Local manufacturers claim

Tk 1500 cr Indian sarees smuggled every year

Bangladeshi saree manufacturers have claimed that over six crore pieces of Indian sarees worth Tk 1,500 crore are being smuggled annually, posing a serious threat to the domestic industry, reports UNB.

"Ninety per cent of weaving units, printing factories and enterprises engaged in the business of local sarees are on the verge of closure," M Kaikobad Bhuiyan, convener of Bangladesh 'Bastarshilpa Sangram Parishad', an action committee of saree manufacturers, said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference at a local hotel, he urged the government to re-align an 11-point charter of demand to save the saree industry.

Bhuiyan said the government has failed to protect

the domestic saree industry by stopping the smuggling of Indian sarees, which is the main obstacle to the flourishing of local textile industry.

"Smuggling is more harmful to the economy than hantals," he said, urging the government to take effective measures to check smuggling in all the entry points and seize smuggled sarees from the local markets.

Although Bangladeshi manufacturers offer quality sarees, they cannot compete with the smuggled ones because of high production cost at home, Bhuiyan said.

The Parishad leader blamed high duties and taxes on imported raw materials of saree — cotton, yarn, dye and various chemicals — for the higher production cost of the local sarees.

He demanded duty-free import of raw materials used in saree industry as well as textile dyeing and finishing machinery and urged the government not to impose value added tax (VAT) on the industry.

Citing the free market economy as another factor behind the dismal situation in the industry, Bhuiyan also demanded that import of grey fabrics be stopped immediately.

The Parishad's other demands include reduction of tariff of some utilities like gas, water and electricity, announcement of new import policy protecting the textile industry, inclusion of business representatives in anti-smuggling task force and lowering bank interest rate for the textile sector.



Members of the Dhaka Autorickshaw Drivers' Unity dismantling the dais erected by the Babi-taxi Labourers' Union at the Purana Paltan crossing in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Keep garments sector out of hartal: BGMEA

By Staff Correspondent

President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Redwan Ahmed in a statement yesterday appealed to all concerned to keep all activities of garment sector including production and transportation of goods to Chittagong port out of the purview of hartal, siege and demonstration.

The coming few days are very crucial for the garments sector because the deadline for US and Canada quota year is December 31, he said.

Jubo Dal leader

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dul Malek of 225, East Rampura, came out of his residence. Doctors declared him dead when he was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Diana

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"I think you have to be careful about the word ambassador," the foreign secretary told BBC Radio 4's Today programme.

DU teacher

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university.

Nuban Ahmed was admitted to the DMCH on December 17 with severe injuries in the right eye and head after some muggers stabbed him when he cried for help near the South Plaza of the Sangsada Bhaban in the city.

Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, pro-VC Shahiduddin Chowdhury and a number of teachers and students visited the hospital immediately after receiving the death news of Nuban Ahmed.

The Nama-j-Janaja of Nuban Ahmed will be held today after the Jhor prayers at the Dhaka University central mosque.

Abdul Haq

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travel bags.

The programme started with hoisting the black flag and red flag at around 10:30 am.

Vice Chancellor of the DU Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, former VC Muniruzzaman, leaders of different left political parties including Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, leaders of trade unions, socio-cultural organisations and professional groups, teachers and journalists and some BNP leaders including Tariqul Islam paid their last tribute to late Abdul Haq.

Mehdi Anwar his only son and younger brother Ekramul Haq were also present.

The programme at the TSC ended with the 'communist international' (the song of the communist) and a 'revolutionary salute' and the body was taken in a decorated open truck on its last journey to the Mirpur Shaheed Buddhijibi Graveyard at around 3:30 pm.

Earlier, his Nama-j-Janaja was held at the central mosque of the Dhaka University.

The body of Abdul Haq was taken to the Mirpur graveyard in a long funeral procession from the TSC. The body was buried with due religious rites.

Autorickshawmen

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yesterday fearing attack by the autorickshaw drivers disrupting communications.

Some 96 drivers and owners were arrested in the city yesterday on charge of unleashing violence and obstructing traffic.

UNB news agency said the autorickshaw drivers and owners have called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the city today to protest police action on them.

The autorickshaw drivers went on an undeclared strike and rampage in the city Monday protesting seizure of the autorickshaws and autotomopsis plying without valid documents.

A driver of a Dhaka University bus was stabbed by picketing autorickshaw drivers at Sharulia, under Demra thana while carrying students to the university.

At Jatrabari they also clashed with truck workers while trying to damage some parked trucks there.

Witnesses said hundreds of autorickshaw drivers welding sticks brought out militant processions in the city also in the evening.

A group of unruly drivers snatched a wireless set from an NSI field officer from Malibagh at about 10:45 am, witnesses said. Police could not confirm it.

They set fire to an autorickshaw in the evening at Kakrail crossing.

Meanwhile, the autorickshaw drivers' union was split into two groups and one accused the other of conspiring against the realisation of their demand.

Azizul Haque Mukto, a leader of the Dhaka Autorickshaw Sramik Union was severely beaten up by another group of drivers who alleged that his union was collaborating with the government to foil the present movement.

The newly formed group of the autorickshaw drivers was holding a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club at about 3 pm. At the same time the Dhaka Autorickshaw Sramik Union led by Mukto was holding its rally at Purana Paltan.

At one point activists of one group attacked the Paltan rally and beat up Mukto who was later admitted to the DMCH.

2 JU students killed in road accident

By JU Correspondent

Three persons including two students of Jahangirnagar University (JU) were killed and ten others injured, three of them seriously, when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus collided with a truck on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway early yesterday.

Shah Ahmed Khalil Moon, a third year student of the English Department and another unidentified person died on the spot when the bus of S Alam Transport Company hit a road-side electric pole following a collision with a speeding truck.

Ruhul Amin Shishir, another student of the same department expired on way to Gazaria thana health complex soon after the accident.

The mishap took place on the Meghna-Gomti bridge at Daudkandi when the bus from Cox's Bazar tried to overtake a truck at around 3:30 am.

Moon and Shishir were the only sons of their parents.

Of the injured three students of the English Department of JU Nurul Momen

Khan, Abdullah-Al-Faruq, and Shamsuddoha Rony — were admitted to Suhrawardy Hospital in a critical condition.

Seven other injured passengers were released after first aid at Gazaria thana health complex and the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

After the post-mortem examinations at DMCH, the bodies of Moon and Shishir were taken to their residences at Mirpur in the city.

The body of Moon was buried at the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard at Mirpur while Shishir's body was sent to Singair, Manikganj for burial.

Transport strike

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Munshi Abdul Majeed, told The Daily Star last night that it would hand over a memorandum to the Prime Minister today to press for implementing the agreement signed in 1992.

The agreement includes issuance of a number of licenses in different categories to the autorickshaw drivers.

The Midnight File

SAARC Economic Assoc formed

KATHMANDU, Dec 26: Economists from South Asian nations today formed a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Economic Association (SEA). The objective of the association is to formulate the study and analysis of the issues concerned with economic cooperation in the SAARC region in order to encourage effective linkage among the professionals in the region," a SAARC secretariat official said, reports AFP.

Fight for soccer gold

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from the region met each others was in the SAARC football championships in Colombo early this year when the Indians clinched the thriller against the run of play in tie-breakers. Their last match-up in the SAF Games was again in Colombo in 1991 when Bangladesh won 2-0.

The game will be the second India Bangladesh SAF Final, the other one being in Dhaka in 1985 when India won 4-1 in a tie-breaker after the regulation time ended 1-1.

Pfister, adding, "My boys have played three matches in five days. There is a limit to how much workload a player can take and my over-worked players are very tired."

Pfister, who has been complaining about the organisers from the very first day, only stopped short of accusing the hosts of manipulating the schedule for the local team's benefit.

The usually jovial German also complained about the "bizarre wisdom" of holding the final at 1 pm under the scorching sun.

Medals table

MADRAS, Dec 26: Following is the final medal tally in the SAF Games today:

Country	G	S	B	Total
India	105	60	19	184
Sri Lanka	16	25	52	93
Pakistan	10	33	36	79
Bangladesh	7	16	35	58
Nepal	4	8	16	28
Bhutan	0	0	2	2
Maldives	0	0	1	1
Total	142	142	161	445

Chunnu

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sorrow at the sad demise of Zahid Hossain Chunnu.

In a condolence message President Biswas said that his contributions to the cultural arena were really praiseworthy and his death was a great loss to the nation.

In a similar message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday also expressed her profound shock and sorrow at the premature death of Chunnu.

The Prime Minister prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and expressed her heart-felt sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Information and Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam and State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum in separate messages also condoled the death of Chunnu.

Deportees

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fourth batch. They identified themselves as residents of Teknaf.

Some of the returnees also raised complaints against the Bangladesh embassy officials in Saudi Arabia, for alleged non-cooperation with the Bangladeshi expatriates.

Nurul Islam said, "we wrote to the embassy about our sufferings in Saudi jail but no response was received."

The returnees also alleged that they had faced food and accommodation crisis on board the vessel during their 16 days' journey.

They paid 100 riyals each but were herded together. The voyage was also risky because the ship was old, they claimed.

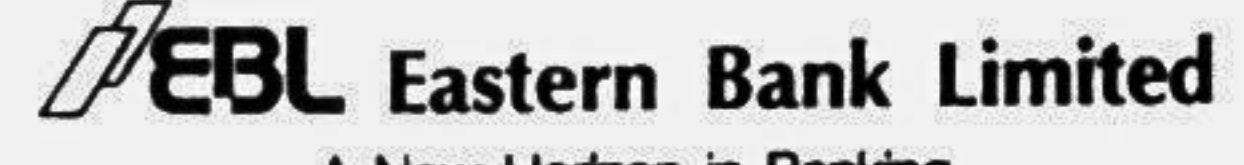


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Wage Board formed

From Page 1

and Publisher of the Dainik Inquilab, Chowdhury Mohammad Faruque, Editor, Printer and Publisher of Dainik Millat, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Editor, Printer and Publisher of Dainik Khabar, Abul Quasem Majumder, Secretary General, BSP and Editor, Printer and Publisher of Dainik Samachar, and DP Barua, Managing Director and Chief Editor, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), have been made members of the Wage Board to represent the employers of newspapers and news agencies.

Messrs Fazul Karim, City Editor, Dainik Bangla, Syed Mahmud, News Editor, BSS, Fazole Imam, Senior Vice-President, and Bazlur Rahman Milon, Secretary General of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Press Sramik Federation, Jahangir Kabir, and Alhaj Mir Mozammel Hossain, President and Secretary General respectively of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatra Karmachari Federation will represent the employees in the Wage Board.

The Wage Board will recommend wages, allowances and other benefits for the working journalists, press workers and general employees in the newspapers and news agencies. While making the recommendations the Board will consider the living index, fiscal benefits being given for similar jobs in the government, semi-govern-

ment and private organisations, objective condition of newspapers and news agencies in different parts of the country and other relevant matters.

The Board can also recommend fiscal benefits for 'time work' and 'piece work'.

It will submit specific recommendations to the government for giving dearness allowance for interim period for the journalists and other employees of the newspapers and news agencies. The Dearness Allowance will be merged with recommended wages and allowances in future. The Wage Board will make the final recommendations to the government within the next six months.

Strike cut

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gramme of today in view of the formation of the fifth wage board by the government yesterday, according to a press release, reports BSS.

The committee, however, decided to hold a joint rally of the journalists, press workers and employees of newspapers and news agencies in the Jatiya Press Club premise today at 11 am to press their demand for starting the activities of the wage board and declaration of the dearness allowance at the earliest. During the rally, a token work stoppage for three hours will be observed from 11 am in all newspapers and news agencies.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

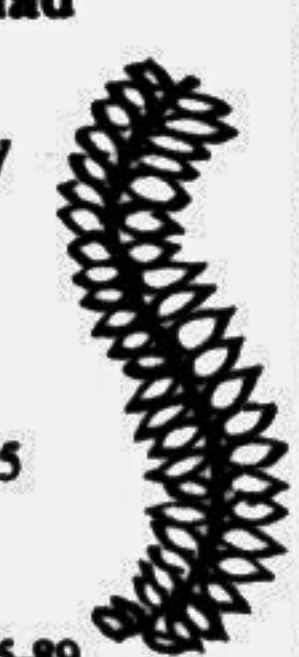
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