

Garments sector has incurred Tk 7111 cr loss in 2 years'

By Staff Correspondent
The country's garments sector incurred a loss of Tk 4978 crore in 37 days, from February 23 to March 30, due to non-stop hartal programmes and non-cooperation movement of the political parties, BGMEA leaders said.

"In the last two years, the garments sector incurred a total loss of Tk 7111 crore because of political unrest," President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Redwan Ahmed told a press conference in the city yesterday.

He said that currently the garments sector was sustaining huge production loss due to loadshedding. At places, Redwan pointed out, electric supply remained suspended for 12 hours. Clarifying his claim on the loss incurred during February-March, Redwan said, "our statistics were gathered from all the factories."

Giving a break down of the losses he said, in those 37 days, the factories suffered production loss of Tk 194.25 crore, bore extra air freight cost of Tk 44 crores, sustained stock lots worth Tk 90 crore and had to cancel export orders worth Tk 4650 crore.

He elaborated by saying that in the last two years this sector lost 170 working days due to hartal, non-cooperation, attacks, rail and road barricade, work abstention at the port, strike of dock workers, C & F agents, stevedores and workers and congestion at the port.

The garments sector fetched home US 2.4 billion dollars in 1995 and has employed some 12 lakh workers. The growth rate of this sector was over 20 per cent during the last fiscal year, according to sources concerned.

"On an average, each of the 2000 factories are sustaining liabilities worth Tk 42.5 lakh," Redwan pointed out.

According to a BGMEA survey, LDF firm to make country secular, says Menon

Workers Party general secretary Rashed Khan Menon said yesterday that the political parties who talked about protection of minorities should have clear stand about banning the use of religion in election manifesto, reports BSS.

Addressing a public meeting at Narail Dakbanglo ground Menon said the banning of election campaign in masjids, mandirs and churches was not sufficient enough, the propaganda of religious communalism had to be stopped, he said adding the source of such propaganda could be stopped by abolishing the Fifth and Eighth amendments to the Constitution.

The meeting was also addressed by the front leaders Bimal Biswas, CPB leader Advocate Firoz Ahmed, Workers Party central leader Advocate Nazrul Islam.

Mass hunger strike

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had distributed illegal arms to its party cadre. Without naming the minister, he also urged the caretaker government to probe who had been given the arms.

The Jatiya Party leader also demanded that the caretaker government take steps to ensure the independence of the judiciary for proper enquiry into the corruptions of the ministers, MPs and party leaders of BNP.

Otherwise, he said, the election would not be fair and free in the influence of black money, he said.

JP presidium member Begum Roushan Ershad in her speech said she expected justice from the caretaker government and added, "there shall be no election confining Ershad in jail."

Moudud Ahmed, a presidium member of the party, also urged upon the caretaker government to "prove its neutrality" by releasing Ershad.

Moudud, who was prime minister in Ershad government said, if elected, the JP will re-introduce the Upazila System and further decentralise the administration by involving the people's representative at the district level.

The case of those government officials who were given forced retirement by the BNP government would be given "due consideration" by the JP once it was voted to power, Moudud said. "The JP would follow the policy of co-operation and co-existence rather than confrontation," he assured.

The rally was presided over by Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury. Thousands of slogan-chanting party worker and supporters from districts joined the rally, held to press for release of Ershad. They carried banners, fastoons and replica of plough, JP's election

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina along with her sister Sheikh Rehana and some relatives offering flowers at the graves of her family members at Banani graveyard before leaving for Hajj yesterday. — Star photo

BCS coordination body leader contradicts statement

By Staff Correspondent
A NH Akhter Hussain, joint secretary general BCS Coordination Committee, yesterday described the joint statement of acting honorary general secretary of Engineers' Institution, Bangladesh and secretary general of the Bangladesh Medical Association and Krishi Bid Institution as unfortunate and undesirable, reports BSS.

In a statement Hussain said they issued the joint statement without verifying the truth of what appeared in newspapers. He particularly accused the acting honorary general secretary of Engineers' Institution of signing the 'misleading' joint statement unilaterally without the approval of the president of the institution and the vice-president (SSW). This type of unauthorised statement was repugnant to the constitution and tradition of the Engineers' Institution, he added.

Hussain said that the statement of Dr MA Majed, Chairman Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council which appeared in yesterday's newspapers cleared the controversy centering his meeting with BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia.

He expressed his concern over the machination of some persons in dividing the movement of the professionals and creating a rift among them.

Magisterial power

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election in the country, suggested the Chief Adviser to hold election in more than one days for the sake of ensuring full security in the vote centres.

They proposed magisterial power to be given to the presiding officers so that they could face any untoward incident during vote and could arrest and punish instantly the armsholders or trespassers during the balloting.

The delegation also suggested that the Election Commission arrange a joint meeting of political parties, administration and authorities maintaining law and order, and representatives of teachers' organisations which could help holding of a free and fair election.

They also told the Chief Adviser that some people, who are not teachers at all, play role in protecting the interest of political parties by dominating over the teaching community in disguise of teachers' leaders.

The National Federation of Teachers' Associations comprises Bangladesh College Teachers Association, Bangladesh Teachers Association, Bangladesh Government College Teachers Association, Bangladesh Government Secondary Teachers Association and Bangladesh Government Primary Teachers Association.

Other members of the delegation were: Nazrul Islam, Chowdhury Shahadat Hossain, Siddiquy Rahman, Rahima Khandaker, Nazrul Islam, Abdur Razzak, Abdul Awal Talukdar and Suruzzaman.

Khaleda: Share of Ganges

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next election.

Negating Awami League's contention that the 25-year treaty was a treaty of friendship, Begum Zia mentioned Clauses 8 and 10 of the Treaty and said under the treaty Bangladesh was barred from entering into agreement with any country without the consent of India.

Turning to then Opposition's 'negative politics' Begum Zia said being perturbed by decreasing public support for their past misdeeds and successes of BNP government on all fronts of national and socio-economic life, the Opposition parties forced upon the nation 170 days of hartal to turn the country into a bottomless basket again.

For whose interest they forced closure of Chittagong Port, set ablaze goods worth of crores of taka at Benapole land port, closed down 1000 garments factories, she questioned and said surely not for

Trade information centre opens Dhaka regaining image, says British envoy

By Staff Correspondent
The United Kingdom believes in the great potential of Bangladesh's economy and will continue as its important trading partner, said Peter J Fowler, the British High Commissioner in Dhaka.

"We believe that there is a great potential in Bangladesh's economy and we will continue as an important trade partner of the country," he said while inaugurating the British Commercial Information Centre at the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry premises yesterday.

"Bangladesh is overcoming its difficulties which was created for last couple of months resulting in an image problem of the country abroad," he added.

The opening ceremony was also addressed, among others, by DCCI President Ali Hossain, Director of British Council Keith Burd and representative of United Kingdom Department of Trade and Industry John Lownds.

"Last year the export growth (to Britain) was 49 per cent," the British envoy said. Bangladesh could sustain its growth trend which has been achieved steadily, he added and suggested making services at the Chittagong Port prompt.

The British High Commission and the British Council, in collaboration with the DCCI would jointly operate the Centre. The Southern Asia Advisory Group (SAAG) of the UK Department of Trade and Industry has provided the equipment.

Services to be provided will include a business enquiry service, business and trade journals, newspapers, directories and computer CD-ROM facilities.

All Hossain said Bangladesh has emerged as fast developing country in this region through its liberalised and market oriented economy.

He said, bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Britain was growing rapidly. Bangladesh's export to Britain increased to 284.30 million US dollars in 1994-95 from 138.00 million dollars in 1991-92.

Bangladesh's imports from Britain have also increased from 106.18 million dollars in 1991-92 to 170.10 million dollars in 1994-95. Hossain also pointed out.

John Lownds said that the UK Department of Trade and Industry would continue its efforts to help build economic ties between the two countries.

He told the gathering that a British investment team was scheduled to visit Bangladesh between October 26-30.

Troops attack LTTE bases, kill 100

COLOMBO, Apr 23: Government warplanes hammered Tamil rebel targets in northern Sri Lanka today as troops continued an offensive that has killed more than 100 rebels in five days, the military said, reports AP.

The rebel bases attacked were in the coastal town of Point Pedro in the northern Jaffna Peninsula and in Mullaitivu on the mainland, said Major Tilak Dunuwille, a military spokesman.

Rebel casualties in the air strikes were not immediately known, but he said over one hundred guerrillas and two soldiers have been killed in fighting on the ground.

Remove BNP men from Radio, TV: AL

By Staff Correspondent
The state-owned electronic media would not be able to play an impartial role unless BNP people were removed from various posts in Radio and Television.

This view was expressed at a meeting of the Information and Research Sub-committee of Awami League held yesterday at the Dhanmondi office of the party with Prof. Abu Sayeed, Information and Research Secretary of AL, in the chair, says a party press release.

The meeting said that Radio and Television were still carrying one-sided news.

It alleged that the electronic media were "mistakenly keeping mum on the issue of corrupt practices by the fallen BNP government's ministers, MPs and members of Khaleda Zia's family."

The AL sub-committee urged the caretaker government to take necessary measures regarding the identified BNP men in Radio and Television.

The meeting was attended by, among others, SAMS Kibria, Advocate Gazul Haq, Dr Md Selim, Monayer Sarkar, Dr Rajib Humayun, Dr Harunur-Rashid, Abdul Mannan Khan, Nurul Fazal Bulbul, Rasheda Mohiuddin, GM Gaus, Sharier Rumi and Nakib Ahmed.

10 hurt in city incidents

By DMCH Correspondent
At least 10 people were injured in separate incidents of violence in the city yesterday, according to witnesses and Dhaka Medical College Hospital sources.

Two youngsters identified as Tapash, 18 and Afan, 25, were injured in a bomb blast during an armed clash between two local gangs of Gopibagh and Maniknagar in the old part of the city at around noon yesterday, witnesses said.

The injured persons were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, three persons identified as Siraj, 45, Abul Kalam, 25, and Liton, 20, were injured when an unidentified gang hurled crackers at Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday evening. The injured were admitted to the DMCH hospital sources said.

Besides, one Shahidullah, 16, was also injured in a bomb blast at Jurain in the city at around 7pm yesterday, hospital sources added.

British warship due in Ctg today

A British naval warship, HMS York, arrives in Chittagong tomorrow for a four-day goodwill visit to cement the ties with the Bangladesh Navy, reports UNB.

HMS York, Type 42 Destroyer of Britain's Royal Navy, Commanded by Captain Andrew Moll will visit the Chittagong city en route for the Gulf.

During the visit HMS York will join a Bangladesh Navy exercise at sea and the crew of the ship will visit the port city and Kaptai Naval Base, said a press release today.

DU authorities deny charges against VC

Dhaka University authorities yesterday termed the allegations against the Vice Chancellor and the university administration by some university senators as baseless, reports BSS.

The university authorities, in a statement, said many of the senators who addressed the press conference recently are now departmental chairmen, syndicate members, deans while some others once held these positions.

The statement said the Vice Chancellor of the university had convened the adjourned meeting of the senate on March 30 but postponed the same due to political situation. The Vice Chancellor will convene the senate meeting soon, it said.

Workshop held at FBCCI

A day-long workshop on "Income Generating Activities of Trade Promotion Organisations" was held at the FBCCI auditorium yesterday, reports UNB.

The Midnight Fire

Fire engulfs 5 villages around Chernobyl plant
TOVSTY LIS, Ukraine, Apr 23: Fire engulfed at least five villages inside the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Station today during an annual visit to their abandoned homes by evacuated residents, reports Reuter.

Dev of Armed Forces to continue: Biswas

SYEDPUR, Apr 23: President Abdur Rahman Biswas today said the efforts of the government for the development of Armed Forces would continue in conformity with the economic development of the country, reports BSS.

"Within our limited resources, the country has been providing priority to meet the defence requirements," he said, adding "I can firmly assure you the government's efforts for the promotion of army would continue in conformity with the country's economic development."

President Biswas said this while addressing the officers and soldiers of all ranks of electrical and mechanical engineering corps of army on the occasion of the corps' inauguration ceremony at Syedpur Cantonment here.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, Area Commander of 66th Division Major General Abdus Salam, GOC of 24th Division and newly appointed Col Commandant of EME Corps Major General Azizur Rahman, Director General of forces Intelligence Major General Abdul Matin, PSO of Armed Forces Division MSA Bhuiyan, Adjutant General of Army Major General AM Seraj and former Col Commandant of EME Major

General (ret'd) Golam Maula, among others, were present on the occasion. Earlier on arrival here, the President was received by the Chief of Army Staff and other senior army officials while a smart contingent of armed forces gave him a guard of honour. President Biswas inspected the guard and took the salute.

The President termed the army as the vigilant guard of the country's independence and sovereignty and observed that it had always stood by the people in time of their necessities including, natural calamities.

"It is a matter of great satisfaction that Armed Forces is progressing in the right direction and have accomplished all the tasks assigned to them by the government with excellent standards," President Biswas said.

He added: "You have earned appreciation for the professional discharge of your responsibilities in overseas missions while your dedicated service in flood relief operation in 1988, cyclone of 1991, election in 1991, fertilizer movement of 1995 are acknowledged by the people with appreciation."

President Biswas said, recently, during the Operation Treasure-hunting and 'Operation Life Line' the Armed Forces have once again earned the confidence of the people by discharging their assigned responsibilities with dedication and efficiency.

Director of the EME Brig ATM Wahab presenting the President with a crest of the EME Corps, thanked him for his kind presence at the investiture ceremony.

Muggers stab

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at Hazaribagh yesterday morning, the witnesses said. The injured trader was admitted to the DMCH with serious stab injuries; hospital sources said.

On another incident, one Sajal Karim, 32, was also stabbed by an unidentified gang and was robbed of Tk 18,000 in the Kamalapur area at around 8 am. He was admitted to the DMCH.

A group of muggers seriously assaulted and stabbed a vendor Shahid, 25, at Hazaribagh in the afternoon. They took away the day's income of the vendor. He was later admitted to the DMCH.

Nor'wester

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Our Kushtia correspondent adds: A severe nor'wester swept over Kushtia and its adjoining areas this afternoon causing damage to kutcha houses and uprooting trees.

The storm which lasted for 15 minutes with moderate intensity accompanied with scattered rain damaged electric poles installed by the REB and disconnected electric connection.

In town areas many telephone lines have gone out of order. Electric wires were snapped in some places plunging the town in darkness.

The extent of damage caused by the storm in rural areas could not be known immediately. Banana trees and standing boro paddy were damaged in Kumarkhali and Khokha thanas, according to reports.

Dudayev killed?

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night and that senior Chechen rebel spokesman Khodzakhmed Yerikhanov had confirmed the death.

"Dudayev has been killed," of that there is no doubt," Yerikhanov, who led a rebel delegation in negotiations with Moscow last year, told Tass.

Dudayev was killed on the night of April 21 to 22 near the village of Gekhu-Chu after a rocket strike. Tass quoted the statement as saying.

Tass later quoted Yerikhanov as saying Dudayev's body had been found near the village, 30 km (20 miles) south-west of the Chechen capital Grozny.

Code of conduct

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government facilities, it said. Candidates or their representatives will refrain from offering or promising money in public or secretly to any organisation in or outside their constituencies. The parties or candidates will not make any development project after the election schedule is announced.

All parties and candidates will enjoy equal rights for campaigning. None will foil or obstruct the campaign of rivals, it further said.

No camps relating to election campaign should be set up on the roads or places designated for public use. Election camps should not wear a too glittering look and food and drinks should not be served to the voters at the camp.

A candidate must not use more than three loud speakers at a time in his constituency and the use of loud-speaker is restricted between 8 am and 2 pm.

Parties or candidates shall not write any graffiti as a part of election campaign. Also, no damage should be caused to property, building, land or any moveable or immovable property of public.

Carrying of firearms and explosives shall not be allowed. Illegal interference in the election process by government officials is banned, the finalised code of conduct said.

Voters' list

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list during their meetings with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Sunday, according to an EC press release.

The EC started the present voters' list updating process on April 11 and on April 18 it announced that the updating would continue until April 23.

As per law no registration, correction or omission can be done to the voters' list at the field level after the election schedule is announced.

In that case, changes can only be made centrally by the Election Commission Secretariat.

An EC official indicated that the current drive to update the voters' list may continue until April 26.

Tax payment

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expected to start its routine consultations with trade bodies on budget from next month in that direction, he said.

Senior officials of the NBR and representatives of different foreign and multinational companies attended the meeting.

Shot dead

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three other BNP supporters by armed miscreants.

She was consoling the mother and wife of Dulal when they came at the Circuit House in the evening and broke down into tears. Dulal, a former member of police, was the only earning member of the family. He left behind his mother, wife and two minor sons.

Begum Zia demanded immediate arrest of the miscreants responsible for the killing. She expressed her deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.