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DOWN TO EARTH

City's Labour Market

By A S M Nurunnabi

Dhaka city's labour market mainly comprises two segments: Those labourers who are engaged in regular jobs and those who work at various odd jobs of temporary nature. The latter class of labourers are known as floating ones who enjoy no security of their jobs. In the city's floating labour market, the maximum amount of daily wage does not go beyond Taka one hundred in the present circumstances. But in the matter of fixation of daily wage, the current price of the coarse variety of rice plays an important role.

In course of a survey recently conducted by the Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka, some important aspects of life of the city's labourers can be known. The survey shows that the majority of these labourers are males, while there is a rising percentage of female labourers. Their age ranges from 12 to 40 years in most cases with a small percentage of those who exceed that age limit. They are mostly illiterate but a sizable number of them received primary education.

These labourers are found to be involved in some trades and professions. The majority of them work as day labourers with no clear specification of the work they are called upon to do. They are mostly engaged for earth-cutting, earth-filling and other miscellaneous jobs. Next in terms of number, are construction workers possessing some degree of skill. Other classes of floating labourers include semi-skilled masons, carpenters, helpers of masons, painters of buildings, gardeners, etc.

On an average, most of the labourers are not able to get work for all the days of a month. On this account, the average monthly income of labourers from wages gets reduced. Moreover, there are other factors, such as occa-

sional illness or breaks in work availability, which tend to affect their earnings. The absence of work of such labourers caused by such contingencies creates hardship as most of them have no savings to fall back upon.

It has been observed that most of the floating labourers assemble at specific points in city areas looking for work. Those labourers who are found physically suitable for work are picked up by contractors and carried in trucks in groups for various projects sites within or outside the city. There are others who get work through their own initiatives or their friends and acquaintances.

Some of them don't get wages at prevailing market rates, as compared with regular workers. In such cases where they are compelled to accept work at comparatively low wages, their earnings are of necessity spent in buying food for themselves and their families, if any. In such situations, there is no question of keeping aside any margin of savings from their earnings.

The majority of floating labourers live in the city's slums or squatter settlements singly or with families, where possible. In cases where they live with their families, some of their wives and children work as domestic help in city homes or in other sundry jobs. Some of their womenfolk who get some domestic help in city get some measure of relief when they are given free food by the families for whom they work.

The survey shows that mainly physically active males constitute the bulk of the floating labourers of the city on their migration from villages. The causative factors for such migration are well-known. By and large, because of their ignorance, lack of even rudiments of any education, or any agency to ensure unified activity in the matter of wages and working

Time to study nation's true history: President

By Staff Correspondent

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday called upon the historians to come forward to let the new generation know the true history of the country.

The President was speaking as chief guest at the inaugural session of the three-day eleventh conference of Bangladesh Itihas Samity (Bangladesh History Association) and an international seminar on the occasion, held at the National Museum auditorium. The conference and the seminar on 'Bangladesh Itihas: Swadhinatar Panchish Bachhar', is being held marking the country's Silver Jubilee of independence.

Chaired by AKM Mohsin president of the Bangladesh Itihas Samity (BIS), the conference was also addressed by Prof Abul Kalam Azad Chowdhury Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University and Prof Sharifuddin Ahmed, secretary of the Samity.

The President said that opportunity to study the true history of the country has been opened up under the present democratic system. There is no scope to limit the periphery of history. Fragmented history can not earn confidence," he said.

He said the allegation that objective study of history was neglected in the country is not baseless. Such allegations can be raised if history is cultured with specific political purpose, he added.

President Shahabuddin stressed the need for making history a compulsory subject at secondary level. He also felt the need for a national institution for higher research in history. Congratulating the organisers of the conference and the seminar, Shahabuddin hoped that works of eminent historians and researchers of the country would contribute a lot to evaluating the failures and achievements in the 25 years of Bangladesh.

"We have to take lessons from past mistakes to go ahead," he said.

The conference is being participated by delegates from India, Japan and USA.

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BCL activist stabbed to death in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 8: An activist of BCL and student of class nine was stabbed to death on Thursday night in housing estate area under Khalishpur thana.

The victim was identified as Rakibul Islam Rocky, 15. Police said he died on way to hospital after being stabbed by a group of youths.

Meanwhile, three out of 20 persons named in the FIR as accused have been arrested. They are Delwar, 20, Kamal, 22 and Yunus 32.

Rao granted bail in 2 more cases

NEW DELHI, Nov 8: Former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao, free on bail in one criminal case, was granted bail Friday in another two cases. All three go to trial later this month, reports AP.

Prosecutors unexpectedly decided not to object in the Delhi High Court when Rao appealed a lower court's decision to deny him bail on charges of conspiring to commit forgery.

Illegal logging rampant

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political solution to the CHT problem we cannot do anything," said the Divisional Forest Officer, South.

Logging in all natural forests in the country is banned since 1985. The ban will continue till the year 2000. In CHT, afforestation programmes started in the later part of the last century and continued 'on and off' until mid-eighties.

"We are allowed to fell only mature plantation in the reserve forest and immediately replace it with several others to maintain the cycle," an official said. "Felling of large number of trees can be seen but we have no say about it," he said.

"When a generation has no children it automatically goes into extinction, we are faced with the same consequence in the Hill Tracts," he added.

According to statistics available at the Divisional Forest Officer's (South) office, there was no afforestation in the southern region of the CHT in 1990, 1991, 1992 and 1996. In the years 1993, 1994, 1995 only a negligible area came under afforestation.

Vast forest areas are also

24-hr strike ends today

Body of launch master recovered in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 8: Launch Owners' and Workers' Association here enforced a 24-hour strike till 9 am tomorrow protesting what they said killing of a master of a passenger launch.

Meser Ali, master of 'ML Zubayer', had been missing since he fell into the river Kirtonkhola during a brawl between some passengers and employees of the launch on Thursday. His body was recovered from the river half a mile off the Saheberhat launch terminal this morning.

Witnesses said that following an altercation over launch fare, a group of people attacked the launch and beat up its employees.

A case has been lodged against 20 persons. Police arrested five people in this connection.

The launch owners' association stopped plying of launches in all routes from Barisal after the body was recovered.

IU reopens today

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Nov 8: Classes of Islamic University will resume tomorrow.

The university was closed on September 26 following clashes between BCL and Shibir activists which left one killed and hundreds of students injured.

Meanwhile, BCL activists held a meeting at Shaikhpara Bazar near the University this afternoon protesting the gun attack on its president Shamsul Islam Zoha.

It was reported that some unidentified gunmen fired at Shamsul Islam Zoha last night when he was coming towards Kushtia by a motor cycle. But he escaped unhurt.

Pakistan

From Page 1

In his lengthy charge sheet, Leghari accused Bhutto of saturating state-owned industries and government departments with friends and relatives. In one year Bhutto's government reportedly gave more than 1,000 people jobs with the state-run airline that was already over staffed and teetering on bankruptcy.

The Pakistan Steel Mills was barely surviving following a year at the helm by Usman Faruqi, a close friend of Bhutto's jailed husband, Asif Ali Zardari.

Zardari, who also was investment Minister in his wife's government, has been at the center of a number of corruption scandals and has been labelled 'Mr. 40 Per cent', a reference to the alleged commissions he charged businessmen wanting to invest in Pakistan.



Leader of the Opposition and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting in front of the party central office in the city Thursday marking November 7. —Star photo

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Khaleda: Movement

From Page 1

Protesting the government move to provide India with transit facility, Begum Zia said the ruling party wants to allow India to transport its goods and arms and ammunition from one state to another through Bangladesh.

"They want to give India a corridor through Bangladesh in the name of transit or Asian Highway. But people will not allow them to do so. Well resist this attempt at any cost," said the Leader of the Opposition.

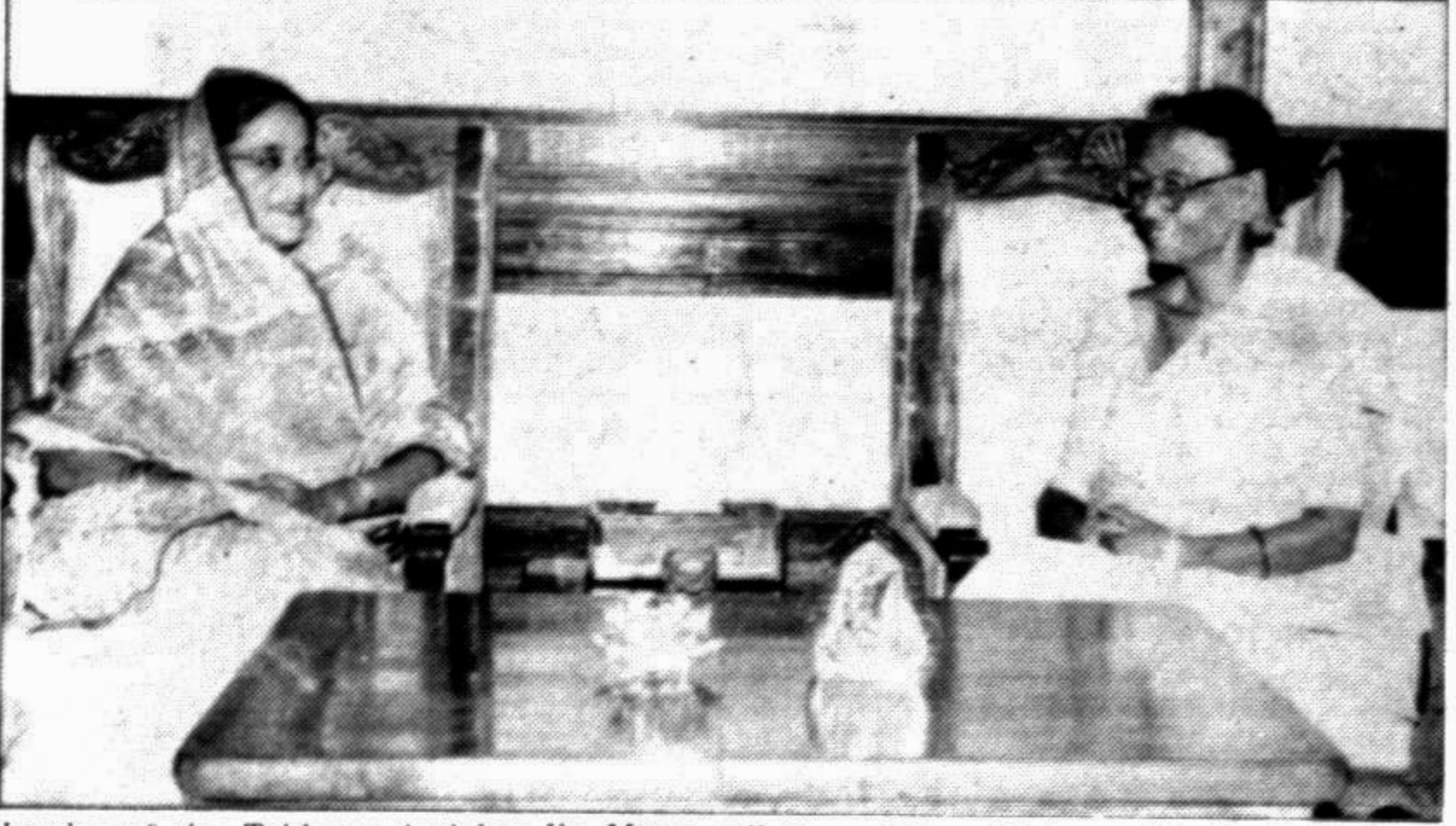
Castigating the government for the plan to import electricity from India, she said India has not enough electricity to export. But the government has become desperate and is creating power disruption intentionally to justify its plan.

"Once they threw the people into danger by allowing India to commission the Farakka Barrage and now they want to endanger the country by importing power from that country. This way they want to make Bangladesh a province of India," she said.

The Leader of the Opposition demanded immediate release of all BNP leaders and workers arrested during the last four and a half months. "They are unleashing attack on the people... now is the time to make counter-attack."

She said that terrorists patronised by ruling party are not only attacking the BNP supporters, but also the common people. Even Dr Moeen Khan, who is a Member of Parliament, was attacked by the AL terrorists.

On the other hand, she said, the country's economy is facing a disaster with stagnancy in the export situation and overall economic activities. Foreign entrepreneurs are afraid of in-



Leader of the Tebhaga Andolon Ila Mitra called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Ganohaban yesterday —PID photo

'Khaled Mosharraf wanted to restore chain of command in army'

A discussion on '7th November Freedom Fighters and Soldiers Killing Day' was held at the Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The meeting was presided over by Captain (ret'd) Humayun Kabir BP, chairman of Shaheed Khaled Mosharraf Smriti Parishad. Noted writer Shawkat Osman spoke on the occasion as the chief guest.

The speakers demanded the trial of the killers of the father of the nation, four national leaders, and the freedom fighters and soldiers — Khaled Mosharraf, Col. Haider, Col. Huda and others.

They said that Khaled Mosharraf wanted to restore the chain of command in the army and law and order in the country. He had no intention at all to take over power, they added.

The speakers urged the freedom fighters to be united to strengthen the hands of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for establishing the spirit of independence and democracy.

The function was addressed by State Minister for Land, Hajj Rashid Mosharraf, Salma Khaled, Dr Nilima Ibrahim, journalist Rahat Khan, Major General (ret'd) CR Datta, Col. (ret'd) Abu Osman Chowdhury, columnist M R Aktar Mukul and Professor Abdul Mannan Chowdhury.

Seminar on local govt structure

Dist minister or governor system proposed

Speakers at a seminar on 'Local Government Structure' proposed yesterday to introduce district minister or district governor system for more effective and coordinated development work at the grassroots level, reports BSS.

The seminar organised by The Engineer's Services and Social Welfare Committee of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh was attended by chairman of Local Government Commission Advocate Rahmat Ali, MP.

Two keynote papers were presented in the seminar one by Dr Ali Ahmed, an eminent educationist and another jointly by Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, a renowned social scientist and Monowar Hossain Chowdhury, additional chief engineer of Local Government Engineering Department.

Advocate Rahmat Ali said the commission would propose a structure of local government which would be based on the Constitution.

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed and Engineer Monowar Hossain Chowdhury in their paper said that union council is traditionally recognised as institution of the common people. They said the union council could be considered as the primary stage of local government bodies. Hossain said any body lower than union council like village government would not work effectively.

The papers recommended that nomenclature of upazila in lieu of thana could be meaningful because of the next possible place of proximity to the rural people after the union council.

They said in poor country like Bangladesh only stages of local government bodies are advisable and these could be union council and upazila council.

The writers advised to abolish the divisional administrative set up including office of the divisional commissioner.

Dr Ali Ahmed, stressed the need for introducing local government structure based on two stages. He also proposed for district governor system of administration in lieu of the deputy commissioner system for making administration democratic.

Dr Ahmed gave a detailed historical background on the country's local government structures and said "we have not formed the local government bodies as our constitution dictates. The structures had been formed by different rules on various occasions to serve their political interest, he said adding the local government bodies used to act as the agents of the central government."

Local Government Engineering Department Quamrul Islam Siddique took part in the discussion on the papers while vice president of the committee M A K Azad presided over the function.

'Illegal acts' of police

Moulvibazar Bar calls requisition meet tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 8: Eighty members of Moulvibazar District Bar Association have called a requisition meeting on Sunday to discuss 'illegal acts' of Moulvibazar police in arresting a person from the Eijash (court room).

The lawyers said Kamalganj police, on suspicion, arrested Abdul Hossain, a union parishad member, in a murder case. The District and Sessions Judge of Moulvibazar granted him bail on October 17. But, Kamolganj police again arrested him on November 1 and produced him in the magistrate's court the next day. The District and Sessions Judge again granted him bail on November 3.

Later, when Abdul went to the magistrate's court on November 5. To give attendance, police dragged him from the Eijash, the lawyers alleged.

Then, on orders from the magistrate, police brought him back to the court, they added.

Nasim

From Page 1

Nasim and fourteen other senior army officers were released from their confinement on June 14, 1996. I am disappointed to learn that they have been punished without the benefit of a free and fair hearing in which they could participate with legal counsel."

"I look forward to hearing from you regarding this important issue," the letter added, a faxed copy of which was made available to The Daily Star.

Azhar to wed

From Page 1

In August after being in charge for 36 Tests, and replaced by Sachin Tendulkar.

Azharuddin had been under fire since India's defeat in the World Cup semifinal to eventual champions Sri Lanka in March. He was often accused in the media of 'not being focussed' after his highly-publicised romance.

Both Azharuddin and Tendulkar played in the Indian team that beat South Africa to triangular one-day Titan Trophy final on Wednesday. The competition also involved Australia.

PM: youths

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thrust was given in the workshop to broaden the mental faculty and human values of the participants.

Referring to the call of the Father of the Nation to build up an exploitation-free prosperous "Sonar Bangla" Sheikh Hasina said Bangladesh felt the necessity of "Sonar Manush" (golden men) for building the "Sonar Bangla." The present workshop is aimed at producing 'golden people' who would be capable of building a nation as per the dream of the Father of the Nation.

The Prime Minister called upon the organisers and participants to turn Tungipara and model thana which would show the path of the whole nation to build a society where there would be no hunger, poverty, illiteracy and diseases.

Speaking on the occasion Obaidul Kader declared that the country's 271st Jubo Training Centre would be set up at Tungipara.

Later, the Prime Minister held a brief meeting with the teachers of Bangabandhu College. She listened to various problems of the college and assured the teachers that those would be looked into phase by phase.

Electronic devices worth Tk 2.7 lakh looted in city

By Staff Correspondent

An armed gang looted cash and electronic devices worth about Tk 2.7 lakh from the office of a cable network owners association and control room of a network at Kakrail in the city Thursday afternoon, police said yesterday.

The gang of about 10 people attacked the office of the Bangladesh Satellite Cable Network Owners Federation and the control room of Excel International at about 1:30 pm, according to the FIR filed with the Ramna thana.

They took away seven satellite receivers and some electronic devices, a computer, a telephone set and Tk 50,000.

Two separate cases have been lodged with Ramna thana in this regard. None was arrested in this connection till last night, police said.

Degree exams

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clude on December 30. On completion of theoretical examinations, the practicals will be held in centres at the district headquarters.

The NU Deputy Controller of Examinations, Shahadat Hossain, told UNB that all preparations for smooth holding of the examinations have been completed.

Question papers and vigilance teams with necessary instructions have already reached their respective examination centres, he said.

RU authorities' warning to striking staff

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Nov 8: Rajshahi University authorities have warned the striking officers and employees of the university to return to work by tomorrow, or legal action would be taken against them. University Registrar issued the order yesterday following a Syndicate decision, taken on Nov 6 regarding the strike. The Syndicate also approved some demands of the striking staff.

The Officers and Employees Oikya Parishad (EOEP) went on an indefinite strike Nov 4 to press home its demands.