



Pvt jute, textile mill workers to agitate from tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Non-governmental Jute, Yarn and Textile Mills Sommonoy Parisah yesterday declared an agitation programme beginning tomorrow to realise its six-point demand.

The programme includes rallies at mill gates on November 6 and in industrial areas on November 10, submission of memoranda on November 14, token hunger strike at all divisional headquarters on November 19 and a 'mass hunger strike' in the city on November 22.

The demands are: implementation of the 1991 Wages Commission Awarded in all non-governmental jute, yarn and textile mills, formation of a new

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**Constable dies of heart attack during gunfight with dacoits**

NARSINGDI, Nov 4: A constable died of a heart attack and a woman received bullet wound during a gunfight between police and dacoits at village Murgib in Shibpur upazila of the district on Friday night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Sirajul Islam, 40.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of Abul Hashim alias Hashi of the village at 7:30 pm to arrest a gang of dacoits.

Sensing police presence, the dacoits opened fire. Police also returned fire.

During exchange of fire Sirajul Islam fell sick. He was rushed to the Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Hashim's wife Jahanara Begum received bullet injury in her head during exchange of fire. She was first admitted to the Sadar Hospital in a critical condition and later shifted to Dhaka as her condition deteriorated.

Meanwhile, another team of police joined the raid and managed to arrest two dacoits Rabiul Islam Rabi and Abu Hanifa from the village.

One revolver, one pipegun and seven bullets were also recovered from their possessions. A case was filed.

**2 UZs of Satkhira flooded again**

SATKHIRA, Nov 4: Two upazilas of Satkhira district were flooded afresh through breaches developed in the flood protection embankment at Khaitala in Sadar upazila today, reports UNB.

Locals said gushing water from the Sonai and Ichhamoti rivers flooded vast areas of four unions in Assasuni and Debhata upazilas.

About 10,000 people of 10 villages of the four unions have taken shelter in 10 centres.

# Dhaka to allow TU in EPZs to retain GSP

By Rafiq Hasan

The government has agreed to allow trade union activities in Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and fulfil all other major conditions of the US government regarding workers' rights there to retain the Generalised System of Preference (GSP) facility.

Trade union activities in EPZs will be allowed in phases, sources in Washington DC told The Daily Star when contacted last night over telephone.

The government's proposal accepting the conditions was sent to the US embassy here on Thursday, which sent it to the White House and to the USITRO (US Trade Representative Office) immediately.

President Bill Clinton was supposed to sign on Friday a USITRO recommendation, sent to him on October 26, to cut the GSP facility to Bangladesh for not allowing trade union activities in EPZs.

The source however said there are still some unresolved issues including the proposed structure of trade unions in EPZs. These will be resolved soon, the sources said.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury when contacted here last night said the government accepted the US condi-

tions. "We have met many of the points they raised and we are optimistic that the GSP facility would not be cancelled."

He however did not elaborate the points. "Discussions are still going on", he said.

The US government had been threatening Bangladesh for long to cut GSP facility at least by fifty per cent for not allowing trade union activities in EPZs.

The US government move followed a petition by the Association of Federation of Labour Congress and Industrial organisations (AFLCIO), the largest forum of trade unions in US, for cancelling the GSP facility for not allowing trade union activities in EPZs.

Bangladesh earlier tried to convince US officials that workers' rights in EPZs would be protected by forming welfare committees.

But the US government rejected the idea and continued the pressure to allow workers' freedom of expression and right to association in EPZs.

Bangladesh exports goods worth 38 million dollars to the US annually under the GSP facility.

## Separating judiciary from the executive

# Political parties evade this issue after going to power: President

## Judiciary could not work freely during ML: CJ

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman yesterday said judiciary including the Supreme Court could not work freely to discharge its constitutional duties during martial law periods, reports BSS.

"The Supreme Court for a long time could not work freely due to martial laws," he told a seminar on a 1951 Refugee Convention organised by Legal Education and Training Institute (LETI) of Bangladesh Bar Council here coinciding with the Bangladesh's Constitution Day.

He, however, added that despite the constraint the highest court had issued several decisions in line with the constitutional spirit (Article 32) even in the absence of particular laws.

Presided over by Bar Council Vice Chairman Barrister Amirul Islam the function was attended by Justice Naimuddin Ahmed, bar leaders SS Halder, Barrister Salam Talukdar, Ozair Farook, and UNHCR official MM Sunnah.

Dean of the Law Faculty of Chittagong University Dr. Shah Alam presented the key-note paper in the business session.

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ocratic process. He hoped that in the exploitation free society, the rule of law, fundamental human rights and freedom, equality and justice will be ensured for all citizens.

Shahabuddin Ahmed said that part III of the Constitution defined the fundamental rights which are enforceable judicially while Article 102 provides for judicial review of Administrative Action. The court not only interprets the Constitution but also may be declared unconstitutional if it conflicts with any of the basic structures of the Constitution, the President said, adding "Our 8th amendment case judgement may be looked into."

He said provision of the Constitution is that it is the sacred duty of all to safeguard, protect and defend the Constitution and to maintain its supremacy as the embodiment of the will of the people.

The President said in line with the salient features of the Constitution, fundamental aim of the state is to realise an exploitation free society through demo-

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## Time for a safety check

Short-circuit in the main power switch at the Concord Tower near Bangla Motor created panic among the residents, who came out of the building in a rush. Later, fire fighters arrived to get things under control. Fortunately, no one was hurt in the incident.

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# First ICC confce kicks off in city Nov 10

Star Report

The first Asia Conference of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), scheduled for a November 10 start in the city, is expected to be started by a number of internationally-renowned personalities including the next World Trade Organisation (WTO) chief Dr Supachai Panichpakdi.

Others who would also attract attention are ICC Secretary General Maria Livanos Cattau and ESCAP Executive Secretary Kim Hak-Su who will read out a message from UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Asian Development Bank President Tadao Chino will also speak on the occasion, which will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Dr Supachai who is also the Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand will arrive here at midnight on November 9 and will leave Dhaka soon after the inauguration of the two-day conference.

This is the first time that an international conference of such a magnitude is going to take place in Bangladesh.

"This is the first time that regional businessmen, policy makers and economists are putting heads together to give shape to a futuristic outlook for the region in the context of globalisation," said Mahbubur Rahman, President of ICC-Bangladesh, explaining the reasons for holding the conference.

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# Police action leaves 100 agitating IU students hurt

From IU Correspondent

ISLAMI UNIVERSITY, Kushtia, Nov 4: At least 100 students including 50 females were injured when police and BDR personnel clubbed and teargassed the agitating students of the Islamic University here today.

This is second such incident on the IU campus in three days.

The first incident took place on November 2 when the students laid a siege to the VC's office demanding suspension of a staff of the transport section for his alleged negligence of duty.

At least 80 students were injured in police action in that incident.

Today's trouble began at around 10:30 am when thousands of students went to the VC's office in a procession protesting arrest of 144 IU students in connection with the November

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## Hopes cruelly belied



On her way back home on an Oman Air flight from Lalsaria, Abu Dhabi after the one-and-a-half-year employment, Zarina Khatun of Muradnagar, Comilla had nearly five and a half thousand rials in her purse and a sense of security in her heart. But hopes of the poor widow were shattered once she got back her luggage on arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday. The suitcase was broken and the purse, which contained all her earning, and other valuables inside it were stolen. Tears and hopelessness were all she is now left with.

-- Star photo by Sk Enamul Haq

# 143 directors drew Tk 780cr from own banks: BB

By Inam Ahmed

After a revelation that private bank directors had taken out 20 times of their paid up capital as loans, the Bangladesh Bank has found that 143 private bank directors have taken Tk 780 crore loans from their banks and about nine per cent of these loans are now classified.

According to Bangladesh Bank (BB) sources, these directors representing 23 banks hold 4.4 per cent of the total loans given by their banks. The total loans given by these banks stand at Tk 1915 crore.

As 'inside lending' pose a big threat to the health of the banking sector, the BB on August 5, 1999 issued a directive that directors can not take more than 50 per cent of their paid up share. Later it also set a December 2001 deadline for these directors to adjust their excess loans.

According to statistics, the highest number of 18 directors of Dhaka Bank had taken loans from their banks, followed by 17 directors of NCBL and 10 directors of Eastern Bank.

In UCBL, 13 directors took out Tk 4.43 crore loans.

However, in terms of amount, IFIC Bank directors top the list. Only three of them took out Tk 287 crore from the bank, weakening its financial position. In National Bank Limited (NBL), eight directors took Tk 84 crore from their bank.

Niru City Bank directors took Tk 83 crore loans, 10 Islami Bank directors took Tk 50 crore and two City Bank directors took Tk 63 crore.

Of the total 143 directors who took loans, 18 defaulted to the tune of Tk 69 crore.

The City Bank has the highest amount of Tk 46 crore defaulted loans, taken by its directors.

However, the BB has so far served notices on 139 defaulter directors for their removal. Of them, 58 have adjusted their loans while 47 have lost their directorship. Nineteen directors have obtained stay orders on the notices from court.

# Nov 7 rally deferred, procession planned

By Staff Correspondent

The BNP-led opposition alliance has deferred its planned 'grand' public meeting till "sometime this month" and decided to bring out a mass procession in the city instead on November 7 to protest the government's refusal to allot the Paltan ground.

The central liaison committee took the decision yesterday at its meeting at 29 Minto Road with the BNP secretary-general, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, in the chair.

Chiefs of the four parties may skip the procession to be brought out from Mutanjan at 3-30 in the afternoon. A fresh date for the grand rally would be announced from the procession. The rally, as Bhuiyan told the reporters after the meeting, is highly likely to be held before Ramadan.

The government's refusal to allow the rally at the Paltan Maidan was a "deliberate" ploy to suppress the opposition movement and also to provoke the alliance to go for confrontation, Bhuiyan said.

"The government's prohibition left us with the only option of entering the Maidan by force, but we don't want to do that because we believe in democracy and constitution," he said.

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| Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|-----------|----------|
| Nov 5     | 5.17 pm  |
| Nov 6     | 6-08 am  |

| Prayer Timings |        |  |
|----------------|--------|--|
| November 5     |        |  |
| Azan           | Jamaat |  |
| 5-00           | 5-35   |  |
| 12-45          | 1-20   |  |
| 4-00           | 4-15   |  |
| 5-25           | 5-30   |  |
| 7-15           | 7-45   |  |

Source: Islamic Foundation