

POST-MFA THREAT Garment workers seek job security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Garments Workers' Unity Council (BGWUC) yesterday asked Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association to ensure job security for garment workers.

Against the backdrop of phasing out of quota system by year-end, the BGWUC at a press conference in the city also urged the government to create alternative employment opportunities for garment workers in a bid to tackle post-MFA (Multi-Fibre Arrangement) crisis.

BGWUC leaders feared thousands of workers might lose their jobs once quota system is abolished.

The country might suffer a huge economic setback as 20-30 percent garment factories could be shut down if proper steps are not taken right now, they warned.

To absorb post-MFA shock, they asked the government to search overseas jobs for them.

BORDER CONFCE BSF team due today

BSS, Dhaka

A 15-member delegation of Border Security Force (BSF) of India arrives in Dhaka today to attend a five-day director general (DG) level border conference between

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the BSF, beginning at the BDR headquarters tomorrow.

BSF Director General Ajay Raj Sharma will lead the Indian team to the talks. Officials of the Indian home and foreign ministries and the staff officers of BSF headquarters will be in the team, an official handout said yesterday.

BDR Director General Major General M Jahangir Alam will lead the 19-member Bangladesh team comprising high officials of the home and foreign ministries, Department of Land Records and Survey, Bangladesh-India Joint River Commission and the BDR.

The conference, which concludes on May 3, will discuss the bilateral border issues, the handout added.



PHOTO: STAR

Supreme Court Bar Association held a meeting on the association office premises in the city yesterday to protest mass arrests.



No change in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty to squally wind is likely at one or two places over six divisions till 6pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 36.6 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and the lowest 19.5 degree at Rajshahi.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:26 pm today and rises at 5:26 am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.6	24.0	58	77
Chittagong	33.5	26.0	73	72
Rajshahi	34.4	19.5	66	60
Khulna	34.5	23.0	64	61
Barisal	33.5	23.0	68	85
Sylhet	33.3	23.2	67	61
Cox's Bazar	33.0	24.0	--	71

Ershad Shikder's brother appeals to Amnesty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Ashraf Ali Shikder, eldest brother of condemned prisoner Ershad Shikder, has appealed to the Amnesty International to take steps to commute the death sentence of Ershad to life imprisonment.

Ershad is scheduled to be hanged in Khulna jail on May 10. Ashraf has submitted a petition to the chairman of Bangladesh chapter of Amnesty International through the office of the deputy commissioner, Khulna, on April 26.

According to Khulna jail authorities, Ershad has not yet been informed of the petition or the date for execution of the death penalty.

He will be informed of the execution of death sentence only two or three hours before the execution, Jail Super Farhad Mian said.

Meanwhile, security has been tightened in and around the jail following new developments.

RU closed for three days as Shibir defies ban on politics

RU CORRESPONDENT

Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) of Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday brought out a procession and held a rally defying ban on politics on the campus.

Shibir held the meeting in front of the central library to protest the killing of its activist Muhammad Saifuddin.

On the other hand, vice chancellor has closed the university for three days to avert any untoward incident.

Additional police were deployed on the campus.

The university syndicate banned all processions and meetings on the campus last month.

A tense situation was prevailing on the campus as Shibir took out the procession without any prior announcement. that paraded the campus

Many outsiders joined the procession riding motorbikes chanting slogan against the killers of Saifuddin.

On January 15, a group of outsiders stabbed Saifuddin at Kajla gate. He was sent to the Combined Military Hospital in a critical condition. On January 15, a group of outsiders stabbed Saifuddin at Kajla gate. He was sent to the Combined Military Hospital in a critical condition.

University JCD General Secretary Aslam Reza told the journalists that RU authorities could not say anything about Shibir procession and meeting as they had patronised them.

Proctor Prof Shamsul Alam said it was a condolence meeting and the authorities had not taken it cognizance to avert untoward incident.

Meanwhile, many students have left the campus fearing clash.

SOUTH ASIAN JOURNAL LAUNCHED

12th Saarc Summit has removed mistrust: FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said a new window has opened up for meaningful cooperation among the South Asian nations with the successful holding of 12th Saarc summit in Islamabad that removed the mutual mistrust and distrust.

Speaking at a ceremony marking the launching of South Asian Journal at the National Press Club in the afternoon, he said although Saarc had a fine journey 20 years ago, it could not achieve much not because of trade barriers but because of mental barrier.

Morshed Khan said the 12th Saarc summit has broken the mental barrier creating an opportunity for effective cooperation in different fields among the seven member states.

Referring to the vast market in the region, he said we are used to look at the West, but the West also looks at the East because of this

market of 450 million population. Commenting on Safta, signed at the Islamabad summit, the foreign minister said this umbrella accord provided for both bilateral FTA and multilateral approach from where the Saarc countries could gain significantly.

"We must come out of the mental barriers, we must come out as South Asians," he told the function.

On the important role of the media, the minister said being a link between the people and the government, media could make the government accountable and help materialise the hopes and aspiration of the people.

Describing the South Asian Journal an excellent initiative of South Asian Free Media Association, he said media can turn the sound of silent into sound of music in fulfilling the aspiration of the silent majority.

Chaired by SAFMA President and Editor of the News Today Reazuddin Ahmed, the function was also addressed by Pakistan

Ambassador to Bangladesh Manzar Shafiq, Indian Deputy High Commissioner Dilip Sinha, Editor of the New Age and the Holiday Enayetullah Khan and SAFMA Secretary General Intiaz Ahmed.

Pakistan Ambassador Manzar Shafiq said Saarc could not make progress as done by other economic groupings like EU, Asean and Nafta.

He observed that South Asian nations should act together so that one day we can say we are South Asians.

Praising the theme and articles of the journal, which is an economic overview of South Asia, Indian Deputy High Commissioner Dilip Sinha said the journal did not shy away from the issues that strained relations among the people in the region over the years.

There are some micro issues facing the people that also needed to be looked at, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

Sher-e-Bangla National Youth Front places a wreath at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haque in the city yesterday on the occasion of his 42nd death anniversary.