

GARMENTS FACTORY COLLAPSE Skop demands punishment to those responsible

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different trade unions, NGOs, rights and women organisations yesterday held rallies and demanded exemplary punishment of the owner as well as the government bodies that approved the construction of the nine-storey garment factory at Palashbari in Savar, which collapsed in the early hours of Monday claiming many lives.

It is now clear to everyone that the collapsed building was badly constructed and the government agencies concerned remained indifferent to it, speakers said at a rally organised by the Sramik Karmochary Oikyo Parishad (Skop) at Mukhtangan in the city.

Skop leader Aminul Haque Faruq expressed grave concern over the slow process of the rescue operation adding that the government should take foreign help immediately if it does not have equipment to carry out

the rescue operation properly. National Garment Workers Federation, Karmajibi Nari, Ain O Salish Kendra, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), and Action Aid Bangladesh also held mourning-rallies at Muktangan demanding immediate arrest of the owner of the Spectrum Sweater and Knitting.

Workers of the National Garments Workers Federation demanded compensation of Tk 2lakh for each of the affected families.

"The government should identify all poorly built garment factories and other industries in the country and close them down immediately," JSD president Hasanul Haque Inu said at a citizen rally.

He also demanded that national condolence day be declared for the tragic accident at Savar.

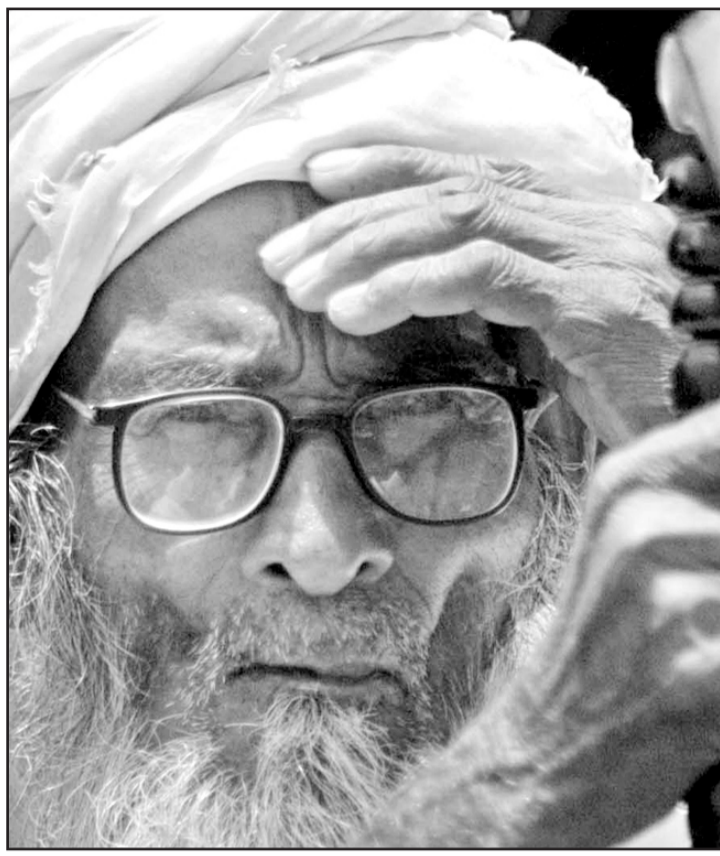


PHOTO: STAR

One of the hundreds of relatives of the workers trapped under the rubble of a nine-storey garment factory waits anxiously near the collapsed building in Savar yesterday in the hope of getting his loved one back from the death trap. (Right) As part of the rescue efforts, army personnel make profiles of the missing victims of the building Savar tragedy.



Ensure security of Ahmadiyyas: ASK

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), a legal aid forum, yesterday demanded security of the Ahmadiyya community across the country.

In a statement, the ASK protested the move of the International Khatme Nabuyat Movement (IKNM) to lay siege to Ahmadiyya Mosque at Sundarban village under Shyamnagar upazila in Satkhira district on April 17.

IKNM Chairman Noor Hossain Nurani has announced the siege programme.

The Ask said Islamic bigots have been repeatedly torturing and attacking Ahmadiyya Muslims, and occupying their mosques.

Due to governments' inaction followed by direct or indirect shelter to Islamic bigots, the situation is deteriorating fast, it added.

The ASK urged the law enforcement agencies to remain alert to foil the IKNM's move.

The South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism has also condemned

the IKNM's threat to lay siege to the Ahmadiyya Mosque at Satkhira village.

In a statement, the union leaders said the Bangladesh wing of Pakistan-based IKNM has been violating the constitution by attacking Ahmadiyya mosques and people repeatedly.

The signatories to the statement included National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Justice KM Sobhan, and Julfikar Ali Manik.

Ananda Alo to be launched today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Impress Telefilms Ltd is launching a new magazine 'Ananda Alo' with the slogan 'Binodoney Bandhu Amar', says a press release.

The launching ceremony of the fortnightly is scheduled to take place at Ramna Batamool in the city at 8:45 am today.

The magazine will cover every aspects of entertainment, including sports, fashion, lifestyle, literature, travel, cinema and television. The regular issues of the magazine on art paper will have 80 pages in four colours.

Rezanur Rahman, a senior journalist, has joined the magazine as its editor.

Joy arrives today

UNB, Dhaka

Sajib Wajed Joy, son of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, will arrive in Dhaka today from Washington, AL sources said.

He will be staying here for a month.

Joy along with his American wife Christina came to Dhaka in December last.



Death anniversary of 5 martyrs

The 34th death anniversary of five members of a family who were killed during the War of Liberation will be observed tomorrow, says a press release.

The martyrs are engineer Fazlur Rahman, his wife Hosne Akhter, and their three sons -- Mostafizur Rahman Moznou,

Hasinur Rahman Hiron and Azizur Rahman Babu.

They were killed by the Pakistani occupation forces and their collaborators at the Railway colony in Sayedpur, Nilphamari.

Qurankhani and feeding of the destitute have been arranged to mark the death anniversary.

Caterer's family under death threat from extortionists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A caterer and his family members in Tejgaon area are now fearing for their lives after a notorious armed gang of hoodlums threatened to kill them for refusing to pay a toll of Tk 200,000.

The gang, which had been demanding the money from the caterer for over a month, recently served him an ultimatum over the phone, demanding that he pay the amount by April 4 or be killed along with his children, 'who attend school'.

According to Tejgaon police, on April 4, at around 8:00pm, the armed gang, led by Gaffar, Choto Babu, Chashma Sujon and Kangali Mostafa, entered the Yang Tun Chinese restaurant, hardly 20 yards from the Tejgaon police station, and demanded to see its owner, Dilip G Bepari.

An altercation soon ensued between the hoodlums and Dilip's

brother and the Managing Director of the restaurant, Albert Prodig Bepari. Gaffar and his men dragged Albert into a corner of the restaurant, shooting him twice in the stomach point blank. But Albert miraculously survived the attack because the bullets happened to hit the large steel buckle of the belt he was wearing. Gaffar and his friends left the restaurant thinking Albert was dead.

Dilip G Bepari told The Daily Star the family is now receiving death threats. "The hoodlums know exactly where our children read and they have threatened to kill our daughters and the entire family if we do not withdraw the case," Bepari said.

The Investigative Officer of the Tejgaon police station, ASI Rejalul Islam, said the notorious gang had long been involved in various crimes in the Tejgunipara, Razabazar and Tejgaon areas.

He added that he had led his

team to arrest Gaffar and Kangali Mostafa from the Tejgunipara area.

Under interrogation, Gaffar revealed that one Boro Babu of the area was their "coordinator". The same night ASI Islam and his team raided Boro Babu's residence, arresting him with several rounds of ammunition and a magazine. The police also seized 72 bottles of Phensidyl from the residence.

"The three men are now on police remand and we shall submit charge sheets against them within a day or two," Islam told The Daily Star.

The two remaining men, Choto Babu and Chashma Sujon, both charged in the same case, are now absconding. According to Tejgaon police sources, a top official in the Home Ministry is "trying to have the charges against Choto Babu withdrawn." Choto Babu is believed to be trying to cross into India from Jessore.

Sammilito Panel sweeps JU dean, syndicate polls

JU CORRESPONDENT

The 'Sammilito Panel', an alliance backed by pro-Awami League teachers, has won 13 posts while the 'White Panel' backed by Gonatantrik Shikshak Parishad, bagged three posts in the elections to dean offices, Syndicate, Academic Council and Finance Committee of the Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday.

The 'Sammilito Panel', also backed by Vice-Chancellor Prof Khandaker Mustahidur Rahman, has bagged all the dean posts in four faculties.

Prof Nasir Uddin of history, Prof Amin Mohammad Ali of Economics, Prof Shahabuddin Kader Chowdhury of Pharmacy department, Prof Mahmuda Ghani Ahmad of Chemistry were elected as dean of arts, social science, life science and science faculties.

Out of five posts in the Syndicate, the Sarmillito Panel got three while the White Panel bagged two.

Mohammad Kamrul Ansan of philosophy, Khairuzzaman Mitu of drama and dramatics department and Dr Naem Sultan of government and politics department got elected from Sarmillito Panel under associate professor, assistant professor and provost categories in the Syndicate.

Prof Obaidur Rahman of philosophy and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad of botany were selected from the White Panel under professor and lecturer categories in the Syndicate.

In Academic Council, Dr Monjur Elahi of philosophy, Dr Khabir Uddin of environmental science from the Sarmillito Panel and Dr Talim Hossain of botany from White Panel were elected under associate professor category, while Kamruzzaman Monir of zoology, Mokammel Hossain Bhuiyan of archaeology from Sarmillito Panel under assistant professor category and Abul Kalam azad from computer science and engineering from Sarmillito under lecturer category were elected.

Prof Nurul Huda from Sarmillito Panel was elected to the Finance Committee.

'Market-oriented education a must in the era of globalisation'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday stressed the need for market oriented-education system in the country to produce trained human resources for the development of trade and commerce.

Northern University of Bangladesh (NUB) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organised the seminar titled 'Higher Education in Entrepreneurship Development: Exploring the Needs of Entrepreneurs in the Small and Medium Enterprise (SMC) sectors' at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

Addressing the seminar as chief guest, State Minister for Finance and Planning Shah Mohammad Abul Hussain said there is no alternative to market-oriented education system to survive in the era of globalisation.

Aftab-ul-Islam, president of American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh, presented a keynote while NUB Vice-Chancellor Prof Mohammad Ali presided over the seminar.

FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo and University Grants Commission Member Prof Moinalu Haque spoke as special guests.

Contempt rule on Observer editor

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a contempt rule against the editor of the Bangladesh Observer, director of Al-Helal Printing and Publishing Co. Ltd, district magistrate of Dhaka and others for their wilful disobedience to its judgement and order.

On May 26, 2004 the High Court, in a judgement and order, declared Nargis Rahman the printer and publisher of the Bangladesh Observer and directed the district magistrate to complete the legal formalities on the declaration.

But no steps were taken regarding the High Court's judgement and order.

Nafisa Chowdhury, secretary of Al-Helal Printing & Publishing Co. Ltd, filed a contempt petition against the respondents.

A Division Bench of the High Court comprising Justice M A Matin and Justice AFM Abdul Rahman passed the contempt rule asking Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Director Khaled H Huq, District Magistrate Abdul Bari and others to show cause in two weeks why contempt proceedings shall not be drawn against them for their wilful disobedience of the judgement, petitioner's counsel said.

Barrister A K M Nazrul Islam appeared for the petitioner.

CANAL ENCROACHMENT Wasa demolishes structures amid protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) demolished illegal structures belonging to scores of families from the Ramchandrapur canal in Mohammadpur yesterday, in its ongoing drive to protect the canal from unusual waterlogging during the monsoon.

The drive is a continuing effort to recover the city's 43 canals from illegal encroachers to bring back the natural flow of the canals, mainly used for drainage.

A Wasa team began demolishing bamboo-made houses, shops, semi-pucca and pucca dwellings from the canal at 10:00am amid protests.

There were allegations from some inhabitants that they were not given enough time to shift their valuables.

eviction team removed illegal structures from the canal.

"We support the Wasa eviction drive, but we urge the government not to knock down our homes," Abul Kashem, one of the freedom fighters told The Daily Star.

Officials claim that rainwater from the city's Tejgaon, Karwan Bazar, New Market, Kalyanpur and Mirpur areas will be drained out properly, if the eviction drive can clear the canal.

Wasa officials assured they had been informing people for the last few days with megaphones to move their valuables and houses.

Wasa started the eviction drive on March 29, removing illegal structures from the branch canals of Kalyanpur canal as part of the government's decision to free the city's canals of illegal encroachments.

Adequate police were deployed in the spot to avert any untoward situation.

'Chinese PM's visit helps counter Indian influence'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent visit of the Chinese prime minister to Dhaka has helped Bangladesh counter the influence of its big neighbour, India.

This was stated by a Harvard University Professor Roderick MacFarquhar while he was addressing a lecture in the city yesterday.

The lecture titled 'China's evolving relations with South Asia: Implications for Bangladesh' was held at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

"China will of course benefit Bangladesh as it is a supplier of technical assistance, and a recipient of Bangladesh exports," said Lahore-born professor, adding, "It

also helps counter the influence of India."

"China will always play a big role in Bangladesh because geography cannot be changed," MacFarquhar quipped.

Speaking as chief guest, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed said Bangladesh must strike a balance of diplomacy among its neighbours.

"As our neighbour, we cannot abandon the idea of having good relations with India, particularly when it comes to the watershed issues, but it is also good to have our Chinese friends around," Moudud pointed out.

BISS Director General Major General Muhammad Abdul Matin and Chairman Mufleh R Osmani also addressed the programme.

JOURNO BELAL KILLING CASE

Brothers of prime suspect picked for quizzing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four brothers of prime suspect in journalist Belaluddin murder case Shahabuddin Lashkar were taken into custody of the Detective Branch of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) yesterday.

Plain cloth police picked Dr Shawkat Ali, Sadek Ali, Shujat Ali and Shamsheer Ali at 11:30 am while they were heading towards Hotel Royal International to hold a press conference to deny their brother's involvement in the killing of Sheikh Belaluddin, Khulna bureau chief of the Dainik Sangram.

When contacted, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Iqbal Hossain of Khulna Police Station admitted that the brothers of Shahabuddin Lashkar alias Dhira were picked up for questioning.

Meanwhile, Hasina Begum, mother of the four brothers, in a

press statement alleged that OC Iqbal Hossain while on duty on the hotel premises misbehaved with her sons and snatched their mobile phones and other important papers before taking them into custody.

Dhira, also a leader of Khulna Jamaat-e-Islami, has been absconding since March 31, one day after he had been named as the prime suspect in Belal murder case.

Journalist Belal was severely injured in a bomb attack at the Khulna Press Club on the night of February 5 this year. He succumbed to his injuries on February 11 while being treated in the Dhaka Combined Military Hospital.

A case was recorded with Khulna PS under section 302 with OC Iqbal Hossain as complainant.

DHAKA TODAY
Film show
Cultural function
Bibartan Dhaka
Liberation War Museum
Baishakhi fair
Terracotta exhibition
Kachi-Kanchar Mela
Drama
Nazrul Academy
Baishakhi festival
Kite-flying festival
Film show
Baishakhi Mela

WEATHER TODAY
Thundershowers likely
UNB, Dhaka
City/Town Temperature in Celsius Humidity in percentage
Dhaka 35.0 22.5 36 40
Chittagong 33.8 26.4 75 61
Rajshahi 35.8 18.9 48 23
Khulna 35.0 22.0 87 60
Barisal 34.6 24.4 83 62
Sylhet 33.2 21.3 69 54
Cox's Bazar 33.4 26.2 81 75