

Extortionists shoot mason for tolls, one arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of extortionists shot and injured a mason at Kafrul in the city yesterday as the owner of an under-construction building refused to pay tolls.

Four local youths equipped with firearms stormed into the construction site at about 12:30pm and demanded to see Kazi Golam Ahmed, the building owner. A few days ago, the gang asked the owner to pay them Tk 2 lakh.

Failing to find out Ahmed, the gang fired several shots, injuring Dabiruddin Mondol, 35, said Ahmed's brother Mohammad Montu, who brought the injured to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

According to the doctor, Dabiruddin's condition was critical.

Meanwhile, Kafrul police arrested a youth identified as Pichchi Jahangir with a firearm from the area in the afternoon.



Gonomukti and Jatiya Sampad Rakkha Sammilita Andolon form a human chain in the city yesterday demanding compensation for Magurchhara-Tengratila gas field fires and protesting the move to export gas.

ADB official arrives tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Kunio Senga, director general of the South Asia Department (Sard) of Asian Development Bank (ADB) arrives in Dhaka tomorrow in a three-day visit.

During the visit, Senga will meet senior government officials and other development partners to exchange views on ways how the ADB could better support the government's effort to promote sustainable growth, reduce poverty and improve governance, said an ADB news release.

It will be Senga's first visit to Bangladesh since he took over as the director general of the Sard in September 2004.

Senga oversees the operations of the six divisions in South Asia Department, covering operations coordination, transportation and communication, energy, agriculture, environment, and natural resources, social sectors and governance, financial and trade.

ADB's resident missions in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka also come under his purview.

GARMENT FACTORY TRAGEDY

'Declare nat'l mourning'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different labour fronts yesterday laid a siege to the labour department demanding exemplary punishment to the persons responsible for the tragedy at the Spectrum Sweaters Factory Limited in Savar.

In a memorandum to the chief inspector of factories during the siege, the labour leaders said the government must identify the deaths as a result of negligence.

They said the factory was set up in a building constructed without proper approval and with faulty engineering.

The siege was organised by Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote, Bangladesh Jatiya Garment Sramik Jote and Jatiya Nari Sramik Jote.

"The owners will have to compensate each of the affected families with Tk 7 lakh as per the Fatal Accident Act of 1955," said Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote President Shirin Akhtar.

"The factory owner must take the corporate liability in the accident," she added.

Shirin said persisting indifference and apathy on the part of the factory owners and government agencies have led to recurrent occurrence of such tragedies in garment factories in recent times.

While expressing his solidarity with the workers, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal General Secretary Syed Jafar Sajjad said, "Both the industries minister and the chief factory inspector should resign taking responsibility of the tragedy."

The connivance of factory owner with the corrupt elements at the Rajuk, cantonment board, labour department, environment department and fire service and civil defence department made it possible to construct the factory building with faulty engineering, said the labour leaders in the memorandum.

They demanded of the government to declare national mourning for

the tragedy, enforce labour laws at every factory, identify all the risky factory buildings and publish a full list of the dead, wounded and missing in the Spectrum tragedy as per the attendance card.

Labour leaders Meer Hossain, Al Azam Khan, Ashraf Haque, Saiful Islam, Anjuman Ara, Delwar Hossain,

Shahin Akhtar and Mahbub Rahman were present during the siege.

At least 75 people have so far been reported dead with 84 wounded and more than hundred missing in the collapse of a nine-storey factory building at Palashbari in the early hours of April 11.



Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Jote, Jatiya Garments Sramik Jote and Jatiya Nari Sramik Jote stage a demonstration in the city yesterday demanding punishment to those responsible for the Savar garments factory tragedy.

Open Arial Khan bridge immediately

Demand AL lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League lawmakers yesterday accused the government of deliberately delaying opening a newly constructed bridge over the river Arial Khan in Madaripur to traffic.

They also demanded that the government inaugurate the bridge by today. Otherwise, the

opposition will open it by holding a rally there, they warned.

Four months have elapsed after the completion of the bridge, but the prime minister could not make time to open the bridge, the lawmakers from southern districts told a press conference in the city.

"It's a matter of regret that people are being deprived of benefits from the bridge as the prime minister could not make time to open it in the last four months," said Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim MP, also a presidium member of the AL.

"We, the elected representatives from the southern region, strongly demand the government open the bridge immediately, which was originally planned during the previous Awami League government," he said.

Although nobody is allowed to cross the bridge before its formal opening, the prime minister's son along with his companions used the bridge during their recent visit to the southern districts, Selim said.

"If they can, what's is the wrong with the general people using the bridge?" he asked.

AL leaders Kazi Zafrullah MP, Syed Abul Hossain MP, Col (Rtd) Faruq Khan MP, Col (Retd.) Shakhawat Ali MP, Shahjahan Khan MP and Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury MP were present at the press conference held at the party's Dhanmondi office.

Road accident kills three in Sonargaon

UNB, Nargaj

Three people died and three others injured when a bus collided with an auto-rickshaw on Narsingdi-Madanpur road near Lalate under Sonargaon upazila yesterday.

The dead are Nuru Mia, 22, Masum, 12, and Abul Kashem, 28. The injured are now undergoing treatment at Narayanganj Hospital.

After the accident, local people put up a barricade on the road disrupting traffic for an hour.

Police recovered the bodies and sent them to hospital for autopsy.