

AL to propose
2 names for
caretaker chief

Says Jalil

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil has called for resolving the pre-election standoff through dialogue, saying that they will propose two names for the chief advisor of the caretaker government and the chief election commissioner, which will be acceptable to all including the ruling BNP.

"We've given some space to the BNP-led coalition government for holding dialogue...and we are waiting for government initiative

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2 outlaws killed
in 'shootout'
with Rab

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two regional leaders of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party ML Lal Pataka faction were killed during a 'shootout' between their cohorts and the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

The incident took place at Natunpara of Dhulauri union under Santhia upazila early Saturday morning. The dead were identified as Haiful Islam and Hazrat Ali of the same village.

Rab12 received a tip off and cordoned off the Natunpara brickyard early morning yesterday to capture the outlaws, Rab said.

The wanted criminals opened

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Solve crisis, save RMG sector

Speakers urge at The Daily Star-Junior Chamber roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called upon all stakeholders to immediately solve the prevailing crisis regarding minimum wage structure in the readymade garment (RMG) sector and look into other hidden causes that are responsible for the stalemate.

The minimum wage is one of the causes of violence in the sector but many other issues - workers right, overtime, regular increment, bonus, incentives and other facilities - need to be resolved for bringing back normalcy in the thriving garment sector, they said.

The speakers underscored the need for an amicable solution of the problems in the greater interest of the sector.

The Junior Chamber International (JCI) Bangladesh chapter organised the roundtable on 'Problems in the RMG sector, recent issues and possible solutions' at the Brac centre with joint collaboration of The Daily Star.

The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam moderated the seminar while garment factory owners, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) leaders, representatives of workers, buyers and donors participated in the

discussion.

The seminar witnessed a strong debate between the representatives of workers and owners on the question of minimum wage for the garment workers.

Annisul Huq, former president of BGMEA and a member of the government formed wage commission for garment sector, told the discussion that the prevailing conflict between workers and owners on the question of minimum wage would be solved within a week.

"We are going to have a win-win situation on minimum wage within a week," he said without giving details about the understanding between the conflicting groups.

Earlier both the workers and owners rejected the minimum wage structure declared by the government wage commission. The workers said the minimum wage was much less than their demand while the owners termed it 'too high and unacceptable'.

The workers' representatives demanded wage hike in the garment sector for the 'very survival' of the poorly paid workers.

With the unusual rise in the prices of essentials, the garment workers cannot survive with the poor amount they get, they said, adding that the sector may face another spell of unrest if their

demands are not met.

Annisul Huq expressed fear that around 20 to 30 per cent factories might face closure if the minimum wage structure is implemented without considering the other relevant issues.

The cutting and making (CM) charge has declined almost by 50 per cent in the recent years, he said, adding that the wage structure should be formulated considering the ability of the owners.

Nazma Akhter, a worker leader and representative of the workers in the wage commission, reiterated their demand for Tk 3,000 as the minimum wage for the garment sector.

Urging the buyers to increase the CM charge and save the sector from ruination, she said the workers are also ready to launch movement for price hike of the garment items.

"We do not want to go for rampage but we want to survive. Please let us lead a life as just human beings," said another representative of workers.

Mamunur Rashid of City Bank NA said the garment factory owners do not present the actual picture of their earning and profit. Although the owners make huge

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