

Over 1000 workers of five Khulna jute mills sacked

Uneasy calm in Khalishpur industrial belt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

At least 1084 workers of five out of eight state-owned jute mills in Khulna-Jessore industrial belt have been served with termination notices with effect from Monday (June 4).

The termination notices were issued on order from the chairman of Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC).

Names of terminated workers, mostly in sacking sections of the five mills, were hung on notice boards yesterday.

The notices were signed by project directors of the respective jute mills.

An uneasy calm was prevailing in Khalishpur industrial belt yesterday. Labour leaders at the mills declined to make any comment and said they were watching the situation.

Motahar Uddin, regional convener of jute mill workers union, said the situation is moving towards closure of jute mills though there is scope to run those profitably.

The retrenchment has been done due to decline in production following severe load shedding, crisis of fund and workers' refusal to join works without full payment of their arrears wages and benefits for the lay-off period, said BJMC Zonal Coordinator Shamim Ahmed.

One hundred sixty-eight permanent workers out of the 1084 were also served with termination notices Monday evening, the zonal coordinator said.

The terminated workers belonged to Crescent Jute Mills, Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills, Star Jute Mills, Aleem Jute Mills and Eastern Jute Mills.

Earlier on Sunday night, project directors of the five jute mills held separate meetings with officials of joint forces and Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) Commissioner on ways to tackle the situation in case of any violence following termination of workers.

There is no possibility of any of these five jute mills to go into production as workers are staying away in demand for arrears wages, withdrawal of lay-off notices and payment for the lay-off period, Shamim Ahmed said.

He said violence may erupt again in the entire industrial belt. The termination notices were issued under sections 7 and 20 of Bangladesh Labour Law without giving any indication about payment of their arrears wages, Shamim said.

Meanwhile, security forces were deployed in front of the mills yesterday in apprehension of violence.

Bird flu detected in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Dinajpur*

Bird flu (Avian Influenza) has been detected at a village in Chiribandar upazila in Dinajpur, according to district livestock department officials.

They said two fowls in Shatnala village were infected with unidentified disease days back.

These were sent to Joypurhat Livestock Research and Testing Institute where, during test, they were found infected with bird flu, the officials said.

When contacted, Chiribandar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Mominur Rahman said livestock department officials told him that bird flu was detected in two fowls in Shatnala village. Effective steps have been taken to check spread of the disease, he added.



PHOTO: STAR
Police yesterday recovered six firearms and some ammunition from an abandoned rubber factory in Nasirabad industrial area in Chittagong. Police said the factory was owned by an Awami League leader.

Enact tough laws, save CHT ecology

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Khagrachhari*

Speakers at a discussion yesterday urged the government to make enact stringent laws to protect the environment and ecology in Chittagong Hill Tracts by stopping indiscriminate plunder of forest resources and cutting hills.

The also urged the government, NGOs and civil society leaders to build a movement to create awareness among people to resist plunderers and to protect the wildlife and waterbodies.

The discussion meeting, jointly organised by the district administration and district forest office, was held at the Shipakala Academy in the district town.

Additional District Magistrate Shamsuddhoha was the chief guest while Divisional Forest Officer Shah-e-Alam presided over the discussion marking the World Environment Day.

Among others, ADC (general) Mohammad Khalilur Rahman, ex-headmaster Ananta Bihari Khisha, district youth department officer Mizanur Rahman spoke at the meeting, attended by the local elite and journalists.

They said forests are shrinking



PHOTO: STAR
Jono Udjog, a citizens' body, brought out a procession in Chittagong city yesterday marking the World Environment Day.

though governments spent hundreds of crores of taka in last 10 years for afforestation in the three hill districts.

The vast Kaptai Lake is almost of deplete of fish resources though there is scope to produce fishes

worth several hundred crores of taka, they said.

The plunderers are few in number and the destruction by them can be stopped if people and the government want sincerely, they said.

They urged all to take a fresh vow to protect the nature and resources in the hills for the sake of the future generation.

ZIA FERTILISER AT ASHUGANJ

Four staff punished for theft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *B'baria*

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) authorities terminated two CBA leaders of Ashuganj Zia Fertilizer Company Limited (ZFCL) and cut yearly increment of two officers for their involvement in pilferage of 2,57,300 polythene bags from the factory.

The orders were issued on Monday effecting the punishments from yesterday, ZFCL sources said.

The sacked two staff are store keeper and CBA secretary Md. Gulam Nabi and assistant store keeper Anwar Mia.

The two officers are Assistant Manager Abdus Salam and

Additional Chief Engineer Emdadul Haque.

According to sources, at least 2,57,300 polythene bags worth about Tk 28 lakh were stolen by a group of staff and officers from ZFCL godown despite tight security in and around the fertiliser factory.

Sources said the theft was detected on November 12 last year during a visit to the store by high officials.

Later, on November 13, higher authorities in BCIC head office in Dhaka were informed. On November 16, the ZFCL authorities formed a three-member probe body to investigate the matter. A BCIC team also probed the alleged theft.

The probe bodies detected that four persons were involved in the pilferage of 2,57,300 polythene bags and also recommended punishment for them.

When contacted, ZFCL General Manager (admin) Md. Habibullah Chowdhury said the action has been taken as per order of high officials.

While contacted, Md. Gulam Nabi said it is a conspiracy against them as there is no scope to steal anything from the godown which is under tight security round the clock.

He said he will send a prayer to higher authorities to review the punishment.

YOUTH MURDER BY 'LAND GRABBERS'

None arrested in Shyamnagar

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Satkhira*

None was arrested till yesterday in the May 28 incident at Mehendi Nagar village in Shyamnagar upazila in which a youth was killed allegedly by land grabbers as he resisted the bid.

A case was filed against 31 alleged land grabbers after the incident that triggered protests by people of both Muslim and Hindu communities.

Shah Jahan, 30, son of Safiur Rahman of the village was beaten to death by musclemen of Fazlul Haque, an alleged land grabber, who wanted to occupy about 40 decimal of lands including the temple of Lord Krishna built about 200 years ago.

But, no criminal was arrested in this regard till filing of the report. People belonging to both Hindu and Muslim communities held a meeting on the temple premises on Monday. The meeting demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the killers. Speakers urged the Chief Advisor for immediate action against the killers and measures.

Panic gripped the village where 100 families of both Hindu and Muslim communities reside in harmony.

During the attack, the culprits damaged the temple and assaulted Hindu housewives and their girls. As a result, Shefalli Rani Mondal, Manati Rani Mondal, Sushila Mondal, Anima Rani Mondal, Binoy Krishna Mondal,

Rabindra Nath Mondal, Tarak Kumar Mondal and others were injured.

Mahendi Nagar Lord Krishna Temple Committee secretary Sudhansu Kumar Mondal filed a case with Shyamnagar Police Station accusing 31 people including Fazlul Haque.

Additional police forces have been deployed to curb further untoward incident.

The accused are now threatening the temple committee leaders to withdraw the case or face the dire consequence, Sudhansu said.

Police said, a dispute arose between the villagers and Fazlul Haque son of Mobarak Ali over ownership of 40 decimals of land including Lord Krishna Temple about 8 months ago.

Fazlul Haque claimed to have purchased the land from Bijoy Mondal.

At that time, local police administration and Union Parishad (UP) held separate arbitration meetings to resolve the issue. The meetings said Bijoy Mondal has no right to transfer the land to Fazlul Haque. Two separate notices were issued to Fazlul Haque asking him not to claim the land, police and UP sources said.

But defying the order, Fazlul Haque and his hired goons tried to occupy the land and the temple forcibly and killed Shah Jahan who resisted them.

Ex-BNP MP Monirul Haq sued in Comilla

A CORRESPONDENT, *Comilla*

A case was filed yesterday against former lawmaker from Comilla-9 constituency and BNP leader Monirul Haq Chowdhury.

The case was filed with Cognizance Court-1 in Comilla by Abul Khair of Baroipur village.

In his complaint, Khair alleged that Monirul Haq Chowdhury took possession of a land by using forged documents and embezzled Tk.50,000 under the pretext of earth filling at Chotto Sharifpur College in the Sadar upazila.

Magistrate Ashraf Hossain of Cognizance Court-1 instructed the Officer in Charge (OC) of Sadar police station to investigate the allegation and take necessary steps.

Three other persons were also accused in the case.

This correspondent tried repeatedly to contact Monirul Haq Chowdhury over cellphone but he was not available.

ATTACK ON BNP OFFICE

102 Chuadanga AL leaders, activists chargesheeted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kushtia*

Sadar Police Station against 102 AL leaders and activists.

Of the accused, 83 got bail from High Court while the rest are still at large.

Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Abdur Rahim submitted the charge-sheet after his investigation.

Meanwhile, district AL secretary Azadul Islam Azad expressed his dismay over the charge framing against his party men.

He said another case was filed by district Chhatra League (BCL) secretary Obaidur Rahman Dipu and AL office secretary Rafiqul Islam Laddu just after the incident accusing 100 BNP men.

But the authorities concerned are yet to take action against the BNP men for attacking and injuring 50 AL men, he said. Even no BNP men appealed for bail after their case, he said.

The AL leader criticised the step motherly attitude of the authorities concerned towards them.

Joint forces arrested Bheramara upazila BNP leader Jamal Uddin Dulal Mollah, also chairman of Aria UP and regional manager (RM) of Uddipon, an NGO, Ayub Hossain, its branch manager Raihanuddin Chowdhury and area manager Murtazul Haq Monday night.

Joint forces arrested the NGO officials from their rail gate area office in Bheramara town at about 9.30:pm Monday, police said.

Kushtia Sadar police arrested BNP leader Jamal from a rented house in Kalishankarpur area in Kushtia town.

Jamal was an accused in several cases including extortion. He fled the area and was living in Kushtia town till arrest.

Of the arrested, the NGO officials were released and the BNP leader was sent to Kushtia jail.

The cause of arrest could not be known.

7x3

9x3

3x2