

Jute workers' ultimatum to BJMC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Workers of six jute mills of Khulna-Jessore Industrial belt yesterday announced to go for agitation if their demands are not met by April 5 as committed by Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) Chairman Atahanul Islam.

The workers, who were forced to go into voluntary retirement at the age of 57, have started demonstrating from 10:00am to 11:00am in front of offices of project directors of their respective mills to press home their five-point demands.

The retrenched workers of Crescent Jute Mills and casual workers of six jute mills of Khulna-Jessore industrial belt staged sit-in programme from

10:00am to 11:00am in front of offices of project directors of their respective mills claiming payment of their dues and other arrears wages.

CBA leaders Joinal Abedin of Crescent Jute Mills, Syed Arab Ali of Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills, Moslem Ali of Star Jute Mills, Kauser Ahmed of Alim Jute Mills, Syed Samdani of Eastern Jute Mill, Joinal Abedin of Jessore Jute Industries and Rahim Farazi of Carpeting Jute Mill in their speeches in separate rallies yesterday warned the government of a tough movement from April 6 if their demands are not met by April 5 as committed by both Jute Adviser Anwarul Iqbal and BJMC chairman during a meeting at Khulna Circuit House on March 5.



Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus receives an honorary doctorate degree from President VA Sadovnichiy of Moscow State University, the largest in Russia, on April 2.

Smuggled motor parts seized in Benapole

A CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel seized smuggled motor parts worth Tk 86.31 lakh from Benapole check post areas yesterday, while Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) recovered 1,500 bottles of phensidyl from Lauzanin Jessore.

BDR's Benapole Company Commander Gulzar Hossain said the parts were smuggled into the country from India and, sensing the BDR's presence, the smugglers fled off the scene leaving the parts wrapped into seven sacks.

The parts were handed over to Benapole customs house. Meanwhile, Rab officials said they recovered the contraband drugs after searching a truck bound to Dhaka from Benapole.

They said sensing the Rab personnel started searching the truck, the driver and helper ran away leaving the vehicle.

Three arrested for cheque forgery

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Bogra*

Police yesterday arrested three youths for their bid to draw about Tk 93 lakh from a bank in the town by forging signatures.

The arrestees are Belal Habib, 26, of South Shakpala in Bogra, Mosharrif Hossain, 24, of Debidwar in Comilla and Shahjahan, 28, of Patgram in Lalmonirhat districts.

Police said the youths were caught when they tried to draw Tk 92.84 lakh from Bogra branch of National Bank against the balance of commercial organisation KB Traders.

Zahirul Islam, assistant vice president of Bogra branch of the bank, said the cheats had forged the signatures of the bank officials and tried to draw the money.

Delhi signs

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north-eastern states a new trade route to South East Asia and enhance connectivity benefiting not only Myanmar but India as well, they pointed out.

India had been negotiating with Bangladesh for an access route to the north-eastern states without any success, the officials said.

The agreement was signed in presence of the second-in-command of Myanmar's ruling military junta Vice-senior General Maung Aye and Indian Vice-president Hamid Ansari.

The deal, the highlight of Gen Maung Aye's four-day visit, comes at a time when the international community is trying to put pressure on the military rulers in Myanmar to usher in democracy.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh held talks with the Myanmar general during which they decided to open up the existing border trade points to further promote trade.

Singh emphasised the need for cross-border infrastructure projects to promote greater connectivity.

New Delhi is looking at increasing border trade with Myanmar through two new towns besides the existing one in Moreh in the north-eastern Indian state of Manipur which connects with Tamu in Myanmar, the officials said.

Gen Maung Aye also held talks with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Indian army chief Gen Deepak Kapur.

Curbing insurgency and enhancing trade are on the agenda of the Myanmar general's talks with Indian leaders, said the officials.

The issue of Myanmar's move towards political reforms also figured prominently in talks Gen Maung Aye had with Indian leadership.

Noting the positive steps taken by the Myanmar junta towards national reconciliation and political reforms, the Indian prime minister stressed the need for Myanmar to make it broad-based to include all sections of society including imprisoned pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

During his meeting with Ansari, the Myanmar general apprised him of the latest political reforms initiated by his government including the announcement of a referendum in May this year and elections in 2010.

During Gen Maung Aye's meeting with Indian President Pratibha Patil, the two leaders noted with satisfaction the growing cooperation at regional and multilateral levels.

India has consistently opposed economic sanctions against Myanmar saying they would be counter-productive in pressuring the military junta to introduce democracy and improve domestic human rights record.

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