

## Ashulia erupts into violence

1 more killed, 150 hurt as RMG workers clash with cops for second day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers clashed with police for hours at Ashulia near the capital yesterday, leaving a co-worker killed and over 150 people including 30 cops wounded.

The fight followed Saturday's pitched battles that saw a worker killed and 25 others injured when Ansars fired on those agitating for higher pay.

Police shot over 200 rounds of rubber bullets and teargas shells and charged baton to break up yesterday's protest over the fellow worker's death

the previous day.

The marauding crowd attacked at least 15 factories and damaged over 50 vehicles. They barricaded the Dhaka-Tangail highway for over four hours, causing huge traffic gridlock on either side.

Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association President Abdus Salam Murshedy has expressed deep concern over the last two days' violence.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, he said such unrest is 'very upsetting' for the industries.

Earlier in the day, some 500 policemen from Dhaka and Manikganj districts joined Ashulia police and the Rapid Action Battalion to quell the violence.

Iqbal Bahar, superintendent of police in Dhaka, told The Daily Star in the evening, "Around 50,000 workers participated in the protest. They were violent and throwing stones at us, forcing us to fire rubber bullets and tear gas."

He confirmed that a worker had died in the incident, but could not give identity of the deceased.

Additional SP Imam Hossain,

Assistant Police Commissioner (circle) Abdus Salam, Officer-in-Charge Monwar Hossain of Ashulia Police Station, sub-inspectors Ilias Hossain, Abdus Salam, Murad Hossain, Mostafa Kamal and Hafiz Uddin were among the injured.

Most of the wounded workers were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Of them, condition of at least 30 was critical, said hospital sources.

The workers began pouring into the Jamgorah bus stop since early morning. At 9:00am, they started agitation

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## Discard caretaker system, soup up EC

Ruling alliance lawmakers demand in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday urged lawmakers to take steps to abolish the caretaker government system and strengthen the Election Commission (EC) for holding free and fair parliamentary elections.

Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad echoed her and urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to free politics from the caretaker government system. Treasury bench MPs supported their pro-

posals, thumping desks in parliament during a general discussion on the proposed budget for the next fiscal year yesterday.

The caretaker government system was introduced in the constitution in 1996 in the face of vigorous agitation of opposition political parties.

The EC also opined earlier that if it is strengthened, the caretaker government is not necessary for holding the parliamentary election in a free and fair manner.

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## Make public all info on Tipaimukh

BNP asks govt to send one JS team

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Standing Committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday asked the government to make public all data and information on the 'controversial' Tipaimukh Dam project provided by the Indian government.

Mosharraf, also a former minister, said only a parliamentary delegation should visit the site of the proposed dam in the greater interest of the country as sending of two or more teams there will harm national unity.

If more than one team is sent there, it would weaken Bangladesh's bargaining

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A person tries to seize a polythene bag containing glue from minor rag picker Al Amin, who is addicted to solvent abuse for a couple of years, near Sir Salimullah Medical College in the capital.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Forest bosses flayed for failure

JS body asks for steps to recover 3.27 lakh acres grabbed land

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary body yesterday castigated forest officials for their failure to prevent grabbing of forest land and illegal felling of trees, and directed the chief conservator of forest to strengthen the drive to recover around 3.27 lakh acres of land from grabbers.

The parliamentary standing committee on the environment and forest ministry asked forest officials to come up with a report at each of its meetings specifying the progress of the drive.

It also asked the forest department to seek, if necessary, directives from the High

Court to fight grabbers who obstructed recovery of forestland by filing cases.

"A vast tract of forestland has been grabbed mainly due to indifference of forest officials to protecting it and corruption among them," chief of the committee Abdul Momin Talukder said at a news briefing after it met at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The House body made a set of recommendations which include stern legal action against individuals and organisations who pose a threat to environment and forest.

It also recommended that the government impose tax on

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## 2 key river projects left in the cold

MORSHED ALI KHAN

While political leaders, academicians, eminent citizens, professional groups and the common people are demanding urgent measures to save our rivers, the government is sitting on two projects -- demarcation of all the four rivers and a four-lane bypass highway around the city -- which would ensure water flow, if implemented.

The Dhaka Integrated Flood Control Embankment-Eastern Bypass Road Multipurpose Project, widely known as bypass project, and the Rehabilitation of

the Buriganga-Turag-Shitalakhya River System and Augmentation of Dry Season Flow are the two mega projects lying idle now due to lack of funds.

According to Water Development Board (WDB), the initiator of both the projects, the estimated cost of the eastern bypass project is Tk 2,475 crore while the second project's cost stands at around Tk 630 crore.

According to experts at the WDB and the Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) the cost of the two projects combined would be the highest ever but the concepts are indispensable for the river

system and road communication around the city.

Experts at the WDB and Institute of Water Modelling (IWM) said the project for augmenting flow in the four rivers is vital to keep the rivers protected and free from pollution round the year.

They, however, insisted on installing Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) in the polluting industries simultaneously.

The IWM, in April 2003, conducted a feasibility study to explore ways to rehabilitate the Buriganga-Turag-Shitalakhya river system and ensure their dry-season

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## Fugitive BDR jawan held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another fugitive BDR jawan, suspected to have been involved in the February 25-26 mutiny and carnage at BDR headquarters, was arrested from Darshana area under Sadar upazila of Rangpur district on Saturday evening.

With the arrest of fugitive Sepoy Mohammad Noor Hossain, the number of BDR jawans absconding since the bloodbath at Pilkhana stands at 23.

A team of Rab held Noor, hailing from Santospur village under Sandwip upazila of Chittagong district, from the area, reports our correspondent from Rangpur.

The Rab conducted the drive on information that Noor is leaving the country for

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## Fatwa leads to 303 whips

Widow hospitalised; 6 held

A CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

Piara Begum, a widow of 40, and Mamun Miah, 25, fell victim to fatwa (religious edict) and were whipped before hundreds of people at Khaiyar under Debidwar upazila of Comilla Saturday night for their alleged involvement in anti-social activity.

Police, in this connection, arrested six people including a local religious leader who issued the fatwa. The conditions of the victims were stated to be critical.

The arrestees are Dakhl Madrassa Assistant Super Moulana Mohammad



Moulana Md Manirul Islam Manirul Islam, Dudmiah, Ibrahim, Wahed, Jalil and Mamun, the victim.

Dudmiah presided over the

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## Gen Moeen leaves for Singapore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former army chief Moeen U Ahmed has left Dhaka for Singapore early today.

Sources at Zia International Airport Immigration confirmed at 1:45am that the former army chief was scheduled to board a 2:20am flight of Malaysian Airlines bound for Singapore.

The purpose of his trip could not be known.

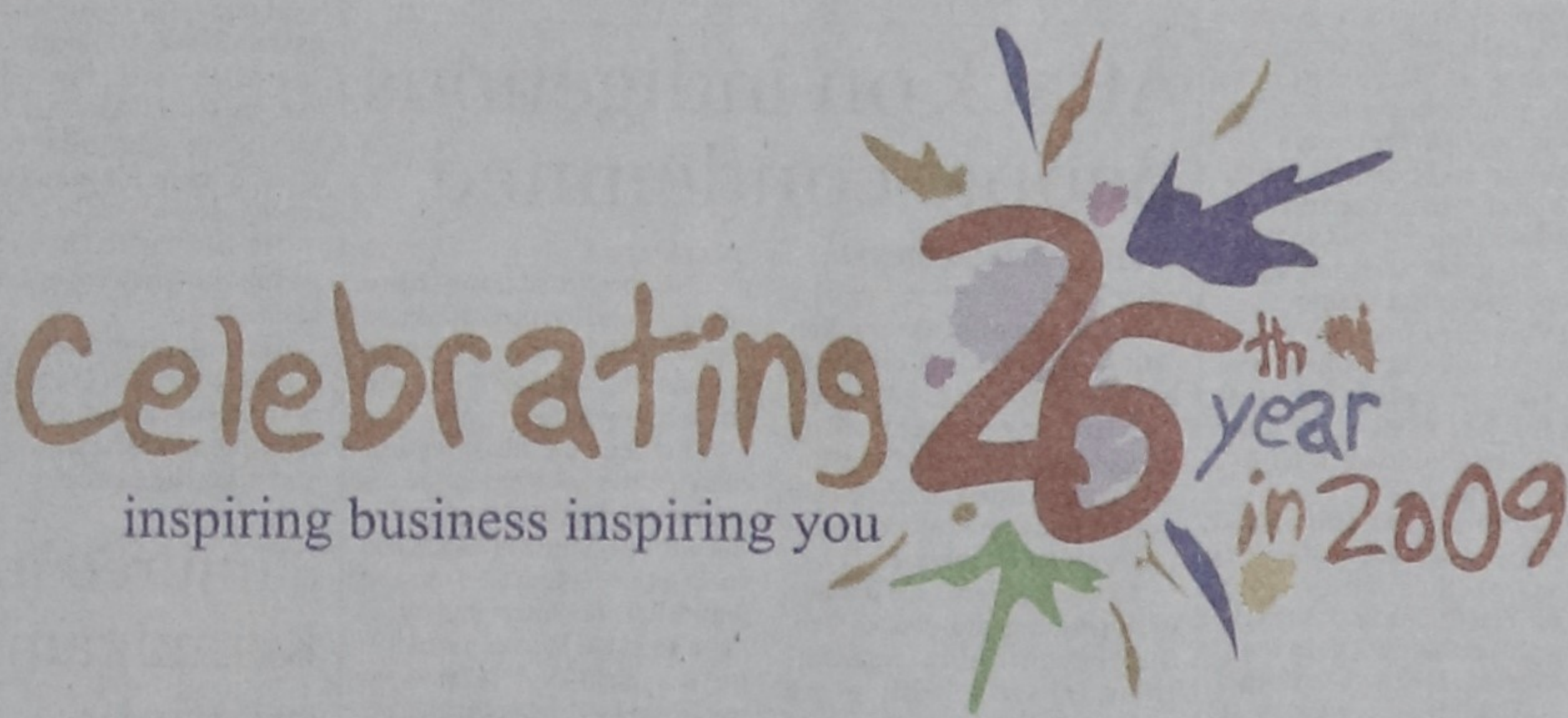
## KARWAN BAZAR KILLINGS Microbus used by gunmen seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch (DB) of police seized a microbus used by the criminals in Friday's triple murder incident in Karwan Bazar of the city.

Sources said one of the DB teams seized the microbus and detained its driver from the city's Uttara on Saturday night. Contacted, Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner AKM Shahidul Huque admitted the seizure of the microbus but declined to disclose the details for the sake

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