

## RMG factories vandalised in Ashulia again

50 hurt as workers clash with cops over delay in payment; production hampered in 50 factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Clashes between garment factory workers and police in Ashulia yesterday and the night before left at least 50 persons injured, and kept production in at least 50 factories suspended almost all through the day yesterday.

The workers also ransacked at least six factories at Kathgora and Pukurpar of the area, vandalising 15 vehicles and burning other factory materials.

Witnesses said during the clashes, police fired several gunshots and charged batons to disperse the workers who retaliated with brickbats and sticks. The ensuing chases and counter chases turned the area into a battleground.

The incidents started in the garment factory of Textown Group on Thursday night when payment of the workers' salaries was being delayed.

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This recent photo shows a large number of logs piled right on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway near Jatrabari narrowing down the highway.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## WAR CRIME TRIAL 14-party to hold rallies to unite nation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

14-party alliance led by Awami League yesterday took massive programmes in the city to unite the nation through building public opinion towards holding trial of war criminals.

At a view exchange meeting held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity, the alliance leaders said that as part of the programme they will hold rallies at nine constituencies of the capital this month.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua said a vested quarter is hatching a conspiracy to foil trial of the war criminals.

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## PDB's hasty bid process unnerves power bidders

Bidding for 1,275 MW power projects in progress; old projects yet to show results

SHARIER KHAN

The government's failure to make much headway in several tenders for power projects and floating of fresh tenders without ensuring gas supplies in last one year are making aspirant bidders nervous.

The executives of a few power companies consider "hasty" and "discouraging" the Power Development Board's latest bids for five private power projects of 900 to 1,275 megawatt capacity as the bids offer little time gaps to prepare documents for such large-scale ventures.

They have also been discouraged by the fact that despite repeated commitments, different government agencies have failed to complete tender processes of six power projects totalling around 1,400 MW capacity in the last one year.

The government's poor handling of tenders for eight rental power projects of 530 MW capacity and 10 public sector projects of 810 MW capacity has also shaken confidence of the investors.

Since February, PDB launched the bidders' pre-qualification (PQ) process

for five private power projects totalling maximum 1,275 MW capacity. These are Meghnaghat 2 dual fuel (300-450 MW), Bibiyana 2 gas-fired (300-450 MW), Bhola 150-220 MW gas-fired, Syedpur 100 MW fuel oil and Katakhal 50 MW fuel oil-based power projects.

The PDB aims at completing all the tender processes within this year.

In the tender notice, PDB has not given confirmation about gas supplies for the Meghnaghat, Bibiyana or the Bhola projects.

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## BRAHMANBARIA 37 handmade bombs found near Jamaat office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Police recovered 37 handmade bombs from a sand heap outside district Jamaat office at Bhadughar under Brahmanbaria Sadar Thursday night.

Police said they reached the spot following a blast at the eastern side of Al Hera Complex at Bhadughar around 10:45pm.

Led by Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Sadar Police Station Md Hamidul Islam, the team recovered 37 handmade bombs of different sizes--some weighing up to one kilogramme--from a sand heap outside the boundary of Brahmanbaria Jamaat office around 11:30pm.

The bombs were brought to the police station and kept in water in a tub. An explosives expert would soon examine the bombs, sources said.

Contacted, the OC said he had assigned second officer of the

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PHOTO ON PAGE 16

## Barapukuria miners call off hunger strike

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Agitating villagers of Barapukuria and adjacent areas yesterday withdrew their hunger strike after the authorities of Barapukuria Coal Mining Company Ltd (BCMCL) accepted their demands.

The demands accepted by the BCMCL authorities are: implementation of the decisions taken at the March 11 inter-ministerial meeting by June, compensating the affected people within the next three months and ensuring jobs for the affected villagers at BCMCL by this month.

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## BNP MPs to visit CHT

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has decided to send a parliamentary team of the party to the recent violence hit areas of Chittagong Hill Tracts on March 15 to gather firsthand information.

A six-member team led by Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque will visit the affected areas of Baghaichhari in Rangamati district and Khagrachhari Sadar in Khagrachhari district where violent incidents took place between indigenous people and Bangalee settlers.

"We will go to Chittagong Hill Tracts on March 15 to visit affected areas and will submit a report before our chairperson," Farroque told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BNP parliamentary team will exchange views with the affected people in the troubled areas.

The other members of the parliamentary team are Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, Abul Khair Bhuiyan, Ashrafuddin Nizan, Shahiduddin Chowdhury

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A hoarding built on a poor structure poses high risk of collapse especially in storm or strong wind. The photo was taken near the city's Kamalapur Container Station recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Khaleda intervenes to end factional feud in city BNP Committee likely before DCC polls

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

As the top-tier BNP leaders failed to resolve the factional feud centring formation of its Dhaka city committee, party Chairperson Khaleda Zia has now stepped in to set up the unit.

Party insiders believe the chairperson's intervention will minimise the gap between two factions led by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka and former Mayor Mirza Abbas.

Party leaders hope a strong committee will be announced soon ahead of city corporation election, which might be held in May, in efforts to prepare the party for an anti-government movement.

Earlier, as part of the party's reorganisation process, the chairperson declared new committees of Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal and Swachhchasebak Dal. Mahila Dal committee will hopefully be announced at any time soon.

Sources said despite facing strong opposition within the party, Khoka would finally regain the post of Dhaka city unit president. Someone fresh might be nominated as general secretary of the unit.

The unit has no committee since party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain disbanded the then committee led by Khoka in June 2008 when Khaleda Zia was in prison.

After the national polls held in December, the party high ups

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## 5 more houses set on fire in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A group of criminals set fire to five houses of Bangalee settlers at Rajjomonipara of Khagrachhari sadar upazila early yesterday.

The belongings of five families were burnt to ashes after the criminals set fire to the houses at about 3:00am, Khagrachhari district administration, fire brigade and police sources said.

Mohammad Shah Alam, one of the victims, blamed the

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## Ershad's graft cases move at snail's pace

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two graft cases filed against deposed president HM Ershad have been moving at snail's pace, as the investigation reports of the cases have not been submitted in the last 16 years.

As the investigation into the allegations is going on at a snail's pace, Ershad, also the chairman of the Jatiya Party, has not faced trial in the two cases filed in 1994.

Investigation officers (IO) of the cases, who were the officials of now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac), have not been absorbed into the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). And the ACC has also made no move to investigate the cases, sources said.

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## Twin suicide attacks kill 45 in Lahore

Muslim cleric among 5 killed by gunmen

AFP, Lahore/Karachi

Twin suicide attacks seconds apart targeted the Pakistani military yesterday, killing up to 45 people in the second attack to hit security forces in the country's cultural capital this week.

The bombers walked up to army vehicles in the crowded R A Bazaar area of Lahore, blowing themselves up as people sat down to eat before the main Muslim weekly prayers were to begin, a senior

official said.

Lahore, a city of eight million near Pakistan's border with India, has been increasingly subject to Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked attacks in a nationwide bombing campaign that has killed more than 3,000 people in three years.

The bombers targeted the cantonment, home to army officials and military installations, as well as hospitals and schools run by the military. There were civilian homes, shops and restaurants in

the vicinity of the attack.

Footage of the blasts broadcast by private Geo TV showed people running and shouting in panic. One man, who apparently shot the video on a mobile phone, is heard murmuring: "Oh my God, Oh my God, Be kind to us God."

Jumpy images of the second explosion showed a thick ball of smoke with a huge bang and people shouting.

Mohammad Nadeem, a man in his 20s

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## Another ship breaking yard worker killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A worker was killed when a huge steel-plate fell on him in a ship-breaking yard at Bhatiary under Sitakunda upazila in the district early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Subhash Kanti Das, 25, of South Thakurpara at Bhatiary.

Police said a huge steel plate fell on Subhash when he along with other workers was dismantling a ship at Bhatiary

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