

RMG factories

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The company usually pays its factory workers their monthly salaries on the 10th of the next month, but failed to pay February's salaries on March 10, and promised to pay the next day.

When the workers did not get their salaries on Thursday night either, they started ransacking the factory around 8:00pm.

Witnesses said around 2,000 workers went on the rampage, breaking windowpanes, furniture, and machinery from the ground floor to the fifth floor of the factory building.

Police rushed to the spot and charged batons to disperse the ransacking workers. The workers also launched a counter attack on the law enforcers. The ensuing clashes that went on for more than an hour, left at least 20 people injured including three policemen, the witnesses added.

Yesterday morning the workers returned to the factory with a seven-point charter of demands, including demands for regular on time payment of salaries, improvement of the subsidised meals served to them on the factory premises, maternity leave for women, stopping of worker harassment, and sacking of three production managers who are the alleged harassers.

The factory authorities told the demonstrating workers to receive their pays which were ready for disbursement by then, and to get back to work, said the workers. About meeting the workers' demands the management said those will be solved later, they added.

But the workers were not in the mood to wait, and they started ransacking the factory again around 9:00am.

Several thousand workers of different neighbouring factories also came out and launched attacks on other garment factories of Lusakha Group, Arunima Sports Wear Ltd, and Rising Group. They also damaged several other factories by throwing bricks at those.

When police arrived, they also came under attacks from the workers. Police fired several blank shots, and charged batons to disperse the attacking crowd, giving rise to clashes that injured at least 30 people, including three policemen and two members of Ansar.

The authorities of at least 50 factories in the area shut

Another ship

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Steel, owned by one Jamal Uddin, around 2:30am.

Subhash was rushed to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital in a critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries around 4:30am, said Sub-Inspector Md Azam Khan of Sitakunda Police Station.

A case was filed in this connection.

Eden College

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Fatema were responsible for yesterday's incident.

College Vice Principal Ayesha Begum said it was a mere misunderstanding between the BCL leaders and activists.

"As far as I know, there was no irregularity in the admission process and everything was done in line with the national university rules," she said.

Mohammad Ali, officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station, told The Daily Star that police and administrative officials brought the situation under control at about 12:00noon.

Law enforcers were deployed on the college premises to avert any untoward incident, he added.

14-party

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State Minister for Law Kamrul Islam said the government must hold trial of the war criminals and make it acceptable at home and abroad.

A prosecution agency will be constituted this month to hold trial of the war criminals, the state minister said adding, "Those who are the identified war criminals will be taken behind the bar at first."

He said, "We do not mention the names of the leaders of Jamaat or BNP. Those who took part in the genocide of 1971, will be tried."

He added that the BDR carnage, violence at Rajshahi University and Chittagong Hill Tracts are part of the conspiracy to destabilise the law and order and foil the trial bid.

At the meeting, the leaders also urged people to become united against the war criminals.

down their factories around 10:00am, fearing attacks.

Around 1:00pm, leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and workers' representatives held a meeting mediated by the law enforcers. After the meeting, Textown Group paid its workers their salaries assuring them of fulfilling their other demands as well.

Officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station Sirajul Islam told The Daily Star that the trouble started due to delay in paying workers' salaries.

"The situation forced police to fire several blank shots," he said.

BGMEA President Abdus Salam Murshed told The Daily Star that the Textown Group authorities failed to pay their workers on Thursday because the money did not reach the factory on time due to a severe traffic jam in the capital.

He said ransacking of multiple factories by the workers, although the incident was in Textown Group, and the resulting suspension of work in almost all neighbouring factories was a bad thing for the garment industry as a whole.

The workers of Textown will get all facilities approved by the labour law, the BGMEA president added.

Shibir

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and a half hours since 2:00pm to record the statement, said court sources.

None was allowed in the court when the statement was being recorded. Ekram's lawyer Abu Raihan Al Biruni was allowed in the court after it was recorded.

He told reporters afterwards that the statement was "similar to the statement given before the media in Dhaka".

Sources said Ekram in the statement said he took part in the attack on Chhatra League with the Shibir group led by RU Shibir President Shamsul Alam Golap. He said Golap contacted several times with central Jamaat and Shibir leaders during the night of violence.

His statement mentioned Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Shibir President Rezaul Karim, said Raihan.

Ekram Hossain, president of Amir Ali Hall unit of Islami Chhatra Shibir and a masters' student of Islamic studies department at RU, was placed on a seven-day remand on March 10 in connection with police assault case, one out of 11 cases filed in connection with the violence on February 9.

Senior police officials said they are yet to know details of the statement as none including the police was allowed in the court when it was recorded.

Rapid Action Battalion-1 arrested Ekram at Savar on March 7.

Sarkozy lauds British PM ahead of election

AFF, London

French President Nicolas Sarkozy showered praise on British Prime Minister Gordon Brown Friday weeks before a general election here, but rebuked Brown's main rival over his policy in Europe.

Sarkozy said after talks in London that Brown was a "great reformer" and someone who was "willing to get things moving".

The centre-right president said that although Brown was from the other side of the fence politically -- he leads the centre-left Labour Party -- they were able to discuss issues frankly "even if we don't always agree".

The president was later Friday to meet David Cameron, the leader of the centre-right Conservatives who are more 'natural' political partners for Sarkozy's party.

But he criticised Cameron's decision to withdraw the Conservatives from the main centre-right grouping in the European Parliament.

Cameron could become prime minister if the Conservatives win an election widely expected to take place on May 6, although opinion polls show their long-comfortable lead over Labour has dwindled sharply in recent weeks.

Top outlaw

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his associates in a field near his house Thursday night when they outlawed party rivals swooped on them with local weapon at about 12:30am.

The outlawed chased Akkas and chopped him indiscriminately near his house leaving him in a critical condition. Later he was sent to Pabna General Hospital where he died early Friday, police added.

Officer-In-Charge Md Sirajul Islam of Ataikul Police Station said the police has recovered the body and send it to Hospital for autopsy.

The deceased was the regional leader of Janajuddha faction of PBCP and their outlawed party rivals might have killed him for internal feud, he also added.

A case was lodged with Ataikul Police Station in this connection.

Barapukuria

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The March 11 inter-ministerial meeting decided to set up a coalmine city and employ the affected people while it discussed BCML's proposal of fixing Tk 35 lakh for each acre of subsidised land including the rehabilitation cost.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Md Mokbul Hossain and Police Super of Dinajpur Hasan Mohammad Shaukat Ali helped end the 53-hour strike by feeding the convenor and secretary general of Jibon O Shampad Rakha Committee. People of 15 villages around BCML area sat on hunger strike until death on March 10.

Around 3:00pm, Mokbul Hossain along with BCML officials requested the strikers to withdraw fasting and explained to them the limitations of the government. On outright refusal by the protesters they invited the leaders of Jibon O Shampad Rakha Committee to sit across the table for talks.

The meeting was held at the BCML administrative building at 3:30pm. After over one and a half hours' talks both the sides came to an agreement.

Meanwhile, the hospitalised protesters were released from the hospital yesterday while the forces deployed were withdrawn from the BCML project area.

Contacted, a BCML official said the mass hunger strike did not hamper coal production of BCML.

37 handmade

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police station Sub Inspector Mahbubur Rahman to investigate how the bombs got there.

Investigation officer Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star over phone that at least 48 handmade bombs were recovered from Jamaat dominated areas in Brahmanbaria.

Earlier on February 13, police recovered three handmade bombs from outside the house of Brahmanbaria Jamaat Ameer. On the same day around 11:00am, they recovered eight more bombs from Brahmanbaria Cadet Madrasa.

On February 11, seven people were arrested in connection with an explosion in a room of a dormitory of Brahmanbaria Residential School and College, a Jamaat dominated institution. A case was lodged in this connection.

Contacted over mobile phone, district Jamaat Ameer Kazi Nazrul Islam Khadem said he had heard about the recovery of bombs from outside Jamaat office and Al Hera Complex. But he knew nothing about how the bombs got there.

5 more houses

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indigenous criminals saying that it was a planned attack to drive out the settlers from Chittagong Hill Tracts.

With this arson attack, a total of 130 houses including business centres, farms have been gutted after the fierce clashes between settlers and indigenous people in last two weeks that left one Bangalee killed, one missing and 32 injured in Khagrachhari.

Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Abdullah, Superintendent of Police Abu Kalam Siddique, Additional Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Gias Uddin Mogal, and Executive Magistrate Mohammad Joyal Abedin visited the spot.

Ershad's graft

FROM PAGE 1
Dates for the submission of probe reports have been fixed many a time, but the probe could not be completed in time due to shortage of investigation officers, an official in the prosecution department of ACC at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court of Dhaka told The Daily Star.

An official of Bac, Sajjad Hossain, filed one of the cases against Ershad with Tejgaon police station on August 31, 1994.

The case statement said that on January 11 in 1984, Ershad, then president, directed the authorities concerned to buy 50 percent of bitumen emulsion required for the Roads and Highways Department from M/s Zakir Industries for his own financial benefit.

Following the order, the authorities bought bitumen emulsion worth Tk 17,17,75,780 for the department.

Bac official Nazrul Islam was made the IO of the case and Ershad was shown arrested in the case on March 11, 2001. But Ershad, an accused in 17 other cases, was granted bail on April 9 same year.

In the second case filed with the same police station

Bird flu

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Bangladesh Livestock Research Institute (BLRI), Savar.

Meanwhile, fearing bird flu infection, the farm authorities isolated the parent chickens and eggs and imposed restriction on bringing the birds and eggs to other side of the poultry.

Yesterday around 5:45pm the BLRI sent a fax message to the District Livestock office confirming the bird flu detection.

A 50-member team from District Livestock Office with the help of district administration started a culling drive yesterday around 7:30pm.

About 1,17,626 parent stock and about 2,10,000 eggs would be destroyed there, said the district livestock officer.

Thakurgaon Deputy Commissioner Munshi Shahabuddin Ahamed told the Daily Star that they have put a ban on carrying, purchasing and selling of chicken, duck, pigeon, eggs and all sorts of birds from the farm.

DC Shahabuddin said we would also try to make people aware of the influenza.

The district administration placed a three-month ban on trading of such birds in the area.

PDB's hasty

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Out of the five, the PQ tender document dropping date for the Meghnaghat project is set on March 23, while the rest on May 2, giving the bidders just 45 days to prepare their documents.

But the power companies say for large projects like Bibiyana or Meghnaghat, they need at least two months timeframe for preparation.

"It's because the bidders not only prepare their documents on experience and financial condition but also they contact with power plant equipment manufacturers to ensure a primary confirmation for the bids," comments an executive requesting anonymity.

"When things are being done in such a hurry, good bidders would not be able to complete their documents with due diligence," says another executive.

But the power board executives do not completely agree that the bids are being conducted in a hasty manner.

"We have given 45 days to prepare PQ documents. This should be enough. If bidders feel that this is too inadequate for preparation, they can seek extension of the deadline and we will consider that," observes a top official.

On the question of absence of gas supply guarantee, he adds guarantee for gas supplies to the Bibiyana and Bhola projects would be provided after the PQ documents are provided. In Meghnaghat project, guarantee for gas would not be required as it is a dual fuel project.

Sources say the power ministry has already sought Petrobangla's confirmation of gas supplies for Bibiyana 1 and 2, Bhola, Meghnaghat and Sirajganj projects.

Petrobangla is likely to

on September 9 in 1995, it was alleged that Ershad, during his tenure as president, earned a huge amount of money and transferred 10 million US dollars to a foreign bank account of Mariam Mamtaz.

Bac official Akhteruzzaman was made the IO of the case.

Earlier, Ershad was acquitted and discharged of several criminal cases as the prosecution failed to prove the charges brought against him.

First Test

FROM PAGE 16
Pietersen, who was on the back of mounting pressure and failure against the Bangladesh left-arm spinners. The right-handed batsman got back his much-awaited form by dealing the home side's spinners brilliantly.

But the superstar could not complete a Test century as he fell one short to a beauty from left-armed Abdur Razzak.

Before his agonising dismissal, Pietersen executed some eye-catching shots including a splendid straight drive during his 135-ball 99 that contained 15 fours and a six.

Bangladesh's ploy to test the English batsmen with the slow bowlers didn't work as Cook and debutant opener Michael Carberry put pressure on the home side.

The young England skipper transformed his new found one-day storkeplay into the five-day game. Shakib came to the attack as early as the eighth over of the match but he was hardly any trouble the English batsmen. His ploy of giving his bowlers short spells also failed.

Cook reached his hundred in grand style with a massive slog-swept six over mid-wicket off Mahmudullah Riyad and thus became the fifth England captain to make a century in the first game in charge. The left-hander smashed 14 fours and two sixes during his stay for the whole day in the middle facing 244 balls.

Riyad gave the first breakthrough to the Tigers, trapping Carberry in front after wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim had dropped the left-hander, but England went for a happy lunch with the score-board reading on 104 for 1.

Bangladesh was lucky to get another wicket in the second session. Television replays showed the rising ball from Rubel Hossain hit the helmet of the Jonathan Trot, on 39, and not the top-edge of the bat before landing at the hands of Mushfiqur.

Paul Collingwood remained not out for 32 with his captain to continue the visitors' progress for a big score.

confirm gas supplies to Bibiyana and Bhola projects but it is yet not ready to confirm gas supplies to Meghnaghat or Sirajganj projects.

The other tenders facing unusual delays due to outside pressure or tender authorities' incapability are Bibiyana 450 MW plant under the Power Cell, two 150 MW plants in Siddhirganj and a 360 MW plant in Haripur under the Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB), and Khulna 150 MW and Sirajganj 150 MW plants under the Northwest Power Generation Company (NWPGC).

The PDB feels that this was happening because the government had unnecessarily created too many companies to handle too little power generation and transmission. "There is a lack of coordination and lack of expertise in these organisations," quips a senior PDB official.

The Bibiyana tender saw its failure back in 2008 as it drew no competition. The Power Cell floated fresh tender in April last year. But till now, the tender made no significant progress. As a result, power companies are questioning the justification of floating the Bibiyana 2 power project.

But PDB aimed to complete the Bibiyana 2 tender process before the Power Cell could finish its own, sources say. The other tenders floated by mid-2009 are also suffering different kinds of setbacks due to poor determination of the EGCB and NWPGC in getting the tenders through against all odds, sources say.

Influential local agents of different power companies are trying to influence the outcome of all these tenders, the sources add.

BNP MPs

FROM PAGE 1
Annie and Nazimuddin Ahmed. Meanwhile, Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faruque at a press briefing at his Gulshan residence yesterday alleged that prime minister's son Sajeeb Wajed Joy is "fully involved in illegal VoIP business."

He demanded international and domestic inquiry into his allegation saying that they have enough documents to prove Joy's involvement in the business.

Faruque last night filed a general (GD) diary with Gulshan Police Station after he received a threat over telephone from unanimous callers.

In his GD, Faruque mentioned that the threat was issued within hours of the press briefing at his Gulshan residence where he alleged that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's son Sajeeb Wajed Joy is involved in illegal VoIP business.

Seeking security from police, he mentioned in the GD that he himself and his family members might be in "danger."

UNB adds: the opposition chief whip told the UNB that he received the threat over his land phone first at about 1:00 pm and second time over his cell phone at 7:45pm. He could not detect the caller's number as the number only showed a "zero".

Officer-in-charge Kamal Uddin of Gulshan Police Station told The Daily Star that legal action will be taken if any "proof" is found in this regard.

MOUDD BLAMES PRO-AL SYNDICATE
BNP standing committee member Moudd Ahmed said pro-Awami League syndicate is responsible for price hike of essentials.

"Ruling Awami League is responsible for the deterioration of law and order and price hike of essentials," he said while addressing a discussion meeting at the National Press Club yesterday.

Moudd said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her speech on the closing day of the last session of parliament tried to hide her failure by holding the opposition responsible for manipulating price hike of essentials.

Jatayatadabi Tanti Dal organised the meeting to mark Tarique Rahman imprisonment day.

Man dies

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as the slum-dwellers kept their doors under lock and key from inside and when the fire broke people failed to make exit in time.

Two locks were found on the door of Elim's burnt shanty.

Shah Alam, a local, told The Daily Star that the slum dwellers sustained burn injuries in an attempt to get out of their house or while trying to douse the fire.

Madhu Mala, a slum-dweller, said the fire destroyed their 12 shanties and a cosmetics shop with goods worth Tk 5 lakh, adding that they could not save anything as the flames spread fast.

"My husband, our two children and I were asleep. We woke up to the scorching heat and saw Elim's house ablaze," she said.

On information, eight fire fighting engines rushed in and doused the flames around 5:30am.

The injured were treated at local clinics and hospitals.

Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1
took initiative several times to form the committee but failed due to the internal conflict.

However, party insiders said the chairperson directed Khoka to conduct regular activities of the city unit, but the Abbas-led faction is strongly opposing Khoka's inclusion in city committee.

Pro-Khoka leaders claimed it is widely believed within the party that without Khoka reorganisation of the party would get tough. Most ward and upazila unit leaders and pro-BNP ward councillors are with him, they said.

Khoka said he is ready to accept whatever decision the chairperson takes regarding the city committee.

Meanwhile, a number of midlevel leaders, former lawmakers and ward councillors have started lobbying the high command to think about the post of the unit's general secretary.

Former state minister Amanullah Aman, former Chhatra Dal city unit president Abul Khayer Bhuiyan, former city BNP general secretary Abdus Salam and ward councillors MA Qaium and Kazi Abul Bashar, among others, are in the race for the post of general secretary.

Combing

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Batiaghata upazila parishad and organising secretary of Khulna district Awami League said, "Chairmen in seven unions of my upazila have shifted their families to rented premises in Khulna city, out of fear of being killed by listed outlaws."

Rupsha Upazila Parishad Chairman Sheikh Ali Akbar said notorious outlaws are moving freely and making death threats to various professionals.

Monirul Hasan Bappi, chairman of Srifaltala union under Rupsha upazila, said he has received three death threats over his cellphone in the past month.

UN urges

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such as the recruitment of child soldiers, discrimination against the Muslim minority in northern Rakhine state and the deprivation of basic rights to food, shelter, health and education.

The UN should therefore consider setting up a panel to probe the allegations, Quintana said -- echoing a long-term demand of rights groups for Myanmar's ruling generals to face war crimes charges.

"Given this lack of accountability, UN institutions may consider the possibility to establish a commission of inquiry with a specific fact-finding mandate to address the question of international crimes," he said.

He said rights violations had continued unabated for years in Myanmar without any intervention from the junta.

He charged that the violations "are the result of a state policy that originates from decisions by authorities in the executive, military and judiciary at all levels."

The expert also renewed a call for Myanmar to release more than 2,100 political prisoners, as well Suu Kyi, ahead of this year's elections.

Suu Kyi called on Myanmar citizens on Thursday to respond to the "unjust" laws, under which her own National League for Democracy must expel her from the party ranks or face dissolution.

"She didn't think such a repressive law would come out," said her lawyer and NLD spokesman Nyan Win after he visited the opposition leader, who has been detained for 14 of the last 20 years.

The new laws also officially annul the result of Myanmar's last elections in 1990, which the NLD won by a landslide. The junta never allowed the party to take power.

Nordic foreign ministers late Thursday joined the United States, Britain and other nations in criticising the election laws.

Rights groups hailed Quintana's report.

"This is the first time in the nearly 20 years of UN involvement in my country that an UN official made a credible, meaningful and important recommendation to help transform the situation in Burma," said Aung Din, executive director of the US Campaign for Burma.

"I hope the UN Security Council and other UN institu-

tions will act accordingly to set up a commission of inquiry, suggested by the Special Rapporteur without further delay. This is the time for action," he headed.

But Renaud Egretreau, a Myanmar researcher at the University of Hong Kong, said that the UN report was a provocation and the international community needed to engage with the junta to have any hope of promoting reform.

The UN report "will not help the transition process. One is used to this kind of declaration from other organisations but this is new from the UN".

Myanmar's "severe human rights abuses" -- including deaths in custody, rape and torture -- were also highlighted in a separate report released Thursday by the US State Department.

That report said Buddhist monks were subjected to particularly "cruel treatment" due to the role the clergy played in 2007 pro-democracy protests crushed by the junta.

Jihadi books

FROM PAGE 16
cadre Sultan Mahmud alias Sabuj who went into hiding after the February 9 incident.

None was arrested in the four-hour raid until 12:00 midnight.

Hall Provost Dr Murtuza Khaled said they conducted the raid in response to requests from resident students.

Shibir cadres might have persuaded the examiner concerned to give them the answer sheets and took those to their rooms to write answers, Dr Murtuza said.

Meanwhile, Motihar police on Thursday night arrested a RU employee with link to the February 9 violence on RU campus.

Arrestee Billal Hossain works at Shah Mukhdoom hall where Shibir cadres allegedly hacked to death BCL worker Faruque Hossain on February 9.