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REGD. NO. DA 781 • VOL. XX No. 104 • DHAKA THURSDAY APRIL 29, 2010 • www.thedailystar.net • BAISHAKH 16, 1417 BS • JAMADIUL AWAL 13, 1431 HIJRI • 32 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE : Tk 10.00 •



22 RMG units hit by unrest

30 hurt as workers clash with cops while blocking roads for hike in salary, perks

Minimum wage in 3 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national minimum wage will be announced in three months and is expected to come into effect before the Eid, Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addresses the inaugural session of the 16th Saarc summit yesterday in Thimphu, Bhutan. Right, all Saarc country leaders about to take their seats in the Grand Assembly Hall.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fresh labour unrest affected production in 22 more readymade garment factories yesterday while the industry has been facing difficulties surviving against power and gas crises, price hike of yarn, poor infrastructure, and low price offers from international buyers amid increased production cost.

"We hope that the workers will soon start getting the benefits of the national minimum wage," he told journalists after a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association at the ministry.

Mosharraf Hossain, however, did not quantify the national minimum wage. It will be fixed on the basis of the recommendations of the committees comprised of workers and employers in different sectors, he said.

Saarc vows climate unity

Nepal wants to use Mongla, Ctg ports

UNB, Thimpu

Hasina places at summit opening 2 proposals to tackle fallout together; backs regional power grid; Bhutan new chair

UNB, Thimpu

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday presented two innovative proposals to help the climate-victim countries in South Asia as the eight-nation Saarc Summit began in Thimphu with the theme "Climate Change."

The proposals are setting up Himalayan Council on the model of the Arctic Council and an International Adaptation and Research Centre (IARC) in Bangladesh to recommend measures to cope with the impacts of climate change.

Addressing the opening session of the summit, Hasina also stressed the need for developing a regional power-grid, harnessing renewable energy sources like hydropower, solar, bio-fuel, wind, and

reducing dependence on fossil fuel.

Bhutan's Prime Minister Jigmi Y. Thinley, who assumed the new chair of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation, chaired the opening ceremony of the 16th Saarc Summit at the Grand Assembly Hall in Thimphu.

Hasina PM said the proposed IARC could facilitate exchange of scientific

Nepalese Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal yesterday requested Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to allow his country use Mongla and Chittagong ports.

He made the request when he called on Hasina at Bangladesh House in Saarc village.

In reply, Hasina said she

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Production halted in these factories in Mirpur and Rugganj areas as workers put barricades on highways on the second consecutive day of their agitation for increased minimum monthly wage from Tk 1,662 to Tk 5,000.

Trade union leaders recently demanded that the government must not set the national minimum wage below Tk 5,000 considering the rise in prices of essentials and services.

At least 30 workers were injured during chase and counter-chase between the demonstrators and police in Mirpur.

There is no national minimum wage now. The minimum wage for workers in the

The managements of 20 factories situated in Mirpur suspended production when 6,000 workers of Opex Garment Limited, a sister concern of the Sinha Group, put up barricades at Mirpur 13 and 14.

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The workers also want a hike in their attendance bonus from Tk 300 to Tk 400.

PHOTO ON PAGE 16

"It is very hard for a man to maintain his family with just Tk 1,662.50, the amount a helper at our factory get each month. Our demand for hike in wages is a demand of the time," said Laily Begum, a worker of Opex Garment.

Officer-in-Charge of Kafrul Police Station Delwar Hossain told The Daily Star that the workers of Opex Garment blocked the Mirpur street at about 9:30am. Workers of the other garment factories in the area joined the Opex workers.

BNP to march towards EC on May 3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP will bring out a march towards the Election Commission (EC) and demonstrate in the capital on May 3, demanding cancellation of Bholra-3 by-poll and resignation of the entire commission.

BNP Standing Committee Member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday announced the programme at a rally in the capital's Muktangan.

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TV SHUTDOWN Channel 1 to challenge govt decision

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The management of Channel 1 has decided to go for a legal battle against the government's decision to suspend the transmission of the private television channel.

The channel authorities at a press briefing yesterday sought the prime minister's intervention in this regard.

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MUTINY TRIAL AT PILKHANA Male nurses were partners in crime

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several male nurses (medical assistants) of Bangladesh Rifles took up arms and helped others in killing and dumping the bodies during the bloody mutiny at the headquarters on February 25-26 last year.

A case was filed yesterday with the BDR Special Court-6 against 256 members of the BDR hospital unit in the force's HQ at Pilkhana.

Medical assistant of this unit nayek subedar Md Nannu Mia filed the case with the three-member court headed by BDR Director General M Mainul Islam. The other members of the court are Lt Col Md Nurul Alam and Maj Md Ali Mustain Khan.

Taking the case into cognisance, the court ordered the prosecution to produce the 256 accused before it at 10:00am today.

The male nurses, number of which could not be known, might not have killed or tortured officers of their own unit. But they indeed took up arms with the mutineers and helped them kill officers of other units.

Many of them played an active role to remove bodies from Darbar Hall. They took the bodies on trucks and pickup vans and also played a leading role to dump those in a mass grave besides the mortuary of the BDR hospital to destroy evidence.

Ninety of the accused were arrested last year in connection with a case for killing, looting and arson. They have been shown arrested in this mutiny case and the court also ordered to arrest the rest who are still serving at the hospital unit.

Lt Col Dr SMA Al-Muid of the hospital gave a brief but pathetic description to the court about atrocities during the mutiny in which 57 army officers including four doctors were killed.

The entire courtroom fell silent as he described how the mutineers brutally beat up male and female doctors with rifles.

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SME Service Centre at Rupnagar, Mirpur

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