



PHOTO: STAR

Workers resume their duty after the RMG factories at Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ) opened yesterday. The factories were shut following clashes between the garment workers and law enforcers on Sunday. (Story on Page 1)

UNREST IN RMG SECTOR

Implement new pay scale

Demand rights and labour bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Protesting police attack on the garment workers in Dhaka and Chittagong, different rights and labour organisations yesterday reiterated the demand of implementation of the new pay scale for the workers.

Condemning the attack in Chittagong EPZ that killed three workers, the Workers Party of Bangladesh demanded compensation for the deceased families and treatment for the injured workers free of cost.

"It is the legal right of the workers to be organised and bargain. Still they are deprived of enjoying their rights in Export Processing Zones," said WPB President Rashed Khan Menon and General Secretary Anisur Rahman Mallik in a statement yesterday.

Disobeying the labour law, the garment owners did not let the workers formulate Trade Unions that led to their dissatisfaction and forced them to protest. Instead of meeting their demand, they were tortured by police, they said.

The WPB leaders demanded implementation of the new pay scale under a strict monitoring system to resolve the issue.

Shammilita Nari Samaj (an alliance of the women) in a statement said it is seen that whenever the workers demonstrated to realise their righteous wage, the law enforcement agencies swooped on them.

Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad organised a rally at the city's Muktaghara yesterday in protest of the police attack on garment workers.

Samajtantrik Dal of Bangladesh, Left Democratic Alliance, Ganasanghati Andolon, Odhikar O Sromobikash Kendra, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), Anti Imperialism Student Alliance, Social Movement Alliance, Bangladesh Garments Sramik Karmachari Federation, Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Progressive Lawyers' Association of Bangladesh, Garments Sramik Sangram Parishad also demanded trade union facilities for the garment workers to create a congenial atmosphere in the sector.

Police reject TIB report

Threaten legal action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Police Service Association (BPSA) came down heavily on TIB, raising questions whether its recently published report was prepared after interviewing militant operatives or addicts.

BPSA also rejected Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB)'s report, which showed the police most corrupt institution, and termed the report "non-realistic, partial and ill-intentional."

BPSA officials made the remark at a press conference at the police headquarters in the city yesterday.

Additional Inspector General of Police (Admin and Operation) AKM Shahidul Hoque, also the president of the BPSA, said they are taking preparation for legal action against TIB for terming police corrupt unlawfully.

They said only a court can term individuals or organisations corrupt but anybody else cannot exercise the power.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Benazir Ahmed said a vested quarter, which does not like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and democracy, is behind the report.

He also said TIB's methodology used in the survey and the way of sample selection for conducting the interview are questionable.

He expressed his confusion whether JMB operatives or drug addicts were interviewed to prepare the report and demanded making public of the names of the interviewees.

High officials of the police headquarters and DMP were present at the press conference.

Free treatment on Victory Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Hospital will provide free treatment during Bijoy Mela organised by private television station channel-iat Tejgaon in the city.

The hospital sources said freedom fighters, sector commanders, Swadhin Bangla Football Team members, artists of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, editors, cultural personalities, litterateurs, singers, writers, journalists, and people from all walks of lives can get the medical service and medicine free of cost.

Besides, freedom fighters and members of the families of the martyred in 1971 always enjoy special discount in the treatment cost, added the sources.

DU to establish research centre on '71 genocide

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University is to establish the "centre for genocide studies" and the "department of educational psychology".

The university's academic council made the decisions at a meeting yesterday.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the centre for genocide studies will initiate soon as a research centre to unfold the true history and information of the genocide during the War of Liberation in 1971.

Change law to protect migrant workers' cause

Speakers tell consultation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With changing problems in overseas recruitment system, it has become imperative to amend the Emigration Ordinance 1982 to bring discipline in the sector, said speakers at a consultation yesterday.

They said migrant workers want security of their family, land and properties they leave behind and so domestic laws should be framed in a way that protects interests of the wage earners.

The observations came at the programme titled "Reform of Emigration Ordinance 1982 and Migration Policy" organised by Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) of Dhaka University at Sonargaon hotel in the city.

Addressing a session, expatriates' welfare Secretary Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan said it is very hard to bring the recruiting agencies to book for any wrongdoing under the existing laws and judicial system, which ultimately puts the migrant workers' rights at risk.

About the reform in the ordinance, Dr Zafar said it should be reformed as problem patterns

of the expatriates and migrant workers are changing.

"But in the context of Bangladesh, many interest groups play a vital role during the formulation of a law for which sometimes it becomes impossible to enact tough laws," he said at the concluding session of the daylong programme.

Chairing the session, Law Commission Acting Chairman Dr M Shah Alam said ways should be found out to protect the rights of the migrant workers who send home annually US \$10 billion plus remittance, a lifeline for the country's economy.

RMMRU Chair Prof Tasneem Siddiqui presented the outcomes of the consultation.

She said the migration policy-2006 has a lot of good things for the expatriates, but the government is yet to frame any action plan to implement the policy.

Prof CR Abrar, coordinator of RMMRU, Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University, Begum Shamsun Nahar, joint secretary of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, also spoke at the consultation.

Gulshan Club not exempted from paying income tax

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan Club would have to pay income tax and submit tax return to National Board of Revenue (NBR) as a High Court bench yesterday rejected its writ petition.

The Gulshan Club authorities in Dhaka sought direction from this court on the National Board of Revenue (NBR) to exempt the club from paying income tax and filing tax return.

An HC bench of Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam and Justice SM Emdadul Hoque came up with the verdict after hearing counsels for both sides of the petition.

The Gulshan Club authorities are now liable to pay income tax and submit tax return to NBR following the HC verdict, Additional Attorney General Murad Reza told The Daily Star.

The club authorities filed the writ petition on February 12 this year claiming that this club is a limited company by guarantee without any share capital and a non-profit making organisation.

The club is not liable to pay income tax and to file tax return to NBR, the petition said.

Following the petition, the HC on April 8 direct the NBR authorities to exempt Gulshan Club from filing tax return and issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to declare Gulshan Club a limited company and to exempt it from filing tax return.

The SC on April 20 asked the HC direction and asked both sides of the petition to dispose of the rule after hearing at the HC.

Barrister Masood R Sobhan and Barrister Fatema S Chowdhury appeared for the petitioner.

TOXIC GAS FROM CHEMICAL FACTORY

20 fall sick in Narayanganj

A CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

At least twenty people including pedestrians fell sick following release of toxic gas from a chemical factory at Bottola area under sadar upazila of Narayanganj yesterday.

Among them, a girl Mitu, 6, was said to be in critical condition.

Police said workers of Bhai Bhai Chemical shop accidentally poured some hydrochloric acid on a drum of bleaching powder. Within a short time, the whole area was engulfed in toxic

gas, turning at least twenty people sick.

Of them, Hekmot, Ohid, Payera Banu, Alauddin, Fazlu, Asit, Sifat, Nurujjaman, Mitu, Farhad, Jewel, Bashir, Rahima, Alam and Shahin were rushed to Narayanganj General Hospital at Khanpur.

On information, members of Haziganj Fire Service and Civil Defence visited the spot.

Dr Nazim Uddin, resident surgeon of the hospital, said the people fell sick on inhalation of the toxic gas but it was nothing to be anxious about.

Climate Fund: EU channels £8.5m

BSS, Dhaka

The European Union (EU) has contributed 8.5 million pounds to Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (BCCSAP) is the heart of the BCCRF.

The fund is managed under the supervision of the ministry of environment and forests and supported by a number of development partners, including the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, World Bank and also the EU.

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Other development partners have shown keen interest to contribute to the fund in the near future, the statement said.

The BCCRF provides the government with a mechanism to manage the substantial international support in this area in a way that facilitates high-level coordination, donor harmonisation with a maximum flexibility in fund management and transparency, it added.

JUTE MILL FIRE

4 top staff arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested four top officials of Abdul Latif Bawani Jute Mill of city's Demra early yesterday suspecting their involvement in a fire incident that gutted three godowns of the mill Sunday night.

The arrestees are Enamul Haque, general manager, Ziaur Rahman, deputy general manager, Mir Mosharrif Hossain, assistant manager and security officer Shahidul Islam.

Officer-in-Charge of Demra Police Station Nurul Muttakin said police arrested them following an allegation from the mill workers that the fire incident was pre-planned. Police would interrogate them, he added. On that night, mill workers brought out a procession demanding proper investigation into the incident and exemplary punishment to the persons responsible.

Three of four go-downs of the jute mill were gutted in the blaze. The first godown caught fire around 8:30pm and soon engulfed two others adjacent to it.

Over 50,000 mounds of jute were burned to ashes, said Enamul Haque, general manager of the jute mill, on Sunday night.

Abdur Rahman, deputy director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star yesterday the roof of a godown had collapsed and walls and roofs of two other godowns were partially damaged in the blaze. Five units of firemen were working at the spot to dump burnt out stuff of the godowns. It could take a whole day to finish the job, Rashid added.

Workers said another fire broke out in a godown on Wednesday but could not damage the stored jute as the fire fighters managed to douse the fire. The mill authority has formed a five-member committee to probe the matter. The jute ministry also formed a four-member committee in this regard.

MUNICIPAL POLLS

EC warns errant officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday warned election officials of stern action on failure to discharge duties properly in the mid-January municipality polls.

"Do not try to do anything to favour any candidate. Perform your duties properly for holding a free and fair polls," Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain told officials, who will be on election duties in the municipalities of Dhaka Division.

He was speaking at a meeting organised by the EC Secretariat at the National Economic Council auditorium in the capital.

The commissioner told journalists that the EC issued directives to all election officials to ensure holding of a free and fair election. All government officials engaged in election duties are accountable to the EC for their actions. "We will take action if anyone is found guilty of wrongdoing," he said.

Seeking cooperation from all, he urged lawmakers and upazila parishad chairmen not to try to influence the municipality polls. Elections to 269 of 310 municipalities in seven divisions will be held on January 12, 13, 17 and 18.

The deputy commissioner of Dhaka, returning officers of municipalities in Dhaka division and district election officers were present at the meeting.

18 alleged robbers held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DB police and Rab in separate drives arrested 18 alleged robbers from the city's Jatrabari and Uttara early yesterday.

**DHAKA TODAY**

**Presentation**  
Law Ministry will hold a presentation programme. Time: 10:30am, Venue: Liberation War Museum.

**Discussion**  
National Museum will organise a discussion. Time: 4:00pm, Venue: National Museum.

**Meeting**  
Communications Ministry will hold a view exchange meeting. Time: 10:30am, Venue: Auditorium, Department of Roads and Highways.

**Ceremony**  
Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Teaching Quality Improvement Project (Education Ministry) and Access to Information (A2I) Programme (PMO) will sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU). Time: 3:30pm, Venue: Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

**BISS conference**  
Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) will hold a conference. Time: 10:00am, Venue: BISS Auditorium.

PILKHANA CARNAGE

35 accused

cross-examine six witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven witnesses gave their depositions against the accused of record wing under BDR headquarters before a special court while 35 jawans cross-examined six witnesses during the hearing yesterday.

The Special Court-9, headed by BDR Sector Commander of Dhaka Col Habibul Karim, started the four-hour proceeding around 9:00am, which is adjourned till 10:00am today.

The allegations brought against the accused include leaving Darbar Hall showing solidarity with the mutineers, and fuelling with firearms, staying inactive to prevent the mutiny, and failing to control unruly subordinates.

A total of 111 accused were present at the makeshift dock of Darbar Hall of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in Pilkhana.

Among the accused, five are charge-sheeted by CID, 41 took part in the mutiny with firearms, 54 are charged with leaving Darbar hall defying the order of the then BDR director general and another 41 are accused for inciting the mutineers.



Munir, Hossain president, secy of IEB Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Engineer Munir Uddin Ahmed and Engineer Mohammad Hossain were elected the president and the general secretary of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Dhaka centre, says a press release.

Munir was the vice president and former president of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and Hossain is the vice president of Bangabandhu Prakaushali Parishad.

Besides, Engineer Shahdat Hossain Shelly and Engineer Mamunur Rashid Mamun were elected vice chairmen of IEB.

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