

RMG protesters

FROM PAGE 1
involved in the unrest and take stern actions against them. She also warned ministers and state ministers to remain alert to possible conspiracies to create unrest in the nation's top-earning sector.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun told the meeting that outsiders, not the garment workers, were involved in the vandalism.

Police filed four cases accusing some 33,000 people in connection with the RMG violence in Chittagong and Dhaka. Three cases were filed with Bandar Police Station in Chittagong against more than 25,000 people while another with Khilkhet Police Station in Dhaka against 3,000.

Korean-owned Youngone Ltd restarted production at two factories and expects all 11 of its units to operate again by tomorrow. The company was at the centre of the disruptions.

Sikder Mesbahuddin Ahmed, director operations of Youngone Corporation, said workers who did not get the new wage would be compensated in a month. "We will include the workers under the newly introduced pay scale those who were left out. The group will also pay the arrears to those workers, which will be disbursed in the next month."

Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA) Executive Chairman Brig Gen Zamil Ahmed Khan and Chittagong EPZ General Manager Abdul Rashid said production resumed at 148 factories in the morning. Ten other factories will start operating today.

The workers returned to the factories with an assurance of full implementation of salary under the new pay scale, said Mohammad Abdullah, managing director of Nassa Group in Dhaka.

"I agree that there were some mistakes in the calculations of salaries in the first month's payment under the new pay scale," Abdullah said. "But the management will adjust the salary within the next seven days, so that, the workers can receive proper remuneration." He said three factories out of

34 units of the group were affected by the latest labour unrest.

A worker of the Kimia Apparels Ltd, a unit of Nassa Group at the city's Joar Shahara area, said the workers returned to the factory with an assurance of a proper salary by the management.

"Implementation of the government approved wage structure and increasing the salary of the senior workers at the same proportion of the junior workers are our demands," said a sewing operator requesting anonymity.

Police said 31 people who were arrested during Saturday's violence in the port city were among the thousands accused.

In Dhaka, sub-inspector Abdul Awal filed a case against 3,000 people, but only 16 persons by name, on charges of rioting, vandalism, blocking roads and obstructing police on Airport Road at Kuril. Among those named, four are women and seven were arrested during the clash.

Four people, including a garment worker and a rickshaw-puller, were killed during recent clashes between police and RMG workers in and around the EPZs.

The disgruntled workers damaged 11 garment factories and 20 roadside buildings, leading to the closure of the entire CEPZ. They set five vehicles ablaze and damaged 90 more.

Meanwhile, officers of the Detective Branch of police have picked up a labour leader from her home in Dhaka early today.

Moshrefa Mishu, president of Garments Workers Unity Forum, was led away to the DB Headquarters for interrogation around 12:45am, her sister Jebunnesa Jebu told The Daily Star over the phone.

Jebu said as many as 12 officers -- one in uniform -- carried out the raid on the labour leader's Bhuter Gali home in Kalabagan.

Jebu said the officers did not show any arrest warrant, neither did they explain why her sister was being led away.

Kalabagan police were not aware of the arrest.

Tk 1 crore forex seized at Shahjalal airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs intelligence at Shahjalal International Airport last night seized foreign currencies worth about Tk 1 crore and arrested a Singapore-bound passenger.

The arrestee, Tusnar Ahmed, 30, of Narayanganj, was handed over to Airport Police Station.

Sub-inspector Ershad Ahmed told The Daily Star the customs intelligence found the currencies in Tusnar's luggage when he was crossing the boarding bridge-4 at around 11:00pm.

Police and customs officials suspect that officials of Civil Aviation and Customs might have involvement in the smuggling bid, as the currencies were not found during regular scanning.

2 new mammals

FROM PAGE 16
"Finding any new wildlife species for the country is very rare. So the discovery of two new species is very significant," said Dr Monirul Khan.

Usually found in India, Nepal, Myanmar and some Southeast Asian countries, the two species were never seen in the country before.

Himalayan Striped Squirrel is a small brownish squirrel with longitudinal black, brown and buff stripes along its back from behind the eye up to the base of the tail.

With a total length of only 22 centimetres (head-body 11cm and tail 11cm), the striped squirrel is now the smallest of the nine species of squirrels so far recorded in Bangladesh.

When Dr Khan found the squirrel, it was seen feeding on a large brown stick insect and moving swiftly among the branches of trees of the forest in Thaikang, Ruma, Bandarban.

Least Leaf-nosed Bat, the other new species, is a small bat with head-body length of only 3.7cm. The body hairs are dull brown to orange in upper parts and pale to almost white in under parts.

Its wings and large external ears are dark. There is a small leaf-like structure at the tip of the nose, hence it is called 'leaf-nosed' bat.

Dr Khan discovered a few dozen of this species inside a natural cave near Boga Lake in Ruma, Bandarban.

In the week-long expedition, the zoology professor also found a number of rare birds including Pale-headed Woodpecker, Long-tailed Broadbill, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Striated Yuhina, Chestnut-bellied Nuthatch, Orange-bellied Leafbird, Mountain Imperial Pigeon, Maroon Oriole and Common Rosefinch.

The discovery not only proves that the country is still very rich in wildlife, but also indicates that there are many species yet to discover, said Dr Khan.

But the rich wildlife in the Chittagong Hill Tracts will not sustain unless steps are taken seriously to conserve the existing forest patches and control the hunting for meat, he said.

New house

FROM PAGE 1
Tanveer Islam, son of Major (retired) Quamrul Islam, former state minister for expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, said a source close to the BNP chief.

Standing on a one-bigha land at Gulshan-2, it has seven bedrooms, a living room, a lawn, a garden and amenities needed for a comfortable living.

The former prime minister had been looking for a house since she had to leave 6, Shaheed Mainul Road residence in Dhaka cantonment on November 13.

After choosing the duplex, she has visited it several times, one of her aides told The Daily Star.

Khaleda's new abode (House-1, Road-79) is near the Gulshan house the government donated her in 1981. Opposite the Russian embassy, it is also close to several other foreign missions.

Built in 1979, the house still looks impressive. Labourers are working round the clock to renovate the house, which has been vacant for the last few months.

Student crushed

FROM PAGE 16
Rima was the daughter of Monwar Hossain, an expatriate in Qatar, and Nur Nahar Begum. Her family lives in Bashark Market area.

Victim's maternal uncle Tajul Islam Selim said they were waiting for the death certificate to file a case.



Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami members, arrested along with explosives and bomb making materials by Rab in Chittagong, are paraded before media yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Huji training camp

FROM PAGE 1
Following an intelligence report the Rab members first captured Mahfuzul Rahman alias Apu, 29, of Mymensingh at Amanbazar in Hathazari upazila around 4:30pm on Sunday. Acting on information he gave, the elite force raided the makeshift bamboo-made training facility at a hilly rubber garden at Godarpar near Kaokhali in Raosan.

After a brief gunfight, the crime busters arrested four more Huji activists at the camp. They are Abul Farah Rumman, 30, of Mymensingh, Abul Kalam, 45, of Jamalpur, Salauddin Hussaini Bhuiyan, 37, of Chittagong and Md Abdullah Al Amin, 31, of Pabna.

The Rab also seized 11 live cocktails, two kilograms of explosive materials needed for bombs and grenades, bomb-making manuals in Arabic language, electric circuits, adaptors, fuses and booklets written by ex-Jamaat leader Golam Azam and incumbent Jamaat chief Motiur Rahman Nizami.

Sensing the presence of Rab the Huji men opened fire and started hurling cocktails on them. The law enforcers also retaliated that triggered a "gunfight".

With the help of around 100 locals who gathered there hearing the gunshots, the Rab members held four Huji men, while around 20 others managed to flee the scene, said Maj Syed Ali Ashfaq who led the operation.

According to the Rab officials, Rumman had earlier worked as an instructor in different areas to organise Jihad activities. He has been living in Hathazari for last few months to recruit members for the banned organisation from different madrasas.

Rumman who is also an IT specialist took training in arms at 10 stages at Mirherat of Hathazari, Dhulur Char of Tangail, Sylhet, Bhaluka of Mymensingh in last few years and gave training to over 1,000 new Huji members.

Al Amin, after completing studies at Hathazari Boro Madrasa in 1995, got involved with Huji and took training at Rorar Char of Mymensingh, Dhulur Char of Tangail and at Hathazari.

Arrested Hussaini who passed Dakhil from Naduary Kamil Madrasa and studied at

Mohammadpur Sat Mashjid Madrasa in Dhaka was the coordinator of Rangan Shilpi Goshthy and worked as Huji's publications secretary.

Rab-7 Commanding Officer Lt Col Sazzad Hussain told The Daily Star that they had earlier got information about secret movement and activities of Huji members at Hathazari, Raosan and Banskhalhi and kept keen monitoring on those areas for last couple of months.

He said they have information of secret Huji activities in remote hilly areas of Hathazari, Raosan, Banskhalhi, Satkania of Chittagong, Chakaria of Cox's Bazar and Vedbedi of Rangamati.

Drive on hold

FROM PAGE 16
System Control, said the power authorities held a meeting with ISPs, cable TV operators, NTTN (National wide Telecommunication Transmission Network) corporations and Dhaka City Corporation yesterday and agreed to stop the drive for four days.

Meanwhile, SM Anwar Parvez, former president of Cable Operators' Association of Bangladesh (Coab), claimed that around 30,000 to 40,000 city dwellers could not watch satellite TV channels until last evening due to the removal of wires in Sunday's drive.

"The optical cables set by the NTTN corporations are mainly for data communication, telecommunication and internet services. These cables are not suitable for video communication," he said.

He added cable operators are ready to move their services underground if the underground optical fibre network has been designed to facilitate video communication.

Anwar said he will sit with the energy secretary to talk about this issue today.

Akhtaruzzaman Manju, president of Internet Service Providers' Association of Bangladesh (ISPAB), said operation of eight ISPs were disrupted until last evening and several hundred users received poor Internet services because of Sunday's drive.

The government tried to exert pressure on the ISPs and cable TV operators through the drive so they come forward to remove their cable.

Government

FROM PAGE 1
The ministries also proposed building a monument in the capital commemorating the Indian soldiers who made the highest sacrifice for our freedom and a memorial in Chittagong for the Russian soldiers who died sweeping mines there after the Liberation War.

US missionary Richard Taylor is one of the unsung heroes who stood for Bangladesh even being thousands of miles apart. He besieged a Pakistani ship at Chicago port with 100 boats. The ship was there to get weapons to use against the Bangladeshes.

After a week, the vessel had to start for home empty because of Taylor's strong resistance. This act of bravery has recently hogged the spotlight in a translated book titled "Aborodh" by Mesbah Uddin Muntasir.

Like Taylor, many foreign individuals and organisations stood by Bangladesh during the war.

The draft list of honour includes the names of Indira Gandhi, Jyoti Basu, Mother Teresa, Edward Kennedy, the then Indian army chief Sam Manekshaw, Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Arora, the then Russian prime minister Aleksey Nikolayevich Kosygin and Russian diplomat Yakov Alexandrovich Malik.

US poet Allen Ginsberg, who brilliantly described the misery of the Bangalee refugees in India in his poem "September

on Jessore Road", and British singer George Harrison who collected around \$250,000 through his Concert for Bangladesh in New York are also on the list.

Besides, some Pakistani citizens including politicians, journalists and rights activists have been selected for their support to Bangladesh.

After yesterday's meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad told reporters that the distinguished persons and organisations would be invited to Bangladesh to receive awards.

Families and relatives of those who have passed away would also be invited, said sources.

Talking to The Daily Star, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Captain (retired) AB Tajul Islam said, "Around 500 people and organisations are on the list that will be reviewed further."

"The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina wants to remember with great honour the foreign nationals and organisations that made significant contribution to attaining victory in the Liberation War."

The minister said the mode of award has not yet been finalised. "We want to give our foreign friends something they will remember for the rest of their life."

A source said the government might offer the foreign friends honorary citizenship of Bangladesh.

Italian-Thai

FROM PAGE 16
percent. As per condition, it was mandatory to get at least 80 percent marks to qualify for opening the financial offer.

After rejection, an official of the Sikder-KCC alleged that an influential quarter at the communication ministry has manipulated the technical evaluation of the project.

He said now they will urge the government to reconstitute the evaluation committee, which will work under the direct supervision of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) instead of the communications ministry.

When asked, Abul Hossain, however, did not want to make any comment on the issue and said the evaluation was done by a committee who should make their own comments on the matter.

He informed that in the committee meeting, the prime minister instructed him to promptly start the work of the project as it is a very high priority project of the government.

The present government undertook the 26-kilometre DEE project as part of its move to ease traffic congestion in the capital.

The project will be implemented in phases of which the first phase is from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport and end at Kutubkhali of Chittagong Highway.

The cost of the first phase of the project has been estimated at \$2 billion.

The route alignment of first phase of DEE is Airport-Kuril-Banani-Mohakhali-Tejgaon-Satrasa-Moghbar-Rail corridor of Kamalapur through Khilgaon-Golapbagh-Kutubkhali.

On completion of the first phase, the expressway will be expanded to Joydevpur and Narayanganj.

It is expected that gradually the main avenues of the capital

including Manik Miah Avenue will be linked to the designed route of the expressway.

"Linking the bypass road planned in the eastern side of the capital to the elevated expressway is also being considered strongly," said a Bridge Division source.

The project was planned to implement as public-private partnership project where the government will have 30 percent equity investment. The selected bidder will have to implement the project build-own-operate basis.

The Bridge Division invited tender in June this year and initially nine local and international companies participated in the bidding process. Among them, four companies were short listed by the Bridge Division as pre-qualified bidders.

But when the request for proposal was sought from the four companies, only two of them responded and submitted their final technical and financial offers.

A tender evaluation committee headed by Buet's former vice-chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury selected the ITDCL and Sikder-KCC JV as technically responsive bidders for the project.

Project Coordinator of the DEE Abdul Wadud said the Bridge Division is expecting to select a bidder within current month and award contract by the first week of January 2011.

The Dhaka Elevated Expressway has been planned to improve road connectivity between the northern part of Dhaka City and the central, south and south eastern parts linking important commercial and business centres of the capital.

However, as per schedule, the implementation of the project was supposed to start in 2010 and completed by December 2013.

Businesses urge

FROM PAGE 1
Industry (FBCCI) organised the event seeking suggestions of the mass media to get rid of political programmes like hartal.

Former advisers to caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman and Tapan Chowdhury, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Editor of the Samakal Golam Sarwar, Editor of The Independent Mahbul Alam, Editor of the News Today Reazuddin Ahmed and Editor of the Manab Zamin Matior Rahman Chowdhury spoke on the occasion.

Distinguished Fellow of the Centre for Policy Dialogue Debapriya Bhattacharya and former FBCCI president Anisul Huq also spoke. FBCCI President AK Azad was in the chair.

Speakers called upon the political parties to refrain from enforcing programmes like hartal. They stressed a change in political culture and an end to confrontational politics to accelerate economic growth to achieve a middle-income status for the country.

They said hartal is not acceptable on any logic since it curtails others' right to move freely and carry on normal activities. They rather suggested bridging the gap between the ruling and opposition parties to ensure political stability.

Discussants emphasised unity of the businessmen against hartal.

"Politics is for the welfare of people. If hartal does not bring any good to the nation, then why should it be there?" questioned an annoyed AK Azad.

"Hartal not only hurts economy but also squeezes job opportunities," said Azad, also managing director of Ha-Meem Group, one of the leading garment makers.

"We want no hartal," he said.

Meanwhile, another countrywide hartal is likely on December 26, called by Islamist political parties and supported by the opposition BNP.

It is going to be the fourth hartal during the two-year rule of the Awami League-led grand alliance government.

Political parties are calling hartals when the national economy is growing, supported by buoyant export earnings and imports such as capital machinery, steady growth in farm and services sectors.

Businessmen said the prospects of the economy of Bangladesh, a place for cheap labour in Asia, is attracting foreign buyers and investors.

But many of the potential investors are shy of investing here fearing economic losses from keeping factories shut during hartals.

The collision in Narsingdi left 14 people dead and over 100 injured.

Anisul Huq said hartal earns a bad image for Bangladesh abroad and weakens exporters' bargaining position with buyers. "Parliament, not the street, should be the place for debates [to solve national problems]," he said.

Rokia Afzal Rahman called upon the businessmen to unite against hartal. "No one likes hartal. Businessmen should be united and speak in one voice," she said.

Businesses came up with the appeal as hartals enforced by political parties have become an additional impediment to accelerating growth of the economy, growing by more than five percent a year.

But the present pace of growth fails to absorb half of the 20 lakh people joining the labour market every year.

Analysts said Bangladesh requires creating jobs for 30 lakh people each year by attracting investment in labour intensive manufacturing industries.

Debapriya Bhattacharya said the prospect of desired growth lies in political and policy-related stability, infrastructure and skilled labour. Both good and ominous signs are now on the horizon of Bangladesh economy, he observed.

He suggested the government create space for the opposition. "At the same time, opposition should realise that people are not so fool. They (opposition) should come up with alternative solutions to various problems," he said.

Mahfuz Anam said it has become a culture that the party in power opposes hartal but it enforces the same when it is in the opposition.

"Hartal not only hurts the economy but curbs people's right to move around," he said, adding that people do not support hartal but keep away from normal activities out of panic.

"Hartal cannot be accepted on any logic when a democratically elected party is in power," Anam said.

He suggested businessmen should stop giving donations to those parties that call hartal.

Anam observed that one of the main reasons for hartal is the animosity between ruling and opposition parties. In bridging the gap, it is the ruling party that should do more than the opposition, he said.

Golam Sarwar urged political parties to build harmonious relations among them, giving up confrontations.

Mahbul Alam said economic progress would have been much more had there been political stability. "We have to pay attention to creating an atmosphere of peaceful politics."

Country could not

FROM PAGE 1
confessional statement to the police.

Khalil got released in December 1975 after the then president Ziaur Rahman stopped the trial of war criminals by cancelling the Collaborators Act 1972.

With the present government's move to try war crimes 39 years after the independence, Shaheen wants his father's killers including Khalil to be brought to justice through proper investigation.

Like him many families of martyred intellectuals demand proper probe into the mass killings in 1971 saying witnesses and enough evidence are there to bring the perpetrators to book.

"We have evidence. Many of us were even witnesses to the killings but the government has not approached us. Some of us even handed evidence to the investigators on their own," said Shumon Zahid, son of martyred journalist Selina Parvin.

The aggrieved families with the whole nation observe the Martyred Intellectuals Day today with a renewed demand for trial of war criminals.

"The killings of intellectuals and professionals must be probed with special priority. We might not get the names of all three million people killed during the Liberation War. But we can have a list of our martyred intellectuals and professionals with references to their families and evidence," said eminent journalist Shahriar Kabir, also president of Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee.

"Many of our martyred intellectuals and professionals had enjoyed global fame and trial of the killers of those sons of the soil would get support of the international community," he added.

There is no list of martyred intellectuals and professionals, let alone those three million martyred freedom fighters.

"The liberation war ministry can make a list easily and it should do that," said Shahriar Kabir.

"In every corner of the country, you will find places where monuments were built in memory of local intellectuals and professionals. What the government needs to do is to collect their names," he said.

Killing of intellectuals and professionals, who helped organise the independence movement, had become a priority of Pakistan occupation forces since the start of the Liberation War on March 26, 1971. They killed many teachers and students at Dhaka University.

Sensing defeat, Pakistan

occupation forces with the help of their collaborators -- Razakar, Al-Badr and Al-Shams -- prepared an execution list of progressive intellectuals and professionals five months after the start of the Liberation War, said experts quoting the diary of the then Pakistan Army general Rao Farman Ali.

They began executing the list on November 15 in 1971 and killed nearly 12,000 intellectuals and professionals across the country.

The martyred intellectuals include Prof Muneir Chowdhury, Dr Alim Chowdhury, Prof Muniruzzaman, Dr Fazle Rabbi, Shahidullah Kaiser, Prof GC Dev, JC Guhathakurta, Prof Santosh Bhattacharya, Mofazzal Haider Chowdhury, journalists Khandaker Abu Taleb, Nizamuddin Ahmed, SA Mannan (Ladu Bhai), ANM Golam Mustafa and Syed Nazmul Huq.

The then commander-in-chief of Al-Badr and Jamaat Ameer Matior Rahman Nizami, Jamaat Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, its assistant secretary general Muhammad Kamaruzzaman and Mir Kashim Ali led the killings, according to accounts of both victims and collaborators, various publications and secret documents of Pakistan home department.

The Gestapo-styled killings were so well planned that the country still suffers from the loss and the people including political leaders remain divided over the issue of having a secular state, said Shahriar Kabir.

One killed

FROM PAGE 16
to retaliate.

Shaheed came in the line of fire while the others managed to flee, added the OC.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Rab officials said they recovered a pistol from his possession.

Achhia Begum, wife of the deceased, said her husband was missing since he went out on Sunday morning responding to a phone call.

Shaheed was on bail in several cases filed against him, she added.

She also claimed her family shifted to Savar from Bhasantek of city's Kafraul to start a normal life.

Abdur Rahim, father of the deceased, said locals of Bhasantek used to call his son 'Jama' as he had a relationship with a girl there eight years ago.