

BNP protests Ananda Bazar report

UNB, Dhaka

The BNP has protested and condemned recent reports published in the Ananda Bazar Patrika of India against party's senior vice chairman Tarique Rahman blaming his involvement in the recent plot by a small section of army in Bangladesh.

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir in a statement yesterday said the allegations are totally "baseless, untrue and imaginary".

The protest note was sent to Kolkata-based daily Ananda Bazar Patrika through e-mail and fax and also to its local correspondent.

Quoting the Patrika report, Fakhru said not a single word of it was based on facts. It is all imaginary and motivated, intended to character assassination.

He said the BNP is the largest democratic political party and there was no need to secure support from outlawed Hizb ut Tahrir. Question of BNP's having any connection with it is absurd, he added.

The BNP leader noted with regret that the Indian daily was not only against his party but also launched propaganda against Bangladesh.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia holds a discussion with the leaders of Dhaka city and Dhaka district units at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: BNP

CTG GHAT WORKERS BEGIN STRIKE Importers face loss of Tk 20 crore daily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Ghat workers in the port city launched work abstention programme for an indefinite period from yesterday morning, demanding increase of their wages.

The workers, who are involved with loading and unloading of goods from vessels, said storehouse owners are paying them under the 2005 wage chart, which is unjustified.

Labourer gets Tk 7.50 for carrying a load of 90kg and Tk 4.20 that of 50kg, they said, claiming that it is very difficult for them to maintain family costs with the money they earn under the wage scale.

As the workers went on work abstention yesterday, mother and lighter vessels got stuck in a jam in Karnaphuli River, causing a huge economic loss to the importers.

Amol Chandra Das, an owner of Marine Services and Traders Ltd, said at least 60 lighter vessels were stuck at 16 ghats on the river and 12 mother vessels at the outer anchorages.

Put together, the losses for the suspension of loading and unloading of goods from the trapped vessels amount to at least Tk 20 crore a day, he said.

Mohammad Alamgir, convener of Chattagram Ghat and Gudam Sramik Sangram Parishad, the association of the workers under which they were protesting, said they requested many times for rise of wages, but owners of different storehouses and agencies never heeded.

To press the demand, the workers also observed a five-day protest in 16 ghats of the port city including rallies and processions from January 19, he said.

Saying the 2005 wage scale is unjustified, the workers' leader hoped that the government and the local administration would think about their problem and take initiatives to solve it.

He said no one contacted with them till 6:15pm yesterday.

Abul Hasem, owner of an agency, Laboni Enterprise, which appoints workers for discharging goods, said three different organisations are involved in the matter. If the importers do not rise service charge, how agencies can raise the wages, he said.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Syed Sadat Abul Moudud, son of late Sir Syed Nasim Ali and brother of Syed Manzur Elahi, passed away at his Dhanmondi residence in the city yesterday afternoon, says a press release.

He was 89. His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Dhanmondi Takwa Mosque after Zohr prayers today (Wednesday).

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkhwani of Mohamad Abdur Rob, a BNP leader and founder principal of Gournadi Women's College, will be held at his Gournadi residence in Barisal after Asr prayers today.

He left behind his five daughters and two sons to mourn his death.

Rob passed away early Monday at the age of 73 due to old age complications.

He was buried at his family graveyard following namaz-e-janaza after Asr prayers.

SUST VIOLENCE Seven more Shibir suspects arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police arrested seven suspected activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir in Madina Market and Dakshin Surma areas early yesterday in connection with the recent violence on the Shahjalal University Science and Technology (Sust) campus.

The arrests were made in the cases the Sust authorities filed for vandalism on the campus and damaging the university buses at different places of Sylhet city during the last week.

Previously police caught 28 persons, including a Union Parishad (UP) chairman and students of different institutions, in connection with the same cases last week.

Police said Abu lais, 32, Shafiqul Islam, 22, and Abdul Aziz Sohag, 27, were caught from Boroikandi Maijpara under Dakshin Surma Police Station while Kotwali police arrested four persons including Osman Gani, Oli, and Roni from a students' mess in Madina Market area.

Meanwhile, normalcy was returning on the Sust campus with a number of classes held yesterday, although students' presence was low. Examinations, however, did not take place, as the authorities earlier suspended all exams till January 26. Sust Registrar Ishfaqul Hossain said the situation was almost normal as most of the classes were held yesterday. He hoped that it would be all right within a few days.

Tension has been prevailing on the Sust campus since January 11 when Bangladesh Chhatra League men drove Shibir activists and leaders out of the university dormitories.

CONSTRUCTION IN FORT AREA Maintain status quo: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to maintain status quo on construction works within the area of Bhitorgarh fort, a place with historic importance in Panchagarh.

During hearing a rule, the court also directed not to dig up the ground within the fort except conducting scientific excavation for research purpose.

The rule was issued in response to a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh following newspaper reports saying two private companies Assort Plus Ltd and Selilan Tea & Estate Ltd were constructing commercial buildings in the fort area ruining the site.

Earlier on June 14 last year the HC asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to declare the site as "protected antiquity" and asked the government to publish a gazette notification announcing the area as an archeological site. It also directed two private companies to maintain status quo on construction of structures in and around the fort.

Yesterday, the court formed a committee to demarcate the fort area and asked the committee to submit a report in three months. The committee comprises director general of department of archeology, one professor each of archeology or history department from Dhaka, Rajshahi and Jahangirnagar universities, deputy commissioner and superintendent of police of Panchagarh district and the custodian of Barendra museum.

The HC bench of Naima Haider and Justice Farid Ahmed passed the order during hearing on the rule.



Seminar
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Marie Stops Clinic Society will organise a national seminar; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Sammilita Peshajibi Parishad will organise a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:30.

Human chain
Jalalabad Foundation and WBB Trust will form a human chain; Venue: Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University; Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
The Federation of Bangladesh Civil Society and Jatiya Nagorik Mancha

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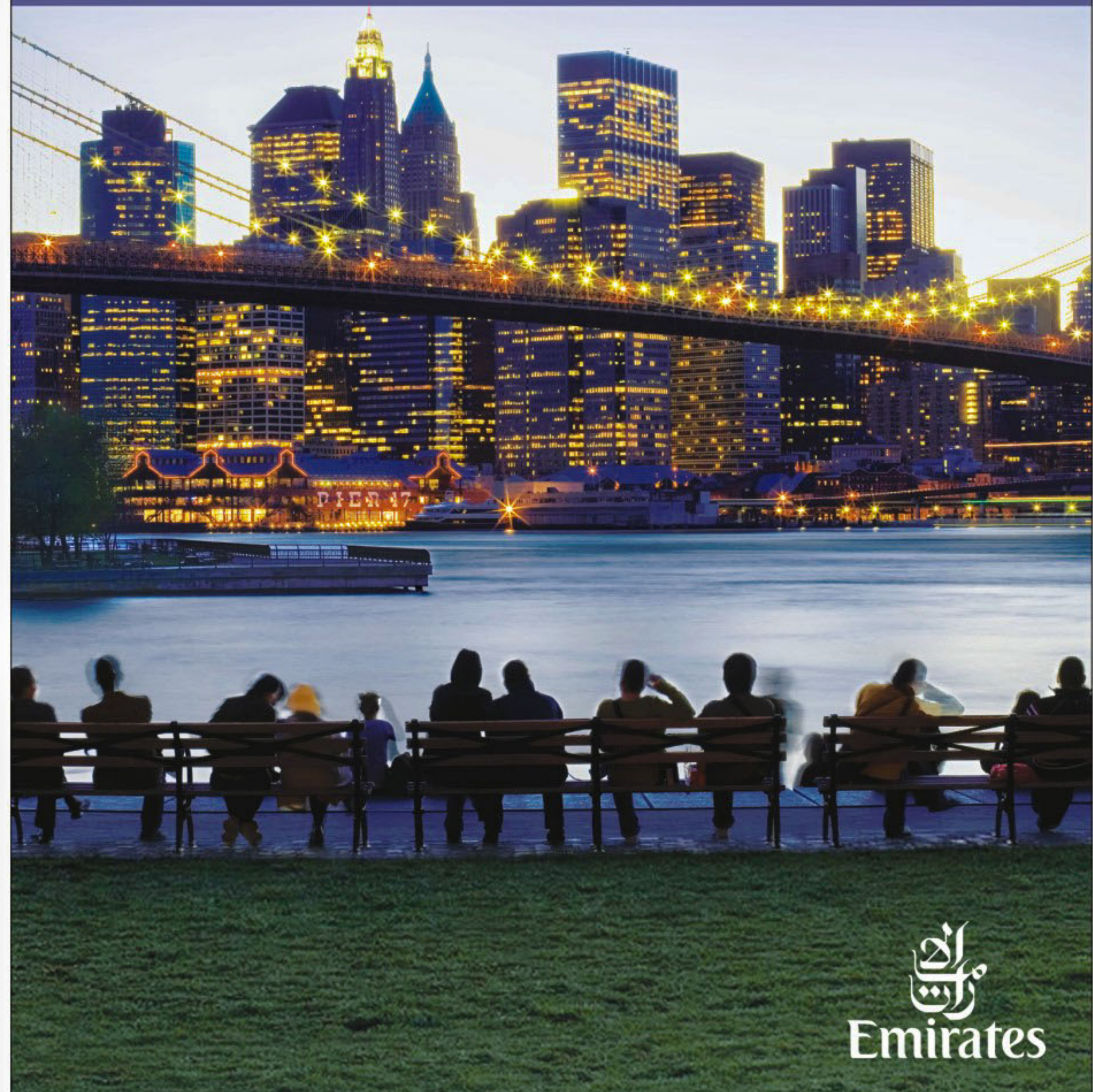
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