

# Labour leaders demand reopening of Ashulia factories

## Some say shutdown was a unilateral decision by BGMEA

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Labour leaders yesterday demanded that all 300 garment factories in Ashulia be reopened soon.

The factories were declared closed by owners following labour unrest on Saturday.

Some leaders expressed concerns over the sudden shutdown of the factories because of 'unilateral decisions' taken by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association.

They urged the government to immediately resolve the ongoing issues by holding a tripartite meeting with representatives of

factory owners, workers and government officials.

"Garment workers cannot lead a normal life due to the price hike of essentials, rising transportation costs and soaring inflation," said Wazedul Islam, coordinator of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad.

So the workers are demanding a wage hike, he said in a statement. "It is a logical and justified demand."

The worker leaders said the unrest took place as workers in the RMG sector do not have access to trade union.

In the absence of unionism, workers cannot express their frustration or anger in case of a sudden closure of their factories, exploitation and outstanding

wages, they said.

This compels the workers to protest on the streets to press home their demands, they added.

If the government relaxes the ban on trade union activities in the RMG sector, labour unrest would ease to a certain extent, said many workers.

Garment Shromik and Shilpa Rakha Jatiya Mancho, another platform of workers, urged the government to resolve the ongoing labour unrest with a tri-party meeting.

They demanded all closed factories be reopened by June 20 or the federation would hold a grand rally in Dhaka on June 22 and announce tougher programmes, like strikes.

The unilateral decision taken by the factory owners to keep their factories shut will deepen labour unrest, said Shafiqul Islam, coordinator of the platform, in a statement.

He urged the government to introduce a rationing system for the workers and to contain house rents.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association also expressed concerns at the closure of the factories.

They urged the government to take immediate action to resolve the issues.

"It will severely hurt the development of women in country if the problem is not solved," the association said in a statement.

## United Airways launches Ctg-Kolkata flights

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

United Airways Ltd launched its Chittagong-Kolkata flight yesterday to carry passengers directly from the port city to Kolkata.

Chittagong City Mayor Manjur Alam inaugurated the flight as the chief guest.

Three flights will be operated a week on Friday, Monday and Wednesday.

The flights will take off from Chittagong at 12:30pm, said Kamrul Islam, assistant general manager of United Airways.

There is a special reduced fare of TK 7,345 on the flight from Chittagong to Kolkata. The two-way ticket fare will be TK 14,430, including all taxes.



CROWN CEMENT

Md Sahidur Rahman, general manager for marketing and sales of Crown Cement, and Han-Seok Kim (Chris), planning manager of GS Engineering and Construction, exchange documents after signing a deal in Dhaka recently. The Crown brand cement will be exclusively used in the Bibiyana-Kaliakoir 400kv Transmission Line

## Green Delta re-elects chair



AQM Nurul Absar

Dilruba Chowdhury

STAR BUSINESS DESK

AQM Nurul Absar was re-elected as chairman and Dilruba Chowdhury elected as vice chairperson of the board of Green Delta Insurance, the company said in a statement yesterday.

Absar is a civil engineer from BUET with a post graduation in hydraulic engineering from DELFT University in The Hague, Netherlands. He served the Water and Power Development Authority in Kuwait for 10 years.

Nurul Absar is also a sponsor director of Green Delta Insurance and Delta Medical College & Hospital as well as director of Delta Life Insurance.

Dilruba Chowdhury is a sponsor director of Green Delta Insurance and is a graduate in international business majoring in finance from Universite Quebec a Montreal, Canada.

She is currently serving as a director of East Coast Group of Companies, a diversified conglomerate with primary focus on oil and energy. Chowdhury is also the managing director of Parkesine Products Limited, a subsidiary of East Coast Group specialising in plastic goods.

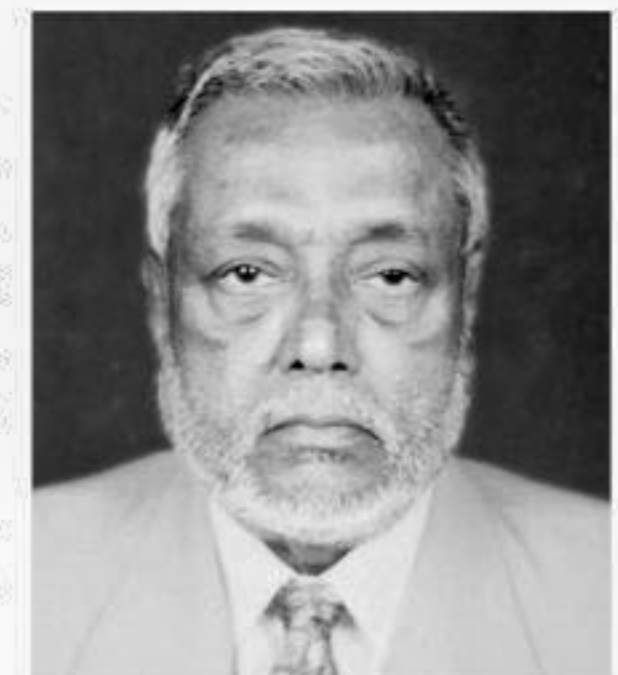
## NCC bank re-elects audit, executive committee chairs

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Mahbubul Alam Tara has been re-elected as chairman of the audit committee and Fakhrul Anwar as chairman of the executive committee of the NCC Bank board, the bank said in a statement yesterday.

Tara is a sponsor director and former chairman of the bank.

Fakhrul Anwar is the managing director of Golden Inn Chittagong, director of Federal Insurance Company, Holy Crescent Hospital Ltd and



Mahbubul Alam Tara

## Workers' woes

"We do not take to the streets for no reason. Let alone sending money to our parents in the village, we are scraping through to meet our living expenses in Dhaka," said Shihab Hossain, worker of another Ashulia-based garment factory.

"There are even incidents where some had to ask money from their parents in the village to survive in the city," he added.

One woman worker said the factories expropriate from their wages at every given opportunity. "Uneducated like us are exploited extensively," she said.

Workers complained that they do not always receive their overtime payments. As for the sick leave, they have to go to the factory premises in their condition and prove the illness. Workers blamed mid-level management and other support staff at the factory for their workplace woes. "It is like a prison," said one worker out of frustration.

Workers, however, are uncompromising of the pay rise, as they feel they have their backs against the wall. "We will continue to take to the streets for the pay rise," said Amena Khatun, a 43-year-old garment worker.



DBBL

KS Tabrez, managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd (DBBL), and Abdullah Al Mamun Khan, manager (finance) of Seven Circle (Bangladesh) Ltd, attend the signing ceremony of a mobile banking agreement between their organisations held in DBBL head office in Dhaka recently.



AB BANK

M Wahidul Haque, chairman of AB Bank, attends the inauguration of the bank's representative office in Yangon of Myanmar recently. M Fazlur Rahman, managing director of the bank, and U Win Than, deputy minister of finance for Myanmar, were also present.

## G20 to press Europe for lasting crisis fix

REUTERS, Los Cabos, Mexico

World leaders were set to pile pressure on Europe at a G20 summit on Monday to outline a lasting strategy to save the euro currency after a victory for pro-bailout parties in a Greek election failed to calm financial markets.

US President Barack Obama spoke with European leaders after the Greek vote and requested a meeting with them on Monday evening, underscoring the extent of concern in Washington that the euro crisis could deepen, infecting the fragile US economy only months before an election.

He will also hold separate talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who as the leader of Europe's biggest economy, faces enormous pressure to take bold new steps to resolve a crisis that has been raging for more than two years.

Protected by Mexican navy vessels and troops on the beaches and highways, Group of 20 leaders from major industrialized and developing economies, representing more than 80 per-

cent of world output, began a two-day meeting in this Pacific resort to prioritize growth and job creation against the backdrop of a weakening global economy.

Escalating violence in Syria and the near-collapse of a United Nations-brokered peace plan also will be in focus when Obama meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the summit on Monday. The two super powers are clashing over arming Syria and UN sanctions.

But Europe's progress toward lasting solutions for its debt crisis will be the focal point when G20 leaders hold their opening session on the global economy.

A narrow victory for the conservative New Democracy party in the Greek election on Sunday eased concerns the heavily-indebted country could exit the euro zone soon but did little to calm financial markets.

The euro fell from a one-month high against the dollar and Spanish bond yields shot above 7 percent to their highest level since the creation of the single currency in 1999.

## SEC fines national shipping company

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Each BSC share was traded between Tk 290 and Tk 275, before closing at Tk 277.50, registering a 4.14 percent fall.

The stockmarket regulator also warned United Airways and its managing director, directors and company secretary about non-compliance with the

securities rules in connection with audited financial statements for 2010-2011, according to another web posting of the premier bourse.

Each United Airways share was traded between Tk 16 and Tk 15.30, before closing at Tk 15.40, with a 2.52 percent fall.

## Housing fair sees huge crowd but low sales

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"Now a 760-square-foot flat costs more than Tk 20 lakh, which is beyond the reach of a middle income person these days. So it's understandable why the spot bookings at the fair went down," said an executive of Dom-Inno Builders.

However, organisers said the main objective of the fair was achieved, as the participants thronged to gather information regarding their choice homes, and the builders were aware of the popular demands through meeting potential clients at the show.

The organisers admitted though that the turnout was "unusually lower" than the previous years, and blamed the hot weather as a major reason.

The fair participated by 161 realtors and five building materials companies, kicked off on Thursday, and ended on Sunday at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in Dhaka.

Real estate developers showcased land and apartment projects in and around Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Comilla and Cox's Bazar at the fair.

Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) organised a closing ceremony yesterday at the fair venue, where AB Tajul Islam, state minister for liberation war affairs, spoke as the chief guest.

Sultana Shaheda Islam, acting president, and Murad Iqbal Chowdhury, general secretary of REHAB, also spoke.

## Taka gains against dollar, slightly

FROM PAGE B1

"A healthy reserve and good inflow of remittances in the first half of this month helped the taka gain against the dollar," said Kazi Saidur Rahman, general manager of foreign exchange reserve and treasury management of the Bangladesh Bank.

Rahman said the foreign exchange reserve crossed the \$10 billion mark after several months yesterday. Now the reserve stood at \$10.02 billion.

In the first 15 days of this month, inflow of remittances was \$535 million, according to the BB official.



TBBL

Mohammad Ataur Rahman, former chairman of Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, inaugurates the bank's Araihaazar branch in Narayanganj yesterday. Mohammad Abdul Mannan, managing director, was also present.



TRUST BANK

Atiur Rahman, governor of Bangladesh Bank, and Shah A Sarwar, managing director of Trust Bank, attend the signing of a JICA assisted fund for SMEs between Bangladesh Bank and Trust Bank, held recently.



CITY BANK

Sohail RK Hussain, acting managing director of City Bank, hands over a donation cheque to Dilara Sattar Mitu, director of SEID Trust, at a ceremony held at the bank's head office in Dhaka recently. The trust is a voluntary organisation for intellectually disabled and autistic children.