

## RMG unrest

**FROM PAGE 20**  
protest since Sunday demanding removal of its Administrative Officer Anisur Rahman and Accounts Officer Mehedi Hasan for their alleged misbehaviour with workers, said Moktar Hossain, deputy director of Industrial Police.

"However, the factory authorities refused to remove the officials and said those who were unwilling to continue their jobs were welcome to resign," added Moktar.

When the workers went to the factory around 8:00am yesterday, they saw a notice saying 102 workers were terminated, which, said Moktar, sparked a storm of protest among the workers.

He said the workers set fire to the generator room of Fashion Knit and pelted brickbats at some adjacent factories. The workers of the adjacent factories later joined the agitation and took to streets.

Police used rubber bullets and tear gas canisters to disperse the agitating workers who, in turn, pelted brick chips the law enforcers.

Of the injured, five were policemen and three security guards of Fashion Knit Composite Limited, witnesses said.

Most of the injured were admitted to local hospitals, while Yunus Ali, security in-charge of Fashion Knit, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

At one stage, the authorities of several adjacent factories including IDS Fashion, Safa Sweaters, Rose Garments and Green Life Garments, announced their factories closed for the day.

Additional police were deployed to avert further violence.

Contacted, Sheikh Badrul Alam, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station, told The Daily Star that none had been arrested and no case had been filed in this connection.

Meanwhile, the workers of Multi Modern Apparels Ltd, located in Dhanaid area of Ashulia, also staged a protest after the factory hung up closure notice in the morning.

## Bomb

**FROM PAGE 20**  
"Recent attacks are a clear message that al-Qaeda in Iraq is determined to spark a bloody sectarian war," the official said, asking not to be named.

"With what's going on in Syria, these attacks should be taken seriously as a potential threat to our country. Al Qaeda is trying to push Iraq to the verge of Shia-Sunni war," he said. "They want things to be as bad as in Syria."

Gunmen using assault rifles and hand grenades killed at least 16 soldiers in an attack on an army post near Dhuluidya, 70 km north of Baghdad, police and army sources said.

In Taji, 20 km north of Baghdad, six explosions, including a car bombing, occurred near a housing complex. A seventh blast there caused carnage among police who had arrived at the scene of the earlier ones. In all, 32 people were killed, including 14 police, with 48 wounded, 10 of them police.

Two car bombs struck near a government building in Sadr City, a vast, poor Shia swathe of Baghdad, and in the mainly Shia area of Hussainiya on the outskirts of the capital, killing a total of 21 people and wounding 73, police said.

Nine people, including six soldiers, were killed in attacks in the northern city of Mosul, police and army sources said.

In Kirkuk, five car bombs killed 35 people and wounded 17, while explosions and gun attacks on security checkpoints around the restive province of Diyala killed six people, including four soldiers and policemen, and wounded 30, police sources said.

Other deadly attacks occurred in the towns of Khan Bani Saad, Udhaim, Tuz Khurmato, Samarra and Dujail, all north of Baghdad, as well as in the southern city of Diwaniya.

The orchestrated spate of violence followed car bombs on Sunday in two towns south of Baghdad and in the Shia shrine city of Najaf that killed 20 people and wounded 80.

The last two days of attacks shattered a two-week lull in violence in the run-up to the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, which started in Iraq on Saturday.

## Holy or less

**FROM PAGE 1**  
blamed "a section of the press" for tainting his image. While talking to The Daily Star in recent times, he claimed to be a "holy person".

But his career as a cabinet member and politician has been repeatedly raising questions since he first became a state minister in 1996.

Hossain came into Awami League politics in the early 1990s as a successful businessman. His namesake company Sahco has remained as his political shadow and has given rise to many controversies.

As for the latest, the World Bank brought the allegation that Hossain, through Sahco, had approached different bidders in the Padma Bridge project asking for money in exchange for ensuring the job.

He had to resign from his position as state minister for Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) on August 10, 1997, after his controversial visit to Singapore without the government's permission, using an ordinary passport instead of his diplomatic passport. The LGRD ministry is one of the top spenders of the government.

His dubious visit gave rise to criticism in the political and public domain. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina did not take much time to respond to public sentiments by dropping him from her council of ministers.

But this time, Hossain enjoyed much more blessings of the prime minister. He was made communications minister, in-charge of a vital ministry that looks after the country's infrastructure and deals with a lot of money.

His ministry's failure to repair roads and highways gave rise to widespread criticism in and outside parliament. In February last year, some veteran MPs of the ruling Awami League-led alliance excoriated him on his poor performance. In response, Abul wrote a letter to the PM, complaining against senior AL MP Tofail Ahmed. The next day, on February 7, 2011, when some MPs again started blasting him, Hasina took the floor and saved him. While doing so, she also criticised a section of newspapers for publishing "fake" reports to "malign" dignitaries.

As communications minister, Hossain did not care about the parliamentary standing committee on communications ministry much. Once the committee had asked his ministry to produce the tender documents related to the appointment of a consultant for the construction of Padma bridge. But Hossain refused to produce any document, questioning the committee's jurisdiction in demanding such documents. This response irked the committee and it expressed resentment over it.

Finally, he was mired in wide controversy regarding the appointment of a consultant for the construction of the Padma bridge. In the face of growing criticism, he was removed from the communications ministry. But blessed Abul did not need to resign from the cabinet. Rather, the prime minister created a new ministry, Information and Technology, for him. But his staying in the cabinet did not resolve the crisis. At one stage, the World Bank cancelled the Padma bridge loan agreement with the government, saying it had credible evidence of a high-level corruption conspiracy among Bangladeshi government officials.

Before he resigned as information and technology minister, he proclaimed his "honesty", "sincerity" and "integrity" by publishing advertisements in some dailies. Through the advertisement, he blamed a section of the press for the situation.

US Ambassador in Dhaka James F Moriarty termed Abul "a less than honest" man in his business dealings. According to diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks on August 30, Hossain was involved in a

2011, Moriarty wrote the cables following a conversation with the minister at a dinner on February 3, 2010.

Abul Hossain's company Sahco has always generated news, directly or indirectly, whenever the Awami League has been in power.

Founded in the mid-1970s, Sahco's business thrived mainly in the power sector as a local agent of foreign companies.

In 1998-2000, Sahco's involvement in land development for the first big private power project at Meghna ghāt not only generated controversies, but also put a penalty unduly on the Power Development Board (PDB). At the time, Sahco represented a Chinese company that had been given the Tk 141 crore site development work. It was alleged that Hossain had influenced the government decision in getting the contract.

After a long delay, when the site was completed, the power company AES refused to take over the site, stating that it was substandard and that the developer had used cheap technology to make an extra profit of Tk 25 crore.

As this led to a prolonged feud, the prime minister in 2000 resolved the matter through a meeting. Through this resolution, AES undertook the remedial work to improve the site, for which the PDB had to pay up to \$ 4.5 million. The Chinese company, however, was not penalised.

Sahco's influence in various power tenders returned soon after the Awami League came to power. This time, Abul Hossain told The Daily Star repeatedly that he had resigned from the company and that there was nothing wrong if the company on its own merit bagged contracts.

But according to sources, he influenced various power contracts. When a bidder represented by Sahco was totally unable to win a tender, he influenced the government in cancelling the tender.

Because of his influence, the government cancelled a 450MW power project tender in Siddhirganj once, and awarded the job recently through a re-tender to a joint venture company although it did not quite qualify.

Sahco is also involved with representing successful bidders in two other power projects in the last one year, 150MW Sirajganj and 150MW Khulna power projects. Each of the tender processes separately faced various allegations against the winning bidders.

In August 2009, Sahco's Chinese company also won a 150MW power project in Sylhet despite irregularities and a very high bidding price.

A 300MW power project in Ghorashal was foiled after three rounds of tender because of procedural anomalies in selecting the winning bidder represented by Sahco. Hossain played a key role in foiling the tender.

Abul Hossain openly opposed at a Cabinet meeting the award of a contract to a Chinese company in the Chandpur 150MW power project tender. The bidder represented by Sahco had failed to bag the job.

### US MASSACRE

## Obama consoles victims

**AFP, Aurora**  
President Barack Obama paid emotional tribute Sunday to the victims and survivors of the Aurora cinema massacre, as the shaken US town held a tearful vigil for the 12 dead filmgoers.

Obama, making a visit to the stricken Colorado town, said he shed tears with relatives of those who died as the community struggles to recover from Friday's shooting at a screening of the latest Batman movie, which also left 58 injured.

"I confessed to them that words are always inadequate in these types of situations," he said as thousands gathered for a vigil outside the municipal center in Aurora, just outside Denver.

## PADMA 'GRAFT' ACC quizzes sub agents of AECOM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday interrogated three top officials of Bangladeshi sub-agents of the New Zealand-based consulting firm Maunsell AECOM Ltd in connection with the alleged corruption in Padma bridge project.

The three are Gholam Mostofa, managing director of ACE Consultants Ltd, AKM Rafique Uddin, managing director of DDC Ltd, and Syed Ashraf Hossain, director of SARM Associates Ltd.

ACC directors Mir Md Zainul Abedin Shebli and Mirza Zahidul Alam quizzed them at the commission's headquarters from 10:00am to 2:00pm, ACC Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya told The Daily Star.

Pranab said the trio were interrogated about whether they knew anything about the alleged corruption in appointing a consultant for the bridge project or whether they had any links with the matter.

The government on January 29 signed an agreement with Maunsell AECOM Ltd for preparing design of the Padma bridge.

The ACC on Sunday interrogated three top officials of three local sub-agents of the SNC-Lavalin. They are Abdus Sabur, managing director of Bets Consulting Service Ltd, Shahidul Hasan Khan, managing director of Prokolpo Upadesta Limited, and MA Aziz, director of BCL Associates Ltd.

## JMB militant

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Khamaru, 45, was a regional commander and the second-in-command of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in 2004, when its leader Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai was operating in the region, said a release of Rab.

He was also a close aide to Bangla Bhai, who was executed in March 2007 in the two judges' murder case in Jhalakathi.

Acting on intelligence information, members of the elite force picked him up from his home around 3:50am. He had been on the run for a long time, said ASP Mirza Golam Sarwar, chief of Rab's anti-militancy cell.

Khamaru was sent to jail through a court after Rab members handed him over to Bagmara Police Station for legal action.

A few weeks ago, a Rajshahi court had issued arrest warrants against him and several others in connection with a case filed by Amir Ali of Madhya Jhina area of the upazila on August 17 in 2009.

According to the case statement, Khamaru and his associates abducted Amir from his house in 2004 and tortured him for extortion.

The arrestee is also accused in five other cases of extortion and torture, said the release.

## Reducing

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Fund (WCRF).

It wants people to eat less salt and for the content of food to be labelled more clearly.

In the UK, the WCRF on Sunday said one-in-seven stomach cancers would be prevented if people kept to daily guidelines.

Cancer Research UK said this figure could be even higher.

Too much salt is bad for blood pressure and can lead to heart disease and stroke, but it can also cause cancer.

The recommended daily limit is 6 gram, about a level teaspoonful, but the World Cancer Research Fund said people were eating 8.6 gram a day.

There are around 6,000 cases of stomach cancer every year in the UK. The WCRF estimated that 14 percent of cases, around 800, could be avoided if everyone stuck to their 6 gram a day.

Kate Mendoza, head of health information at WCRF, said, "Stomach cancer is difficult to treat successfully because most cases are not caught until the disease is well-established."

## Abul resigns, at last

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"So, I have made a decision ... I won't stay in office," he told Bangla daily Prothom Alo. He, however, did not give any details about his resignation.

Abul said he would come out clean from the probe, as he had not been "involved in the corruption".

He claimed the Anti-Corruption Commission, the WB or the Canadian police would not find his involvement, saying he had maintained transparency all along.

Abul believed his resignation had apparently removed the main barrier to constructing the bridge with the global lender's funding.

Though the WB gave several conditions for funding the project, Abul's exit from the cabinet was the key.

His resignation is likely to end the 10-month impasse between the government and the WB following the global lender's corruption allegations in the \$2.97 billion project. The WB in September last year suspended its promised \$1.2 billion funding for the country's biggest infrastructure project.

Construction of the 6.15 kilometre bridge became uncertain when the WB last month cancelled its loan

agreement on the grounds that not all its conditions were met.

"He [Abul] should have resigned much earlier. He finally stepped down but the country paid a high price for that," a minister said on condition of anonymity after the cabinet meeting.

A security guard at Abul's Gulshan residence said Abul left home in the morning in a car without flag.

Later, he met the prime minister and turned in his resignation, said a source close to Abul.

It was the second time he resigned as a minister. He was forced to resign as state minister for the LGRD ministry in August 1997 over a controversy for using a private passport instead of a diplomatic book.

Though there has been a strong public opinion against him for the last few months, Abul has kept protesting his innocence and refuted allegations of any irregularities in the Padma bridge project. He accused a section of the media of resorting to propaganda against him, saying it misled the WB to cancel the project's funding.

The government also showed reluctance to take any

## Belated, still welcome

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Bikalpa Dhara President A Q M B a d r u d d o z a Chowdhury said the minister's resignation proved that the WB had rightly made the graft allegation.

"I hope the World Bank will reconsider the cancellation decision so that the bridge can be built without further delay," said the former president.

JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu said it was a belated but a good decision. "It would have been better for both him (minister) and the nation if he had resigned earlier."

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Manjurul Ahsan Khan said it is a good decision and it will facilitate fair investigation. "Now it will be easier to probe the corruption allegation," he added.

Jatiya Party presidium member Anisul Islam Mahmud welcomed Abul's resignation, and hoped the WB will now come forward to help build the Padma

bridge. "I hope Abul Hossain will be proved innocent through fair investigation into the corruption allegation," he said.

Former caretaker government adviser Akbar Ali Khan said the resignation has come too late. It would have been better if it had happened much earlier.

"Even if it (resignation) is late, the government has ultimately taken the decision. I think this will allow us to put some pressure on the World Bank on moral grounds," he said.

"So, I see this resignation as a positive development. Not all things are closed permanently. If it is possible to restore conciliation, the (Padma bridge) project still could be revived," Akbar Ali added.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said it might be too little and too late. "This should have happened

## Goodbye Humayun

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Mahbubul Haque Shakil and Assistant Personal Secretary Saifuzzaman Shikhor placed wreaths on the coffin around 10:20am.

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhit, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Food Minister Abdur Razzaque, rights activist Sultana Kamal, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam, among several dozen eminent persons, bade farewell to the bestseller author of numerous Bangla novels.

Humayun's mother Ayesha Faiz, son and daughters with first wife -- Sheela, Nova and Nuhash, second wife Meher Afroz Shaon, brothers Zafar Iqbal and Ahsan Habib, Zafar's wife Yasmeen Haque and two sisters stood by the coffin.

Finance Minister Muhit said Humayun's creation was rare in Bangladesh. The writer had also contributed to politics.

Sammilito Sangskritik Jote President Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu said, "Today's presence proves how a writer can unite a nation. He is a symbol of unity. He penned the joys and sorrows of people. A new generation has been created through his books."

The nation has lost Humayun Ahmed's body, but not the spirit. His works will inspire people to love the country and human beings, he added.

Asif Munna, a young scriptwriter, may be representative of the generation Bachchu was talking about.

"The creation of Humayun Ahmed was a combination of science and literature. I cannot but come to see and pay respects for the last time," he said, standing in a long queue stretching up to Shahbagh.

At 2:00pm, the body was taken to the National Eidgah Maidan.

Minutes before the second namaz-e-janaza there, Humayun Ahmed's son Nuhash Humayun asked everyone present to be forgiving if his father had hurt anybody.

"Anybody to whom my father owes anything is requested to contact me or my uncle Mohammad Zafar Iqbal," said Nuhash in his first ever public statement after the death of the writer. He too was in a yellow punjabi.

Prof Maulana Muhammad Salahuddin, khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, administered the janaza attended by ministers, top government officials, academics, jurists, litterateurs and politicians and citizens across the spectrum.

After the janaza, Humayun's son Nuhash and father-in-law Motahar accompanied the coffin to Birdem mortuary around 3:00pm.

His first janaza was held at Jamaica Muslim Center on Friday.

Humayun, who was also an award winning filmmaker, died at Manhattan's Bellevue Hospital in New York on Thursday night after a nine-month struggle with colon cancer.

Shaon, Humayun Ahmed's two sons with her Nishad and Ninith, mother-in-law Tahura Ali, sister-in-law Senjuti Afroz and friend Mazharul Islam came with the coffin aboard the flight from the US yesterday.

Zafar Iqbal, Ahsan Habib, Nuhash, Sheela and Nova and a host of relatives received the body at the airport.

Awami League Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif, LGED State Minister Jahangir Kabir Nanak, Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes, and leaders of the Sammilito Sangskritik Jote were also present there.

On arrival at the airport, Shaon told reporters about Humayun's "wish" to be

action against him, other than transferring him to the ICT ministry.

Earlier, in an open letter published in several dailies on Saturday, Abul gave hints that he could resign for the sake of the country and proper probe into the corruption allegations.

The ex-communications minister first came under fire ahead of the last year's Eid-ul-Fitr for failing to repair and maintain roads and highways in many parts of the country.

He was removed from the communications ministry and given the charge of ICT ministry on December 5 last year after the WB brought corruption allegations against him and suspended its loan.

Apart from the WB, Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Islamic Development Bank are co-financiers in the project. ADB committed to provide \$615 million, Jica \$400 million and IDB \$140 million.

After the WB cancelled its loan agreement, the government decided to construct the bridge with its own resources. The government, however, said it would welcome any foreign investment in the project.

several months ago when the WB brought corruption allegation.

Urging the WB to seriously consider reopening the negotiation with the government and revive the deal, he also said the WB decision to cancel the \$1.2 billion Padma bridge financing was wrong and too hasty.

The government has to further prove that it is committed to chandling corruption cases with a heavy hand, he added.

Economist Hossain Zillur Rahman, another former caretaker government adviser, said the minister's resignation proves that the government has started to take into cognizance the WB allegation of corruption in Padma bridge financing.

Though the resignation has come too late, it proves that the government is taking action. This could lead to a happy end as it will create an opportunity for restarting negotiation, he said.

buried at Nuhash Palli. "A day before the operation, he [Humayun] told me, 'If something unexpected happens to me, please keep me at Nuhash Palli.'"

Foreseeing that a tug of war would begin over his burial, Humayun asked her to lay him down at the Palli, he said. "He had told me, 'I don't like Banani Graveyard or Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard. I get frightened in unknown places.'"

"He loved Nuhash Palli more than his life. He loved all the trees equally as his children," she added.

However, Nova, Sheela and Nuhash told reporters at the Mirpur residence of Ayesha Faiz yesterday evening that their father should be laid to rest in a place where everybody can visit and offer prayers.

"My father had repeatedly said Nuhash Palli should not turn into a graveyard," Nova said.

In the presence of Zafar Iqbal and his wife Yasmeen Haque, the trio sought the cooperation of all for a smooth completion of the burial, reports Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

Talking to journalists, Yasmeen Haque said, "As a situation has arisen, the children have decided to take a stance."

Asked about the burial place, Zafar Iqbal said, "Wait, you will be informed in time."

Later at night, Zafar Iqbal, Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu, media personalities Shaikh Siraj and Faridur Reza Sagar went to Humayun's Dhanmondi residence Dakhin Hawa to talk with Meher Afroz Shaon about the burial site selection.

They went to Shaon after discussing the issue with State Minister for Local Government Jahangir Kabir Nanak.

No decision came as of 1:00am today.

### DEMO IN NATORE

## Police club orphans, 15 injured

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

Police yesterday charged batons on the orphans of Natore Sarkari Shishu Sadan in Bonbelghoria area leaving 15 of them injured.

The orphanage authorities were about to shift some of the orphans to different districts on a microbus around 9:00am.

The orphans, however, refused to obey the decision, said police and locals. Being informed, police came at the scene and tried to force them into the vehicle.

But as all the orphans of the home, including those to be shifted, brought out a procession protesting the move, police charged batons on them.

The injured were given treatment locally.

Assistant Superintendent of Police Mahfuzzaman said the orphans pelted at the law enforcers with brickbats after blocking Natore-Dhaka highway. The police then charged batons on them to calm the situation, he claimed.

However, the boys alleged that they blocked the highway after being baton-charged.

The situation eased after Additional Deputy Commissioner Shakhawat Hossain intervened and cancelled the transfer of the orphans.

## A walk thru'

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Rajdhani Supermarket, Swamibagh, which is one of the ends for the flyover. Office goers are stuck for a good 40 minutes due to haphazard repair and construction.

Titas has its own agenda of underground repairing and reconstruction starting from Janata Police Box all the way to Golapbagh. Mohammad Sabbir, a local resident of that area, mentions, "It's been almost 25 days and I see no sign of its being wrapped up any time soon."

The toll of all this has its impact off the main roads as well. Shekhdin Shonir Akhra had sewage water overflowing, which caused local small businesses to salvage their goods by any means possible. A refrigeration repair shop had all of its items placed above four layers of bricks to avoid flooding.

Salam Ahmed, owner of the shop, elaborates, "The Wasa and Titas people could not bother to clear up the drains around our area once their construction was done. Now they are all clogged and we are left to suffer after every rainfall."

There are ditches all over Dania bazar due to ill-planned digging by several utilities authorities that block the roads completely. Shoppers and commuters must cross balancing on bamboos tied together.

Khadia Begum, who lives in the residential area adjacent to the bazar, had her two-room house flooded with most of her belongings placed above bricks and high furniture. The worst part of it is that her open kitchen goes under sewage water every monsoon season.

She explains, "I asked my landlord to put the kitchen up on a platform so at least I don't have to worry about cooking. He does not budge. The rich cannot worry about us. All this construction is to accommodate them, but it's we who must suffer because we live here."

It was the same old song and dance around Wari, Folder Street and Thatari Bazar as well. The locals have laid bricks around Joy Kali Mandir to cover the several potholes and ditches.

There are many accounts of sufferings due to