

# 4 Shibir men held in Ctg

Jubo League, BCL press cops for releasing detainees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Police detained 40 people at a community centre in the city's Panchlaish area yesterday afternoon suspecting their involvement in subversive activities.

In the evening, law enforcers freed 20 of them after identifying them as students, said Shah Abdur Rouf, assistant commissioner (Panchlaish) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police.

Among the other 20, four are activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir, including Mehedi Hasan. He is an accused in a police murder case with Lohagara Police Station in Chittagong, added Rouf.

Tipped off, Panchlaish police conducted a drive at King of Chittagong, a community centre, around 12:45pm and picked up the 40. Probaho, a coaching centre run by Islami Chhatra Shibir men, was awarding reception there to some students for obtaining GPA-5 in this year's SSC examinations.

The detainees were taken to Panchlaish Police Station for interrogation.

CHAOS AT POLICE STATION

Some local Jubo League and Chhatra League leaders came to Panchlaish Police Station and started an altercation with the law enforcers to release some of the detainees, said sources at the police station.

At one stage, Jubo League leader Hasan Muran Biplob and former BCL leaders Didarul Alam and Osman Gani, among others, scuffled with police officials. The situation calmed down after half an hour.

Contacted, Didarul said police "misbehaved" when he went to Panchlaish Police Station to recommend releasing his nephew Sadnan Ahmed Chowdhury.

Sadnan went to the reception programme as a GPA-5 holder and was not involved with Shibir, he added.

"The OC took me to a room and news spread that I have been arrested. My fellow party men went to the police station and engaged in an altercation with police after failing to enter the police station," he mentioned.

Regarding the BCL-police scuffle, Didarul said, "As I was inside a room, I couldn't see the incident. My followers might have done that protesting the misbehaviour of police."

Terming the incident a misunderstanding, Pradip Kumar Das, officer-in-charge of Panchlaish Police Station, said the BCL men tried to interfere with police duty.

## School bus

FROM PAGE 16 exploded have been discounted.

The bus driver is reported to have survived, but is being sought by police after leaving the scene.

The children, aged between four and 10, were just a few kilometres from their school in Gujrat, about 200km (120 miles) south-east of the capital Islamabad, when the incident happened.

Police officer Dar Ali Khattak told the AFP news agency the fire was apparently caused by a spark when the driver of the dual-fuel bus switched from gas to petrol.

Two children who survived by escaping from a window in the back of the bus told reporters they had smelt gas before the fire broke out.

One boy said the other children were shouting: "Brother, save us, save us. We are burning."

"I took a huge stick and broke the glass. I tried to save them but I couldn't," he said.

Compressed natural gas is used in millions of vehicles in Pakistan as a cheaper alternative to diesel and petrol.

Numerous previous vehicle explosions have been blamed on substandard cylinders used to contain the fuel.



Several Chhatra League leaders, including former Chhatra League president of Chittagong Commerce College Didarul Alam, trying to get detainees released from Panchlaish Police Station in the port city yesterday. The police picked up 40 people at a community centre in connection with holding a meeting to plan criminal activities.

## Let's talk at JS

FROM PAGE 1 [Khaleda] want," she said, adding, "I urge you [Khaleda] to shun arson, vandalism and other destructive programmes that cause sufferings to the common people."

Hasina, who is also chief of the ruling Awami League, was speaking at a view-exchange meeting with the grassroots leaders of Kishoreganj district AL at Gono Bhavan.

"Earlier, I called upon her [Khaleda] for a dialogue. But she responded by giving the government a 48-hour ultimatum [to restore the caretaker government system] and warned I would not find anywhere to escape," the premier said.

Claiming that the ruling AL had consolidated people's constitutional and democratic rights, she said, "Only those who are voted to office by the people will come to power. No one will be able to grab power by violating the constitution."

Terming the Election Commission a completely

independent institution, Hasina said over 5,600 different local government and other elections had already been held in the country during the incumbent government's tenure.

These polls were fair, and in many cases, the BNP's candidates won because the government did not influence any of the elections, she mentioned.

About the recent political unrest, Hasina alleged that the BNP had joined hands with Hefajat-e Islam and used violence across the country to protect the war criminals.

AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam, several central party leading figures, and leaders and activists of Kishoreganj district AL attended the programme.

Leaders and activists of the party at the grassroots level demanded that the party's different units form new committees soon as the tenure of the existing committees had expired long ago, said a source at the meeting.

## US retailers

FROM PAGE 16 protested the owners forcing people to work in the unsafe factory."

They blamed the absence of trade union for the Rana Plaza disaster in Savar, where 1,127 workers died on April 24.

The labour leaders said some factories opt for not employing workers themselves and instead use outsourcing companies to supply workers on contract. They said this method goes against the workers as the workers cannot become permanent staff of the factories.

Miller will personally assess working conditions in different factories during his visit. The congressman did not discuss the Generalised System of Preferences issue in the meeting, labour leaders told The Daily Star.

Leaders of Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers Federation, National Garment Workers Federation, Bangladesh Industrial Garment Workers Federation and Bangladesh Federation of Workers Solidarity attended the meeting.

## Labour issues

FROM PAGE 1 R Sherman arrives in Dhaka today to lead the second partnership dialogue. The dialogue will focus on four key areas -- development and governance, trade and investment, security cooperation, and regional integration.

A private sector business delegation is also accompanying the US official delegation. US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Jose Fernandez will coordinate the delegation's meetings.

At the meetings, Dhaka is expected to reaffirm its commitment to bring about reforms in the labour laws, maintain safety in the workplace and take measures to prevent any tragedy in the readymade garment sector. It will also ask for a continuation of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) facilities to Bangladesh in the American market.

Sherman, who has just concluded her visit to New Delhi after an earlier one in Jakarta, will join the dialogue and have meetings with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia.

According to the programme schedule, officials of the two countries will hold several work-

ing group meetings at the foreign ministry today when the two sides will finalise the agenda and other issues for discussion at the plenary session slated for tomorrow morning at the foreign ministry.

Sherman will lead a 10-member US delegation at the plenary session. Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque is expected to head a 12-member Bangladesh delegation comprised of officials of the foreign, finance, home, commerce, and labour and employment ministries, and the Armed Forces Division.

The session will be followed by a joint press conference by Sherman and Shahidul Haque.

Sherman will then move to Ruposhi Bangla Hotel to deliver an address on "A Partnership without Boundaries: US-Bangladesh Relations", organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).

Additionally, tomorrow morning, Sherman will lead a roundtable with labour representatives and officials of the garment industry and the government in the capital's American Club to discuss standards in the garment sector in the aftermath of the Rana Plaza tragedy.

## Ultimate

FROM PAGE 16 year by Hungarian photographer Irene Becker. Her photo was published by National Geographic as one of the best 'Photos of the Day' in August 2012, and ever since then the mysterious and tranquil abode of Drina River has captured the imagination of millions. But in Serbia, the precariously placed house has been a popular tourist destination for decades, and a symbol of the picturesque Basta region. It was even nominated as one of the Seven Wonders of Serbia.

## Threat

FROM PAGE 16 opposing the cut on various export facilities that Bangladesh enjoys.

The representatives led by its president Hafizur Rahman Khan told Muhith that they would go to the USA next month and raise the issues of interest to Bangladesh in different forums there.

They urged the government to be vocal as to why 32 lakh garment workers needed to suffer just for the Rana Plaza disaster.

On this the finance minister said, "What we [govt] say carries little weight. For God's sake, please raise the issue in various forums."

Thirty years ago, garment factories had started their journey in rented facilities, he said, adding that now they had become an integrated industry and have been maintaining very good standard and price.

Citing the recent garment factory disasters, including those at Rana Plaza and Tazreen Fashions Ltd, he said only three to four such large scale accidents had taken place in the country over the last three decades.

The government had for the first time formed a cabinet committee to ensure building and workers' safety. The committee had been asked to submit its findings to the cabinet panel on garment industry in three months, said Muhith.

He said the government representatives who had been relieved of their usual tasks and engaged in the committee would submit their recommendations by this deadline and measures would be taken based on those.

"We have done so much, so why cut down the facilities?" asked the finance minister.

During the meeting with Muhith, the IBFB delegation also placed its recommendations on the next budget.

## Please, find

FROM PAGE 1 including the prime minister, in order to resolve the ongoing political crisis. But the opposition leader was not ready to meet them, said Akram.

The discussion, titled "Communal Intolerance and Political Violence: Our Duties", was organised by Bazlur Rahman Foundation at Dhaka Reporters' Unity. Noted economist Khandker Ibrahim Khaled was in the chair.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Sultana Kamal urged the pro-liberation and progressive forces to take a stand against the communal forces.

There was a conscious political process to plant and spread communalism through textbook curriculums and cultural activities, she said. "That is why we could not resist Hefajat-e Islam..."

"Why have we who claim to be conscious citizens and pro-liberation people lost our courage? We have to regain our strength."

Eminent cultural personality Pijush Bandopadhyay, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Shirin Akhter and columnist RM Debnath spoke among others on the occasion. Prothom Alo Joint Editor Sohrab Hasan presented the keynote speech.



Activists dressed in black clothes protest outside a Benetton fashion store yesterday in London over the retailer's failure to compensate the families of Bangladesh workers -- killed and injured -- after the Rana Plaza building collapse. A coffin was also carried as a reminder of the deadly outcome from a factory monitoring system which the activists claim puts profits before workers' safety and failed to prevent the latest disaster. The activists also targeted Mango fashion stores in London. Benetton and Mango labels were found in the rubble of the building in Savar, but they refused to pay any compensation to bereaved relatives and many workers, now left without any income, who are struggling to survive with their families.

## Two more

FROM PAGE 16 at DMCH at 1:00pm from abdominal injuries. Ashrafur used to work on the 7th floor of the collapsed building.

"He was released from the hospital on May 20, but was readmitted on the 21st following an aggravation of illness," his uncle Farhad Ali told The Daily Star.

The other victim, Anju Ara Akhter, 18, died in the ICU of Square Hospital around 12:30am.

Fourteen have died at hospitals till now after they were rescued from the collapse.

## 4 lakh to turn legal workers

FROM PAGE 16 opportunities... because it is a huge country," Shahidul Islam said.

There are 12 lakh Bangladeshis working in Saudi Arabia, the biggest labour market for Bangladesh, labour minister of Bangladesh embassy in Riyadh Dr Embadul Haque told The Daily Star.

Saudi Arabia, which reduced the number of recruitment of Bangladeshi workers from early 2008, had

been trying to discipline the foreign workers sector, he said.

Haque said Saudi Arabia through a new policy had made it mandatory for all foreign workers to be registered with the state-run General Organisation of Social Insurance (GOSI) in order to enjoy full medical coverage.

The Arab News newspaper recently reported that GOSI was compulsory for all Saudis, but was previously optional

for expatriates. Therefore, private companies could refuse to enroll their foreign workers in GOSI, but the new scheme says from now on private employers cannot turn their backs on them.

"This provision is very significant," Emdadul Haque said, adding that there were many cases where workers had faced huge difficulties due to health problems or workplace injuries. Most of them had no insurance coverage due to the refusal of

private employers to pay premiums.

Under the new policy, foreign workers, including Bangladeshis, will be hugely benefited in cases of health-related problems, he added.

"The whole idea of the programme is to ensure a healthy work environment in the Kingdom free of illegally working foreigners," Saudi Deputy Labour Minister Moufarrej bin Saad Al-Hagbani told the Arab News on May 13.

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