

Pay workers' wages, bonus by Aug 6

Govt asks RMG makers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday asked the readymade garment factory owners to pay their workers' wages of July with festival bonus within August 6, ahead of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

The three-day-long public holiday on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival of Muslims, might begin from August 8.

"Garment owners must pay their workers' wages for the month of July and the festival bonus within August 6," said Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir.

He said this after a meeting with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association at his secretariat office in the capital.

However, Atiqul Islam, president of BGMEA, apparel sector's apex trade body, said, "We will try to pay the garment workers' wages and [the festival] bonus by August 6 or 7."

A source at the meeting said no garment factory owner would be allowed to

shut down his factory, and terminate any workers before the Eid to ensure the workers' rights.

The government had decided to keep branches of the banks in the industrial areas open on August 6 for smooth payment to the workers, the minister added.

August 6 is a national holiday for the holy Shab-e-Qadr, a night of blessings.

Another source at the meeting said it had also decided to make a recommendation to the cabinet for extending one day Eid holiday starting from August 7 instead of August 8 to ease traffic jams due to the homebound people during the Eid festival.

In reply to a question about the progress of investigation into garment workers' leader Aminul Islam murder case, Alamgir said, "We are yet to make any progress that we can share with you [reporters]."

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku, and chiefs of police, Rapid Action Battalion, National Security Intelligence, and Directorate General of Forces Intelligence, among others, attended the meeting.

Govt, BGMEA warned over inaction

FROM PAGE 16

The court said it would take actions against the government and the BGMEA officials concerned if they fail to submit the reports on the day.

On June 19, the HC ordered secretaries to the ministries of home, and labour, the inspector general of police, and the president of the BGMEA to submit the reports on July 18.

In this regard, Deputy Attorney General Bishwojit Roy told the court that his office had not got any reports from the government or the BGMEA, and none of them had contacted his office.

BGMEA President Atiqul Islam told The Daily Star that his office had sent a compensation report to their lawyer Abdul Mannan around one month back to submit it before the HC.

The Daily Star correspondent could not reach Abdul Mannan for his comments despite repeated attempts yesterday.

Senior Secretary to the home ministry CQK Mustaq Ahmed also could not be reached despite repeated attempts over the phone.

Petitioners' lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua said the HC had expressed dismay since no reports on compensation or DNA tests were submitted before it. The court was dismayed for the same reason on June 19, he added.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Quazi Rezal-Ul Hoque and Justice ABM Altab Hossain also asked Tazreen owner Md Delwar Hossain to appear before it on July 28.

Delwar appeared before the bench yesterday as per its June 19 order. The bench fixed July 28 for passing an order on the issue.

On June 11, a government body probing the devastating fire had found "unpardonable neglect" on the part of the Tazreen owner, but said the incident might have been "subversive".

The probe report was



Managing Director of Tazreen Fashions Delwar Hossain was seen at the High Court yesterday. A devastating fire at his factory killed at least 112 workers last November. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

submitted before the HC on June 19.

The committee, formed by the home ministry, recommended that factory owner Delwar Hossain be tried under Section 304 (A) of the Penal Code, which hands down only five years' imprisonment as maximum

punishment.

Three anthropologists -- Naznin Akter Banu, Saydia Gulrukh Kamal, and Mahmudul Hasan Sumon -- filed a writ petition on April 28 with the HC, seeking directives on the government to arrest and bring Delwar to book.

The petitioners had also claimed 37 garment workers had been missing since the deadly fire.

The fire at Tazreen Fashions Ltd in Ashulia on the outskirts of Dhaka on November 24 last year killed at least 112 people and injured many others.

Safe haven for Rony, others

FROM PAGE 1

Monipur High School and College at Mirpur in the capital where she had gone to seek his comment on the school authorities' decision to charge admission fees way beyond the amount fixed by the government. Kamal is chairman of the school's managing committee.

Kamal, who earned much of a bad name during the previous AL-led government's tenure between 1996 and 2001 for many of his wrongdoings, did not have to face any action either from his party or the government. In a bizarre manner, he took the floor in parliament to claim his innocence and castigated the media for defaming him through running "false news".

What could have been the fate of Kamal, Rony and others for their unruly behaviour had they not belonged to the ruling camp?

Imagine the fate of some BNP MPs, including Moudud Ahmed and MK Anwar, who were not spared. The law worked strongly against them. They were sent to jail on allegations of obstructing law enforcers in discharging their duties during the opposition-enforced political programmes.

There are many more examples of how the rule of law falls flat when it needs to be strong against the ruling AL MPs.

During the Teknaf upazila parishad election on January 22, 2009, AL MP Abdur Rahman Bodi unlawfully entered a polling centre and beat up three assistant presiding officers. In May the same year, Bodi manhandled advocate Rakhil Mitra, a rights activist of the district.

With no action taken against him, Bodi seemed to feel rather encouraged to behave in a more unruly manner. In July 2011, he

assaulted a local school teacher when the latter protested Bodi's move to grab part of the land belonging to a school.

In Pabna, AL MP Golam Faruk Khandaker Prince openly adopted a stance against the district administration in September 2010 when his alleged demand for recruiting his party men in government service was not met by the then deputy commissioner. Rebuffed, Jubo League and Chhatra League men attacked the administration officials, including a female magistrate, while the recruitment examinations were going on.

There is more. AL lawmaker Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon was sued over the killing of party leader Ibrahim Ahmed in the capital in August 2010. Local AL leader Ibrahim was reportedly shot with the MP's licensed pistol.

Policemen, who have

gone to the extent of beating up opposition MPs and journalists, were also assaulted by the ruling AL MPs.

In Dhaka, AL MP Ilias Uddin Mollah assaulted an on-duty policeman on June 30, 2010. The policeman filed a case against Ilias.

Another AL MP, Sheikh Afil Uddin of Jessore, assaulted the officer-in-charge of a police station of his constituency in August 2010.

And AL MP Captain (ret'd) Ghyas Uddin Ahmed in May 2012 opened fire on a crowd to thwart an agitation against him in his constituency in Mymensingh.

Newspapers have also run numerous reports over many other MPs' unlawful and controversial activities in their constituencies. Apart from MPs, the ruling party men have also been involved in many unruly and violent activities.

Transparency

International Bangladesh in October 2012 revealed more shocking findings. Ninety-seven percent of the 149 sitting MPs surveyed by the TIB were involved in "negative activities," including being involved in or supportive of criminal activities, misuse of government funds and influencing government decisions.

And 70 percent of them were engaged in "criminal activities" like killing, land and river grabbing, extortion, tender manipulation and cheating. Many MPs even used their position to boost their income.

All these unruly and controversial activities have contributed largely to an overshadowing of many successes of the government. These also demonstrate how the AL and the government-led by it have miserably failed to uphold the rule of law, which is a pre-requisite for good governance.

CONTEMPT OF COURT DISPOSED OF

Witness seeks review

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after International Crimes Tribunal-2 disposed of a contempt of court rule, Jahir Uddin Jalal, respondent of the rule, yesterday sought review of the order.

The tribunal on May 28 asked Jalal, a prosecution witness in Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed's case, to reply why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against him for allegedly assaulting a counsel of Mojaheed.

Following a petition filed by Munshi Ahsan Kabir, who was allegedly assaulted by Jalal on May 26, the tribunal issued a show cause notice and asked Jalal to give his explanation.

Submitting his explanation on June 30, Jalal denied his alleged assault on the counsel and said the allegation brought by Mojaheed's lawyer "could be a strategic plan to discredit him in some way".

Jalal also said he was ready to face any enquiry or investigation in this regard.

Kabir's lawyer Tajul Islam yesterday said apart from assaulting his client, Jalal had earlier verbally attacked another counsel of Mojaheed outside the courtroom and he sought action against Jalal.

At that point, Jalal's lawyer

Mohammad Mohsen Rashid prayed to the court to dispose of the case, issuing a warning to Jalal for his earlier conduct.

When the court sought Kabir's opinion, he said, "He [Jalal's lawyer] didn't say anything unusual. He is a respected lawyer. Now it's up to the court."

Around 11:30am, the court disposed of the matter, issuing a warning to Jalal and said it would give a detailed order later on.

However, around 3:00pm Jalal himself filed a petition with the registrar's office of the tribunal, Jalal told The Daily Star last night.

"My lawyer gave the proposal without taking my consent. That's why I filed the petition seeking review of the order," said Jalal.

Registrar AKM Nasiruddin Mahmud and Deputy Registrar Arunav Chakraborty, however, told The Daily Star that they were not aware about Jalal's petition.

Jalal said as the registrar was not in the office, he had submitted the petition to the official of the registrar's office.

Jalal, who is a freedom fighter, is also the second prosecution witness in the war crimes case against Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami pending with Tribunal-1.

AL embarrassed

FROM PAGE 1

"We will discuss the matter in the party forum and urge the party high command to take stern action against him [Roni]," AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif yesterday told The Daily Star.

As Rony is not a member of the party at any stage, "we can't take organisational steps against him." But the AL parliamentary party can take action as Roni belongs to it, Hanif said. He also suggested taking legal action against Roni.

Political leaders must

have good relations with journalists as they point out the ideology, successes and philosophy of any political party to the people, said Hanif, also a special assistant to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"Journalists are the bridge between politicians and the people,"

The AL leader advised journalists to discharge their duties more carefully to avert any untoward incidents.

Following the assault on the journalists on Saturday, Independent TV filed the attempted mur-

der case with Shahbagh Police Station against Rony and his 20 associates.

Roni then filed a counter suit against the owner of the TV channel, Salman F Rahman, Imtiaz and Mukul, accusing Imtiaz and Mukul of storming into his office, beating him up, threatening him with death and trying to extort money from him.

Police are investigating the two cases to find out who initiated the attack and how, said Assistant Commissioner of Ramna zone Shibli Noman.

At a press briefing at his

secretariat office, Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir, in reply to journalists' queries as to whether Rony would be arrested, said, "The filing of a case does not mean that an arrest has to be made."

"Action will be taken in line with the existing law of the country," he added.

Of the two journalists, Imtiaz said Shahbag police had initially declined to file the case even though they had footage of the attack and bore injury marks.

Besides, police them-

selves had rescued the two from Roni's office and taken them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for treatment.

"They [police] took our case after two hours but they filed Rony's case based on a verbal statement by the lawmaker and without any document," Imtiaz said.

"Our camera had been broken but a vandalism case was filed against us. I want to know what had been vandalised at Rony's office," he said, referring to the allegations brought by Roni.

Cameraperson Mukul is still undergoing treatment at Metropolitan Hospital in the capital's Mohakhali.

"He received serious injuries in the waist and still cannot stand up without any support," Imtiaz said.

In primary investigation, it was found that the TV crew had been following Rony for the last couple of days, said a police official of Ramna division. Unable to tolerate the constant surveillance Rony had lost his temper and attacked them, he added.

On Wednesday, the journalists also interviewed Rony regarding

"his driver's family living in the flat allotted to him at the NAM Bhaban" on Manik Mia Avenue in the capital, Imtiaz said.

Meanwhile, different journalist bodies, including Dhaka University Journalists' Association, issued statements condemning the attack and demanding exemplary punishment to the accused to stop the torture of journalists all over the country.

Policymakers talk about press freedom but such an act by a ruling party MP puts that good intention into question, senior broadcast journalists said.

Govt official

FROM PAGE 16

He also violated the rules by joining a meeting of the council at Gono Bhaban on Saturday.

The government appointed Mansur of Dhaka University's geology department as the top official of the Bangladesh Mineral Oil and Gas Corporation on October 18, 2009. His tenure was extended in 2011.

"If anyone is appointed on a contractual basis, he or she will abide by the government rules," said a senior official of the public administration ministry, requesting anonymity. "In this case, the rules have been clearly violated."

Asked who could do anything about it now, the official said those who had appointed Mansur should take departmental action against him.

Former communications secretary Ali Kabir said a public servant becoming an adviser and joining a meeting of a political party means a clear breach of discipline and rules.

"Every organisation has official discipline which should be followed by every public servant while in service, no matter how they were appointed," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He added that although Mansur had been appointed on a contractual basis, he should maintain his official decorum.

The professor had been appointed to work for the republic, not to get involved in politics or work for a party, Kabir said. "Anyone who wants to get involved in politics should not join a government organisation."

In this regard, Dr Mansur said on Saturday, "I do not know whether I can join a meeting [of the advisory council]. I did it because she [the prime minister] asked me to."

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Protesters block road

FROM PAGE 16

vehicles yesterday.

The students, who could not pass the honours first-year final examinations (2010-11 session) under the system, demanded a re-evaluation of their results and publishing them in accordance with the previous system as they claimed that a huge number of students failed due to the change.

They blocked the road near the main entrance of NU at Board Bazar in Gazipur at around 11:30am torching tyres and at one stage they started vandalising vehicles, reported our Gazipur correspondent. At least 11 vehicles were vandalised in front of the university, suspending traffic for one and a half hours.

Police charged baton and fired several rounds of tear shells and rubber bullets to disperse the students from the highway, creating severe traffic congestion. Five

students were reportedly injured.

The students also formed human chains at Thakurgaon, Moulvibazar and Faridpur to press their demands. Students from Faridpur submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner.

The university authorities in a press release yesterday said they will soon come up with a decision in this regard and urged the students not to waste time in holding demonstrations.

The grading system stipulated that students failing to secure pass marks in each subject or failing to maintain an overall 1.75 GPA on a scale of 4.0 in the first year, final exams would not be promoted to the next year.

The published results on July 15 following this system showed 54 percent of around 2.25 lakh examinees scored at least 1.75 on the GPA scale, while the rest

failed.

The students want the previous system restored, which allows them to be promoted to the next year even with pass marks in only one subject for the year.

University officials said that the division system was replaced with the grading system two years ago and the syllabus was revised accordingly. They, in the press release, said evaluation of answer sheets under the grading system is globally recognised and approved.

"The students knew the system before their admission," said Md Badruzzaman, controller of examinations at NU. "According to the new system, first-year students need to score at least 1.75 grade points, second-year students at least 2.25 grade points and third-year students at least 2.25 grade points to be promoted to the next classes."