

# Losses pile on RMG factories

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Momin Mondol, managing director of Mondol Group, another leading garment maker, said all his 16,000 workers in three factories had been sitting idle for the last five days.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday said the enhanced wages would be announced in late November.

"I have ordered the law enforcers to ensure security of factories and go tough on outsiders," he told reporters after a meeting with the garment owners and workers at his secretariat office in the capital.

Former BGMEA president Abdus Salam Murshedy said they requested the government to deploy members of Border Guard Bangladesh along with Rab and policemen in the factories of the crisis-hit areas.

The home minister has asked the factory owners to resume production today and assured them of security, said Murshedy who was present at the meeting.

Jabbar of DBL Group said, during the protests in the last five days, the unruly workers not only vandalised

the factories, but also burnt eight delivery vans and an ambulance of the company.

He added he would have to go for expensive air shipment to maintain the lead-time set by the buyers.

The owner of Mondol Group said he would have to pay an additional \$6 lakh for air shipment due to the delay caused by the unrest.

"Other garment makers will face the same fate," Mondol said.

Meanwhile, labour leaders have assured the state minister for labour and employment of their support in reopening the factories today, Labour Secretary Mikail Shipar said after an emergency meeting.

In a statement, IndustriALL Bangladesh Council's General Secretary Roy Ramesh said they had proposed the minimum wages for workers based on the Millennium Development Goals and the cost of living, which is around \$120 per month.

"There is a consensus among all sections of Bangladeshi society that wages are low and workplace safety is negligible," the statement added.

It is now to be seen whether the employers and

the government come up with a proposal that meets the aspirations of the agitating workers, said IndustriALL Global Union Regional Secretary Sudhershnan Rao in the statement.

Meanwhile, at least 25 workers were injured when police charged batons on them as they were demonstrating for more than one hour, blocking the Dhaka-Tangail highway and the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road.

The workers vandalised at least 10 vehicles and eight factories in Savar and Gazipur.

**GAZIPUR**

The managements of more than 144 RMG units were forced to stop production at their factories fearing further vandalism, our correspondent reports.

The demonstration started around 8:30am when the workers blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway, halting traffic movement for two hours.

The workers vandalised four factories -- Mahmud Jeans, Niagara Textile, Apex and Dressman -- in Kaliakoir.

Later, they put barricades



Police disperse garment workers of Fatullah industrial area in Narayanganj, as they demonstrate on the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road yesterday to press home their demand for a pay hike.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

at different points from Konabari to Chandra and vandalised at least 10 vehicles there.

The agitating workers, however, moved from the highway around 10:30am.

**SAVAR**

At least 20 workers were injured during a 30-minute clash with law enforcers in Zirani area of Savar around 9:30am.

The clash began when

several thousand workers of Masihata Group, Pall-Mall Group and Jeans Plus blocked the Dhaka-Tangail highway.

The workers also vandalised at least four factories,

said Abdus Sattar, deputy assistant director of Ashulia industrial police.

**NARAYANGANJ**

Around 5,000 workers of at least seven garment units gathered in front of Shibui

Market and tried to block the Dhaka-Narayanganj link road around 9:30am.

The road communication resumed after an hour. At least five workers were injured during the clash.

## INDO-BANGLA LAND BOUNDARY DEAL

### Fresh move for passage of bill

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India hopes to make another attempt to get the Land Boundary Agreement Bill passed by parliament on the first day of the winter session expected in November.

"We hope to do it [passage of bill] on the first day of the next session," a highly-placed source said about the LBA bill ahead of the meeting between the prime ministers of Bangladesh and India in New York on September 28.

The bill, which provides for exchange of 161 adversely-held enclaves

between India and Bangladesh, could not be taken up by parliament due to strong opposition from some parties like the Trinamool Congress, BJP and Asom Gana Parishad.

A constitution amendment bill is required to be passed to ratify the LBA because it involves exchange of land. Bangladesh parliament has passed the LBA long ago to give legal cover to the Indira-Mujib deal signed in 1974.

The agreement is aimed at settling the issue of enclaves along the 4,069 km border between India and Bangladesh.

## Ban on Jamaat demanded

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"The government will have to ban these organisations through executive order before the polls. Otherwise, vulnerable groups like women and religious minorities will not be able to cast their votes without fear," said Shahriar Kabir, executive president of Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, which champions the demand for war crimes trial.

The consequences will be dangerous if Jamaat is allowed to participate in the polls, he said, adding, "Why should we be frightened [to ban Jamaat]?"

The recent verdicts by the war crimes tribunals described Jamaat as a terrorist organisation and the

prime minister herself branded the party as a terrorist organisation, he added.

The remarks came at a discussion on "Jamaat-e-Islami's involvement in militancy and international terror network" organised by the Nirmul Committee at the National Museum in the capital. A documentary titled "The Ultimate Jihad" by Shahriar Kabir was screened before the discussion.

Speaking on the 52-minute documentary, which was made based on interviews, Shahriar said the film showed the fact that the US was the patron of all terrorist activities and it had decided to promote political Islam in different Muslim countries to resist

Soviet Union soon after the World War II.

The US does not want any Muslim country to become a secular state, and efforts for establishing secular countries by the statesmen from Turkey to Indonesia were thwarted by direct and indirect intervention of the US, he said, adding that the US had roles in the killings of statesmen of many countries.

"They [the US] are not worried about Bangladesh as they already assumed that the secular and progressive government will not be able to come to power in 2014 elections," he added.

Muntassir Mamoon, vice-president of the Committee, said, "Banning only Jamaat will not solve

the problem. We have to be vocal against all the organisations that operate like Jamaat."

The government will not ban Jamaat in its tenure, but it will be possible only when the people get committed and take to the streets to realise their demand, he added.

Eminent historian Syed Anwar Husain demanded for banning all religion-based politics.

Presided over by Justice Ghulam Rabbani, the discussion was also addressed by State Minister for Social Welfare Promode Mankin, Bangladesh Mahila Parishad Chairperson Ayesha Khanam and Gonojagoron Mancha spokesperson Imran H Sarker.

## India to protect

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Minister Manmohan Singh, can become a law only if approved by parliament within six months.

In July this year, the Supreme Court had struck down a provision in electoral law that protects a convicted lawmaker from being kept out of parliament if he or she has appealed against his or her conviction.

The government had earlier failed to get a bill to this effect passed in the monsoon session of parliament due to pressure from main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party. The bill was then referred to the department-related stand-

ing committee.

On July 10, the Indian Supreme Court had ruled that an MP or a member of state assembly would be immediately disqualified if convicted by a court of a criminal offence with a jail sentence of two years or more.

The government move came against the backdrop of a Congress member of parliament, Rashid Masood, facing the prospect of disqualification as he was recently convicted in a case of corruption and other offences.

The BJP termed the ordinance "unconstitutional" and asked President Pranab Mukherjee not to sign it.

## Mr Incredibeard

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Webb, who is also known as Mr Incredibeard, has experimented with every style imaginable from curls and waves to making his beard hold a burger and fries.

There is also a shot of his beard completely straightened and another in which it has been fashioned into a bowl containing noodles.

The 29-year-old explains on his blog that this wife helps him to put his hirsute styles together with a little extra help from various hair products.

Most recently Mr Incredibeard has been applying The Woodsman Mustache Wax and Beard Oil.

On his blog, the lustroously bearded Webb also shares tips about maintaining beards and advice on replicating his wacky looks.

## Shun armament, divert funds to education

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our vision and development agenda to turn Bangladesh into a middle income country by 2021.

The premier added: Bangladesh has achieved gender parity in primary and secondary schools, a target of MDG-3, by providing ICT facilities in schools, stipends to 11.90 million students every year, 915 million free textbooks to students and financial support from the Prime Minister's Trust Fund to poor students for higher studies.

The Bangladesh government, she noted, also has taken massive programmes for the school feeding programme funded by local donors, modernisation of the madrasa curriculum and education of boys and girls with autism and other developmental disorders.

Hasina thanked the development partners, UNDP and other agencies for providing support to the efforts.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon also spoke.

**HELP ATTAINING MDG**

Describing environmental sustainability (MDG-7) as a formidable challenge for Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged world leaders to come up with their promised support to help Bangladesh attain the goal.

She also asserted that the country would remain in the forefront of global efforts in laying down the political groundwork for intergovernmental negotiations in achieving the post-2015 development agenda.

She was addressing a session on "Special event to follow-up efforts made towards achieving the MDGs" at the UN

Headquarters in New York.

The premier co-chaired the session with Irish Deputy Prime Minister Eamon Gilmore.

"The MDG-7 is a formidable challenge for Bangladesh. However, the country has already met or is on track to meet the MDG-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6," she mentioned.

Bangladesh is a low-lying coastal state, fraught with natural disasters, which made it difficult for the country to achieve the MDG-7, added Hasina. "Our government has been implementing a 134-point Action Plan in line with our mitigation and adaptation policy."

The global community should positively respond to their promises, she told her audience.

Recalling her association with the adoption of the historic UN Millennium Declaration in September,

2000, she said, "As the prime minister of Bangladesh, I was here [New York] at that time. It gave a Development Vision and set goals on reducing poverty, hunger and inequality, among others, by 2015."

"In 2010, I was here again as the prime minister and termed the Millennium Declaration as the Magna Carta for a world free from hunger and underdevelopment. I am now here at this special event to share our experiences on the MDGs, and thoughts on the post-2015 agenda," she mentioned.

Hasina mentioned that after returning from the Millennium Summit in 2000, she decided to include the MDGs in the mainstream of Bangladesh's development agenda and poverty reduction strategy.

As per the decision, she

said, the government integrated the MDGs in its annual, mid-term and long-term development plan. "Our actions have proved to be success stories that are being acclaimed universally...."

Our efforts have led to making us honoured with the MDG Award 2010, South-South Award and FAO Diploma Award for reducing hunger by 2012."

As far as the MDG-3 is concerned, the premier said, Bangladesh had achieved gender equality in primary and secondary education in 2009.

On MDG-4, Bangladesh has achieved under-5 mortality rate of 36 per 1,000 live births in 2012, against the targeted 48 by 2015.

"We did well in MDG-5 by reducing maternal mortality from 322 in 2001 to 194 in 2010," she said.

## Pak quake toll 328

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More than 300,000 people had been affected by the quake across six districts -- Awaran, Kech, Gwadar, Panjgur, Chaghi and Khuzdar -- he said.

"People are still trapped under the rubble but it is a huge disaster and it will take time to reach and rescue all the people," he said.

PDMA official Ahmad Nawaz confirmed the death toll and said the injured numbered 498.

The authorities have prioritised finding the injured and getting them to hospital, but the task is hampered by the area's remoteness and the limited infrastructure.

They are also trying to provide tents to shelter the thousands left homeless.

The army has rushed medical staff and troops to

the devastated area to help with rescue efforts, along with seven tonnes of food and a tonne of medicine.

The scale of the territory involved is daunting. Awaran's population is scattered over an area of more than 21,000 square kilometres.

Baluchistan makes up about 45 percent of Pakistan's area but is the country's least populated and least developed province. The area is also rife with separatist and Islamist militants as well as bandits.

Tremors were felt on Tuesday as far away as New Delhi and even Dubai in the Gulf, while people in the Indian city of Ahmedabad, near the border with Pakistan, ran into the streets in panic.

## Anger written in tears

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families expressed frustration at being denied justice.

The press briefing was jointly organised by Families United Against Road Accidents, Saif Foundation, Paribesh Bachao Andolan, Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust, and Bangladesh Press and Human Rights Foundation.

During the briefing, the families observed that the home minister's move undermined those who died in hit-and-run encounters. This would include cases where a driver ran over a person instead of stopping or fled the scene leaving the person hit to die; both tantamount to intended murder.

Samia Halim, mother of deceased Saif Ahmed Arnob, who was hit and run over by a covered van on the eve of Eid-ul-Azha in 2009 while he was coming home with a sacrificial animal, expressed grave disappointment over the uncertainty of justice.

"The minister's initiative

will make it easier for perpetrators to get away. I have been fighting for justice for so long, only to get delayed more by people with vested interests," said Saima, also chairperson of Saif Foundation, which advocates for safer roads.

Lawmaker Tarana Halim, also aunt of Saif, said such a provision allowed bail to reckless drivers and thus ensured them a way out.

"The assurance of a bail provision will further encourage people to drive recklessly," she said adding that classifying all road crash fatalities as accidental deaths also meant no one would even investigate whether it was otherwise.

Mohammad Mahbub Hossain, teacher at Dhaka College, deplored the move saying that he was being denied justice for his two nephews and brother-in-law, who had died in two separate road crashes.

Abu Naser Khan, chair-

person of Paribesh Bachao Andolan who lost a brother in a road accident, said such cases were treated with more negligence than those for other types of homicides.

The minister should enact a law that served the interest of mass people, not vested quarters, said Nazrul Islam, whose wife had been killed in a road accident.

Meanwhile, the home minister's promise to transport owners and workers seems to have taken effect.

The case of yesterday's road accident at Kamalapur was filed under section 304(b), Officer-in-Charge of Shahjahanpur Police Station Syed Ziauddin told The Daily Star.

In the accident, a minibus hit a rickshaw flinging its passenger Rokhsana Begum Laila to the ground. The minibus then ran over her.

"Laila left behind three children; the youngest is only five," family sources told The Daily Star.

## BSF pushes in 19 people thru' border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Indian Border Security Force left 19 Bangladeshi citizens on Bangladesh territory across Bakchar border in Chapainawabganj on Tuesday night.

The Bangladeshi nationals, who are from Chapainawabganj, Patuakhali, Gopalganj, Bhola and Sunamganj districts, were detained by members of Border Guard Bangladesh near the border under Alatali Union.

Requesting anonymity, an official of the home ministry said driving them to Bangladesh territory like that was illegal, as their nationality could not be ascertained.

There had been instances of leaving Bangla-speaking Indian nationals on Bangladesh territory, he

said, adding that the legal procedures require India to inform Bangladesh's foreign ministry about such persons. Bangladesh then verifies their nationality and allows them in.

The citizens said they had sneaked into India through different borders in 2011. After being arrested by Indian police, they served two years in Bahrampur Central Jail in West Bengal.

Lt Col Monzurul Alam, commanding officer of 9 BGB Battalion in Chapainawabganj, said BSF members of Ramnagar camp under Murshidabad, West Bengal, had "pushed them in" around 11:30 pm.

He said BSF did not follow the legal procedures, adding that they were handed over to Sadar Police Station yesterday afternoon.

## US signs UN arms treaty

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"This is about keeping weapons out of the hands of terrorists and rogue actors," Kerry said after signing the Arms Trade Treaty in front of UN officials.

"This treaty strengthens our security and builds global security without undermining the legitimate international trade in conventional arms," he said.

Kerry devoted much of his remarks to assuaging concerns inside the United States, where the weapons industry holds significant political sway.

The Senate needs to ratify the treaty, which has quickly galvanized US conservatives who are deeply suspicious of both gun regulations and the United Nations.

"This treaty will not diminish anyone's freedom," Kerry said.

"In fact, the treaty recognizes the freedom of both individuals and states to obtain, possess and use

arms for legitimate purposes," he said.

If the Senate refuses to ratify the treaty, the United States could face the same situation as under the Kyoto Protocol on climate change in which it helped draft the pact but remained a conspicuous holdout.

The United States hesitated at finalizing the arms treaty as Obama faced reelection last year.

But the United States was part of efforts that sealed the treaty earlier this year, although critics say it watered it down to avoid any international enforcement.

Only three nations -- Iran, North Korea and Syria -- voted against the treaty at the UN General Assembly on April 2.

But 23 others abstained, including major players China, India and Russia.

Russia, which along with Iran is the chief supporter of Syria's embattled President Bashar al-Assad, said that

the treaty was too vague and could be used for political ends.

The treaty requires states to prohibit shipments of weapons that could be used in human rights violations including "attacks directed against civilian objects."

Italy, the world's eighth largest arms exporter, yesterday became the fifth UN member and the first European Union nation to vote to ratify the treaty. The treaty comes into force once 50 nations ratify it.

Advocates for the treaty said that they expected more than 100 countries to sign it by yesterday, which comes during the annual UN General Assembly summit.

Kathi Lynn Austin, executive director of the Conflict Awareness Project which aims to track illicit arms trafficking, hoped that the US signature would motivate Russia and China to join the treaty and develop stricter export regulations.