



A bloodied worker of Asian Apparels Ltd being taken to safety with the help of her fellows during a clash between the workers of the factory and the law enforcers in Chittagong city's Station Road area yesterday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

# Ctg sees fierce cop-worker clash

Police charge batons, fire tear gas, rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators protesting relocation of factory; 100 injured, '100 picked up'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Around 100 people, including 10 policemen, were reportedly injured in a clash between workers of a readymade garment factory and the law enforcers in Chittagong city's Station Road area yesterday morning.

Several hundred workers of Asian Apparels Ltd took to the street protesting relocation of the factory from Station Road to Kattali in the city, said police.

Police picked up around 100 workers from the spot, claimed workers.

Contacted, Jasim Uddin, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, who was also injured in the clash, said when police requested the workers to leave the street, they started hurling brickbats at them, leading to the clash.

Police charged batons, and fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the workers, said the OC, adding that some were picked up from the spot. "We will interrogate and later release them if they are found not guilty."

The demonstrators alleged that the supervisors in the factory at Kattali used to torture the workers, including

the female ones. So they do not want to work there, they added.

"A supervisor yesterday (Tuesday) physically tortured a worker in the cutting section, leading to a commotion among his colleagues," said a worker preferring anonymity, adding, "United, workers protested the incident and came to the factory's head office on Station Road, demanding justice."

"Then the authorities told us to come today (Wednesday) for arbitration," said another worker.

As a result, they assembled before the head office but police started charging them with batons, injuring over 100 workers, he alleged.

Workers said most of the injured were given primary treatment.

Six workers were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital, said Assistant Sub-inspector Pankaj Barua of CMCH police camp.

Maninuddin Ahmed Mintu, first vice president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters' Association (BGMEA), termed the incident as part of "sabotage" instigated by outsiders.

"The authority shifted the factory around two months ago on compliance issues," he said, adding, "All the allegations of workers are baseless."

Asian Apparels Chairman MA Salam did not receive his cellphone despite repeated attempts.

The half-an-hour long clash caused sufferings to several thousand people, including students, in the busy area adjacent to New Market. Traffic remained halted for around two hours, triggering a long tailback.

Many women were seen running with their kids during the clash.

Our CU correspondent adds, workers of Amin Jute Mill yesterday blocked the rail track of Chittagong University shuttle trains and Chittagong-Hathazari road for over one and half hours, demanding their dues.

They withdrew the blockade after being assured by the authorities and police administration of being paid, said Md Mohsin, officer-in-charge of Bakalia Police Station.

Earlier on August 21, the workers also put similar barricade demanding dues.

## 23kg of gold seized at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials last night seized 23 kilogrammes of gold worth around Tk 11 crore and arrested a man at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Mohammad Ataul Majid, 32, of Syedpur, arrived at the airport from Singapore on a Singapore Airlines flight around 10:30pm.

On information, the officials challenged him while he was passing the green channel on a wheel chair pretending to be a patient, and recovered 225 gold bars from a belt wrapped around his waist, said HM Ehsanul Kabir, assistant commissioner of customs.

## Court accepts charges, issues arrest warrant for BNP's Quayum

COURT CORRESPONDENT



A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants for two accused, including BNP leader MA Quayum, in the murder case of Italian national Cesare Tavella.

Judge Kamrul Hossain Molla of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after showing the duo - Quayum, ex-ward commissioner from Badda and a joint convener of Dhaka city BNP, and Sohel alias Bhangari Sohel -- as fugitives.

Before issuing the arrest warrants, the court accepted charges against Quayum, Sohel and five others.

The other accused -- Mohammad Matin, brother of Quayum; Tamjid Ahmed Rubel, Russell Chowdhury, Minhajul Arefin, also known as Bhagne Russell, alleged supplier of firearms; and Shakhawat Hossain Sharif, who allegedly provided the motorcycle used in the killing, -- are behind bars.

Tavella, an aid worker, was killed in Dhaka's Gulshan Diplomatic Zone on September 28 last year.

Barely a week after on October 3, Japanese national Kunio Hoshi, a farmer, was shot dead at Alutari village of Kaunia upazila in Rangpur.

The judge yesterday passed the order after scrutinising

## Aircraft takeoff aborted at Dhaka airport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The takeoff of a Regent Airways aircraft was aborted at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday following technical glitches.

The Singapore-bound flight with 111 passengers on board was scheduled to fly at 11:30am. The pilot found some technical problems in its landing gear, Akter U Ahmed, chief commercial officer of the airline, told The Daily Star.

With another standby aircraft of the private airline, the passengers flew to Singapore around 4:00pm, added Akhtar.

The aircraft was moved away from the taxiway of the airport for repair.

A Biman official said the incident might lead a fatal accident if fire broke out in the engine.

## US LAB TESTS DNA profiles found in Avijit murder evidence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have received results of DNA tests conducted in a US lab on 13 pieces of evidence collected from the spot writer-blogger Avijit Roy was hacked to death near Dhaka University's Teacher-Student Centre.

"We have received (DNA) profiles...through an email several days ago," a Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) official preferring anonymity said without elaborating.

During the February 26, 2015 attack, the two identified militants also badly injured Avijit's wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya. The evidence collected includes two machetes, a bag and blood.

A four-member Federal Bureau of Investigation team then visited the crime scene.

DMP's detective branch, investigating the case, provided the evidences on March 10 and sent DNA samples of eight suspects arrested in the case at different times.

Following arrests in the case, police will now compare the DNA profiles with those found in the evidence.

DMP on Sunday released seven video clips where six alleged attackers were seen following Avijit.

## Launch passengers suffer as workers keep striking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Public suffering continued yesterday, the second day of an indefinite strike called by water transport workers demanding, among others, Tk 10,000 as the minimum monthly wage.

Moreover, vessel owners stated that they would not sit with workers. They did not respond to the Department of Labour's invitation to attend a meeting with government officials and workers at 7:00pm yesterday to end the deadlock.

The department's director, SM Ashrafauzzaman, said they would sit with the owners separately today in the morning.

Most vessels have stayed put since 12:01am on Tuesday. Businessmen also suffered losses as vessels carrying goods remained stranded in many terminals across the country.

However, many owners hired irregular workers to run their launches. The Sadarghat terminal saw the departure of 30 launches yesterday while on other days it is 70, said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority officials.

Like the previous day, many passengers came to Sadarghat and waited, hoping to catch a launch to their destinations.

"I have come to Dhaka around three days ago to see off one of my relatives, who will go abroad. Today, I want to return home through launches because it is cheaper and comfortable. But launches are not available," said Mustaq Ahmed, a tailor heading to Chandpur.

The 15-point demand including increasing overtime pay, festival bonuses and other benefits, ensuring security and maintaining navigability on waterways.

Currently, the minimum wage is Tk 3,900, they said.

The workers' previous seven-day movement ended on April 27 following a tripartite meeting.

The meeting decided to revise the wage structure setting the minimum wage at Tk 10,000. But owners did not agree and later they filed a writ petition against it.

## DEATH PENALTY SC starts hearing Mir Quasem's review petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Rejecting Tuesday's appeal of convicted war criminal Mir Quasem Ali for a three-week deferment, the Supreme Court yesterday started hearing his petition of June 19 seeking review of its verdict upholding death penalty for him.

Quasem's lawyer Khandker Mahbob Hossain placed a short argument before the Appellate Division bench headed by Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha fixed August 28 for resuming the hearing.

Khandker moved the deferment petition, saying he could not prepare arguments as assistant lawyer and Quasem's son, Barrister Mir Ahmmad Bin Quasem, who had the case's records and documents, had "disappeared".

The apex court expressed regret, saying this could not be a logical ground for an adjournment.

When the chief justice and Attorney General Mahbubey Alam offered relevant documents so that he could start placing arguments, Khandker turned them down, claiming he could do so from memory.

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