

## WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES

DHAKA 33.9 | L 26.2 MYMENSINGH 27.6 | L 25.0 CHITTAGONG 33.0 | L 26.3 SYLHET 30.5 | L 24.4 RAJSHAHI 33.6 | L 25.1 RANGPUR 30.8 | L 24.2 KHULNA 35.0 | L 27.5 BARISAL 33.8 | L 27.3 COX'S BAZAR 32.2 | L 25.5

Light to moderate rain/thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna &amp; Barisal divisions till 6:00pm today, reports UNB quoting Met Office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:02pm and rises tomorrow at 5:45am.



MINIMUM WAGE OF TK 8,000

## RMG workers stage demos in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Workers of readymade garment factories yesterday staged demonstrations in Dhaka, rejecting the government's decision of fixing their minimum monthly wage at Tk 8,000.

They demanded a minimum monthly wage of Tk 16,000 instead of Tk 8,000 for the 4.4 million garment workers during the demonstration in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

Over a hundred workers, led by Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra, staged a sit-in at around 11:30am blocking a side of the two-way road and halting traffic movement on the road for half an hour.

The workers' leaders said they would announce tougher programmes if the government does not meet their demand soon.

Later, they brought out a procession chanting slogans, which ended at Naya Paltan intersection.

The government on Thursday raised the minimum monthly wage for the garment workers by around 51 percent to Tk 8,000 from the existing Tk 5,300, with effect from December this year.

Md Mujibul Haque Chunnu, state minister for labour and employment, announced this at a press briefing at his secretariat office

after the fifth and final meeting of the wage board formed in January.

Expressing solidarity with the workers' demand, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) President Mujahidul Islam Selim said the minimum salary of garment workers should be Tk 21,000, considering the price hike of daily necessities. Even then, workers are demanding Tk 16,000, he said.

He said it is not acceptable that the gross salary of a sweeper at a government office is Tk 17,000, while minimum wage of a skilled garment worker is Tk 8,000.

Speaking at the rally, Joly Talukdar, general secretary of Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra, said the current government is an owner-friendly government.

He said the government should accept the demand of the over 40 lakh workers, rejecting the demand of only 5,500 garment owners.

Garments Sramik Front, Bangladesh Garments Sramik Sanghati and Garments Sramik Adhikar Andolan, a platform of 12 organisations, staged demonstrations over

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Garment workers stage a protest in front of Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka yesterday, rejecting the government's announcement of fixing the minimum monthly salary at Tk 8,000, instead of Tk 16,000 as per their demand. Garments Sramik Trade Union Kendra organised the sit-in.

## BNP didn't go to US to complain: Moudud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday said party Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam and others went to the UN Headquarters in New York, USA following an invitation of its secretary general.

"The BNP delegation went there [to the UN] to present the country's real situation, not to make any complaint," said the former law minister while speaking at a discussion at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

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## 'Where do they get so much money?'

Quader says about BNP hiring US lobbyists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday raised a question about BNP's source of money over the "hiring of a lobbyist" to influence the US administration.

"Where does BNP get so much money?" said Quader while addressing a function marking 10th founding anniversary of Anwer Khan Modern Medical College Hospital in the capital.

BNP has hired the services of two US-based firms to lobby the Trump administration on its behalf, according to the US portal Politico.

The contract with the firms, Blue Star and Rasky Partners, costs \$35,000 a month, Politico said.

Referring to the issue, Quader said his party does not have any objection over it, "but the questionable matter is how BNP did this? Can they do this? Was there any necessity?"

He said after failing to wage a movement, some leaders of BNP went to lodge allegations with the United Nations.

"BNP will lobby the US government by appointing lobbyists to put pressure on us [Awami League] and the government.... we will not bow down to anyone's pressure," the AL general secretary said.

Quader said, "Is Bangladesh Pakistan? Is Bangladesh Afghanistan? Is Bangladesh South Sudan or Somalia; or is Bangladesh war-torn Iraq or Iran? We will resolve our problems here."

## 2.5kg gold seized at Dhaka airport

UNB, Dhaka

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) seized 25 gold bars weighing around 2.5kg from the cargo section of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport on Thursday night.

Based on information that a gold consignment was brought from Singapore by a Singapore Airlines flight and kept inside a carton at the cargo section, a CIID team recovered 25 gold bars in presence of other agencies, said CIID Director General Dr Shahidul Islam.



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