

RMG WORKERS' WAGE

Disparity evident

Tripartite body says it is working to reduce gap; 30 hurt in clash, unrest continues for 5th day

STAR REPORT

The tripartite committee formed to resolve the labour unrest in garment industry has found disparity in three grades of the workers' pay structure, and has started working to minimise the wage gap that sparked the protests five days ago.

The 10-member committee with representatives from the government, union leaders and factory owners said disparity was found in grades three, four and five.

"The wages of the workers in those grades did not increase as expected. We are working seriously to reduce the gap in wages in different grades," Afroza Khan, secretary to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, said at a press briefing following a closed-door committee meeting at the ministry yesterday.

In the new pay scale effective from December, the basic wages in the third and fourth grades fell by Tk 82 and Tk 40, and those in grade five saw a rise of a piffling Tk 156.

Meanwhile, RMG workers staged demonstrations for the fifth straight day to protest the wage disparity. They blocked Dhaka-Tangail highway and clashed with police in Ashulia industrial area yesterday morning.

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BGB personnel deployed near a factory in Genda of Savar as some garment workers leave the RMG unit finding it closed yesterday. Inset, a notice at the gate of another factory in Ashulia says the unit will remain shut for an indefinite period. Garment workers staged demonstrations for the fifth straight day yesterday protesting disparity in their wage structures.



Find out reasons for defeat

PM to BNP

BSS, Dhaka

Urging BNP to find out the reasons behind its defeat in the last general election, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said a party that failed to mobilise people for a movement cannot win public support in the election fray.

"BNP has many reasons for their defeat in the December 30 election. One is their failure to wage anti-government agitation involving people," she said.

The prime minister was addressing a discussion

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Dr Kamal for dialogue on 'fresh polls'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Claiming the December 30 election to be "farical", Jatiya Oikyafront Convener Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday called for a national dialogue to find out ways for holding a fresh election as per the constitution.

"We had to witness a farce in the name of an election. It won't bring any legality and stability. This can, in no way, be accepted," said the noted jurist.

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RIGHTS SITUATION IN 2018

'Extremely alarming'

ASK finds the year saw rise in extrajudicial killing, abduction and enforced disappearance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overall human rights situation in the country was extremely alarming last year, Ain o Salish Kendra has said.

Extrajudicial killing, abduction and enforced disappearance continued throughout 2018, with a record 466 deaths in crossfire and in police custody, the rights body said in its analysis of last year's rights situation in the country.

In 2017, at least 162 people fell victim to such killings.

The analysis found that although economic as well as social and cultural rights -- two key human rights indicators -- have seen improvements, the situation of citizen rights and political rights has not improved as expected.

Riding on the increase in the per capita income and economic growth, Bangladesh moved to the status of a developing nation from a least developed country last year. The country also went three notches up in the

UNDP's global human development index, it said.

But incidents of extrajudicial killing, particularly in the anti-drug drives, were alarming.

Since the drive began in May, at least 292 people were killed in "shootouts" with law enforcers till December 30, the report said.

Also alarming was illegal detention and mass arrest, the ASK said in the analysis, presented at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

"The highest number of extrajudicial killings took place in 2018 compared with any other year, which is very much regrettable and abominable," ASK Executive Director Sheepta Hafiza said.

"We want investigations into all extrajudicial killings," she said.

ABDUCTION, ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE

Abduction and enforced disappearance allegedly involving law enforcers spread

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Record 466 deaths in crossfire, police custody

Abduction, enforced disappearance continued

At least 3 journalists killed, over 200 others harassed, tortured

Rise in "fictitious" cases

Hindu community's rights situation alarming



BB HEIST

First conviction, after 3 years

Ex-branch manager of Manila-based RCBC convicted of money laundering

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A court in the Philippines yesterday convicted a former branch manager at Manila-based Rizal Commercial Banking Corp (RCBC) of money laundering, in the first conviction over the Bangladesh Bank reserves heist in which \$81 million was stolen nearly three years ago.

But lawyers for the convict, Maia Deguito, and officials from the BB and the Bangladesh finance ministry said the others involved in the crime should also be held accountable.

The Makati Regional Trial Court sentenced Deguito to a jail term ranging from 32 to 56 years, with each count carrying four to seven years. She was also ordered to pay a total of about \$109 million in fine.

In February 2016, unknown criminals used fraudulent orders on the SWIFT payments system to steal the funds from the BB's account at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York in one of the world's biggest cyber heists.

Maia Deguito



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Rejoinder, our reply

The Farmers Bank has sent a rejoinder to The Daily Star report "Farmers Bank: Dramatic rise in loan default" published on December 21.

Following is the full text of the rejoinder signed by the bank's Managing Director Md Ehsan Khasru.

"To our utter astonishment, the report contains some erroneous figures regarding the bank's actual health, which we think has put the bank on a wrong light and has affected its valued customers at the time when the bank has been working smoothly to be a transparent and responsible financial institution.

"Instead of highlighting the bank's actual health and performance, we feel it will create instability of the bank in particular and the financial sector as a whole.

"The report claimed that

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New Zealand Dairy

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