

RMG workers, police clash in Mirpur

Demanding pay hike amid rising prices of daily essentials, workers block roads for hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment workers from several factories clashed with police yesterday, after the workers blocked roads in different parts of the capital's Mirpur, demanding a pay hike, as prices of daily essentials have shot up.

The protesters said wages must be raised or prices of all commodities must be reduced.

Witnesses said the workers started protesting at Mirpur-13 sporadically around 11:00am, halting vehicular movement. The protest continued till 2:30pm there.

After lunch, the protesters moved to Mirpur-10 intersection, where workers of other factories joined. They all then blocked roads at Mirpur-10, Mirpur-13, Mirpur-14, Pallabi, and Mirpur Indoor Stadium area, Kafrul Police Inspector (Investigation) Kamrul Islam told The Daily Star.

The workers reportedly vandalised a bus of Border Guard Bangladesh in front of the stadium. Two police motorbikes were set on fire. Some parts of the stadium were also damaged, police said.

Later, police tried to stop the agitated workers, and at one point, locked into clashes around 5:00pm. Police fired tear gas, while workers threw brick-bats, witnesses said.

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What started out as sporadic demonstrations ended in a clash between garment workers and police. The workers blocked several roads in Mirpur yesterday, demanding a pay hike to cope up with increasing commodity prices. This ultimately led to workers throwing brick-bats and police lobbing tear-gas shells at each other. During the clash, the protesters vandalised multiple vehicles. At least 16 were detained.

PHOTO: SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Haji flights begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Haji flights carrying pilgrims will start from this morning.

Carrying 419 pilgrims, the maiden haji flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines is scheduled to leave Dhaka airport around 9:00am, Jahid Hossain, director of sales and marketing at Biman, told The Daily Star.

State Minister for Civil Aviation M Mahbub Ali and State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan will see the pilgrims off at the airport.

However, two other airlines of Saudi Arabia -- Saudia and Flynas -- will start operating haji flight on June 10, said M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, president of Haji Agencies Association of Bangladesh.

An intended pilgrim will have to pay a minimum of Tk 5,22,744 for performing haji under private agencies, meaning that they will have to pay Tk 1,68,150 more than the amount in 2020.

Need more women behind the wheel

Says Quader at certificate-giving event of Brac driving school

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Roads Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday directed the authorities concerned to work with "serious commitment" so that female drivers can be recruited for government jobs.

The minister also reiterated that the huge development in road transport sector will not be fruitful unless discipline in the sector is restored.

He was speaking at a programme organised by Brac to hand over certificates to 10 female drivers who graduated from Brac driving school.

Quader said female drivers are cautious and patient. They drive vehicles following all traffic rules, and so accidents involving vehicles operated by female drivers are rare.

"Roads are relatively safer when vehicles are driven by women," he said.

The minister said BRTC sought drivers for 102 posts, but only three female drivers applied, and two of them were recruited.

BRTC sources, however, said although they give priority to female drivers, most do not have a heavy-vehicle licence, and so, they cannot be recruited to operate buses or trucks.

At one point of his speech, Quader also asked Nur Mohammad Mazumder, chairman of BRTA, why female drivers could not be recruited for government jobs.

When the BRTA chairman said they have already

Roads are relatively safer when vehicles are driven by women.

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Polls won't be credible without BNP

Ex-CEC Nurul Huda tells event

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former chief election commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday said the next parliamentary election will not be credible if BNP does not participate.

He mentioned that it is the ruling party's responsibility to ensure BNP's participation.

Nurul made these comments at a shadow youth parliament titled "Credible election is possible under the current election commission", organised by Debate for Democracy.

The former CEC was the chief guest of the event, held at the capital's BFDC auditorium.

About the ongoing debate over using electronic voting machines (EVMs) in the next election, Nurul reiterated his approval for using them.

He said, "Considering Bangladesh's political practices, I think we should use EVMs for at least the next 20 years. We have seen how people used to hijack ballot boxes and cast fake votes. There is no scope for such malpractices with EVM."

In response to a question about BNP's participation, Nurul said, "I think if BNP does not participate in the next election, the polls will not be



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NURUL HUDA
Former CEC

credible. BNP is a very big and powerful political party."

He added, "The ruling party has to take the responsibility to ensure BNP's participation."

During his speech, Nurul said, "The ruling party should take initiatives to resolve conflicts and disputes with other parties and ensure their participation in the polls. The election commission should not intervene in this matter."

He also stated that the biggest regret of his tenure as CEC is that in many places, 100 per cent votes were cast, and many candidates won uncontested.

The former commissioner also admitted that the election commission has to face challenges to organise polls under a partisan government.

'Help us soar' Private airlines urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh won't be able to become a regional aviation hub without an effective aviation sector, said top bosses of the country's air operators and aviation experts yesterday.

They were addressing a seminar titled "Prospect of Bangladesh as a regional aviation hub" at a city hotel, organised by Bangladesh Monitor, a weekly magazine on aviation and tourism.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman presented the keynote in the seminar.

Md Abdullah Al Mamun, US-Bangla Airlines managing director; Mofizur Rahman, managing director, Novoair; Zahid Hossain, Biman Bangladesh Airlines' director, administration and human resources, marketing and sales; and Wing Com ATM Nazrul Islam, managing director, United Airways Bangladesh, among others, were present.

The participants discussed the existing hurdles and opportunities regarding the development of Bangladesh's aviation sector, and how to harness the potential in establishing Bangladesh as a regional aviation hub.

Novoair chief Mofizur said before 2009, number of passengers in the domestic sector was only 3 lakh, while the figure increased to 30 lakh in 2019.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Effective aviation sector for country to become a regional hub
- Lower jet fuel price, duty and tax on spare parts
- Form independent 'Bangladesh Airport Authority'
- Remove inequality between Biman, pvt airlines

PRAYER
TIMING
JUNE 5



| | Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
|--------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Azan | 4-05 | 12-45 | 5-00 | 6-45 | 8-15 |
| Jamaat | 4-40 | 1-15 | 5-15 | 6-50 | 8-45 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



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