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## TEA WORKERS' WAGES Strike ends with Tk 25 hike Many reject, vow to continue movement

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The leaders of tea workers' unions yesterday withdrew their work abstention programmes as the Prime Minister directed the authorities to increase the workers' wage from Tk 120 to Tk 145 per day, but many workers rejected it.

Citing the hike to be insufficient, hundreds of workers staged demonstrations and vowed to continue their movement for a daily wage of Tk 300.

The announcement of the wage hike came following a meeting among government officials and leaders of the Bangladesh Tea Workers' Union at the Department of Labour's Sreemangal office in Moulvibazar.

The department's Director General Khaled Mamun Chowdhury, Moulvibazar's Deputy Commissioner Mir Nahid Ahsan, Superintendent of Police Mohammad Zakaria and leaders of the workers' union were present at the meeting.

"The Prime Minister's Office contacted us. The prime minister has given directives to rise the daily wage to Tk 145 from Tk 120. The workers have accepted it and they will join work tomorrow (Sunday)," said Mir Nahid Ahsan.

"They [tea workers] want to talk to the Prime Minister. I have conveyed this message to the PMO secretary, who said a Zoom meeting will be arranged within 10 to 15 days where the prime minister will remain connected virtually."

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WAS THIS REALLY A WIN FOR TEA WORKERS? PAGE 5

## Partisan govt obstacle to free polls

**Says Shujan, claims admin, law  
enforcement agencies politicised**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A political government is the monumental obstacle to holding a free and fair national election in Bangladesh, said Shusashoner Jonno Nagarik yesterday.

The way the administration and the law enforcement agencies were politicised, it is certain that the upcoming election will not be fair, it said.

In a webinar, organised on the EC's recent move to amend the electoral law The Representation of the People Order, 1972, Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar also said a settled system like caretaker government was unilaterally abolished.

"As a result, two consecutive failed elections were held [in 2014 and 2018]," he said.

In fact, all the past elections organised by party governments were unacceptable.

"Currently, under the constitutional framework and the unlimited politicisation of the administration and law enforcement agencies, it can be said with almost certainty that the next election will not be fair," he said.

The mandate of the Election Commission is to hold a free, fair, and neutral election, not a "rigged" one.

"The political government, in line with the existing constitutional structure, is undoubtedly a monumental obstacle to a free and fair election," he said.

Therefore, to remove this obstacle, the EC should clearly tell the government right now that if the administration and law enforcement agencies perform their duties

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A fisherman catching fish with a locally-made trap in Sylhet's Bishwanath Goahari Beel during a festival. Every year, the festival of fish is celebrated on the first day of the Bangla month of Magh. However, this year, it is being celebrated in Bhadra.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

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PRESS COUNCIL ACT  
Reveal the proposed changes

Demands Sampadak Parishad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) has demanded the Press Council disclose the changes they proposed to the Press Council Act.

The Parishad made this demand in a statement yesterday.

It demanded that the Press Council publish the proposed amendments on its website. Furthermore, it said that when amending a law, it is imperative to consult with stakeholders, and keep them in the loop during every step of the way.

The statement said that a team from the Parishad, led by its president, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam, recently met Press Council Chairman Justice Nizamul Huq Nasim and requested access to the proposed amendments.

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## Allow UN to probe rights violations

Urge the families of enforced disappearance victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Families of enforced disappearance victims yesterday demanded that the United Nations be allowed to investigate the alleged rights violations committed by law enforcers.

They also demanded that the alleged places serving as detention cells be emptied and the situations of the forcibly disappeared be disclosed.

Furthermore, they demanded they be allowed to lodge cases on "enforced disappearances" charges, instead of being forced to file "missing persons" cases.

The families, congregating under the banner of Maayer Daak, made the demands at a human chain organised in front of the National Press Club.

Nasrin Jahan Smriti, wife of missing Mirpur-based trader Ismail Hossain, said, "Take me where you have kept my husband. I want to spend my days in detention with him. I want to share his pain."

Ismail was allegedly forcibly picked up in 2019 and has been missing since then. The family

points fingers at the Rapid Action Battalion.

Hafsa Islam Raita, the teenage daughter of Sajedul Islam Sumon, a BNP leader who was picked up in 2013, said, "Take me to detention as well, so that I can see my father or at least touch the ground he is buried in."



Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury said, "The authorities have records of every person who was forcibly disappeared. Those must be revealed."

Asif Nazrul, professor of

University of Dhaka, said, "If a trial cannot take place in Bangladesh, it can still happen in international courts, which can hold states accountable."

Khandaker Ayesha Khatoon, mother of Ahmed bin Quasem, also son of executed war criminal Mir Quasem Ali, said, "I learnt that my son is still alive, so please return him to me. He has not done any crime."

Ahmed was allegedly picked up by law enforcers in 2016.

"My son went barefoot while my granddaughter ran after him with his shoes ... But they did not let her give them to him," wept Khatoon.

One mother cried, "Why are we not being able to go to these locations and finding our sons?"

Her cry was echoed by Nurul Haq Nur, leader of Gono Odhikar Parishad and former vice president of the Dhaka University Central Students' Union, who encouraged everyone to congregate and demand access into these locations.

"We need to eradicate such an infrastructure where people can be arbitrarily detained," he said.

## Pilots fall asleep on flight, miss landing

CNN ONLINE



Two pilots are believed to have fallen asleep and missed their landing during a flight from Sudan to Ethiopia, according to a report by commercial aviation news site Aviation Herald.

The incident took place on board an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 737-800 en route from Khartoum to Addis Ababa on Monday, the report said, "when the pilots fell asleep" and "the aircraft continued past the top of descent."

Data obtained by the website indicates that the aircraft was cruising at 37,000 feet on autopilot when it failed to descend at Addis Ababa International Airport, its scheduled destination, on August 15.

Air traffic control were apparently unable to reach the crew despite making several attempts. However, an alarm was triggered when the plane overshot the runway and continued along the route.

The aircraft subsequently began to descend, landing safely around 25 minutes later.

Automatic Dependent Surveillance-Broadcast (ADS-B) data shows the aircraft overflying the runway, before beginning its descent and

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Street vendors uniquely displaying the sachets of different fruit flavours on the trees to attract customers and sell sherbet. Each glass was being sold at Tk 15. The photo was taken in Osmani Udyan near Golap Shah Mazar in the capital where demand for the sherbets was high due to the hot and humid weather.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

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## DIG caught in traffic, withdraws OC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The officer-in-charge of Muradnagar Police Station in Cumilla has been withdrawn and attached to Chattogram range police on charges of negligence in duty.

OC Abul Hashim was relieved within hours after the Chattogram Range Police Deputy Inspector General Mohammad Anwar Hossain witnessed his negligence.

According to sources, DIG Anwar was going to Brahmanbaria by road yesterday morning, but his vehicle got stuck in traffic jam in Muradnagar.

He did not find any policeman there to control traffic. After this experience, he immediately relieved OC Hashim of his duties and attached him to the

## Trawlers go down in Bay 3 fishermen die, scores missing

STAR REPORT

Three fishermen drowned in the Bay of Bengal on Friday afternoon after a fishing trawler carrying them capsized near Nazirartek-Bakkhali channel of Kutubdia island in Cox's Bazar.

One of the three bodies was recovered from the Bay near Nazirartek point yesterday. The two others were floating in the Moheshkhali-Sonadia channel, police and Coastguard said.

Meanwhile, scores of fishermen were reportedly missing in the Bay since Friday afternoon after they were caught in rough seas.

Police recovered the body of Md Aiyub, 50, from the channel near Khuruskul area around 5:00pm yesterday after locals spotted it, said SI Md Amzad Hossain of Cox's Bazar Sadar Police Station.

Aiyub was a resident of Hazir Ghona area in Cox's Bazar town.

Lt Commander Md Hamidul Islam, in-charge of Cox's Bazar coastguard station, said they informed the trawler owners' association about the two floating bodies in Moheshkhali-Sonadia channel.

Efforts were being made to recover the bodies with the help of local fishermen, he said.

In Patuakhali, 16 fishermen went missing on Friday after five fishing trawlers sank in the Bay near Kuakata. However, 56 fishermen were rescued.

Our New Delhi correspondent adds: Indian Coast Guard (ICG) yesterday rescued 10 Bangladeshi fishermen

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