

DRIVES AT RESTAURANTS HC seeks info on detained workers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday wanted to know detailed information about the employees and workers detained in connection with the fire incident on Dhaka's Bailey Road that killed 46 people.

In response to a writ petition, the court ordered the inspector general of police to submit a report with the information in 30 days.

The HC also issued a rule asking authorities concerned of the government to explain why arresting workers and employees of different restaurants in Dhaka during drives against unauthorised operation of restaurant businesses should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam and Justice Md Atabullah issued the order and rule

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Jumping from one palash flower to another, a squirrel finally rests as it comes across nectar. Holding onto the flower delicately, it sips the sweet delight in contentment in Khulna University campus area yesterday morning.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Consumers must not pay the price

CPD suggests cutting power production costs to reduce subsidies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for Policy Dialogue yesterday urged the government to reduce the cost of electricity production instead of burdening people with increased tariffs to cut subsidies in the sector.

CPD also urged the authorities to look for alternatives to cut the subsidies as the increased price of power generation is a result of faulty systems, wrong policy, and overcapacity.

The call came at a press briefing yesterday as CPD unveiled a study titled "Recent Electricity Tariff Hike: Isn't there a better alternative for subsidy adjustment?"

Amid a price hike of daily essentials, the government's decision to adjust the electricity price further will add to people's woes, it added.

On March 29 last year, the government increased the average power tariff from Tk 8.25 to Tk 8.95 per kilowatt-hour.

"With the price hike, the subsidy reduction would be around Tk 2,650 crore. If the government wants to reduce the subsidy to zero, the tariff would have to be Tk 16.41," said Dr Khondaker Golam Moazzem, research director of CPD.

At present, the average cost of power generation is Tk 11.33, almost double the figure in 2020, according to the PDB annual report.

Bangladesh Power Development Board has been incurring losses mainly due to an increase in operating expenses driven by diesel or furnace oil used for power

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FEMALE RMG WORKERS

Poor pay, long hours making them quit: study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Disruption to work-life balance due to extended working hours alongside family responsibilities is compelling many female ready-made garments workers to leave their jobs, according to a study.

The findings of the study, "Unpaid Care Work: Perspective of Employers and Workers in RMG Sector," were revealed at a seminar at Dhaka's CIRADP auditorium yesterday.

Aimed at investigating the current challenges being faced by female RMG workers, the study was conducted during February-March this year, by Oxfam with support of Karmojibi Nari and Creative Pathways Bangladesh.

Around 79 percent of female RMG workers who quit cited family responsibilities as the prime reason, said the study.

Meanwhile, 31 percent of respondents said they were unable to take care of their children due to long work hours, and thus, had to leave their jobs.

Additionally, 29 percent said they quit due to inadequate salary and benefits, 18 percent cited harassment and discrimination, while 17 percent blamed poor working conditions.

"Daycare centre facilities should be arranged by factory owners," said Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, president of Bangladesh Labour Federation.

"The government and factory owners must ensure all the required benefits within the industrial areas," he mentioned, stressing on the prevalence of malnourishment in female RMG workers and the need to address it immediately as it hampers productivity.

The wages have increased but their (workers') standard of living did not improve, said Meher Afroz Chumki, former state minister of women and children affairs ministry. Alongside highlighting the gap between workers' income and personal expenditure, she also stressed the need for daycare facilities at factories, emphasising on existing laws that are in place in this regard but are seldom adhered to.

"We need to practically implement the research findings and recommendations. Only then will laws be created and accountability be ensured," said Shirin Akhter, founder of Karmojibi Nari.

She also called for collaborative research and initiatives by the government and private stakeholders to improve sectors that employ more women.

MV ABDULLAH HOSTAGES

Distressed, their families now fear the worst

STAR REPORT

Atik Ullah Khan's family was preparing iftar for the first day of Ramadan on Tuesday when a sudden and ominous phone call shattered their world.

Bangladesh-flagged cargo ship MV Abdullah's Chief Officer Atik managed to call his mother Shahnur Begum after suspected Somali pirates hijacked the vessel in the Indian Ocean.

"My son has been working on ships since 2008. I have seen news of Somali pirates hijacking ships before. But I never thought my son would have to see such a day. I never thought such danger would befall my family," said the 62-year-old mother at her residence in the port city's Nandankanon area yesterday.

Suspected Somali pirates on Tuesday hijacked MV Abdullah with 23 crew members in the Indian Ocean, according to the ship's owner SR Shipping Limited -- a subsidiary of KSRM Group.

Shahnur said her son informed them that some Somali pirates boarded the ship and held them hostage at gunpoint in a cabin, but none were hurt by then.

"Around 15 minutes later, my son sent a voice message, saying the pirates were taking away the cell phones of every crew member and they would be out of contact," said a weeping Shahnur.

"My daughter-in-law is pregnant, and she fell sick after hearing the news," she said, urging the vessel's owners and the government to take steps to bring her son and the 22 other crew members back home safely.

Several family members of the hijacked crewmen gathered at



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Mother and wife of Mohammad Ali Hossain, a crewman of MV Abdullah, have been inconsolable since the news broke. The photo was taken from Hossain's house at Umar Par village in Bisharkandi union of Barishal.

the KSRM group head office in Chattogram's Agrabad area yesterday and demanded that the government and SR Shipping take immediate steps to rescue the sailors.

Jannatul Ferdous, wife of the ship's general steward Mohammad Noor Uddin, is one of them.

"At 6:30pm, my husband made a video call, saying the pirates were taking away everyone's cell phones. He wanted to see our two-year-old baby boy. Then the call got disconnected," she said.

Few minutes later, he sent two voice messages through WhatsApp saying the pirates threatened to shoot and kill the hostages if the ship's owner did not pay the ransom, she added.

Josna Begum, mother of fourth Engineer Tanveer Ahmad, also came to KSRM office.

"My son asked me to request the owning firm to pay the ransom. So I

came here," said the mother.

"PRAY FOR US" Taufiq Islam, second engineer of MV Abdullah, called his mother Dil Afroza in Khulna. "I am in danger. Forgive me, ma. I don't know what will happen. Pray for me," he said.

Then someone took his phone away, said the mother before breaking into tears.

Taufiq has a seven-year-old daughter and a five-year-old son. He boarded the ship from Khulna on November 25 last year and was supposed to come home before Eid-ul-Azha.

"The last time he said the pirates locked the hostages in the bridge room and were taking them to Somalia," said Taufiq's wife Zobaida Noman.

"THIS COULD BE OUR LAST CONVERSATION" Mohammad Ali Hossain, another

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A narrow escape Man survives after truck falls on his car

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A trader narrowly escaped death after a truck tipped over and fell on his running private car in Dhaka's Bijoy Sarani early yesterday.

The incident took place around 1:00am when Sohel Rana, 40, was returning to his Mohammadpur home from Gulshan, said Mohammad Mohsin, officer in charge of Tejgaon Police Station.

The driver of the truck lost control of the vehicle and it fell on the private car, the OC said.

Md Shahidullah, a leader of Tejgaon Fire Station, said almost all parts of the private car, except the driving seat, were badly damaged, trapping Sohel inside.

After spotting Sohel alive, fire officials carefully rescued him by chopping off a portion of the car, he said, adding that the rescue operation took around 45 minutes to complete.

Akter Jamil, Sohel's brother, said his brother is now at home following treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital and is experiencing pain throughout his body. "We are glad he is still with us," he added.

The OC added that police seized the truck but the driver fled.

34-YEAR-OLD MURDER CASE

Two sentenced to life, 3 acquitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced two people to life imprisonment in the case filed over the murder of Sagira Morshed 34 years ago.

The two convicts are Anas Mahmud alias Rezwana and Maruf Reza.

Judge Mohammad Ali Hussain of the Special Judge's Court-3 of Dhaka delivered the verdict in their presence, said Farhana Hossain, bench assistant of the court.

The judge also fined the duo Tk 50,000, in default of which they would have to serve six more months in jail.

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Non-biodegradable wastes being scooped out of the Khilgaon-Basabo canal with a bulldozer in the capital's Madinabagh area yesterday afternoon. The measures were taken to prevent waterlogging in its surrounding areas, ahead of expected rains during summer and monsoon.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



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SHAHNUR BEGUM, mother of Atik Ullah Khan, chief officer, MV Abdullah

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Forest Department.
Sustainable Forests and Livelihoods (SUFAL) Project
Chattogram South Forest Division, Chattogram

Memo No: 22.01.0000.731.29.001.24.814 Date: 13/03/2024

Corrigendum for SRAEP /23-24/GD-2

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of the following goods Corrigendum details are giving below:

| Field Name | Old value | New value |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|
| Last date & time for Tender/Proposal Security Submission | 13/03/2024 13:00 PM | 20/03/2024 13:00 PM |
| Documents last selling date & time | 12/03/2024 17:00 PM | 20/03/2024 17:00 PM |
| Opening Date & Time | 13/03/2024 14:00 PM | 21/03/2024 14:00 PM |
| Closing date & time | 13/03/2024 14:00 PM | 21/03/2024 14:00 PM |

The other conditions will remain unchanged as per tender notice.

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GD-422