

08 BAN 2 – 08-04-12 Narayanganj

Laboratoire des frondeurs.org



Distance Narayanganj – Dhaka \approx 15 km.

http://www.thedailystar.net/pf_story.php?nid=20388

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Labour Unrest

Production halts in 6 RMG units

Our Correspondent, N'ganj

Protesting the sacking of co-workers, the garment workers ransacked two factories at Fatullah in Narayanganj yesterday forcing six export-oriented garment units in the area to halt production.

Workers and police sources said around 1,200 workers of Metro Garments located at Katherpool of Fatullah took to the street in the morning as six of their co-workers were fired on Tuesday.

At one point, they tried to get the workers of some other garment factories in the area to join their demonstration.

Failing in their attempt, the agitating workers threw stones towards the factories of Liberty and Mishu Wear Garments and ransacked those. Consequently, these factories and four other garment units in the area were shut down.

Informed, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

Contacted, the authorities of Metro Garments said that the six workers had resigned from their jobs.

http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5g7DFz2n2qmBIx-UVdGeBwG_vGfpw

Bangladesh workers riot over soaring food prices

7 hours ago [12 avril 2008]

DHAKA (AFP) — About 20,000 workers rioted over high food prices and low wages on Saturday close to the Bangladesh capital Dhaka, police said, amid spreading global unrest over soaring grocery costs.

Police fired tear gas and used batons to break up the protests and at least 50 people were injured, most of them police officers.

About 20,000 textile workers from more than a dozen factories went on the rampage in Fatullah, 20 kilometres (12 miles) south of Dhaka, demanding better pay amid soaring rice prices, police chief Bhuiyan Mahbub Hasan said.

Police said they wrecked cars and buses, vandalised factories and hurled bricks and stones at police.

"They became unruly demanding higher wages, saying their current wages don't even meet basic food needs," police sub-inspector Shafiqul Islam said.

Hasan said representatives of the manufacturers, labour and the military would meet in an attempt to defuse the unrest.

The riots came after the government said food prices, notably rice, which is a staple in Bangladesh, had doubled in the past year due to a massive production shortfall after devastating floods and a cyclone.

The price of rice is a key issue in impoverished Bangladesh, where households are estimated to spend nearly 70 percent of their income on food.

The Bangladesh violence came amid mounting unrest globally over soaring food costs.

At least five people have died in similar protests over high food and fuel prices in Haiti, while disturbances have rocked Egypt, Cameroon, Ethiopia, the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries in the past month.

The country's food minister said early this month that the domestic grain output shortfall and global food price rises had created a "hidden hunger" in the country and that it had intensified in recent months.

The country's garment manufacturers and the unions said the workers are badly hit as they earn some of the lowest salaries in the world.

The basic minimum monthly salary of a garment worker is only 25 dollars.

"The 25 dollars basic minimum salary was fixed in 2006. But since then prices of rice and other food items have doubled or tripled," said Nazma Akhter, president of the United Garments Workers Union.

"With our poor salary, it is now impossible to buy three meals a day. Some of us are even going hungry some days," said Jamal Uddin, a sweater machine operator, who earns 30 dollars a month.

Akhter said the workers have been demanding salary raises from the owners, but "they rejected our pleas. Foreign buyers have even cut the prices of our items in the recent months."

Last month, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association urged the government to distribute subsidised rice to 2.5 million workers, fearing the food price hike could cause unrest in the industry.

"We know their pain and how difficult the situation is. But if you see the prices we got for export, you'll be amazed to find out the buyers are now cutting their offer prices," said association president Anwar ul Alam Chowdhury Parvez.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/04/12/2215251.htm?section=world>

Bangladesh workers riot over soaring food prices

Posted 5 hours 15 minutes ago [12 avril 2008]

About 10,000 garment workers have rioted close to the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka, smashing cars and buses and vandalising factories in anger at high food prices and low wages, police said.

Police fired tear gas and used batons to break up the protests and at least 28 people were injured.

The textile workers went on the rampage in Fatullah, some 20 kilometres south of Dhaka, demanding better pay amid soaring rice prices, police Inspector Nasir Ahmed said.

He said they wrecked cars and buses, attacked factories, and hurled bricks and stones at police who were forced to retaliate with tear gas.

Most of the injured were police officers, he added.

Police sub-inspector Shafiqul Islam said the rampage involved around 10,000 workers from several garment factories.

"They became unruly demanding higher wages, saying their current wages don't even meet basic food needs," he said.

The government says food prices, notably the staple rice, have doubled in the last year, caused by a massive shortfall in production after devastating floods and a cyclone last year.

- AFP

<http://www.thedailystar.net/>

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Front Page

RMG workers clash with cops for pay hike 50 including 27 policemen hurt at Fatullah Staff Correspondent



Cornered, policemen try to fend off attack from demonstrators near Shibu Market at Fatullah of Narayanganj during yesterday's clashes between garment workers and law enforcers. Photo: STAR

More than 50 people including 27 law enforcers were injured yesterday, with four of them having shotgun pellet wounds, in yet another series of clashes between several thousand

garment industry workers and police at Fatullah of Narayanganj near the capital.

The three-hour clash, that ensued after police had tried to refrain a group of garment workers from demonstrating for a salary hike adjustment on a par with other garment factories in the area, turned Dhaka-Narayanganj link road at Shibu Market area into a virtual battlefield.

Police fired shotguns and charged batons when several thousand demonstrating workers attacked the law enforcers with sticks and brickbats during the clash, which local residents alleged had been incited by Sramik Kalyan Federation, labour front of Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami.

Witnesses said a group of pajama-panjabi clad bearded young men armed with sticks of garan wood attacked the law enforcers.

The demonstrating workers set fire to felled tree trunks snapping vehicular traffic on the highway. Long traffic jams formed in both directions of the road causing terrible sufferings for commuters.

Three garment workers -- Sohel Rana, Yousuf, and Nurul Islam, and police constable Quaium -- were hit with shotgun pellets. The injured were undergoing treatment in different hospitals in the capital and Narayanganj.

Police, witnesses and garment workers said the workers of Microfiber Garments came out of the factory and started demonstrating demanding that their salary hike follow the standard set by another garment factory in the area. Referring to Metro Garment's salary hike of Tk 250, the demonstrating workers said their factory owner increased their salary by only Tk 200.

The workers said their anger was ignited by the factory authorities' rough behaviour with them and by the authorities' threat of police harassment as they went to the management for adjustment in their salary increase.

The angry workers came out of the factory and along with workers of some other garment factories attacked and ransacked several factories including Metro Garment, and vandalised some passing buses on the road, the witnesses said. Around 9:00am the demonstrators blocked the busy Dhaka-Narayanganj link road.

When police tried to intervene, the demonstrators staged a sit-in on the highway continuing to block it. At one point of the altercation the demonstrators beat up Assistant Superintendent of Police Mir Mohammad Towhid, and Officer-in-charge of Fatullah Police Station Bhuiyan Mahabub Hasan.

Witnesses said a few panjabi-pajama clad bearded young men were seen beating the policemen with sticks.

The bearded men then tried to drag away four to five policemen including the two officials to a secluded place tearing their uniforms, prompting police to open fire from shotguns.

The clash spread rapidly as soon as police fired rubber bullets. The law enforcers were caught in a helpless situation with a huge number of workers attacking them with brick bats and sticks from many sides. A large number of police and Rab personnel were deployed to tackle

the situation, which led to innumerable chases and counter chases between the angry workers and law enforcers.

Around 11:00am a contingent of army personnel from Fatullah arrived at the spot and tried to calm the workers. The situation came under control after members of law enforcing agencies contacted labour leaders Advocate Mahabubur Rahman and Advocate Mantu Ghosh, who assured the workers of solving their problem by sitting with Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA).

Jamaat's district unit Amir Maulana Mainuddin denied the allegation of their labour wing's involvement in the attack on the law enforcement. "We were not involved in it," he told reporters.

BKMEA President Fazlul Haque, however, told reporters that the unrest might have been the result of a 'political provocation', although he did not comment on the allegation that Jamaat's labour wing was involved in it.

"We sympathise with their demands. But our condition should also be considered. Prices of raw materials like cotton and chemicals increased, but prices of garments did not," Fazlu said.

Bangladesh Textile Garment Workers' Federation President Advocate Mahabubur Rahman said the labour unrest was sparked by price hikes of essentials.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/>

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Front Page

RMG Unrest

Demo continues in Fatulla, 600 sued for violence

Our Correspondent, N'ganj

After the violent clashes between law enforcers and garment workers Saturday at Fatullah of Narayanganj, 15,000-20,000 garment workers of four factories staged demonstrations inside their factories yesterday.

Meanwhile, six other factories in the area remained closed.

Two cases were filed yesterday against over 600 unknown people in connection with Saturday's clashes, the attack on police, and torching of buses.

Sub-inspector Shah Jalal of Fatullah Police Station filed a case accusing over 600 people of attacking police while bus owner Anwar Hossain filed another case in connection with setting

ablaze buses.

According to witnesses, workers of Liberty Garments, Cadtex Garments, Microfibre Factory and Palmal Garments at Sostapur, Shibu Market, Katherpool and Post Office Road went to work but only staged demonstrations inside the factories.

Authorities concerned of Chictex Garments, TexAsia Garments, Mishwear Garments, Gamsons Garments, Rupashi Garments and Times Garments kept their factories closed fearing untoward incidents.

Around 40 to 50 non-workers of Chictex Garments attacked the factory and tried to get the workers out of the factory yesterday. The workers, however, resisted their attempt resulting in chases and counter chases.

Army and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel, police and different intelligence agencies patrolled the area from the morning to avert further clashes.

In the first information report (FIR), police said provocation of vested quarters might have led to the violence. They said they are looking for the pajama-panjabi clad bearded young men who joined the agitating workers and attacked the law enforcers Saturday.

More than 50 people including 27 law enforcers were injured during clashes between a few thousand garment workers and police at Fatullah Saturday.

The three-hour-long clash, which ensued after police tried to stop a group of garment workers from demonstrating, had turned Dhaka-Narayanganj link road at Shibu Market area into a virtual battlefield.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/apr/15/bangladesh>

Bangladeshi garment workers strike over food prices

- Randeep Ramesh, south Asia correspondent
- guardian.co.uk,
- Tuesday April 15 2008
- [Article history](#)

This article was first published on guardian.co.uk on Tuesday April 15 2008. It was last updated at 14:22 on April 15 2008.



Garment workers enter their factory, south of Dakha, before going on strike. Photograph: Lalage Snow/AFP/Getty

Thousands of garment workers in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka went on strike today, closing factories in protest at spiralling food prices.

Demonstrators clashed with police after smashing cars and shops. Local agencies said the army had to be brought in to bring the situation under control, and had police opened fire to scatter the striking workers. Nearly two dozen people were injured.

The disruption crippled Bangladesh's garment industry, the country's biggest export earner, with dozens of factories shutting for the day.

The riots came after stone-throwing crowds clashed with police over the weekend. Factory workers say high food prices have meant many have little to eat, and are demanding wage increases.

The basic minimum monthly salary of a garment worker is less than \$1 (51p) a day. A family of four usually spends half of this amount on food. However the price of rice, the staple of the Bangladeshi diet, has leapt by a third since a cyclone devastated food stocks last year.

Experts say 30 million of the country's 150 million people could go without daily meals - a crisis that threatens the military-backed regime in Dhaka.

Major opposition parties have also threatened street protests if the government fails to rein in rising prices. India agreed to ship 500,000 tonnes of "emergency rice stocks" to Bangladesh, but these could take a month to arrive.

<http://www.abc.net.au/ra/news/stories/200804/s2218050.htm>

[This is the print version of story <http://www.abc.net.au/ra/news/stories/200804/s2218050.htm>]

Bangladeshi workers strike for better wages

Updated April 16, 2008 05:00:48

Thousands of Bangladeshi textile workers have defied a government ban on protests and gone on strike to demand action over low wages and soaring food prices.

Police officials say more than 15-thousand employees in dozens of factories at the Fatullah industrial area, 20 kilometres south of Dhaka, have stopped work.

They say they will not start work until the owners raise their salaries.

The workers are protesting silently inside the factories, locked up by authorities who are trying to prevent a repeat of weekend violence that left at least 50 people injured in clashes between workers and police.

Workers have complained their salaries do not cover basic living costs, and have also complained of arbitrary sackings.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/apr/16/food.bangladesh>

Round-up

- The Guardian,
- Wednesday April 16 2008
- Article history

This article appeared in the Guardian on Wednesday April 16 2008 on p15 of the International section. It was last updated at 02:50 on April 16 2008.

Bangladesh

Hungry workers riot in capital

Thousands of garment workers in the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka went on strike yesterday, closing down factories in protest at spiralling food prices. Demonstrators clashed with police during a rampage in which cars and shops were smashed.

Local news agencies said the army had to be brought in and police opened fire to scatter the striking workers. Nearly two dozen people were injured. Factory workers, whose basic minimum salary is less than a dollar a day, say high food prices mean many have little to eat, and are demanding wage increases. The price of rice, the staple of the Bangladeshi diet, has leapt by a third since a devastating cyclone last year. Experts say 30 million of the country's 150 million people could go without daily meals. India has agreed to ship in half a million

tonnes of emergency rice stocks, but it could take a month to arrive.
Randeep Ramesh

http://www.thedailystar.net/pf_story.php?nid=32894

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Sunday, April 20, 2008 05:48 PM GMT+06:00

Business

Export zone strike ban extended for two years

Jasim Uddin Khan



File photo shows agitating garment workers who brought out procession in support of their demands at the DEPZ in Savar on June 3 in 2006. The government has decided to extend the ban on strikes in export processing zones for another two years.

The government has decided to extend the ban on strikes and lockouts in the country's Export Processing Zones (EPZ) for another two years to keep the specialised investment areas aloof from worker or management agitation.

The Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) board with the Chief Adviser as chairman, in a recent meeting took the decision to extend the tenure until 31 October, 2010. The current restriction will end October 31 this year.

Industry sources said Bepza has extended the restriction for another two years following requests from many foreign investors who felt insecure after the formation of workers association at many factories.

Workers associations have been formed this year in order to ensure that Bangladeshi labour conditions comply with international standards.

However, labour leaders said the extension of the strike ban would make the associations

meaningless, as they will not enjoy full freedom in bargaining about their rights with management.

Ashish Chakraborty, assistant general manager of Mamiya-OP, a Chittagong based foreign factory, said this rule will give investors confidence that they will be able to run their factories smoothly despite having workers associations in place.

Contrasting this view, Shahdat Hossain, a leader of Worker Association of Envice Textile at Dhaka EPZ, said workers will not enjoy full freedom of their rights. He sought discontinuation of the ban in the interest of the workers.

According to the Bepza rules, the workers associations formed at Bepza areas are not permitted to have link with other trade unions outside EPZ, nor to organise procession or agitation until October 31, 2008. The rules also allowed the Bepza to extend it further.

Bepza Executive Chairman Brigadier General Ashraf Abdullah Yussuf said Bepza is extending the restrictions under its existing rules and for safeguarding the investment of local and foreign investors at EPZ.

He said if any disputes among owners or management with workers arise it is mandatory to solve the problem through consultation among the parties.

The Bepza rules also incorporate another clause which empower the factories concerned to sack any worker or mid management without any payment who is found liable to create labour unrest at EPZs.

The Bepza board found some of the workers and mid management involved in creating labour unrest in the recent past, which prompted it to incorporate the rule.

The board also incorporated new articles at the Bepza Rules 1980 which empowered the Bepza to realise the dues from defaulting or closed factory directors from their personal properties.

The Bepza management is hopeful that this process will expedite realisation of crores of taka from sick and closed factories in EPZs.

<http://www.romandie.com/infos/news2/080419153135.3h2njfh6.asp>

Bangladesh: les patrons du textile incités à subventionner la nourriture

DACCA - Le ministre bangladais de l'Economie, Mirza Azizul Islam, a appelé les patrons du textile à utiliser une partie de leurs profits pour subventionner des produits alimentaires destinés à leurs salariés afin de désamorcer les tensions créées par la hausse des prix du riz.

"Il est temps pour les riches de venir en aide aux pauvres de la société", a déclaré le ministre cité samedi par l'agence officielle BSS.

"Les pauvres bénéficieront (de ces mesures) si les entreprises privées distribuent des produits alimentaires subventionnés à leurs salariés", a-t-il ajouté, rejetant les appels des industriels du textile à ce que le gouvernement prenne l'initiative de telles mesures.

La hausse des prix de la nourriture a exacerbé les tensions dans le secteur clé de l'industrie textile, qui représente les trois quarts des exportations annuelles du pays, tandis que les critiques se multiplient à l'égard du gouvernement.

La semaine dernière, des émeutes ont éclaté impliquant quelque 20.000 ouvriers du textile, qui protestaient contre la hausse des prix alimentaires et dénonçaient leurs bas salaires.

Le ministre de l'Economie a écarté toute intervention du gouvernement, soutenu par l'armée depuis sa prise de pouvoir en janvier 2007, dans la distribution de nourriture subventionnée aux salariés de l'industrie textile, en dépit des appels en ce sens du patronat du puissant secteur qui emploie quelque 2,5 millions de Bangladais.

"Il n'est pas possible de mettre en place un système de distribution de nourriture subventionnée pour un groupe spécifique de la société car le gouvernement doit penser à toute la population", a déclaré M. Islam.

Les industriels du textile affirment qu'il leur est impossible de subventionner les produits alimentaires pour les salariés ou d'augmenter les salaires car les acheteurs des pays développés ont fait baisser les prix à la suite du ralentissement économique.

Au Bangladesh, 40% des 144 millions d'habitants vivent avec un dollar par jour.

Le Bangladesh et d'autres pays d'Asie souffrent du prix record atteint par les produits alimentaires et le pétrole qu'ils importent.

Un ouvrier du textile gagne 25 dollars (15 euros) par mois alors qu'un kilogramme de riz coûte 35 takas (30 centimes d'euros). Les foyers pauvres bangladais dépensent en moyenne 70% de leurs revenus en nourriture, selon des estimations.

Le gouvernement bangladais a indiqué au début du mois d'avril qu'il allait importer 400.000 tonnes de riz d'Inde d'ici à la fin mai, avec l'intention de le revendre à un prix moins élevé qu'actuellement dans le but de contenir la hausse des prix.

L'état d'urgence a été instauré au Bangladesh en janvier 2007 après l'annulation d'élections législatives.

(©AFP / 19 avril 2008 17h31)