

Gament Workers (Bangladesh): Labour agitation in Savar, Ashulia, Dhaka

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**For the fifth consecutive day, Bangladesh's garments workers are pursuing protests over "disparity" in their new wage structure. Prabir Das
Star Online Report**



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In Ashulia, workers from factories in Katgora, Puturia, Ramgora and Berun areas began protests around 8:00am, reports our local correspondent.

Thousands of garments workers gathered on the roads in Ashulia and burned various objects in an attempt to block the roads. About 50 factories were found shut.



Ready-made Garments workers agitate in Mirpur. Photo: Prabir Das

Around 8:00am, police allegedly threw tear gas canisters and charged batons on the workers when they tried to block Baipail. At least 20 were hurt.

Paramilitary force Border Guard Bangladesh, who were deployed since yesterday, were seen in large numbers, keeping a vigil watch at different points.

Agitation has also been reported from Katgora area around 10:30am, where police threw tear gas canisters on workers who tried to block a road. 10 persons were injured.

Law enforcers were trying to urge the workers to go back to work, Assistant Superintendent of Dhaka Industrial Police, Shaminur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Workers of two factories of Standard Group also went home instead of joining work today.

Managing director of Standard Group, Mosharraf Hossain, said the factory has accepted all the demands of the workers and they would join work Saturday.

In Mirpur's Shewrapara, workers had gathered since this morning to continue their protest. About a thousand were demonstrating there.

Dadon Fakir, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station, told The Daily Star that the garment workers withdrew the blockade around 1:00pm.

In Mirpur's Pallabi, several hundred workers of a factory of Standard Group blocked the Kalshi road for nearly four hours. They started waging their protest around 8:30am.

"We withdrew our blockade as the factory owner assured us to give salary as per the latest wage structure," a worker, requesting unanimity, told The Daily Star.

WHAT ARE THE WORKERS DEMANDING?

The workers have alleged that the monthly wage in the seventh grade increased to Tk 8,000 from Tk 5,300 as per the latest gazette published by the government last year. But, the salary of the workers in other grades did not increase at the same rate.

The salary hike for the entry-level workers was more than that of their senior operators, who have been working for more than seven to eight years. The new wage has been effective from December 1. Major disparity in the salary hike was noticed in the third and fourth grades as their salaries were not raised like that of entry-level workers.

In most of the grades, other than the seventh, only Tk 500 was raised in the new salary structure, whereas an entry-level worker's salary had increased by Tk 2,700 at one go.

Prabir Das

P.S.

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