

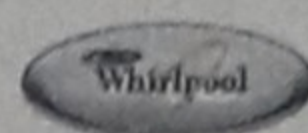


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People's Right to Know

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## May Day observed

Vow to protect workers' rights

UNB, Dhaka

The historic May Day was observed in the country as elsewhere across the world Friday with a promise to amend labour laws in accordance with ILO Conventions to protect the interests of the working class.

International Workers Day, known as May Day, commemorates the killing of several workers at Hay Market in Chicago in the United States on May 1, 1886 who had demonstrated for their demand of eight-hour workday instead of

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

## LAND DISPUTE

### 20 injured as AL men clash with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 20 people, including five policemen, were injured yesterday in a clash between Awami League activists and police at Baktabali Bazar in Fatulla upazila over a land dispute.

Locals said AL activists snatched two firearms from the injured police members which later police recovered.

Police arrested Fatulla Thana unit AL General Secretary Shawkat Ali, Jubo League leader Shafiqul Islam and traders Amanullah and Rafiqul Islam for their involvement in the clash.

Witnesses said local AL and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## SWINE FLU

### 201 tested on arrival at ZIA

UNB, Dhaka

The government has geared up precautionary measures at airports, seaports and land ports to prevent anyone carrying deadly 'Swine Flu' virus from entering the country.

No suspect was detected after screening 201 passengers

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## OnlinePoll

Through which procedure do you think cases of politicians should be withdrawn?

○ Court trial (81.35%)  
○ Executive order (16.01%)  
○ Other (2.64%)

Total votes: 681

## Power crisis BNP's creation: Hasina

Tk 20,000cr plundered in power sector during BNP-Jamaat rule, she alleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Friday blamed the previous BNP-led four-party alliance government for the prevailing power and water crises.

"The present power crisis is a legacy of the BNP-led government. They spent Tk 20,000 crore in the name of generating power but could not produce any. They plundered crores of taka and siphoned them off abroad, which they have to return," said Hasina, also chief of Awami League (AL), at a huge rally in the city's Paltan Maidan, organised by ruling party's

workers' wing Sramik League marking the May Day.

Urging people to show patience, she said they are taking measures to solve the power crisis but it would take some time.

The premier said the government would bring changes to the existing labour policy in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention and also ensure rationing system for all labourers in phases.

"If necessary, we shall take initiatives to reopen the closed factories," Hasina said in her 35-minute-long speech.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Thousands of people gather at a rally organised by Sramik League, workers' wing of Awami League, at Paltan Maidan on Friday, marking May Day. Inset PM and AL President Sheikh Hasina waves at the crowd.

## Ensure power, water or quit: Khaleda

Power sector graft began under previous AL rule, became acute under last CG, she says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday asked the prime minister to step down if she cannot ensure proper supply of gas, power and water and provide jobs, which were the Awami League's election pledges.

"Please quit power if you fail to fulfil your pledges in time. Do not force the people to bring your government down," Khaleda said, pointing to political rival Hasina, while addressing a rally at Paltan Maidan on the occasion of May Day.

Addressing the huge crowd, she said, "We

will fight in both parliament and the street for your problems and we will protest all wrongdoings." BNP's labourers wing Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal organised the rally.

Khaleda alleged that the government is plotting to bring foreign troops to the country in the name of combating militancy although there is no militancy in the country at present since all militants were arrested and brought under trial during BNP's rule.

"We arrested all militants during our rule and punished them. But the government is now creating panic using the name of militancy," she said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



The workers' wing of main opposition BNP, Sramik Dal, organised a rally at Paltan Maidan yesterday on the occasion of May Day. Inset BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia greets the audience.

## Coarse rice gets dearer

Procurement starts

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The price of coarse rice both at the wholesale and retail markets across the country has started increasing after the open market sale (OMS) programme ended Thursday with the procurement of rice and paddy starting from Friday.

The government has started procurement of rice at Tk 22 ak while paddy at Tk 14.

In the wholesale markets in the capital, the prices of coarse rice increased by Tk 2.50-3 per kg in the last week while in retail markets by Tk 2 per kg. There has been a similar impact on the prices of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## CANTT HOUSE

### Khaleda may file writ petition today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is likely to file a writ petition with the High Court (HC) today challenging the government decision cancelling allotment of her house in Dhaka cantonment.

On April 20, the Directorate of Military Lands and

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## Announcement

Today's issue contains the excerpts on the roundtable on "Fire safety in our building" on page 13.

## Swine flu hits Asia

### 300 hotel guests placed on isolation in Hong Kong amid highest health alert

AP, AFP, Hong Kong

Swine flu continued its global march as South Korea confirmed its first case and Hong Kong and China scrambled to track down anybody who had been in contact with an infected Mexican man.

But amid the spread of the virus, health authorities said the world appeared better prepared to fight an epidemic than a few years ago, and vowed that a vaccine was only months away.

Hong Kong was placed on its highest health alert after the 25-year-old Mexican tested positive for the A(H1N1) virus on Friday, the first confirmed case of swine flu in Asia.

Officials in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan were desperately trying to reach anyone who may have come into contact with the man during his journey from Mexico, via Shanghai.

As some pharmacies in Hong Kong sold out of protective masks, more than 300 guests and staff at a hotel where the Mexican stayed were put in isolation for seven days and authorities were trying to locate fellow air passengers.

China said it was to put all passengers on the flight from Mexico to Shanghai under quarantine and that flights from Mexico to the city were being suspended.

China is to send a plane to Mexico to bring back stranded tourists, according to Xinhua news agency.

Meanwhile, South Korean authorities confirmed the first case there, involving a 51-year-old woman who returned from

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Dropping of 11 cases against Hasina on cards

Public prosecutor finds 'political motive' behind them; recommends withdrawal of cases against a few other bigwigs

SHAKHAWAT LITON and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

The metropolitan public prosecutor (MPP) is going to recommend withdrawal of the nine remaining cases against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as the government law official has found that the cases were filed for "political harassment".

"I have examined the documents of the cases and found that those were filed with political motive to harass her [Hasina]. I will send my opinion in a couple of days for withdrawal of the cases," MPP Abdullah Abu told The Daily Star yesterday over telephone.

He has already suggested that the Meghnaghat power plant and Bepza corruption cases against the Awami League chief be dismissed as those were filed by the BNP-led government for "political harassment".

Of the 11 cases against Hasina, eight were filed during the previous BNP-led alliance's rule and the rest during the tenure of the Fakhruddin Ahmed-led caretaker government. Hasina was detained for around a year by the caretaker government in connection with the cases filed.

Abdullah Abu has also suggested withdrawing cases filed against a few political bigwigs,

including Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, AL lawmakers Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Engineer Mosharraf Hossain and Kamal Ahmed Majumder, and former AL lawmaker Mockbul Hossain.

Asked about the petitions filed by BNP chief Khaleda Zia and her two sons for withdrawal of 20 cases filed against them during the last caretaker government's rule, the MPP said he did not yet receive the documents of those cases. On receiving the case dockets from the Dhaka district magistrate, he will start examining those to make his opinion.

"I will recommend withdrawal of the cases if I find those filed for political harassment," said Abdullah, who was appointed the MPP by the AL-led government.

Former prime minister Khaleda Zia, who stands accused of corruption in four cases, was also detained for around a year during the caretaker government's rule.

A few corruption cases filed against Khaleda by the previous AL government were withdrawn during the tenure of the BNP-led alliance government.

Most of the cases Hasina, Khaleda and her two sons and a few political bigwigs are facing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## Nor'wester kills 8 in Jamalpur

UNB, Jamalpur

At least eight people were killed and a trail of destruction to dwelling houses and standing crops left by a nor'wester that lashed seven upazilas of Jamalpur district early hours yesterday.

Abdul Kuddus, 45, and his son Minhaj, 12, of Suri village, Abdus Salam, 50, of Pach Paila, Adnan, 1, of Shabilapur, high school teacher Shawkat Ali, 35, of Balijhuri Purbopara, Batashi Begum, 35, of Shirirghat and housewife Sathi, 25, died in house collapse or under the fallen tree.

Besides, Shah Jamal and his five cattle were killed by thunderbolt at Kalkipur during the storm that swept over Sadar, Sarishabari, Melandah, Islampur, Dewanganj and Bakshiganj upazila.

More than 50 people were wounded in house collapse or under the fallen tree.

District control room said at least 500 kutchra houses were razed to the ground, hundreds of trees were uprooted, boro paddy ready for harvest on about 5,000 acres partially damaged

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

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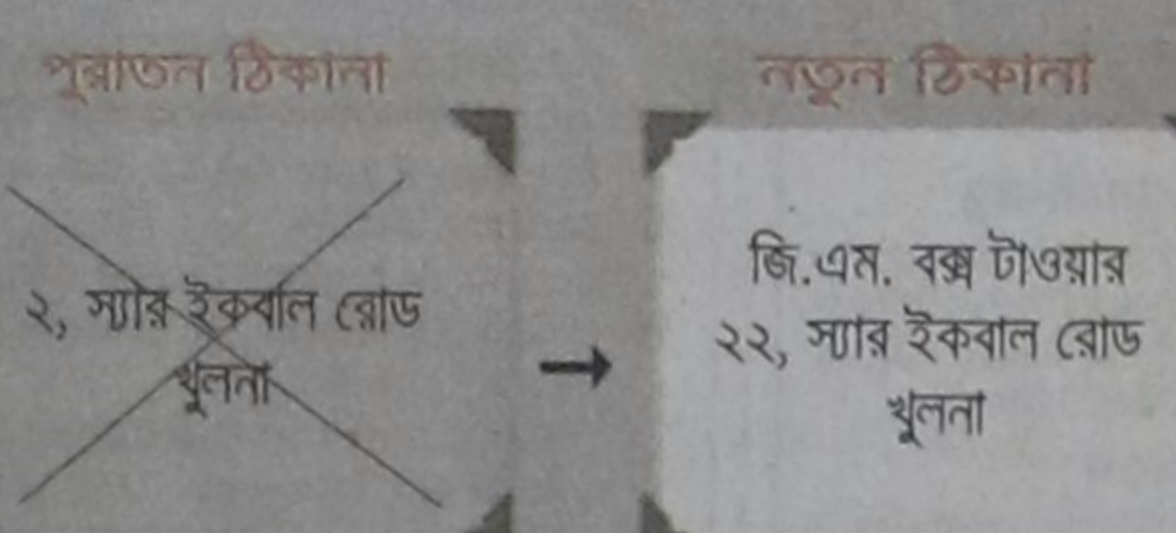
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