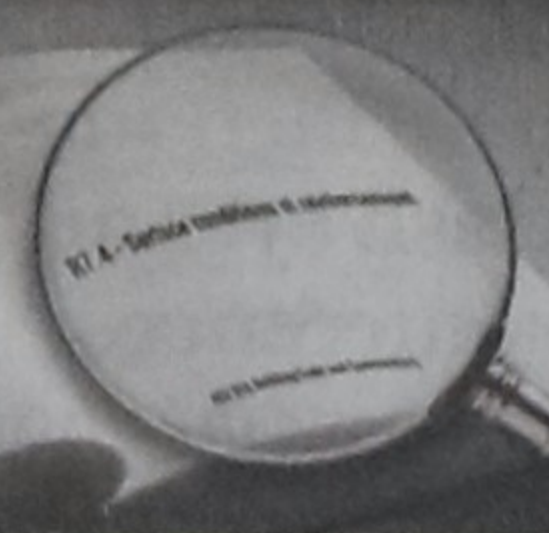


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Food rationing for RMG workers stalled

Hardly 5,000 benefited so far though owners pledged to cover 6.5 lakh initially

PORIMOL PALMA

The government's much-expected food-rationing programme for readymade garment workers (RMG) went into hibernation apparently for factory owners' indifference toward it.

After the inauguration of the programme on August 27, BGMEA and BKMEA members had withdrawn only 200 metric tonnes of rice, which was distributed among 5,000 workers [20 kilogram each per month] for two months although they announced they would initially distribute rice to around 6.5 lakh workers.

Admitting that the programme has become sluggish, senior vice president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin said the factory owners were confused about the programmes. The programme requires more publicity, he added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) president Fazlul Hoque said they could not monitor the food-rationing programme well due to the knitwear exhibition early October, but would try to resume it in full swing soon. The government decided to provide

subsidised rice to RMG workers in the wake of global economic recession that largely affected the RMG industry and prompted the workers to take to the street demanding raise in wages.

The BGMEA and BKMEA were scheduled to start the rationing programme in April with rice at Tk 18 per kilogram. As the price came down in April-May, the price was re-fixed at Tk 16 a kg.

The trade bodies bargained for a lower rate. Negotiations went for quite some time. Meanwhile, the bodies were confused about the distribution management.

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Envoys and representatives of 16 Commonwealth countries yesterday morning attend a special prayer for the World War II heroes at Mainamati War Cemetery in Comilla on the occasion of the Remembrance Day.

PHOTO: BANGLARCHOKH

Woman outlaw 'confesses' to killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Nahid Parvin Champa, detained cadre of outlawed Gono Mukti Fouz (GMF), admitted to police that she along with four other women activists took part in the killing of local Awami League leader Meherul on August 15, police said.

Anwar Hossain alias Chhoto Anu, commander of the party's killing mission unit, led the operation.

According to police, Champa gave the information to the investigators during a three-day remand that ended yesterday. She was sent to jail after the remand.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

ICU at Chest Diseases Hospital inoperative

Facing lack of skilled hands, power supply problem

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

The National Institute of Diseases of Chest and Hospital (NIDCH) in Dhaka lacks capability to run an Intensive Care Unit despite being fully equipped around five years back.

A 10-bed ICU was set up to provide service to patients of acute respiratory tract distress syndrome and respiratory failure in 2005, and to facilitate treatment, hospital authorities brought 10 ventilators at Tk 48 lakh.

But the efforts went in vain as the main prerequisites, continuous power supply and trained manpower, for running the ICU could not be ensured. Therefore 10 ventilators remained idle for a few years with two becoming inoperative by now.

A couple of weeks back the hospital authorities opened the ICU with four beds using a small generator for uninterrupted power supply.

"Patients in a critical condition in ICU need artificial ventilation without any interruption that would imperil the patients' survival, and to run the ventilators, continuous power supply is necessary," said Director of the hospital Mostafizur Rahman.

"We faced difficulties to ensure uninterrupted power supply due to bureaucratic tangles," he added.

The government has recently approved a gas-generator as an alternative power source during power-cuts but acquisition of gas-line extension from Titas seems an impossibility

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Rajshahi cops release trader amid protest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Boalia police released a businessman after two and a half hours of the arrest as hundreds of cloth traders laid siege to the police station protesting "unfair arrest" Thursday night.

Police said, a team of Detective Branch (DB) and Malopara police arrested Shamim Ahmed, owner of Alam Cloth Store, around 8:00pm on recovering 50 grams of heroin from his motorcycle parked outside the shop.

Shamim was released around 11:00pm upon an undertaking by Rajshahi city's

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

ROAD ACCIDENTS

7 killed in Ctg, 3 in Manikganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least seven people, including six of a family, were killed while 10 others injured in a head-on collision between a truck and a microbus at Patiya upazila headquarters on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar highway early yesterday.

The victims, all passengers of the microbus, were returning to Gairala village of Patiya after attending a pre-marriage programme at the bride's house at Kala Ujan in Lohagara upazila.

Meanwhile, agitating people blocked Dhaka-Aricha highway protesting deaths of three people in a road accident at Golara under Sattura police station in Manikganj yesterday morning.

In Chittagong, the deceased were identified as Tejendra Lal Dhar, 65, Babul Dhar, 55, Bidhu

Dhar, 50, Mridul Dhar, 40, Parikshit Dhar, 52, Jadu Dhar, 40, all of them hailed from Gairala of Patiya, and microbus driver Shahidul Alam, 20.

The marriage ceremony, which was scheduled to be held yesterday night, was cancelled after the tragic accident that left six close relatives of the bridegroom dead.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred at about 4:00am when the microbus from Lohagara upazila collided head on with the Cox's Bazar-bound truck in front of Shahchan Aulia Mazar Gate near Patiya Fire Station.

Four persons—Tejendra Lal, Babul, Bidhu and microbus driver Shahidul—died on the spot.

The injured were rushed to Chittagong

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

BNP leader shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Miscreants gunned down a contractor and local BNP leader at East Tejguri Bazar in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday noon.

The victim was Masum Bhuiyan Bablu, 38, BNP vice president of DCC ward no 39, and president of Chhayapath Science Club of the area.

A group of armed criminals attacked Bablu in front of Islamiya Samity Government Primary School around 2:00pm while he was going to a nearby mosque for Juma prayers.

"One of the criminals shot him in the head," said a labourer of nearby under-construction building requesting anonymity.

Bablu was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the doctors declared him dead.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



A relative tries to soothe Dr Lily at DMCH as she weeps for her brother Masum, a ward-level BNP leader, who was shot dead by a band of armed criminals in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday noon.

PHOTO: STAR

Recession ends across Europe

AFP, Brussels

Europe's deepest recession since World War II officially ended yesterday when the world's biggest trading bloc joined Japan and the United States in returning to growth.

Both the 16-nation eurozone and the 27-nation European Union as a whole, home to half a billion people, posted economic expansion -- of 0.4 percent in the single currency area and 0.2 for the whole EU in the third quarter.

But after five quarters of shrinking output in a row, the fact that key pillar Britain still lags behind -- with a 0.4 percent contraction -- underlined the fragility of recovery.

Analysts, who had forecast eurozone growth of 0.6 percent when polled by DowJones Newswires, said the improvement is unlikely to be robust enough to change broad economic policy lines.

"Today's data can be considered a disappointment," warned Aurelio Maccario of UniCredit Group.

The question for political leaders is whether and when the withdrawal of massive state support for economic rebuilding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

OnlinePoll

Do you think Rajuk's drive to retrieve parking spaces by demolishing illegal shops at business centres in the capital was an eye-wash as illegal occupants have rebuilt shops there within a week?

Yes (89.3%)
No (7.9%)
No Comments (0.9%)

Total votes: 750

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman that in case of long-term conviction, graft cases should be non-bailable?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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The Daily Star

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Blasts in Russian arms depot 35 missing

AFP, Moscow

Around 35 people were reported missing yesterday after a series of blasts ripped through an arms depot outside the central Russian city of Ulyanovsk, causing a huge fire.

The blasts took place while munitions were being

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Prayer Timing		
November 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	6-00	6-35
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-22	6-25
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

Maoists kidnap state legislator

Kill 3 Indian soldiers

AFP, Patna

Indian Maoists kidnapped a state legislator and were suspected of triggering a landmine blast that killed three troopers in separate incidents, police in eastern India said yesterday.

Ram Chandra Singh, a legislator in Jharkhand state from the regional opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal party, and an aide were snatched late Thursday in a district that is as a hotbed of the insurgency.

"Police have launched a search operation to recover Singh who was kidnapped by Maoists," Jharkhand police chief V.D. Ram told AFP by phone.

The kidnapping comes ahead of polls in Jharkhand later this month to elect a provincial government.

Meanwhile, three paramilitary troopers including two officers, were killed Friday when their van drove over a landmine planted on a road in the neighbouring eastern state of Orissa, local police superintendent Satyabrata Bhoi said.

The attack took place 610 kilometres (378 miles) south of

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