



Over 20,000 NGOs to lose registration

Inactive for years; anomalies alleged

ALPHA ARZU

The government will cancel registration of over 20,000 non-government organisations that remain inactive for several years, Secretary of social welfare ministry Quomaran Nessa Khanam said yesterday. Social Welfare Minister Enamul Haque Mostafa Shahid told The Daily Star yesterday, "We shall cancel the registration of those organisations immediately." "Since we are committed to citizen's welfare, we can't allow any organisation to make people suffer in the name of volunteering," he said.

Social welfare officers at union, upazila and district levels visited the offices of those NGOs and found them inactive for several years, said Secretary Quomaran Nessa. Joint Secretary Nasima Begum told The Daily Star, "The government will cancel the registration of the non-functioning NGOs which got registered to conduct social welfare activities voluntarily for empowerment of women, rural development and poverty reduction." The government can cancel the registration of non-performing NGOs as per article 10 of Voluntary Social Welfare

Agencies (Registration and Control) Ordinance, 1961, she said. "After identifying inactive NGOs registered under the Department of Social Welfare, we shall give them time to defend themselves and finally cancel the registration of the 'signboard NGOs'," said Secretary Quomaran Nessa. "We shall cancel the registration of the NGOs that are running micro-credit scheme illegally despite submission of written commitment of not doing so," the secretary said. She said the move was made after

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Speaker urges opposition to return to JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday urged BNP-led opposition lawmakers to join the House to play their due role. "Qualitative change in present politics depends on political tolerance. The base of democracy will be strengthened through mutual understanding and respect. Therefore, I am urging the main opposition to join the House and speak whatever they want to say," the speaker said in his brief speech. Opposition lawmakers belonging to BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party have been boycotting

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Graft, power abuse won't be tolerated

Hasina warns AL lawmakers, asks them to abide by laws

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned her party deputies against corruption, abuse of power and unruly behaviour. Addressing an Awami League Parliamentary Party meeting, she asked the ruling party lawmakers to abide by laws. She said the BNP-Jamaat alliance had earned a bad name for misuse, corruption and misuse of power by their MPs. "We don't want that to happen to us. We want to establish the rule of law. We ought to complete our tenure without losing our credibility," Deputy Speaker Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali

quoted the prime minister as saying. Shawkat Ali was talking to The Daily Star after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban late afternoon. Earlier at the meeting, several lawmakers alleged that ministers have no control over director generals of government departments and can do little to have people of their choice recruited. As the DGs were promoted by the four-party alliance government, they favour pro-BNP-Jamaat men in giving jobs, they reasoned. In response, Hasina urged the lawmakers to give her an account of the recruitment irregularities.

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This photo grabbed from ATN Bangla footage shows rampaging garment workers on Dhaka-Gazipur Highway after a garment worker died in a road accident yesterday. Inset, torched and vandalised buses.

PHOTO: TV GRAB

Garment workers go berserk in Gazipur

15 vehicles torched, 50 vandalised; production hampered in 100 factories after road crash kills 1

KAILASH SARKER

Angry garment workers torched 15 vehicles and vandalised over 50 others yesterday, shutting down production in all garment factories on Dhaka-Gazipur highway, after a bus crushed a garment worker. The violence halted traffic movement on the highway for three hours. They clashed with police leaving at least 40 injured and turned the Boardbazar area into a riot zone. Nearly 100 factories were forced to halt production. Witnesses said a recklessly-driven bus at Boardbazar tried to overtake another bus on the inside around 8:00am when passengers were getting on the stationary bus. The bus crushed garment worker Sujam Miah, 24, and a few others were also injured. Sujam's sister Fatema told The Daily Star that Sujam and his wife Reena, who worked at two

different factories, headed to work together from their shanty at Boardbazar. They have a three-year-old son who stays with his grandmother in Sherpur. "Reena left her husband at the Boardbazar bus stop and walked to her factory. While Sujam was waiting for a bus to go to his factory, the bus ran him over," said Fatema, adding, "Within five minutes of her departure, Reena heard about an accident and went to see what had happened. To her horror it was Sujam." "The bus tried to speed away, causing further injuries to others but had to stop due to a traffic jam. The driver and helper escaped leaving the bus," said witness Nuru Miah. Tea vendor Shamsul Islam said, "At first the angry workers only vandalised the bus that ran Sujam over. But when his body was brought back to the spot from the nearby hospital the situation went out of control. They torched

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Rangpur made 7th division

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has declared Rangpur the nation's seventh division. The people of Rangpur have long been demanding a separate division in order to encourage development in its impoverished areas. The decision was announced yesterday by the National Implementation Committee for Administrative Reorganisation (Nicar), which is chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. The Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said that creating the new division fulfills an election pledge of the Awami League. The new division comprises eight districts that were formerly under Rajshahi division -- Rangpur, Kurigram, Dinajpur, Lalmonirhat,

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Good work mostly undone

ATIQUÉ ANAM

World cricket's two most accomplished batsmen Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid hit centuries as India took a firm grip on the second Test against Bangladesh at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Tendulkar struck 143, his 45th hundred, and Dravid scored 111, his 29th, before retiring hurt after being struck by a bouncer. But that did little to help the hosts' cause as the visitors finished the second day on a massive 459-5, a lead of 226 runs, with their skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni still batting on 22. On a wicket that has little purchase for the bowlers, it

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Bird flu again

531 fowls culled in Joypurhat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The bird flu virus H1N1 struck again on Sunday at Lata Poultry Farm under Khetlal upazila in Joypurhat. The Field Disease Investigation Laboratory in the district confirmed the infection while district and upazila livestock officers culled some 531 hens there. Earlier on January 5, the Yati Poultry Farm -- less than half a kilometre away from the new one -- was affected with the virus. The district livestock authorities culled some 932 chickens and destroyed 183 eggs to contain the virus's spread that time. Joypurhat District Livestock Officer Dr Shahidul

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Interview

BNP didn't show negative attitude despite failure of AL-led govt

Mirza Alamgir tells The Daily Star

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said getting just 30 seats in the December 29 parliamentary polls threw the party into extreme frustration but they successfully overcame the situation by reorganising the party in the last one year. Evaluating the Awami League-led grand alliance government's performance so far, he said the government has been successful in a few sectors but absolutely failed to initiate the new political culture by creating a congenial atmosphere. In an interview with The Daily Star, Alamgir claimed that the BNP played a constructive role as the main opposition in the last one year. "We did not show any negative attitude, which could have embarrassed the government. We did not take to the street although there were a lot of issues," he said. He said the BNP has been boycotting parliament because of the lack of a congenial atmosphere, not fewer seats in the House. Alamgir, who was elected senior joint secretary general in BNP's fifth national council on December 8, also ruled out any lack of coordination between him and party Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain. He described his party's reorganisation activity as a great achievement. Replying to a question, he said the BNP was thrown into a catastrophic situation during the rule of the "unconstitutional" caretaker government and was struck with extreme frustration following the party's debacle in the general election. On BNP's election pledge regarding lawmakers' being absent from parliament, the former state minister said there is no room for dogmatic attitude in politics. "One



BNP played a constructive role as main opposition

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Saving 'problem tigers' of Sundarbans

Foresters' training launched under Tiger Action Plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The department of forest has launched a tiger immobilising training programme for its officials as the existence of Bengal tigers is at risk due to frequent human-carnivore encounters in the Sundarbans. Bangladesh Forest Department and Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB) have

jointly organised the first ever tranquillising training programme in the country under Tiger Action Plan (2009-2017). "The training will help foresters save the 'problem tigers' intruding into localities to hunt," said Chief Executive of the WTB Anwarul Islam. He said the tiger that was killed in Satkhira

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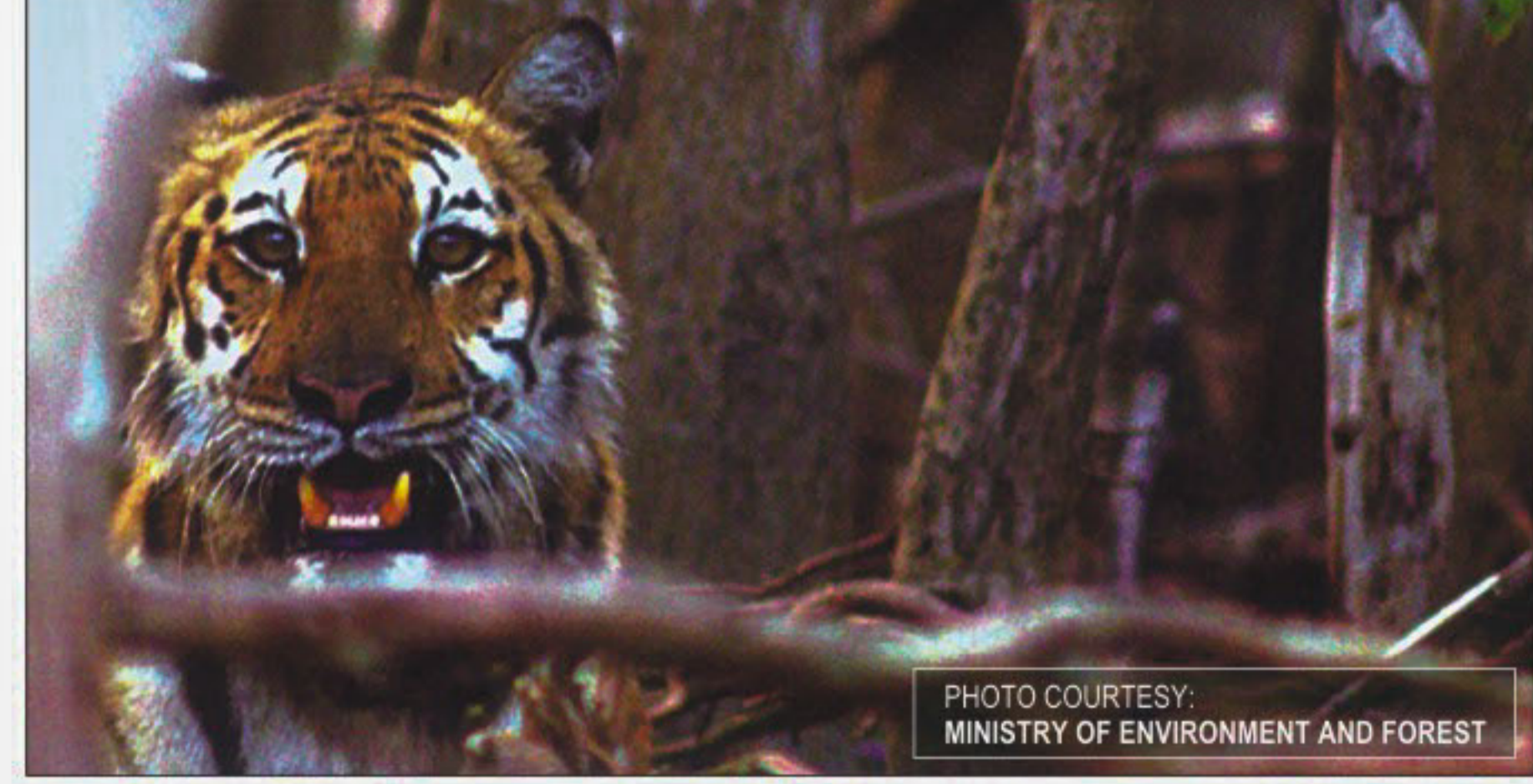


PHOTO COURTESY: MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST

Ethiopian plane crashes with 90 on board

No sign of survivors

AFP, Beirut

An Ethiopian airliner carrying 90 people exploded in a ball of flames and plunged into the sea off Lebanon just after takeoff in stormy weather early yesterday, officials and witnesses said. A massive international search and rescue operation involving helicopters and ships was scrambled as President Michel Sleiman said there was no immediate suspicion foul play was involved and grim-faced officials played down hopes of any survivors. A Lebanese security official said that by early afternoon at least 24 bodies had been pulled from the sea, including that of a child. One rescue official told AFP that some of the bodies recovered were dismembered while another said bodies were floating in the water. The health ministry said it had set up a crisis unit in a bid to

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War crimes act needs reform

Say expert int'l lawyers

DAVID BERGMAN

The law by which the government intends to prosecute people suspected of war crimes during the 1971 liberation war has been criticised by an expert group of international criminal lawyers. The legal opinion, obtained exclusively by The Daily Star, states that the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act 1973 contains 'out of date' definitions of criminal offences, provides inadequate rights to individuals subjected to investigation, and has 'significant omissions' with regard to protecting the rights of those on trial. However the opinion acknowledges that the legislation 'provides a system that is broadly compatible with current international standards'. In total, the lawyers recommend 17 changes to the 1973 act. The opinion was written by the War Crimes Committee (WCC) of the International Bar Association (IBA) following a request by the UK All-party Parliamentary Human Rights Group chaired by Lord Avebury in October last year. The committee comprises an expert advisory board made up of highly regarded international lawyers including former judges, prosecutors, and defence counsels involved in the International Criminal Court and the tribunals relating to war crimes in former Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone. The Bangladesh government has not yet formally received the legal opinion -- but a spokesperson of the UK parliamentary group told The Daily Star that 'after the group considers the

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The agreements and memorandums signed during Honourable Prime Minister **Sheikh Hasina's** recent visit to India will open up a new horizon of economic progress and bilateral relationships between the two neighbouring countries.

Our Heartiest Congratulations to Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

for taking the bold, far reaching and timely decision as a great statesman.



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