

RAVAGED CHILDHOOD

300 of the 820 sex workers in Kandapara brothel are children

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FOR ELECTED ZILA PARISHADS

M Abdul Latif Mondal explains why

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SANGAKKARA STEPS DOWN

Kumar Sangakkara quits as Sri Lanka captain following WC final defeat

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Sarkozy to take up Yunus issue with Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

French President Nicolas Sarkozy has said his government will closely monitor the developments regarding Prof Muhammad Yunus' removal from Grameen Bank and take up the issue with the Bangladesh authorities in the next few days.

In a letter to Yunus, he also expressed his strong support to the founder of Grameen Bank.

Friends of Grameen, a

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Yunus loses plea, No gas for new kitchen

SC hears his petition today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus' petition against a High Court ruling that upheld his dismissal as managing director of Grameen Bank he founded three decades ago.

Chief Justice ABM Khairul Haque, presiding over a seven-member bench of the Appellate Division, passed the one-sentence ruling in a packed courtroom.



Yunus refused to relent even after losing what was seen as his final legal option to stay on as Grameen MD.

In a last-ditch move yesterday afternoon, he filed a petition with the SC for withdrawal of the ruling and a fresh hearing on his leave-to-appeal petition, his lawyer Sara Hossain said.

The court will today hear the recall petition besides hearing another leave-to-appeal petition, filed by nine Grameen

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Embargo on new connection stays as gas scarcity mounts; bidding for on-shore exploration soon; govt to go ahead with coal development

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As the gas crisis continues to remain unresolved, the government is unlikely to lift the embargo on giving domestic gas connection soon, and instead encourage new homeowners to use liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders for cooking.

"We are encouraging LPG marketing," Energy Secretary Mohammad Mesbah Uddin said at a press conference of Petrobangla yesterday.

"In the present budget, we have given incentives to help LPG manufacturers reduce container price. We hope the next budget will give further incentives to cut the prices further."



According to Petrobangla's projection, gas supply shortfall now is more than 500 million cubic feet per day (mmcf). It is set to double by the end of this year. Petrobangla's gas supplies have remained stuck at a maximum of 2,000 mmcf from December 2009 due to lack of pipeline infrastructure, compressor station and new sources of gas production.

The government stopped giving

new gas connections in Dhaka to domestic and commercial customers from July last year as the authorities are unable to meet the demands of the existing customers. Ever since, around one lakh customers have applied for new connections.

As there is no new gas connection, many have obtained connections illegally which worsened the gas supply pressure situation. Many others have resorted to buying LPG containers for their kitchens. These containers are however much costlier compared to the piped gas supplies, and the demand is much higher than supply.

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COMMENTARY

In fighting extremism, PM needs all our support

We must learn from what happened in Pakistan

MAHFUZ ANAM

On Monday, Islami Ain Bastabayan Committee headed by the leader of a faction of Islami Oikya Jote called for a strike against the government's National Women's Development Policy. Given our politics, that can be considered usual. However what was not usual was the way they went about imposing it. They came out on to the streets well prepared to fight the police and create as much may-

hem as possible. They came armed with newly cut tree branches, and freshly carved wooden sticks clearly indicating they wanted a showdown with the law enforcers. They also wore the symbolic white outer garments (indicating that they were ready to die for what they were agitating). In hartals cars, buses or trucks that ply on the streets are usually attacked. But on Monday the 100 or so buses in Chittagong that were burnt or damaged were parked on

roadsides, and were in no way violating the strike. Yet those were burnt or damaged, and one petrol pump was set on fire. We must be fools if we do not see that it was pre-planned. There was something else that was pre-planned.

Some activists in the processions (see Star photo in yesterday's issue) wore the Holy Quran around their necks or under their loosely fitted

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SEE EDITORIAL

BGMEA HIGHRISE SC stays demolition for 6 weeks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for six weeks a High Court verdict that directed the authorities to demolish the 15-storey BGMEA Bhaban in the city.

Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain passed the order after hearing a petition by Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

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Women seats in Sangsad to go up

Constitution amendment body faces difficulties in introducing direct election system

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendments agreed in principle to propose increasing reserved seats for women in the House but it is facing difficulties to introduce direct election to the seats preserved.

Members of the committee yesterday in a meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban discussed two propositions for increasing the number of reserved seats for women.

Some of the members said the reserved seats could be increased to 60 from 45 for the next 15 years with the existing indirect

election system in place.

The second proposition is for increasing the reserved seats to 100 with direct election to those seats, allowing voters to elect them, several members of the committee told The Daily Star after the meeting.

"Members of the committee agreed to increase the number of the reserved seats. We are discussing how to introduce direct election by increasing the seats to 100," Abdul Matin Khasru, a member of the committee, told The Daily Star.

He cited the ruling Awami League's

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KSA to resume hiring workers after 3 years

To take Bangladeshi workers under 4 categories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After three years of restriction, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has decided to open its door for Bangladesh to hire four categories of workers -- housemaids, house drivers, security guards and gardeners.

The Saudi employers will bear all cost to hire housemaids whose minimum monthly salary would be equivalent to Tk 12,000, but migration cost for other categories has not been fixed yet.

"The decision of recruitment will be effective within next two months," Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain told reporters.

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Clockwise from left, A cleaner of BSMMU hospital sells medical waste right at one of its gate. A trader of Old Dhaka gathers used up syringes to make them ready for reselling. A scavenger picks medical waste from a dustbin. These photos were taken recently.

Medical waste up for sale

Experts raise health alert as hazardous waste comes back to market without proper sterilisation

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

It is no secret. Anyone walking by the west gate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) will see cleaners in red dresses sell medical waste to vendors.

During a visit to the university on March 9, this correspondent found a man bargaining with a cleaner by the gate around 11:00am.

Farida, the cleaner, said over the past six years she has been working at BSMMU and doing the trade but

never considered it unlawful.

She was selling syringes, needles, blood bags along with paper and medicine boxes at Tk 20-30 a basket.

Abdur Rahim, the buyer, said he sells the items to factories in Old Dhaka. There the syringes are separated out and washed for reselling. All in new packages and without proper sterilisation, they again come onto the market.

Experts say the trend helps spread infectious diseases like hepatitis B

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