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The Daily Star extensively covered the sorry state of labour in jute rope, balloon and kitchen utensil factories. Two years later, days before the World Day Against Child Labour, it has gone back to those places, only to find nothing has changed.



## Same old sad story

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Today is the World Day Against Child Labour. But mean-while...

Eight-year-old Shakil works a 12-hour shift in a balloon factory in Kamrangirchar. When his day's work finishes the boy comes out of the factory like an age-bent dwarf, covered with white powder from his head to toe. His fellow workers, aged between seven and ten, make balloons in a steel frame, spread cheap talcum powder on them and unwind each balloon carefully.

Shakil's friend Imran works at a metal factory just across the yard. He took a small break and came to see Shakil. Imran had dust and residue from spinning metal all over his body and looked as if he was going on a covert military operation. Indeed, he has his own battle to fight.

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Rubel, 8, and Maidul, 10, top left, Shakil, only 5, top, and Sohel, 14, right, toil away while another World Day Against Child Labour passes. Government policymakers after attending seminars and conferences marking the day will gradually forget about the thousands of child labourers of the country. The photos were taken at Kamrangirchar and Keraniganj in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## Compromise mulled

Govt officials unhappy about proposed income tax

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Facing resentment from government officials over scrapping of the income tax exemption privilege, the government is contemplating a measure to offer them a reasonable alternative.

A finance ministry source said the income tax to be collected from the government officials may be returned to them in the form of an allowance. No

decision has yet been made in this regard but the government high-ups are considering it.

"Let them pay their taxes and at the end of the year it will be reviewed to see what can be done about it," Finance Minister AMA Muhith told a post-budget press conference on Friday.

The salaries of public servants have been raised by 62 percent and the

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## 10 more anthrax infected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Ten people have reportedly been infected with anthrax in Faridpur upazila of Pabna, district health officials said yesterday.

The infected -- Ranju Molla, 30, Rhyme, 12, Alet Mridha, 50, Arif Mridha,

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## Brac comes to aid of Libya returnees

PORIMOL PALMA

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (Brac) has launched a Tk 70 lakh credit programme, funded by Brac Bank, for more than a hundred of those repatriated from strife-torn Libya.

Under the scheme, Tk 10 lakh will be distributed to the most vulnerable people

while Tk 60 lakh to some others as soft loans, said Shipa Hafiza, director of Brac's Gender, Justice, Diversity and Advocacy Programme.

"It is a very small project... Actually, funding has been a major problem. However, we started this, expecting the government to start its rehabilitation

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PRAYER TIMING		June 12
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

## LUGGAGE FROM DHAKA

## Tortoises seized at Thai airport

AFP, Bangkok

Thai authorities have found nearly 400 protected tortoises in unclaimed bags at an airport in Bangkok, an official confirmed yesterday.

Loading tags suggested the luggage had come from Dhaka, according to the Freeland Foundation, a counter-trafficking organisation, before going to Japan via Bangkok and returning to the Thai capital when they were not collected.

The Indian and Burmese Star tortoises had been in the bags for about 10 days by the time they were found late Friday at Suvarnabhumi airport, said a senior customs official, who declined to be named.

The foundation estimated the tortoises could fetch up to \$31,000 on the black market. Out of 370 found, four had died during the journey, it said.

The star tortoise, which is popular in Asia as an exotic pet, is listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and a permit is required to export them.

It is the second large seizure of the creatures in a little

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