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#### **ANOTHER SCAM**

BB detects huge irregularities by a director of Mercantile Bank

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#### **DISASTER MANAGEMENT**

Manjur Mahmud describes how victims of the Savar tragedy could be tracked easily

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### TENSION ON SPY'S DEATH

Indian spy dies, under Pakistan's custody, a week after attacks by other inmates

SARABJIT SINGH



Wants measures to ensure safety standards of factories in Bangladesh; experts see bad signal for export

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The European Union, the largest destination for the country's garment items, plans to take trade actions against Bangladesh, which the industry insiders think will have a negative impact on apparel exports.

The bloc of 27 countries is considering taking action to oblige Bangladesh to improve safety standards in factories as a way of preventing frequent accidents, following the death of more than 400 gar-

ment workers in the Rana Plaza collapse in Savar.

The EU has voiced concern over labour conditions, including health and safety provisions, established for workers in factories across the

"The EU is presently considering appropriate action, including through the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) -- through which Bangladesh currently receives dutyfree and quota-free access to the EU market under the 'Everything But Arms' scheme -- in order to

incentivise responsible management of supply chains involving developing countries," it said in a joint statement on April 30.

The EU is the destination for almost 60 percent of Bangladesh's apparel products. Bangladesh became its major apparel supplier for having duty-free and quota-free access under the GSP and the EBA scheme.

"The EU has sent a strong message through this statement," said Mustafizur Rahman, executive SEE PAGE 19 COL 2



The Rana Plaza came crashing down nine days ago and Gopal has been looking for his wife Rita since. He has been staying at Adhar Chandra High School playground in Savar where the recovered bodies were being taken. Holding a leaflet of his missing wife, he broke down in tears yesterday. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Talks hope in sight

PM invites Khaleda; BNP wants formal invitation; Ashraf says offer by tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia to sit for a dialogue in or outside parliament to resolve the present political crisis.

In response, the main opposition BNP asked the government to send a

written proposal.

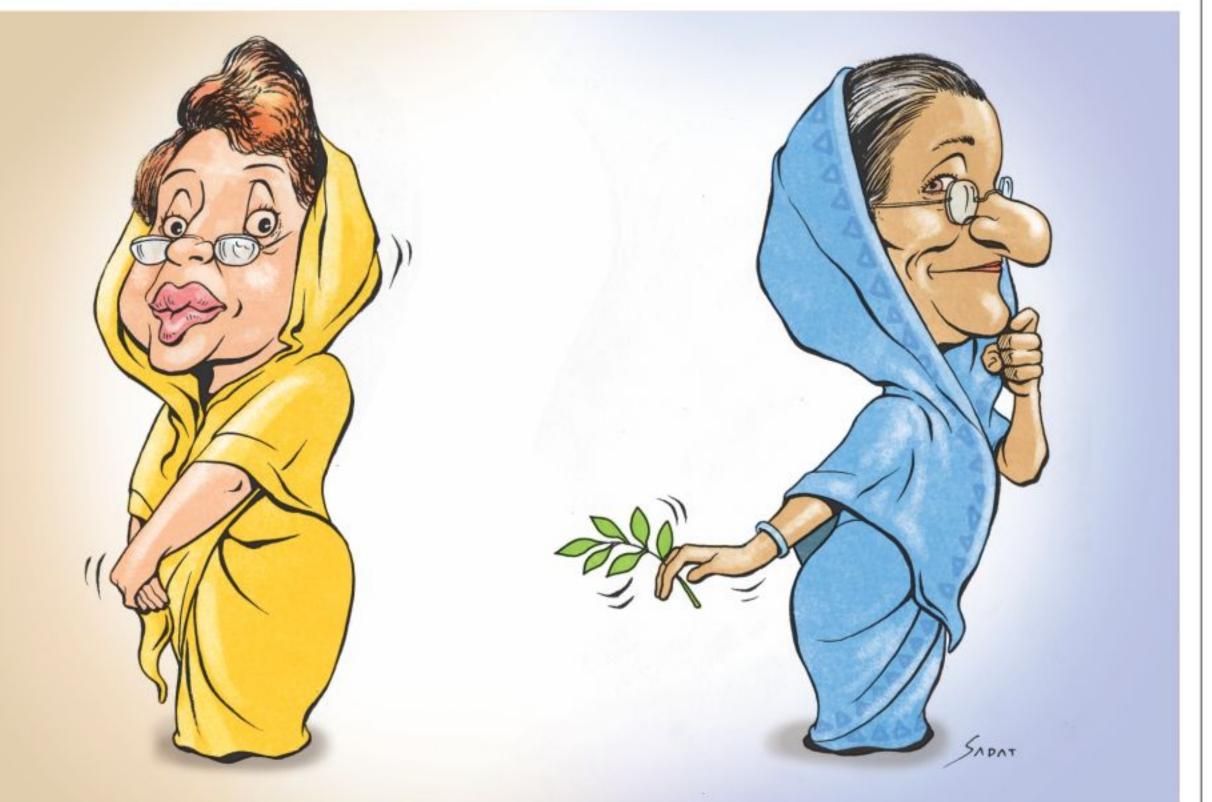
Hours later, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam said if the BNP chief positively responded to the PM's call, the ruling Awami League would invite the opposition through a letter in a day or two.

Hasina's offer of talks came at a

view-exchange meeting with Jhalakathi district AL leaders at Gono Bhaban.

She urged the opposition leader to sit for a dialogue whenever and wherever she (Khaleda) wanted.

"We want peace. We don't want to see more killings in the name of SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

# DEATH TOLL 446

# Riddle over the missing

No reliable data on how many people could not be traced; many still searching for their loved ones

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine days into the Rana Plaza tragedy, how many people still remain missing is a question officials cannot answer. All they can say is they do not have the exact number.

Rescuers say they are unaware of the number of people working at the nine-storey building when it collapsed on April 24, as the garment owners have not yet given them the actual figures.

Briefing journalists, ISPR Director Shahinul Islam yesterday said they

were yet to ascertain the number of those missing because they were still waiting for a list of workers present on the day from the BGMEA. Brig Gen Ali Ahmed Khan, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence, told The Daily Star, "The rescue operation would have been

easier had we had a list of the people working on different floors." From 6:00am till midnight yesterday, rescuers had pulled out 25 bodies from the debris, according to Inter Services Public Relations

Directorate (ISPR) sources. With this, the death toll rose to 446 while the number of people res-

cued alive remained unchanged at 2,437, ISPR added.

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### Problems there, govt to fix them

PM says about RMG industry in CNN

**CNN ONLINE** 

Prime Minister yesterday acknowledged that the country's garment industry is beset with problems, but said her government is

moving rapidly to fix them.

"Bangladesh now is a place for good conditions for the investment," Sheikh Hasina told CNN's Christiane Amanpour eight days after a nine-story building collapsed on the outskirts of Dhaka, killing at least 446 people. She said 2,437 survivors were pulled from the rubble, where recovery work was continuing.

"Yes, there are some problems," she said, but added that a committee has been formed to ensure the

safety of buildings and workers. "This committee will submit the findings to the Cabinet committee

and, side by side, we have been

## ILO for quick action

Asks govt to stop recurrence of building collapse, pledges help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has assured Bangladesh of providing full support to the victims of the Savar building collapse as it called for immediate action to stop recurrence of avoidable workplace tragedies.

Gilbert Houngbo, the UN agency's deputy director-general for field opera-

Killer govt' must go : Says Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka

tions, who is leading a high-level mission : BNP Chairperson Khaleda to Bangladesh, gave the assurance during · Zia on Wednesday said a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh · this government started Hasina in Dhaka on Wednesday, said her · its journey with the blood · of 57 army officers in Houngbo, former prime minister of : February, 2009 and set to Togo, handed over to Hasina a letter of : complete its tenure with condolence from ILO Director-General; the blood of workers killed in Savar tragedy.

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# No permission taken for upper floors

Admits Rana Plaza owner during interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sohel Rana, owner of the Savar building that caved in on April 24 killing at least 442 people, has said they illegally raised the upper floors against permission to construct a six-storey structure.

Both Rana and his father Abdul Khaleq, who is the building owner on papers, also

admitted their liability saying they had failed to control the quality of both construction and materials, said an interrogator.

"They also named to us three engineers who had been involved in the construction," said the interrogator asking not to be named.

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SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

### FIRST ODI TODAY Tigers back at happy ground

SPORTS REPORTER from

Bulawayo

After the bittersweet Test days of Harare, the Bangladesh cricket team will today start a format they are more comfortable with at a ground where they have enjoyed much

success. Like before the Test series on their tour of Zimbabwe, when they take on the home team in the first of three ODIs at

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STAR REPORT

The pope has condemned as "slave labour" the working conditions of the Bangladesh garment workers who died in last week's Savar factory collapse. As workers took to the streets to

Pope shocked at poor wages

Bangladesh RMG workers get

Guy Ryder.

demand better working conditions and the official death toll rose to more than 400, Pope Francis said he was shocked by a headline · for the next test: the collapse on April saying some of the workers were living on €38 (£32) a ·

month. "This was the payment of these people who have died : least 433 people have died. In total,



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SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

### BLOOMBERG

· When a fire at the Tazreen garment factory in Bangladesh killed 112 people in November, many wondered what more it would take before something would be done to improve labour conditions in the country, the world's No. 2 clothing exporter.

The world didn't have to wait long 24 of Rana Plaza, a nine-storey build-· ing housing multiple factories. At more than 1,000 garment workers have been killed in Bangladesh since 2005, according to the International Labour Rights Forum, an advocacy group.

Sewing clothes isn't inherently dangerous. Deaths can be prevented if factories adhere to basic fire and structural standards. Can this happen in Bangladesh, where in 30 years the garment industry grew from nothing to an \$18 billion a year business on the premise of cheap labour and minimal effective regulation? It's an example of the kind of tough chal-

lenge that, increasingly, producers and consumers in a global marketplace must jointly meet.

Yes, it would be ideal if the government firmly enforced building codes and fire standards. But Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries. Don't expect it to have a first-rate enforcement regime. Moreover, owners of the small and medium factories that are typically the most unsafe can't afford to make major improvements; to survive in the competitive world of outsourcers,



করা সংসারের পুরো ভার মায়ের কাছে দিয়ে, পাকিস্তান নৌবাহিনীর চাকরী ছেড়ে একাতরে দেশ স্বাধীনের যুদ্ধে যান আব্বা। তারপর নৌবাহিনী গড়ার ব্যস্ততার মধ্যেই ১৯৭৭-এ আব্বার আকস্মিক দেহত্যাগ। সেই থেকে মা-এর ক্লান্তিহীন It's slave labour Wash blood off your T-shirts একার সংগ্রাম–নিজের সব বিসর্জন দিয়ে আমাদের দশ ভাইবোনের জীবনকে সুন্দর করে তোলা। অসামান্য দুঃখ-কষ্টকে নিজের জীবনের সঙ্গী করে আমাদের বড় করেছেন মা। তার মধ্যেই শিখিয়েছেন কীভাবে মাতৃভূমিকে ভালোবাসতে হয়। জীবনটাকে শুধু যাপন করে যাচ্ছেন তিনি, উদ্যাপন করেননি কখনো। আমাদের সংগ্রামী মা

আজ ৭৭তম জন্মদিন।

বেগম ফজিলাতুনুেছার