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Labour courts inadequate

Only seven courts in operation, largely beyond workers' reach

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The labour and employment ministry cannot ensure justice to workers countywide due to a severe shortage of labour courts under the ministry, said officials concerned.

The seven existing labour courts established under the labour law remain largely out of workers' reach since these are located at divisional headquarters -- three courts in Dhaka, two in Chittagong and one each in Rajshahi and Khulna.

This means workers in different districts must go to the divisional headquarters to file cases with the labour courts, which is impossible for many, said officials in the labour ministry and labour courts.

Even there is no labour court at three divisional headquarters--Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur. Workers living in Barisal division are more unfortunate than those working in Rangpur and Sylhet divisions. There are three

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A crane removes large chunks of debris of the Rana Plaza in Savar bazaar bus stand yesterday as the death toll of the country's worst building collapse continue to rise.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

STATE OF APPAREL PRODUCTION

Merkel urges more transparency

AFP, Berlin

German Chancellor Angela Merkel yesterday urged greater transparency about where and how clothing is produced after the collapse of a garment factory complex in Bangladesh killed more than 500 people.

Merkel said she wanted to see a broadening out of the "Fair trade" label that already exists for some industries to



the fashion sector, speaking at a German Protestant Church conference.

She said this could mirror efforts to establish the origins of tropical woods and palm oil to affirm environmental sustainability, speaking at the gathering in the northern port city of Hamburg.

"Europe could be a trailblazer here and

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Canadian buyer pledges help

Vows to continue buying apparels from Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Loblaws, a major Canadian retailer, has vowed to keep sourcing apparel products from Bangladesh and help the country raise the standards for building codes.

The assurance came in the wake of the recent garment factory disaster in Savar that killed more than 500 people.

Galen G Weston, chairman of Loblaws, said his company wanted more rigorous factory inspections that would, for the first time, examine structural integrity of

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Make joint efforts to avert disasters

ILO official tells The Daily Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deadly workplace accidents keep happening in Bangladesh, as the root cause, workers' right to form trade unions, had not been addressed, said Gilbert Hougbo, deputy director general (field operations) of International Labour Organisation (ILO).

"If the issue is not addressed properly,



Gilbert Hougbo

we might see the buyers move elsewhere for the sake of business," said visiting Hougbo during an interview with The Daily Star yesterday.

He said it needed joint efforts of the government, factory owners and buyers to solve the recurrence of fatal factory accidents.

"When it is a question of a worker's life, it is a serious matter," said

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Using sand business as an excuse, influential quarters continue to encroach on the Turag in Tongi even though the government had marked the river with the pyramid-like concrete pillars. The photo was taken yesterday near the Biswa Jitema ground.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SAVAR DISASTER

Generators on roof blamed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Use of sub-standard construction material and installation of large generators on the roof of Rana Plaza were behind the collapse of the building, said chief of the home ministry investigation

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PRAYER TIMING				May 4
Azan	Jamaat			
Fajr	4-15	4-50		
Zohr	12-45	1-15		
Asr	4-45	5-00		
Maghrib	6-31	6-35		
Esha	8-00	8-30		
Source: Islamic Foundation				

Muhith calls for common currency in South Asia

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, from New Delhi

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday strongly supported the idea of introducing a common currency in South Asia for boosting regional trade.

He said the countries could embrace a common currency without getting all the other macro parameters in order as all of them (countries) are less sophisticated economies.

Even if all the Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) member countries do not agree with the idea, two or three nations could join hands and introduce the system, observed Muhith.

He was speaking at a seminar styled "Boosting Sub-Regional Development through Increased Investment and Trade." Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised the event at its headquarters in New Delhi.

The minister is now in the Indian capital to attend the 46th annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank.

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18-party rally in Dhaka today

Plan to 'assist Hefajat programme' tomorrow

RASHIDUL HASAN and PRABIR BARUA CHOWDHURY

The BNP-led 18-party alliance is set to hold a rally today in the capital to put weight on the government to realise its prime demand, restoration of the caretaker government system.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is expected to announce the opposition alliance's next course of action from the rally, said sources.

A number of BNP senior leaders yesterday told The Daily Star that they had set the rally date a day prior to Hefajat-e Islam's lay siege to Dhaka programme to assist the Islamist organisation.

Hefajat's programme is set to begin from tomorrow to materialising its 13-point demand, including introduction of Sharia [law of Islam] to punish atheists and those who act against Islam.

A top leader of Dhaka district BNP unit told The Daily

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