

Supervising RMG sector



PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN

The RMG sector has been earning a lot of foreign exchange every year. But recent tragedies like Tazreen fire or Rana Plaza collapse have shown us the ugly truth that garment owners are working just in their own interest, that workers' lives are of no value to them, let alone other rights.

The BGMEA has no control over the garment sector. When any accident occurs, it favours the garment owners but not the workers through whose cheap labour they are making huge profits.



There is not a single example where the BGMEA has taken action against a garment owner. In order to save this potential sector, the government should take an immediate initiative to form a new, strong statutory body which will oversee all activities of the RMG sector and will also reserve the right to cancel the membership of any garment factory if necessary.

Md. Enamul Haq
Badda, Dhaka

Is it Altaf or myself there?

He was in pain and despair as I was watching him live on television. He was half-buried in the Rana Plaza rubble and was hanging between the walls precariously to die another day! So awkward was his position that someone passing along might have comforted him with bricks to lean onto.

He was in extreme distress and was in acute pain, as one can imagine. He was constantly entreating whoever was passing him by. He was relentless in his pleading, and was appealing to the media crew to bring forth the rescuers to salvage him from the wreckage.

He must not die like this! It was of utmost importance that he lived as he was the sole bread-earner of his family. He was groaning in pain and muttering ... 'aamar bou aar aamar dui bachchar aami chara ei duniyay aar keu nai amare please bachan!' Even in such dire straits all he could think about was the aftermath as to what would happen to his family if he failed to survive!

I was gripped by emotion at seeing this, so much so that I realised suddenly a similitude between the man on the screen and on myself. I am also working in a garment factory. Like him I also have a loving wife and two kids to feed.

I desperately prayed with all my heart that this ill-fated man be rescued. I spent a sleepless night. The next morning I saw him on the front page of The Daily Star. Altaf was his name. He was still hanging on, it read. The very next morning my hopes were shattered into pieces. The esteemed daily ran a small column on him.

Mozammel Haque Ranju
Mohammadpur
Dhaka

Hefajat's mayhem

Creating anarchy, preventing people, especially the poor from earning a living, cannot be the idea and activity of a religious Muslim. If Hefajat-e Islam thinks that people are on the wrong path, it should preach and guide them towards the right path in mosques, on TV shows, etc. Jihad is acceptable only when a Muslim is prevented from practising his religion, which is not happening in Bangladesh. It dismays me when the leader of the opposition supports religious extremists and bigots. It brings home the fact that she lacks the intellectual capacity to lead the country.

Rehana Latif
Uttara
Dhaka



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Food prices at Comilla hotels

Comilla is the midpoint of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway where passengers stop for refreshments. Almost all vehicles take a break in Comilla. So restaurants in Comilla are doing their food business at full throttle. But the food price is really a matter of concern there. Almost all restaurants sell food at exorbitant prices. Passengers arrive in Comilla after a long journey and they do not have any other option than going to these restaurants. They are compelled to eat there by paying unimaginably high prices for the food. For example, the price of bhuna khichuri is tk. 200, a porota/nun tk. 15 and vegetable mix tk. 30. Even a 1.5 litre mineral water bottle is charged tk 30 when it is labelled for tk 22. Restaurant owners reason that they have to charge high prices due to the declining number of customers. This is not true in the current context of this route which is busy 7/24 hours with long tailbacks. Doing business is good but it should be done ethically and reasonably. No one should try to make a quick buck by robbing hungry passengers.

Maruf Ahsan
Lecturer, School of Law
BGC Trust University
Chittagong

IAS conference in Dhaka

I think the Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS) has taken a great initiative to host its conference, focused on the exploration of the development of science and technology in the member countries of OIC, in Dhaka this month.

The development of science and technology is only possible in political climates where governments are truly democratic, transparent and support a free market. Unfortunately, in most OIC countries corruption and favouritism prevail which act as deterrents against any kind of meaningful development.

Bangladesh has potentials in agro-sciences and the technology industry. The country could easily become part of the global food supply chain by establishing an 'Agro-Resource Centre' that could focus on turning Bangladesh and its farming industry into centres of export.

We definitely have the resources and human talent for establishing this kind of industry, but the political environment is not favourable to its implementation.

Dr. Mohamed Ayub Ali
Uttara
Dhaka

Beautifying Hatirjheel



PHOTO: STAR

Most dailies, including yours, have proposed a dismantling of the illegally built BGMEA building. In my opinion, the building need not be dismantled but left there and the owners as a penalty should turn the whole area of Hatirjheel into a green park as per design and specification to be laid out by Rajuk.

It should have all facilities like boundary walls, pathways, benches, playground for children, and other facilities as well as gates at various points and a pond surrounded by a flower garden all around it. They should provide all needed lighting facilities and water supply at various points for spraying water on the trees and plants.

The BGMEA building can be surrounded by tall and dense trees which will work as curtains all around the structure. After completing the garden strictly as per specification, the BGMEA building authorities should be responsible for looking after the trees, and repair and maintain all the facilities for a period of at least 25 years. All the trees will mature by that time.

People will go to the place to relax in the lush green garden, with flowering plants and trees providing shade and beauty in the middle of the metropolis.

Engr. S. A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Let's save them!

It was evening when I was walking along the footpath near the public library. I saw some street children sharing something with one another. As I went closer to them, I realised that they were taking drugs. I enquired about their identities. One of them said: "We are friends and stay together. We roam around the city and collect waste materials. We sell them and with the money buy drugs." It made me upset. We should come forward to change their mindset. Let's save them.

Bipul K Debnath
Department of English
Dhaka College
Dhaka

Misusing hartal

People of Bangladesh are now passing a critical time due to hartals and other political programmes. During the course of political programmes like hartal picketers vandalise houses, shops, vehicles, etc. Hartal is a democratic way of protest but that doesn't mean that one can destroy public properties during hartals. If the situation continues, our country will turn into a place of terror. We urge the opposition parties not to misuse their right to call hartals.

Debabrata Sarkar
Department of English
University of Barisal



PHOTO: BANGLA CHOKH

READERS respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "27 more killed"

Binodbangali

Why so many lives had to be taken away? Why can't we resolve our differences through civility?

Dev Saha

I am wondering whether these cadres have been getting combat training from the Afghan war veterans.

Shafiqur Rahman

Well, what did you expect the police and other law enforcement agencies to do? Just stand there and have their heads beaten by Hefajat men? Hefajat should go to an Islamic country with Islamic and Shariah laws. Hefajat, you are not welcome here. We already have enough problems.

A Bangalee

It is surprising that the government allowed Hefajat-e Islam to hold a rally at Shapla Chatter.

Ashique Anwar

It is so sad that these "followers of Islam" are using mosques for political purposes. What a shame! Go home, Jamaat. Go home, Hefajat. We want peace.

Iftekhar Hassan

Hefajat's rise to this level can be a threat to the country's stability. Without stability Bangladesh cannot develop.

Khan Kalam

The Jamaat-Shibir and BNP backed Hefajat are trying to turn this country into Afghanistan. The BNP and AL are fighting each other to get to power. The welfare of the common people is outside their agenda. The poor and middle classes are suffering severely because of this chaotic situation. Forced hartals and vandalism are becoming part of our daily life. Is this called democracy?

Sharukh Khan

Curing this religious vulgarity disease depends on how the government tackles poverty and illiteracy in a vastly impoverished country, where parents send their kids to madrasas instead of to modern and decent schools.

Here are some comments that came in response to Tuesday's The Daily Star news report headlined "More bodies lie under rubble"

Al-Mamun

How long will we mourn these sorts of man-made accidents? Let's take proper action.

Guest

We are so cursed as a country that we have politicians who are busy throwing dirt by stepping on dead bodies. It is not just the politicians' fault, it is our fault because we, the general people, allow them to do whatever they wish to do with our silence. I really feel ashamed.

1danny_adam1

Taking quick help from the UK could have saved many more lives in this tragedy. The government's excuse is based on false pride.

Country's interest should get preference

The political parties of Bangladesh are forgetting their core duties. They are absorbed in finding ways to come to power at any cost. Our rising potentials to become a middle-income country within 2021 are going to be nipped in the bud due to the inhuman and cruel activities of the political parties and sectarian power. Strikes, road blockades, rampage on the streets, vandalising properties and overall unrest in the country are causing irrecoverable financial losses and unbearable sufferings to the general people. Political parties should give preference to the interest of the country.

Mrittunjoy Dhali
Patuakhali Science and Technology University