



RISKS TO ECONOMY

German envoy says shutdowns, bad factory conditions may hurt growth

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CYCLONE PREPAREDNESS

Unicef representative lauds efforts by govt and humanitarian partners

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DURAND LINE DISPUTE

Karzai seeks Indian military aid amid border row with Pakistan

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Prospect of GSP very bleak

Signing Ticfa not so soon

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The prospects of Bangladesh retaining the generalised system of preferences in the US market are bleak, according to Commerce Minister GM Quader.

"After the Rana Plaza collapse, expecting a positive result from the USTR hearing has become difficult," Quader told The Daily Star yesterday.

"I cannot exactly say whether the outcome will be positive," he said.

But US Ambassador Dan W Mozena relayed a "grim" feedback from the United States Trade Representative, according to Quader.

Mozena held a meeting with the minister yesterday at the latter's secretariat in Dhaka.

USTR, the body

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POLITICAL MEETINGS, RALLIES

Ban or no ban?

Conflicting versions, statements of two ministers kick up confusion, uproar

Dazed & Confused



"No meeting or demo for indefinite period in Dhaka to avert anarchy!" **MK Alamgir**

"Ban on political meeting across country for a month for smooth relief operations!" **Syed Ashraf**



"I am unaware of such a decision!" **IGP HM Khandker**

"No circular has been issued on such one-month ban!" **Home secretary Mustaq Ahmed**



STAR REPORT

Two top ministers' conflicting statements over the government's "banning" political rallies and meetings have triggered widespread confusion and criticism.

Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir had categorically said that no meeting or demonstration would be permitted for one month, Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS), the state-run news agency, reported at 5:19pm yesterday.

"We give permission for peaceful

meetings but the opposition parties engage in violence and disrupt law and order. So no meeting will be permitted in the next one month in order to safeguard life and property," he said while inaugurating Juraganj Police Station in Mirsarai upazila of Chittagong around noon in the day.

But speaking to BBC Bangla service in the evening, the home minister, however, said the ban had been imposed in the capital for an indefinite period.

The government, however, did not issue any order to this effect specifying

the reasons for such an unprecedented move and the law that allowed it to impose the ban.

For his part, LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam, who is the ruling Awami League general secretary, said the ban had been imposed across the country for the sake of smooth relief and rehabilitation activities in the cyclone Mahasen-ravaged districts.

"It is not possible to protect the people's fundamental rights like meetings and rallies when the country is hit by any natural disaster," Ashraf said

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Parties react angrily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP and other political parties have strongly denounced the conflicting statements of two ministers on banning all kinds of political meetings and rallies for a month.

Political parties and civil society members described the move as undemocratic and unconstitutional, and demanded its immediate withdrawal.

The criticisms came hours after Home Minister Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday said no political party would be allowed to hold any rally and public meeting for the next one month so as to maintain law and order and prevent subversive activities from taking place.

The BNP-Jamaat-led 18-party alliance said it would come up with a befitting action plan against such "fascist attitude".

"We may hold the party's standing committee

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RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

Double blow for a mother

MORSHED ALI KHAN

For Hazera Khatun, the news of the Rana Plaza collapse in Savar meant making urgent arrangements to go there, from her home in Kotchadpur village in Jhenidah. Hazera's daughter Maya Rani worked in the building. With no news of her daughter, Hazera endured the agonising wait at Adhar Chandra High School, which

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Hazera Khatun is now looking for her two-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter. Her daughter, the child's mother, died in the Rana Plaza disaster.

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Editor
The Daily Star

Polls-time govt minus Hasina?

AL toys with the idea

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The ruling Awami League might be agreeable to forming an interim government headed by a lawmaker other than Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to oversee the next parliamentary elections.

Several ministers and leaders of the AL had earlier said Hasina would lead the polls-time government.

"The prime minister has said she will be ready to sacrifice a lot if the main opposition BNP joins the interim government," a top policymaker of the ruling party told The Daily Star.

According to AL insiders, this means a ruling party lawmaker is likely to lead the interim government.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Politics back to square one

SHAKHAWAT LITON

History is known to repeat, but sometimes it repeats in an unbelievable manner.

The ruling Awami League central working committee at a meeting on Friday with party chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair reaffirmed that the next parliamentary election would be held under an interim government composed of elected representatives.

And whatever its name, Hasina, the incumbent prime minister, will be its

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Latest govt move to hurt talks

Khaleda tells EU delegates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has said the dialogue between the government and the opposition would be "affected" by the government's "ban" on holding rallies for a month.

She made the comment when a delegation of ambassadors called on her

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BHERAMARA POWER TENDER Unusual conditions raise questions

SHARIER KHAN

While preparing tender evaluation criteria for selecting bidders for a large power project involving a few hundred million dollars, the Northwest Power Generation Company Ltd (NWPGL) has fixed some very unusual conditions that suit only one particular Japanese bidder.

According to several bidders participating in the tender for setting up a gas-fired 450 MW power plant, the NWPGL has formulated tender evaluation criteria where the proposed plant's life has been fixed at 30 years whereas all other power projects in the country are based on a plant life of 20 years.

"This will artificially increase plant life to get financial benefit of higher plant output and efficiency," said an expert

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Not all steel are of equal Strength



Steel's weight bearing threshold (per square mm) – standard

	America	Europe	India	Bangladesh	AKS (BUET Test)
500W (per square mm weight bearing threshold) – in newtons	520	500	500	500	552

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