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WORKERS' DATABASE

BGMEA asks Ashulia factories to build a biometric database

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MTV IN BANGLADESH

Creinse Limited says Bangladesh is the next emerging music scene

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ASSANGE'S REVELATION

WikiLeaks founder accesses int'l correspondence which allegedly calls extradition 'a fit-up'

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PROPOSED CHANGES TO LABOUR LAW

Concerns still exist

SOHEL PARVEZ and SUMAN SAHA

The proposed amendment to the labour law, expected to be finalised in June, claims to bring changes for workers -- for the better. In reality, many of its provisions will have a contrary effect, particularly on those in the garment sector.

"In many important areas, the employers are being given undue benefits over the interests of workers," said AKM Nasim, senior legal counsellor at the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS).

Take for instance, the provision for owners to terminate workers for "arson, vandalism and obstruction to work". No such words are present in the existing labour law.

Another new clause was put in the draft which empowers the owners to terminate a worker's contract for leave of absence upwards of 10 days without notice. Under such circumstances, workers are not

AMENDED LABOUR LAW

The Good



Labour Dept doesn't need to inform owners for trade union registration



Permanent healthcare centre for 5000-strong companies



Transfer of 5% profit into so-called welfare fund



Termination of workers on allegations of obstruction, arson

entitled to any compensation for termination of their contracts.

The government initiated the process of amending the current Labour Law 2006 after questions arose about the country's continued eligibility for generalised system of preferences (GSP) for the US market, on accounts of its low labour stan-

dards and occupational safety.

But the scope for free formation of trade unions at factories, one of the prime demands of the advocacy parties the world over, however, was not addressed properly in the Bangladesh Labour (Amendment) Act 2013.

The amendment maintains a provision that a worker will not be a member of trade union of a factory if he/she loses job.

"We have been demanding cancellation of this provision for a long time, but it has been kept

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

The jet black water in the capital's Trimohani, where the Balu, Shitalakkhya and Turag rivers converge. The pollution there is so severe that the water remains this black all year around, except during the rainy season, and emits a horrible stench.

RMG WORKERS Wage board by this week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will form a new minimum wage board for garment workers within this week.

Mikail Shipar, secretary of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, yesterday said, "We have asked for names of the owners' representatives from the BGMEA and BKMEA today [yesterday] so that we can form the board within this week."

Labour and Employment Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, earlier in the day during a meeting at the Secretariat, discussed with the leaders of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association how the new wage board could be formed.

As per the rules, the new board would be

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Mozena remark 'provocative'

Latif sees trade union issue as an internal matter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Textiles and Jute Minister Abdul Latif Siddique yesterday expressed surprise at US Ambassador to Bangladesh Dan W Mozena's recent remarks calling on Bangladesh to

allow trade unions in the garment sector. Bangladesh has to ensure workers' right to association to get generalised system of preferences (GSP) in the US market, Mozena said on Saturday at a public hearing on "Safe environment for garment workers".

"I really wonder whether the comments reportedly made by Ambassador Mozena directly pressurising RMG owners or



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PM for end to global conflicts over water

Suggests judicious settlement, proper management of water resources

UNB, Chiang Mai

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said only a judicious settlement of disputes and management of water resources could resolve global conflicts over water.

"Through the ages water has led to human conflicts all over the world. Some are now still going on.

"Only a judicious settlement of issues regarding access to and management of water resources is the solution to these conflicts, and for peace," she said.

The premier made the remarks while addressing the inaugural function of the second Asia-Pacific Water Summit.



The summit was held at the International Convention and Exhibition Centre Commemorating His Majesty's 7th Cycle Birthday Anniversary in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

Today, Hasina said, the world is convinced that human security constitutes food, energy and water securities. "And there exists an increasing inequality in access to water and sanitation."

The situation was worsening due to the precarious state of rivers and wetlands, she said, adding that in South Asia, water security was challenged by booming population, unplanned urbanisation, pollution and over-extraction of ground water.

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It's no good for media

Inu deplores editors' statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday said that speaking in favour of a person like Mahmudur Rahman would not bring any good to the newspaper industry.

He also urged the editors of 15 national dailies not to plead for the release of Mahmudur, acting editor of Bangla daily Amar Desh, in future without being aware of the "real fact."

His comment comes a couple of days after the editors had issued a joint statement demanding the release of Mahmudur Rahman and allowing the broadcast of Diganta and IslamicTV channels.

On May 6, the government halted the broadcast of the two private channels on

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