



US IMMIGRATION REFORM

The Senate okays bill creating path to citizenship for undocumented residents

PAGE 7

THE BEACON OF TOLERANCE

In the midst of blasphemies, a 17th messiah shows the light

PAGE 12

'MAN OF STEEL' IN DHAKA

Zack Snyder's 2013 Superman reboot hits Star Cineplex

PAGE 10

Harsh, shocking

Govt concerned at GSP suspension, says steps taken to improve worker safety, labour standards

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday criticised the scrapping of trade privileges by the United States as harsh and shocking.

Responding to the criticism that Bangladesh has not made "sufficient progress" in basic labour standards, the government insisted that it has taken concrete steps to improve worker safety and rights.

"While Bangladesh is absolutely respectful of a trading partner's choice of decisions, it expresses its deep concern that this harsh measure may bring in fresh obstacles in an otherwise flourishing bilateral trade," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

US President Barack Obama suspended tariff

benefits for Bangladesh for what he said was the nation's failure to protect its workers.

Before the trade action, Bangladesh was among 127 countries qualified for tariff-free privileges under Generalised System of

Preferences (GSP), a 37-year-old scheme that eliminates duties on imports from those nations to aid their development.

"It cannot be more shocking for the factory workers of Bangladesh that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Why suspension not the answer

BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK

If the United States wants to improve working conditions in Bangladesh, it should increase trade benefits, not suspend them.

In the wake of the horrific building collapse in Bangladesh earlier this year that killed a thousand people, mostly garment sector workers, the Obama administration decided yesterday to suspend the country's trade benefits under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

GSP SUSPENSION BNP sees govt failure

AL puts blame on garment owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP yesterday blamed the government for suspension of GSP facilities by the US, and said revocation of beneficial trade status might destroy the country's

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Garment makers shocked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment makers yesterday said they were disappointed with the US decision of suspending the GSP for Bangladesh as millions of garment workers would be affected.

Apparel sector's apex trade body Bangladesh

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Social businesses thriving globally

Prof Yunus, international experts celebrate successes on Social Business Day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

When Prof Muhammad Yunus came up with the idea of social business a few years ago, many conventional businesses and economic experts raised eyebrows, expressing doubt whether it would ever work.

Although the theory is yet to offer widespread successes in terms of actions, the amount of attention it has generated locally and globally -- in developed and developing world -- proves the anti-poverty pioneer has passed the first test of getting people engaged.

This was again evidenced yesterday as around 1,000 people, many from abroad, spent the day in Dhaka, to hear the worldwide developments in social business.

They thronged the Radisson Hotel in the city in the morning to attend the fourth Social Business Day.

The event coincided with the birthday of



Nobel laureate Prof Yunus, who turned 74 yesterday.

The day's proceedings started with showering Yunus with birthday wishes. Everybody in the vast hall-room of the hotel stood and sang the Happy Birthday song.

Sir Richard Branson, owner of Virgin Group, sang birthday wishes with a group of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

BLACK MONEY Whitening scope may widen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government may allow legalising of undisclosed money on investment in productive sectors, a scope that has already been given for the real estate sector in the proposed budget.

This implies the government will not question the source of money invested in productive sectors provided the money holders paid 10 percent tax to avail the opportunity.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith may make an announcement on extending the scope in his concluding budget speech today.

In his earlier budget speech, the finance minister had said the special opportunity was given in the housing sector to boost the industry that had

SEE APGE 11 COL 1

GAZIPUR CITY POLLS

Rivals on full throttle for win

SHAKHAWAT LITON and WASIM BIN HABIB, back from Gazipur

Ruling Awami League and opposition BNP have deployed unprecedented strength in a local election campaign to make sure the mayoral candidates backed by them win the Gazipur City Corporation elections on July 6.

Gazipur city is now abuzz with political bigwigs, lawmakers, and activists who rush there every day from the capital and adjacent areas to campaign for their mayoral candidates.

Even though the elections to the city corporations are supposed to be non-partisan in nature, the intense campaigning of the political parties with immense strength has set a bizarre record.

With the next parliamentary elections just around the corner, and ruling Awami League-backed candidates losing

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

USE OF RELIGION AL responds to BNP, Hefajat campaign

ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND, from Gazipur

The ruling Awami League has launched a campaign countering BNP and Hefajat-e Islam's "religious propaganda" against the government and the AL-backed mayoral candidate for Gazipur City Corporation polls.

The party yesterday distributed leaflets at different places in Tongi and Gazipur, including the mosques, highlighting AL-led government's various measures for Islam and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



The rickshaw puller and the passenger fall on the waterlogged street near the Arambagh intersection in the capital yesterday afternoon after the rickshaw went into a pothole hidden under water.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

Priority on safety

Bangladesh envoy tells int'l conference about Rooppur nuke power plant

SHARIER KHAN, from St Petersburg

Bangladesh gives highest importance to the safety of Rooppur nuclear power plant and therefore expects Russia to install the most up to date and advanced nuclear reactor, said Bangladesh ambassador to Russia Saiful Haq yesterday.

Speaking at the third international inter-ministerial conference on Nuclear Power at St Petersburg he said Bangladesh, to meet its energy demands and also to diversify primary energy source, aims to build the plant with Russian technology and generate 10 to 15 percent of electricity requirements from it by 2021.

As the head of Bangladesh team, Saiful also urged the International Atomic Energy

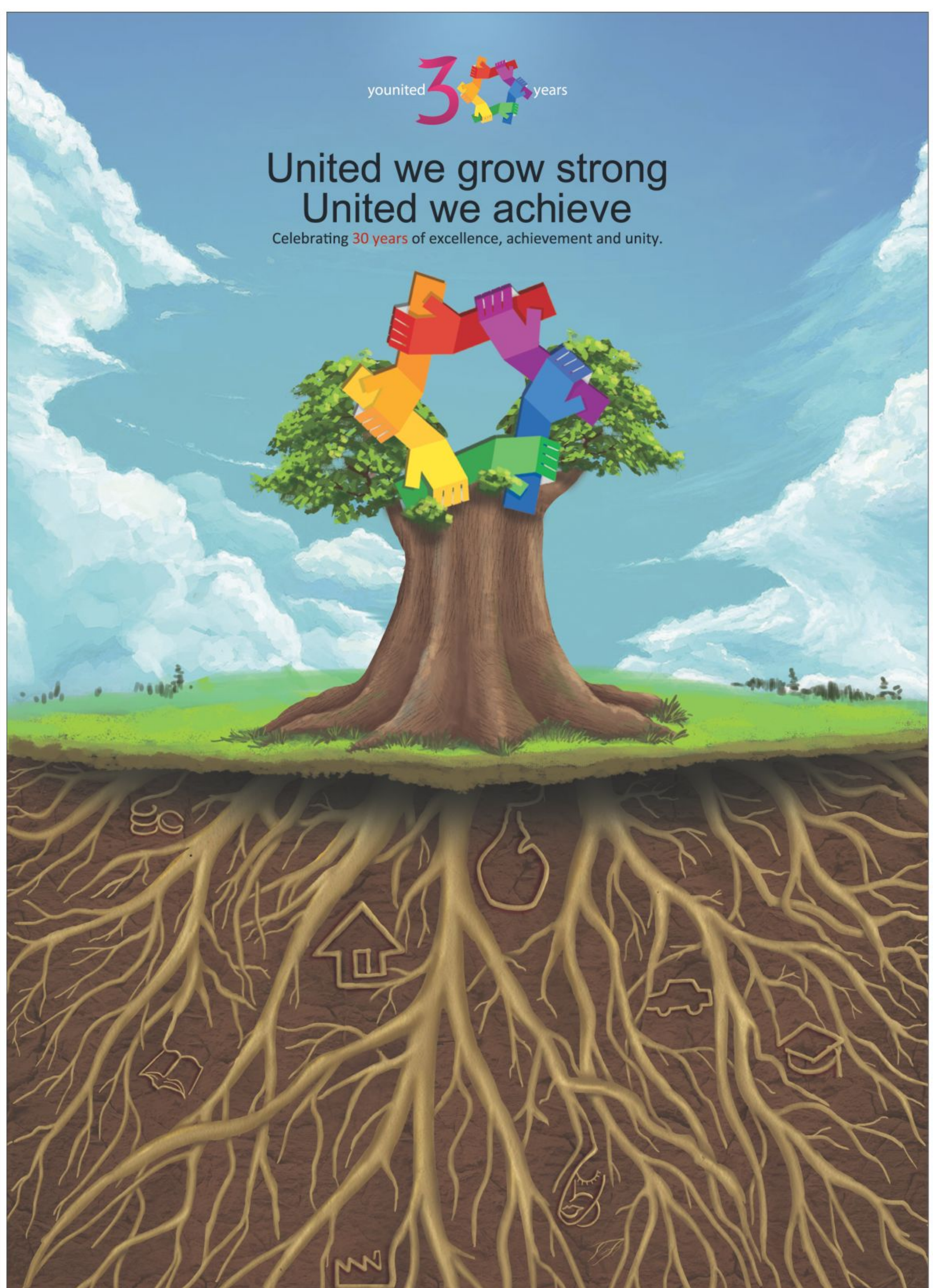
Agency (IAEA) to help Bangladesh ensure the highest and most robust nuclear safety standard at the Rooppur plant.

Hosted by Russia, the IAEA organised the conference that brought together representatives from 89 countries to discuss the future of the technology.

While explaining the rationale of Bangladesh in going for the nuclear power plant, Saiful said about 40 percent of the country's people still did not have access to electricity and that the indigenous energy resources were inadequate.

"There had been accidents [in nuclear plants]. But it is not fair to characterise the technology based on the fears of accidents. To overcome this fear, we will put more

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



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