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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

SHOUT

TAMILS VOTE IN LANKA POLLS

60% turnout of minority voters in Jaffna raises hope for an end to decades-old ethnic conflict

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ACTOR TO DIRECTOR

Cate Blanchett is set to debut directing a dark thriller based on Herrman Koch's bestseller "The Dinner"

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MDG GOALS
Bangladesh top achiever along with Cambodia
 STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Child death cut by 72pc

Report shows Bangladesh's outstanding success over 22 years

REAZ AHMAD

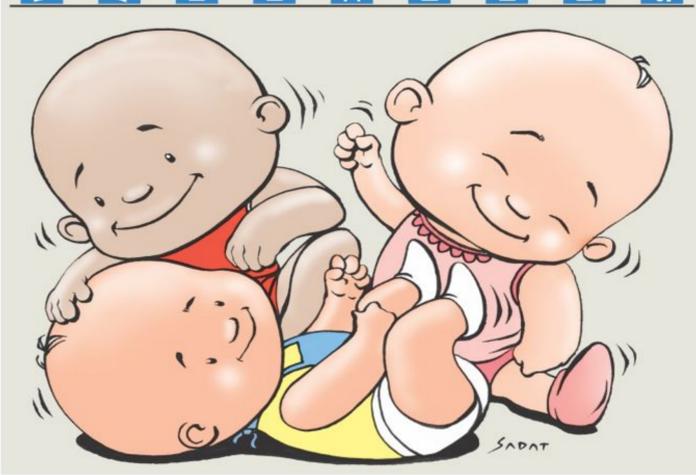
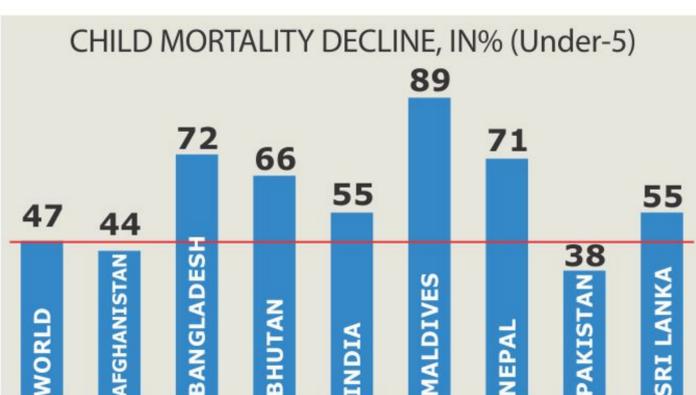
Children don't die in big numbers in Bangladesh now as they did 22 years ago.

The country is preventing over 1,100 child deaths a day, thanks to a successful reduction in child mortality by 72 percent in last two decades.

Back in 1990, as many as 1,454 children used to die a day even before they could reach their fifth birthday. Now that number has come down to 347.

According to a report jointly released by the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank and the United Nations Population Division last week, Bangladesh has outshone all its South Asian neighbours save the small island nation the Maldives in terms of reduction in child mortality.

By slashing 89 percent between 1990 and 2012, the Maldives topped child mortality reduction chart in South Asia followed by Bangladesh (72 percent) while India and Pakistan remain among the biggest contributors to global child mortality, said the report titled "Levels & Trends in Child Mortality".



War trial not act of revenge

Says Hasina in Al Jazeera documentary

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has denied the opposition's allegation that the trial of war criminals is an act of revenge, insisting that it is rather the due course of law.

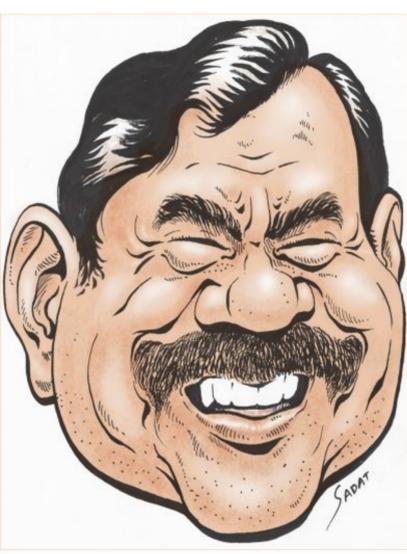
"Sometimes you can hear the hue and cry from many quarters that you are taking revenge on the opposition and this and that. It is not true," she told legendary British journalist David Frost when he met her in Dhaka in June this year.

When Frost pointed out her opponent's claim that the war crimes trial is flawed and just for show, the premier said, "I don't know why these people are opposing it."

Frost conducted the interview as part of a documentary that was aired on Al Jazeera early yesterday. Hasina also discussed with him the upcoming general elections and the rift between Awami League and BNP.

The documentary covers a range of issues, including Bangladesh's independence and the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Asked whether she had forgiven those involved in genocide in 1971, Hasina said, "They killed our people, they raped our women, they tortured, especially those who were Bengali. They are war criminals, killers. So, they should get punished."



Minister's rally, so 400 factories shut

Owners fume privately as labour leader-turned-lawmaker dictates terms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than 400 garment factories were abruptly forced to suspend production yesterday thanks to a rally backed by Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan to demand a 170.5 percent pay rise.

"What the garment owners are pushing for as minimum wage is not rational. We want to negotiate a realistic salary," Shajahan said at the rally organised by Garment Sramik Samannay Parishad, a federation of trade unions in garment sector, at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital.

The minister's role at the demonstration, attended by thousands of garment workers without leave of absence from their employers, was criticised by industry stakeholders, who viewed it as a conflict of interest.

"Being a minister he cannot chair a

programme of a garment workers' platform. He is a minister for all. For workers as well as the owners," said a garment owner preferring not to be named.

A former president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the garment makers' platform, said the gathering was unnecessary as an independent wage board is working to fix the new minimum wage.

"But, it was the desire of the minister -- we do not have any choice," said the owner of a garment factory situated in Ashulia.

"The trade union leaders sent vehicles for the workers -- and my factory emptied just like that. I am sure the situation was similar at other factories," he added.

Another owner said the rally could have taken place on a Friday, when most of the

garment factories remain shut.

"It would not have caused abrupt disruptions to production. It is unreasonable of the minister to force us to write-off the day."

However, Sirajul Islam Rony, workers' representative on the wage board, said the minister was within his rights to chair the programme "as he is the president of a garment sector trade union".

"Being a trade union leader, the minister always has empathy with the workers and their needs," he told The Daily Star over telephone.

Over at the rally, Shajahan Khan alleged "many terrorists" vandalised the workers' vehicles to prevent them from joining the demonstration. In fact, it was the rally-bound

FELANI MURDER

BSF admits using excessive force

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday admitted using excessive force in killing Felani Khatun and said it was difficult to justify the shooting incident.

The fresh trial of BSF constable Amiya Ghosh, who had fired at Felani, is likely to begin soon, BSF's Additional Director General BD Sharma told the media in Kolkata after attending the September 14-19 director general-level talks with Border Guard Bangladesh in Dhaka.

"A jawan has been given a gun. That doesn't mean that he can just shoot without using any sense. The jawan could have arrested her [Felani]," he mentioned.

On returning from Delhi and on her way home, the 15-year-old Bangladeshi girl was

'Cantonment' on Buriganga river

Dhaka DC leases out 27-acre river land

TAWFIQUE ALI

The Dhaka District Administration has leased out 27 acres of Buriganga river foreshore in Postogola for a cantonment defying river laws and High Court (HC) judgment on saving rivers.

Located south of the Buriganga first bridge and north of Shyampur launch terminal, the site is demarcated as river and foreshores with boundary pillars.

Ironically, the very district administration along with land records department and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) have recently installed the pillars upon an HC order clearly showing that the area leased out is part of the river.

During a recent visit to the site, The Daily Star correspondent found labourers filling up a large area of the Buriganga foreshore and building a boundary wall.

Foreshore is the area lying between the low-water mark of dry season and high-water mark of monsoon and is vital for a river's navigability and port activities.

The leased out site in Ailbahar mouza is within the 452-acre foreshore limit of Dhaka river port as per the joint survey map prepared by the district administration and BIWTA, said Joint Director of BIWTA Md Saiful Islam.



Earth filling and construction of boundary walls continue on the Buriganga foreshore at Postogola. The pillar, marked in red, demarcates the foreshore, which cannot be leased out as per laws. But the district administration has leased out part of the foreshore to the army for "setting up a cantonment". Inset, a demarcation pillar near the site. The photos were taken recently. PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

TALKS ON POLITICAL CRISIS

Opposition not invited by UN

SAYS PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh's Permanent Representative to the UN, AK Abdul Momen, has refuted BNP's claim that the main opposition party has been invited to the UN headquarters to discuss Bangladesh's ongoing political crisis.

Speaking at a press briefing at the Bangladesh Mission to the UN in New York on Friday, Momen said the United Nations had not taken any initiative to invite any BNP representatives for a dialogue between the Bangladesh government and the BNP at the UN headquarters.

Congratulations!



We warmly congratulate Dr. Farhana Monem, Director of GME Group for being adjudged as the highest Tax Payer of Chittagong Zone for the Financial Year 2012-2013. We proudly proclaim that Dr. Farhana Monem is the beloved youngest daughter of Mr. Abdul Monem (Hon'ble Chairman and Managing Director of Abdul Monem Limited) and Mrs. Meherunnessa Monem.

Abdul Monem Ltd.

The foreshore area was later extended to 712 acres, he added.

Five decades ago, the foreshores were handed over to BIWTA, said

Islam, adding that BIWTA has since been the conservator of the channel, foreshores and river ports as per the ordinance, Port Act and

Port Rules.

"We regularly pay the district administration licence fee for the foreshores but they did not serve

any notice before leasing it out to another government organisation," he added.

Four years ago, the HC ordered

the district administrations to protect river foreshores including that of the Buriganga with