



**FOR WOMEN, OF WOMEN**  
Discussions on empowerment, work environment and violence  
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**'BACK TO DRAWING BOARD'**  
If ongoing MH370 search fails, it will begin afresh  
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**AVIJIT MURDER MYSTERY**  
State minister once again says two persons are detained in the case  
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## Work equal, wage not

Int'l Women's Day today  
AKRAM HOSEN

On a vast yard, Khadeja Begum collects in a basket oil sludge that her male co-workers scoop out from a concrete floor. She and 10 male labourers have been hired to remove the pitch-dark layer of grease from the concrete yard of the Inland Container Depot at the capital's Kamalapur Railway Station.

Though they all work from the morning to dusk for the same number of hours, Khadeja gets Tk 300 a day while the males are paid Tk 450 each.

"Men deserve a certain level of honour ... So we have to pay them at least Tk 400," said Md Shahjahan, who hired the labourers.

He further said a woman can carry less heavy and fewer baskets than a man.

Khadeja, the lone breadwinner of her four-member family, said, "I know I am not getting fair wage. But what choice do I have?"

"I am thankful that I have been able to pay for the education of my two preteen daughters by working as a day labourer," said the 35-year-old woman, who has been working at construction sites for more than five years.

According to Bangladesh Labour Force Survey 2010, there were 2.27 lakh women construction workers in the country. "We believe the number has multiplied with the increase in construction projects in recent years. But the discrimination remains," said Sultan Uddin Ahmed, assistant executive director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS).

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Women hold lighted candles at midnight to mark the International Women's Day today. Amrai Pari, a campaign against domestic violence, in association with Dhaka University, organised the event at the Central Shaheed Minar with the slogan *Andhar Bhangar Sapath* (pledge to get rid of darkness).

## BANGLADESHI WOMEN MARCHING AHEAD



**BLOCKADE VIOLENCE, 2015**  
(Jan 5-March 7)

**DEAD 83** (66 were general people)  
**INJURED 1,345** (at least)

**TOTAL KILLED IN ARSON ATTACKS 53**

**VEHICLES TORCHED & VANDALISED 654** (at least)

**TOTAL KILLED IN 'SHOOTOUT' 41**  
(Jan 6-mar 7)

**COST TO THE ECONOMY**

Per day cost of shutdown (DCCI)  
Tk **2,277** crore

Estimated cost of shutdown (Jan 6-Mar 7)  
Tk **1,38,897** crore

SOURCE: THE DAILY STAR REPORTS; DATA COMPILED BY STAR RESEARCH

## Hartal on again after weekend

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another spell of 72-hour countrywide hartal starts this morning and it is likely to inflict further misery on people, cause more damage to the economy and put some 1.5 million children sitting for the SSC and equivalent exams in further uncertainty.

BNP joint secretary general Salahuddin Ahmed, on behalf of the 20-party alliance, yesterday in a statement announced the shutdown programme to press home the alliance's various demands, including holding of a fresh election under a non-party administration.

The education ministry postponed the SSC and equivalent tests scheduled for today and Tuesday after the 20-party alliance announced to enforce the shutdown. Officials of the ministry said new dates for the exams would be announced later.

The BNP-led combine has been enforcing the countrywide hartal on all working days since February 1, alongside its indefinite blockade which remains in force for 61 consecutive days.

The blockade and hartal had already claimed 83 lives. Of them, 66 people had

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## HARD WORK to success

Young entrepreneur leads revival of country's oldest garment factory

**DIFFERENCE MAKERS**

**Vidiya Amrit Khan**  
MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

When she told her family that she would lead the effort to revive their family's moribund garment business six years ago, they immediately opposed as Vidiya Amrit Khan was just 28.

But after a lot of hard work Vidiya, now 34, has not only turned Desh Garments around but also emerged as an experienced business person.

Established in December 1977 at Kalurghat in Chittagong, Desh was the first export-oriented readymade garment factory in Bangladesh. It was also the single largest and most modern garment-manufacturing unit in the sub-continent.

Bangladesh's first batch of exports was produced at Desh factory set up by the industry's pioneer Noorul Quader, father of Vidiya.

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## Punishment must

Says PM about Khaleda at March 7 rally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia must face punishment on charges of corruption as well as killing people.

"Khaleda Zia and her forces are killing people through arson attacks... We can't accept it," she said addressing an Awami League rally at Suhrawardy Udyan, marking the anniversary of historic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Condemning petrol and crude bomb attacks on people and public transports, the PM alleged that all of the attackers were members of the Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal, Jamaat-e-Islami or Chhatra Shibir.

Terming those attacks acts of terror, Hasina said cases have been filed against Khaleda as the mastermind.

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22 HURT IN COCKTAIL BLASTS IN CITY - PAGE 2

"Of your two sons, one died from heroin addiction and the other is a fugitive. Begum Khaleda Zia, don't you feel ashamed?"

AGRICULTURE MINISTER  
**MATIA CHOWDHURY**  
AT A RALLY AT SUHRAWARDY UDYAN

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\*Offer valid till stocks last