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Local shoemakers eye brisk sales

Eid brings great opportunity to expand their business

SARWAR A CHOWDHURY

A number of footwear manufacturers are expanding business networks, pinning their hopes on brisk sales ahead of the Eid.

Local sales of footwear hover between Tk 6,000 and Tk 7,000 crore a year, and 40 percent of the turnover comes during the Eid-ul-Fitr, said Abu Taher, chairman of Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters Association.

Though the home market has been dominated by multinational company Bata and local brand Apex for quite long, several local companies have emerged in recent times seeking to tap into the growing domestic demand.

Orion Footwear, which entered footwear business only three and a half months back, has already opened two outlets in Chittagong, and is going to launch two more in the capital soon.

With the opening of four new showrooms, Orion would have nine outlets across the country, said Md Ruhul Amin Molla, chief executive officer of the firm.

"We have set a sales target of Tk 5 crore during this festival. We hope to achieve it as we offer quality products with attractive designs manufactured by our local suppliers and also by leading foreign brands," he said.

Prices of Orion shoes range from Tk 500 to Tk 10,000 a pair, while those of a foreign brand could cost up to Tk 20,000.

The footwear company, a concern of Orion Group, plans to invest around Tk 150 crore in the next five years to expand its business.

"Our aim is to become the number one brand in Bangladesh in the next five years and help the country reduce footwear imports," he said.

Another local shoe manufacturer, Bay Emporium, has opened five more stores in Dhaka, Barisal, Cox's Bazar and Rajbari ahead of the Eid.

"We may open one or two more outlets before this Eid," said Abdul Quader, chief executive officer of the footwear company that emerged in 2006.

With more than 1,000 models of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1



Local footwear companies see a huge boom in sales ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr. Industry insiders say 40 percent of the total yearly sales in footwear, estimated at Tk 6,000 crore to Tk 7,000, are generated during the Eid shopping spree. The photo was taken yesterday at an outlet of a local company in the capital's Banani.

PHOTO: STAR

'BRIBE FUND'
Barisal police reconstitute probe body

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Barisal

Barisal police yesterday reconstituted its probe committee to ensure transparency in connection with the investigation into the creation of a joint bribe fund involving promotion of 230 cops.

BMP Commissioner Shobail Kanti Chowdhury said he reformed the committee after information surfaced that Shoyeb Ahmed, chief of the now-defunct committee, knew

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Back home after 6-month ordeal

BELAL HOSSAIN BIPLAB and AZIBOR RAHMAN



He dreamt of making his fortune abroad, but the dream never came true.

Shohag Khan of Dhopabila village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila met manpower broker Kalam of the neighbouring Natabaria village to express willingness to go abroad.

"Kalam said I had to pay him Tk 2.5 lakh only after reaching Malaysia. He warned me not to disclose it to others," Shohag told The Daily Star.

The 28-year-old painter returned home on May 24 after enduring a terrible ordeal of six months. "I never thought I could meet

my family again. It's only the mercy of Allah that I'm still alive."

He came home after availing a travel permit from the Bangladesh High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. But his cousin Saiful Khan, 22, who accompanied him to Malaysia, is still missing.

The two left Jhenidah and reached Chakaria upazila of Cox's Bazar on November 30 last year. A man received the duo and took them to a hotel where they stayed for two days.

"Chakaria police detained us along with five others at the hotel. But we were freed after the brokers paid the cops Tk 11,000," said Shohag.

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SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Ansar man shot dead by colleague

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Khagrachhari

An Ansar member was shot dead allegedly by one of his fellows in Chowdhury Tila Ansar camp under Dighinala upazila yesterday afternoon.

The dead, Nayek Amir Hossain, 55, was the son of Razzak Ali of Logang in the district's Panchhari upazila.

Amir and his colleague Rafiqul Islam were locked in an altercation at the camp over a trifling matter around 3:30pm. At one stage, Rafiqul opened fire on Amir with his rifle,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Say no to 'blackmail'

Urges Greek PM ahead of key referendum as country declared in default

AGENCIES

Greek PM Alexis Tsipras yesterday called on voters to reject "blackmail" when they vote in a bailout referendum tomorrow.

In a short TV address, he insisted Greece's presence in the EU was not at stake and urged voters to reject the "sirens of scaremongering".

Tomorrow, Greek voters will decide whether they support the terms of further international loans, following months of tough talks with creditors.

EU leaders have warned that a "No" vote could see Greece leave the eurozone.

Greece's economy is already being squeezed after the country lost access to fresh



Alexis Tsipras

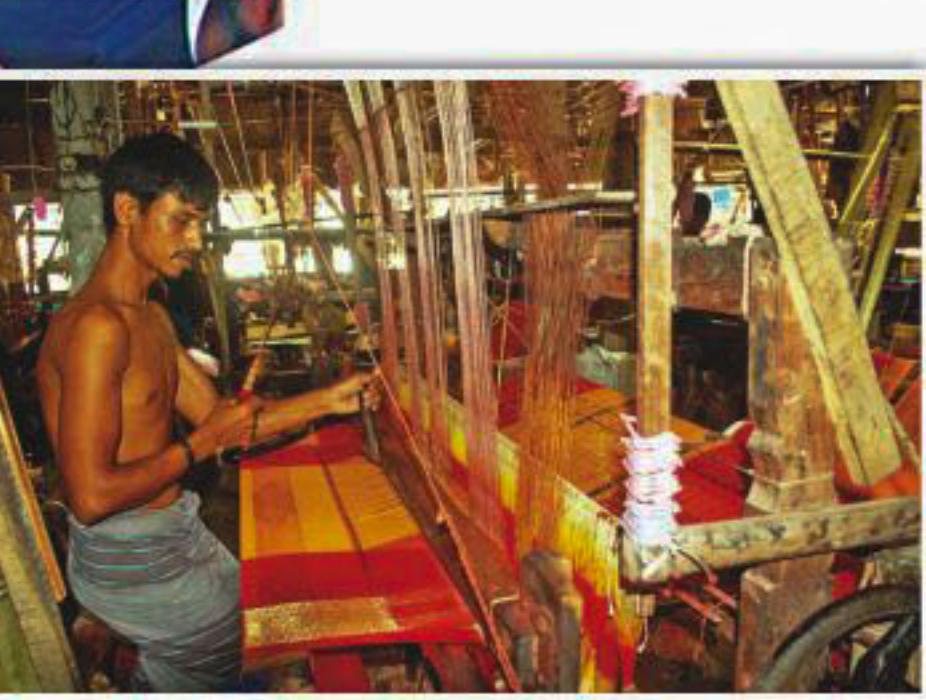
funds. Banks have been shut and limits imposed on cash withdrawals.

On top of that, Greece was officially declared in default yesterday, injecting even more urgency into a make-or-break weekend referendum that new polls suggested was too close to call.

The European Financial Stability Facility said, though, that it had decided to not immediately demand repayment of its loans -- a step that analysts say could have triggered sudden "Grexit", or Greece's exit from the eurozone.

The news will come as a fresh shock to Greece's 11 million people, and will hang over two major, rival rallies taking place in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



A weaver wearing a downcast look over his face holds up a handloom item at Shahzadpur Taant Kapor Haat in Sirajganj, the biggest wholesale market of handloom products in the country. Poor sales have left many weavers dispirited this year. Inset, a local weaver working on his loom.

PHOTO: STAR

Weavers in distress

Dismal sales frustrate them ahead of Eid

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU from Sirajganj

Weaver Abul Kashem brought 100 saris to Shahzadpur handloom clothes' market on Tuesday, hoping to sell them all as demand for this particular type of traditional clothing usually shoots up ahead of Eid.

"But 60 of them remained unsold. Unlike the previous Eid season, there were not many customers this time," the weaver from Pukurpar of Shahzadpur, told this correspondent on Wednesday.

Kashem was one of a few thousand handloom cloth traders who on the day had a similar

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

China uses animals to predict quakes



BBC ONLINE

Chinese scientists are using animals to try to predict when an earthquake may strike.

Seismologists in Nanjing, the capital of eastern Jiangsu province, have set up seven observation centres at zoos and animal parks in the region, the Modern Express website reports.

They will be watching for changes in behaviour among thousands of animals, which might be a sign of an imminent tremor.

An ecological park in the city's Yuhuatai district has become one of the seismic monitoring sites, with 2,000 chickens, 200 pigs and 2 sq km of fish ponds, the report says.

Cameras have been installed around the park, and staff will report back to the seismological bureau on the animals' behaviour twice a day.

"Animals sometimes become stressed before an earthquake," says Zhao Bing, Nanjing

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Boko Haram carnage goes on

Death toll in barbaric attacks in Nigerian villages nears 170

AFP, Kano

Boko Haram waged fresh attacks in northeastern Nigeria, locals said yesterday, bringing to nearly 170 the number of people killed this week in violence President Muhammadu Buhari blasted as "inhuman and barbaric."

Militants have launched multiple attacks in restive Borno state since Wednesday, with people attending evening prayers during the holy month of Ramadan gunned down, women shot at home, and men dragged from their homes in the

dead of night.

A young female suicide bomber also killed 12 worshippers when she blew herself up in a mosque in Borno and while there was no immediate claim of responsibility, Boko Haram has used both men and young women and girls as human bombs in the past.

"President Muhammadu Buhari has condemned the latest wave of killings by Boko Haram in Borno state, describing them as most inhuman and barbaric," the presidency said in a statement.

The wave of attacks, which took

place over less than 36 hours, is the bloodiest since Buhari came to power in May, vowing to root out the insurgency that has claimed more than 15,000 lives.

News of the violence first emerged on Thursday, when survivors described raids on three different villages in Borno the previous evening that left at least 145 people killed and houses burnt to the ground.

On Friday, fresh details of these killings emerged from a resident of Kukawa, the worst-affected village.

Baana Kole told AFP that he and others had managed to escape into

the bush where they spent the night, before returning to bury the dead, only to find that the militants had laid mines everywhere.

"Some residents who hid in trees saw them planting the mines and alerted us when we returned to the village and started burying our dead," he said.

"So many dead bodies are still in Kukawa lying unattended. We had to abandon them because we could not carry them with us."

Less than 24 hours later, a girl blew herself up in a mosque in

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SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS

Ramadan	July	Sehri	Iftar
16	4		6-54
17	5	3-44	6-54
18	6	3-44	6-54



PRAYER TIMING

JULY 4

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 3-43 12-45 5-00 6-54 8-17

JAMAAT 3-53 1-15 5-15 6-64 8-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

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