



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

LIFE STYLE

FAIR GAS PRICE SOUGHT

Textile millers urge govt to safeguard the sector

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PUTIN'S REGRET

"We don't want the USSR back but no one believes us"

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RANA PLAZA DISASTER

3 govt officials finally charged

Court uses inherent power amid labour ministry's refusal; issues arrest order for 24

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday used its inherent power to include three labour ministry officials in the charge sheet of the murder case filed over the Rana Plaza collapse in Savar in April 2013.

The investigating officer (IO) of the case found involvement of the three in the crimes. But the labour ministry refused to give its approval to bring charges against them.

According to law, government's prior approval is required to give a charge sheet against a government official.

The IO, however, put their names in the charge sheet along with 38 other accused, and the court yesterday showed them as accused in the case filed over the country's deadliest industrial disaster.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and more than 2,500 injured in the building collapse that evoked bitter global criticism of the standard of labour and human rights in Bangladesh.

Since then, the ready-made garment sector, considered as the lifeline of the country's economy, has been going through a massive reform to regain the confidence of international buyers and the global community.



Sohel Rana

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This physically challenged man is a source of inspiration for all. At an early age, Sheikh Ahammad Rahim was infected with a disease that left both his legs bent. But he didn't give up on life. He studied up to class-IX and tried everything he could -- from running a tea stall to a grocery shop -- to earn a living. He now drives a battery-run rickshaw in Chittagong city to run a six-member family.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Protest note, our reply

Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority has sent the following protest note to a news item titled "16,000 tea workers face uncertainty" published on 20 December, 2015. It alleged that while publishing this news item, no serious attention was given to the urgency and necessity of setting up Economic Zones to bring about positive change and development in the poorer and less developed areas of the country.

The protest note follows: "We would like to bring to your notice that Hon'ble Prime Minister has instructed Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) to set up Economic Zones in Government khas lands so that no people are displaced from their habitats as well as from their agricultural lands and the other lands of their economic benefits. Keeping this instruction in view, BEZA has taken initiative to setup economic zone in Habiganj also. As regards your report, we would like to mention

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MG!

"There are controversies over how many were martyred in the Liberation War."

BNP CHAIRPERSON
KHALEDA ZIA
DURING A PROGRAMME MARKING THE 45TH VICTORY DAY

WELFARE OF DOMESTIC HELPS

New policy hailed

But shortage of workers feared

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Different stakeholders have hailed a government policy to protect the rights of domestic workers, but working parents fear it may create a shortage of domestic helps causing a crisis for them.

Members of National Domestic Women Workers Union believe that the policy, if implemented, will go a long way to stop violence and torture on domestic helps. They also think it will increase safety and security for both the employers and the helps.

The policy, approved by the cabinet

yesterday, has fixed the minimum age for domestic helps at 14. It also focuses on fair wage, decent working conditions, fixed working hours, identity cards, contract of employment, maternity leave and legal actions against physical or verbal abuse and sexual harassment.

"I thank the prime minister for enacting the policy for domestic workers for which we have been waging a movement since long. People's awareness will increase. As a result, torture on domestic workers will lessen too," said Murshida Akter, general

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Umrah visa resumes for Bangladeshis

Saudi Arabia lifts restriction

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia has resumed issuing Umrah visas for Bangladeshis, ending a nine-month suspension on allegations that some hajj agencies were working as fronts for human trafficking.

The Saudi government in a letter dated December 14 informed Bangladesh

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Blatter, Platini banned for eight years

Found guilty of power abuse, not bribery; both to appeal

AGENCIES, Zurich

A FIFA ethics tribunal banned Sepp Blatter and Michel Platini for eight years each on Monday, saying they had abused their positions over a 2 million Swiss francs payment made to Platini in 2011 for work as a consultant carried out between 1999 and 2002.

Blatter spent eight hours before a FIFA



Blatter



Platini

court last Thursday while Platini boycotted his hearing saying he had been "condemned" in advance.

Blatter, 79, and Platini, 60, were then "immediately" banned from all football activity. Blatter's career is now almost certainly over while Platini's hopes of taking over FIFA are all but finished.

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Probe goes slow amid rampant rules violation

PANKAG KARMAKAR

Although the municipality polls are only eight days away, many returning officers are falling behind with the probes into alleged violations of electoral laws by the ruling Awami League men.

The Election Commission in the last one and a half weeks sent letters in phases to about 50 returning officers (RO), including 10 yesterday, asking them to investigate the allegations raised in the media.

Complaints were made against Health Minister Mohammad Nasim, Whip Atiur Rahman, three lawmakers from AL and some of its mayor aspirants.

EC officials said the commission did not set any deadline for the ROs to send their reports.

POLLS VIOLENCE ON THE RISE -- PAGE 2

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NEWS ANALYSIS

POLLS CODE OF CONDUCT

Is EC helpless to stop violations?

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commissioner has sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's intervention to stop the electoral code of conduct violation by ruling Awami League MPs and leaders and thus Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz has made it apparent that the EC is helpless and unable to control the situation.

His appeal to the PM makes one question if the Election Commission is powerless to do something effective or whether those who are leading the EC are unwilling or unable.

According to media reports, AL leaders, including ministers and MPs, are allegedly joining electoral activities for the

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FUTURE BANGLADESH ON THE FIRMEST FOUNDATION

Chosen steel for the Padma Bridge construction



শেকড় থেকে শিখরে

LEADING THUS FAR IN BUET FATIGUE TEST

BUET TESTED

55 LAKH CYCLIC LOADINGS @369 MPa