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LABOUR RIGHT ISSUES

# EU presses for compliance by mid-June

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Union yesterday suggested that Bangladesh comply with the ILO-recommended labour right standards by mid-June this year to avoid "consequences" with regard to its current trade privileges in the EU market.

The suggestion was put forward by a four-member EU delegation that wrapped up its three-day Bangladesh tour yesterday.

The EU team also stressed the need for a uniform labour law for all workers in Bangladesh -- including those at factories in the export processing zones.

"We note that Bangladesh was mentioned under a special paragraph in the last ILO conference in Geneva, June 2016," Arne Lietz, a member of the European Parliament, said at a press conference in Dhaka.

He said the International Labour Organization called upon Bangladesh to address several issues, including amendment to the labour law, registration of trade unions and reduction of labour harassment.

"It is important that these issues are addressed before the 18th May review of the Sustainability Compact and the June annual International Labour Conference of the ILO."

Lietz, however, noted that Bangladesh made a remarkable progress, especially in workplace safety in the garment sector, and that the visiting members of the European Parliament would submit a positive note to their colleagues at the EU headquarters in Brussels.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

In the pouring rain, a physically challenged beggar moves along the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Farmgate yesterday afternoon. City dwellers were surprised by the over-an-hour-long shower in the Bangla month of Chaitra, considered one of the hottest months in the country.

## Britain in EU exit process

Theresa May says 'no turning back'

AFP, London

Britain launched the process to leave the European Union yesterday, saying there was "no turning back" from the historic move that has split the country and thrown the bloc's future into question.

Just days after the EU's 60th birthday, Britain became the first country ever to seek a divorce from the 28-nation bloc, striking a blow at the heart of an alliance forged from the ashes of World War II.

"This is an historic moment from which there can be no turning back," Prime Minister Theresa May told MPs.

Nine months after the shock referendum vote for Brexit, Britain triggered Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, starting the two-year countdown to leaving.

"We already miss you," EU President Donald Tusk said in Brussels, after receiving the

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FIGHTING EARLY MARRIAGE

# Bangladeshi girl to receive US award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sharmin Akter was just 15 when her mother arranged her marriage with a man decades older than her. But instead of surrendering to family wishes as what most girls feel coerced to do given the socio-economic circumstances in Bangladesh, she spoke up.

And that made her stand out as being courageous and an example to follow in a country that has one of the world's highest rates of child marriage.

Today she along with 12 other women from different parts of the world will be given this year's International Women of Courage Award by United States First Lady Melania Trump and Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas A. Shannon at the US State Department.

Sharmin demonstrated exceptional bravery to hold her ground and establish her rights to education though it required bringing her mother and the suitor to justice.



Sharmin

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10 COUNTS OF IRREGULARITIES

# NRBC Bank high-ups asked to show cause

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Bank has served show-cause notices on the chairman and the managing director of the NRB Commercial Bank over 10 counts of grave irregularities at the four-year-old financial institution.

In a letter sent to Managing Director Dewan Mujibur Rahman on March 20, the central bank asked him to reply within 10 days why he should not be removed from the post.

In another letter issued to NRBC Bank Chairman Farasath Ali the same day, the BB asked him why appropriate action in line with the Bank Company Act should not be taken against the bank for the irregularities.

"It seems the board of directors failed to uphold the Bank Company Act to protect the interest of the depositors and the public," it read.

The Daily Star has obtained copies of both the letters. Contacted, the MD and the chairman declined to make any comments, saying the matter is under trial in court.

Talking to this correspondent, BB Deputy Governor SK Sur Chowdhury said that if the central bank finds their replies unsatisfactory, it would take legal action against the NRBC Bank.

Citing articles from the Bank Company Act, the letter to Rahman said he failed to discharge his responsibilities properly.

All the irregularities were interrelated and took place with the involvement of the board and the management. As the MD, Rahman never informed the BB about the irregularities, said the central bank.

One of the irregularities involved forging of the signatures of four absent NRBC Bank directors -- Kamrun Nahar Sakhi, ABM Abdul Mannan, Feroz Haider Khan and Md Amir Hossain -- for showing them present at the meetings of the board and the executive committee.

The forging of signatures of the directors, who were abroad at that time,

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1971 WAR CRIMES

# Moosa faces preliminary investigation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal-1 has started a preliminary investigation against controversial businessman Moosa bin Shamsheer into his alleged involvement in crimes committed during the Liberation War in 1971.

"We have received allegations against him [Moosa] and started a preliminary investigation for quite a while," Sanaul Huq, coordinator of the investigation agency, said yesterday at a press conference at their Dhanmondi office in Dhaka.

"We will register a case against him if we find evidence during the enquiry," Sanaul said. He, however, declined to give further details but invited journalists to give information about Moosa, if they had any.

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## He can move arm with power of mind



MAIL ONLINE

A paralysed man has regained the ability to move his arm and hand -- thanks to breakthrough technology that harnesses the power of thought.

A cycling accident left Bill Kochevar unable to move from the shoulders down for eight years.

But the 56-year-old is now able to feed himself in his wheelchair, using a microchip in his brain that reads his thoughts and translates them into instructions to his muscles. In one test, US scientists revealed on Tuesday, he was able to scoop forkfuls of mashed potato from a bowl.

In another he raised a mug of coffee to his lips, and he can even scratch his nose. Kochevar, from Cleveland, Ohio, said: "For somebody who's been injured eight years and couldn't move, being able to move just that little bit is awesome."

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## Lailatul Meraj on April 24

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Lailatul Meraj will be observed across the country on the night of April 24 as the moon of Rajab month of 1438 Hijri was sighted yesterday in Bangladesh.

The National Moon Sighting Committee made the decision at a meeting after reviewing reports received from different parts of the country.

ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, joint secretary of the religious affairs ministry,

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**PRAYER TIMING MARCH 30**  
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha  
AZAN 4-55 12-45 4-45 6-16 7-45  
JAMAAT 5-30 1-15 5-00 6-20 8-15  
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Members of AIUB Robotic Crew Legacy Reloaded operate their human-powered rover in front of their university campus in the city's Banani. The AIUB team was supposed to join a NASA competition in the US today but it had to pull out since most team members were denied US visas.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

VISA DENIAL

# Six students couldn't make it to NASA competition

PORIMOL PALMA

Even though two teams of engineering students from CUET and AIUB were selected by NASA for the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge, they are not taking part as most of the students had been denied visas.

Shattering the dream of 12 students of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (CUET), and American International University, Bangladesh (AIUB), the three-day competition begins today at the US Space & Rocket Centre.

"We had taken all preparations, but our applications for visas were denied... Whatever the reasons might be, we are frustrated," said Mainul Hasan, leader of the CUET team. None from his six-member team got visas.

Only two students from the six-member AIUB team got visas, forcing the team

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