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Rising from Rana Plaza debris

RMG sector sees major reforms but more needs to be done for workers' safety



REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The country's garment sector has been going through some major reforms since the Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 with rights activists stressing the need for strengthening further the workplace safety and labour rights.

The sector has already seen investment of more than \$1 billion in various initiatives, including purchase of safety equipment and renovation of factories, following recommendations of a national and two international agencies.

As part of a broader reform plan for the sector, the government has amended the labour law allowing full freedom of association by workers, recruited more than 350 labour inspectors and introduced central workers' DRAFT LAW ON EPZ TO BE REVIEWED -- PAGE 4

Still waiting for justice

Four years on, cases yet to go on trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The wait for justice in Rana Plaza collapse is not going to be over anytime soon, as the trial for the killing of more than 1,000 people four years ago has not begun yet.

Another case filed for the violation of building codes in the construction of the nine-storey plaza has been facing a similar fate.

On July 18 last year, charges were framed against 41 people, including Rana Plaza owner Sohel Rana, in the murder case.

At least 1,136 people, mostly garment workers, were killed and more than 2,500 injured in the building collapse on April 24, 2013, which sparked worldwide criticism of the standards of labour and human rights in Bangladesh.

In June 2015, investigation officer Bijoy Krishna Kar submitted two charge



Shanir Haor in Sunamganj. Spanning across three upazilas -- Tahirpur, Biswastapur and Jamalganj -- this vast lowland grows several lakh tonnes of rice every year. After almost all other paddy fields in Sunamganj were inundated by flash floods late last month, locals did everything they could to prevent floodwaters from entering this haor. Many worked day and night to make sure that the protection embankment doesn't give way. But all their hard work proved futile as the embankment fell apart yesterday, flooding the haor, which is the main source of livelihood for the people of some 60 villages.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Stones hurled at minister's motorcade

OC hurt; attack amid 144 over ruling party infighting in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

A police official was hurt when alleged Chhatra League activists hurled stones targeting the motorcade of Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sayedul Haque amid stringent security in Bijoynagar upazila of Brahmanbaria yesterday.

With injuries to his head and forehead, Officer-in-Charge Imtiaz Ahmed of Nabinagar Police Station was taken to Brahmanbaria Sadar Hospital.

The incident took place around 1:00pm near the upazila's Chandura Bus Stand on Dhaka-Sylhet highway after the minister left a programme venue.

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Growth minus good governance is hollow

Economists tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The economic growth would be meaningless unless there is good governance, said Akbar Ali Khan, former caretaker government adviser, yesterday. "Governance is a must. Without it, people's rights cannot be ensured," he said at a discussion titled "Can Bangladesh continue to grow without good governance?" at the capital's Lakeshore Hotel.

Economists, who spoke on the occasion, said the country will not be able to attain accelerated economic growth in the coming years without ensuring good governance.

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the discussion as part of its two-day annual event called BIDS Critical Conversations 2017 that kicked off yesterday with the theme "The Bangladesh Journey: Accelerating Transformations".

BIDS Director General KAS Murshid at the inaugural session said Bangladesh has made a lot of progress in many areas, including poverty reduction, increase in life expectancy, education and health.

But the country faces problems like corruption, terrorist threat and growing religious intolerance, climate change, rapid urbanisation and educated unemployment, he added.

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HAVOC IN HAOR 3.3 lakh poor to get relief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken a 100-day scheme to distribute relief among at least 3.3 lakh ultra-poor families affected by the flash flood in haor areas.

As part of the scheme, each family in six districts will receive 30kg of rice and Tk 500 per month, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said after an inter-ministerial meeting

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Struggle on in haors

Another embankment washed away; BAEC experts collect water sample; primary findings show radiation 'at permissible level'

STAR REPORT

As the government's efforts to determine the cause of deaths of a huge number of fish, ducks and other aquatics in the haor region continue, the affected people's fight to survive the worst flashflood in recent history is far from over.

With the last remaining haor embankment in Sunamganj's Tahirpur upazila also giving way yesterday, gushing water started entering many villages there and affected

the livelihoods in the northeastern backswamp seriously.

Locals' best possible attempts to save the embankment along the Shanir Haor in Sunamganj went in vain due to excessive rain and the onrush of upstream hill water.

As the embankment was damaged at three points, water from the waterbody began entering the villages through Lalurguala, Ahammak Khali and Radhapurin areas.

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