

# Shut down all illegal boilers

## HC gives govt 60 days, orders inspection

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The High Court has directed the government to bar unauthorised boilers in factories within 60 days as it looks to prevent a repeat of the explosion on July 4 at an apparel plant that killed 13 and injured over 50.

It also ordered the government authorities to inspect boilers in all factories to ensure their registration and renewal as per the Boiler Act, 1923.

In response to a writ petition filed as public interest litigation, the HC asked the authorities to submit a compliance report on its rule by September 30.

It also asked to explain in three weeks why their failure to ensure effective

enforcement of applicable laws on workplace safety should not be declared illegal.

The HC said the failure resulted in deaths and injuries to workers from boiler blasts in factories.

It also instructed the authorities why their inaction to formulate appropriate rules and regulations, which has been sought in sections 28 and 29 of the boiler act, should not be declared illegal.

The sections call for rules and regulations on workplace safety such as prevention of accidents caused by defective or expired boilers and on providing appropriate compensation and imposing punishment for use of such boilers.

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# Accenture leaving Bangladesh

## All 556 employees will be let go

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Accenture, a global outsourcing firm that entered Bangladesh in 2013 by acquiring 51 percent of Grameenphone's GPIT, will wind up its operations in the country and lay off all 556 of its employees from November.

The development is a setback to Bangladesh's aspirations of establishing itself as an IT/ITES hub in a similar vein of neighbouring India.

All the employees received an e-mail from the chief operating officer informing

them of termination of their contracts, said Shahin Ahmed, general secretary of Accenture Employees Union, Bangladesh, yesterday.

Although Accenture has not officially announced its intent to leave Bangladesh, local employees have confirmed it to The Daily Star.

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## Labour law being amended under pressure from ILO, EU

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The government has started the process of amending the labour law and the EPZ labour law under the pressure of the International Labour Organisation and the European Union.

"I am hopeful that the preparation of the draft of the amendment to the labour law is possible by the end of August," Mikail Shipar, labour secretary, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Bangladesh in the last meeting of the International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva in June committed to amending the labour law and the labour law of the export processing zones by the end of August.

"We will bring in some basic changes during the amendment," Shipar said, adding that he has already held meetings with representatives of the tripartite committee of the garment sector to discuss the issue.

The government formed a tripartite council in March this year to resolve any crisis in the garment sector through dialogues.

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Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, speaker of the parliament, speaks at a seminar on—EU Horizon 2020: Opportunities for Bangladesh—organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Dhaka (MCCI) in collaboration with the delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh, at MCCI conference hall in Dhaka yesterday. Yeafesh Osman, minister for science and technology, and Nihad Kabir, president of MCCI, were also present.

# Climate change to displace 20-30m Bangladeshis

## Minister says as EU research scheme with €80b fund is building awareness in various sectors

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The looming impact of climate change threatens to force 20-30 million people away from their homes since much of the country has a possibility to disappear under water in the future, said Science and Technology Minister Yeafesh Osman yesterday.

Bangladesh would do well to adapt to such climate changes and remain prepared in advance. Such adaptations will help the country see off the impacts and allow its development trajectory to remain on course, Osman said.

The minister was speaking at a seminar at the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) office in Dhaka on raising awareness among Bangladeshi research and business communities about Horizon 2020, a flagship research and innovation programme of the EU for the period 2014 to 2020.

Horizon 2020 is the biggest EU research and innovation programme ever making available almost €80 billion to fund collaborative research projects by researchers from Europe and beyond including Bangladesh.

Climate-related expenditure is expected to constitute over 35 percent of Horizon 2020 budget, so it is high time Bangladeshi firms proactively made efforts to become a part of the researching parties, the minister said.

A partnership with European firms can benefit Bangladesh to improve understanding on the economics of climate change and pool resources in a structured manner to develop tools and methods for gauging impacts, Osman said.

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## BB, bankers sit today to devise ways to boost remittance

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Bangladesh Bank officials will sit with the top executives of 20 banks today to find out how to reduce the cost of sending remittance through the banking channel.

The meeting will be held at the headquarters of the banking regulator in Dhaka, as part of an effort to arrest the fall in remittance and encourage the expatriates to send more money.

Migrant workers sent home \$12.77 billion in the last fiscal year, down 14.47 percent year-on-year, according to data from the central bank.

The cost of sending remittance is high mainly due to the commission taken by the exchange houses aboard, said Ahmed Jamal, executive director of Bangladesh Bank.

He spoke at a workshop for journalists jointly organised by the BB and Economic Reporters Forum, at the central bank headquarters yesterday.

The central bank is concerned about the declining remittance, as the strong growth of remittance had helped Bangladesh cushion the shocks of the global economic meltdown earlier, he said.

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# Cities should be made attractive for investment

## Says a professor of University of Oxford



SANEM

Anthony Venables, a professor of economics at the University of Oxford, delivers a lecture on urbanisation in the developing world, in Dhaka yesterday.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Policymakers should see cities as a whole economic system, focus on efficient use of land, infrastructure and utilities and maintain coordination among the stakeholders, to tap the growth potential, a renowned economist said yesterday.

Cities will achieve their potential only if they are perceived as attractive places for investment, said Anthony Venables, professor of the Department of Economics at the University of Oxford.

He delivered a lecture on "Urbanisation in the developing world: challenges and opportunities". South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (Sanem) in collaboration with the World Bank organised the event at Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury auditorium of the social science faculty of Dhaka University.

Almost 350 students, young researchers and teachers attended the lecture.

Venables, also a member of the steering group of the International Growth Centre, said Bangladesh needs to have other thriving cities like Dhaka.

Cities are the drivers of economic growth and development, Venables said.

Cities are potentially good places to do business and to work because they support high productivity, he said.

"The data tells us that large cities have much higher labour productivity than other places," he said, adding that metropolises attract highly skilled, well educated and energetic individuals.

Venables said connectivity to markets, suppliers and workers and firms' and workers' scope to specialise are the main factors behind the high productivity of cities.

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## Netflix users: 100m

AFP, San Francisco

Netflix on Monday reported that its number of subscribers climbed more than expected, topping 100 million worldwide and sending shares in the leading on-demand television service soaring.

Netflix shares leapt more than 10 percent to \$178.48 in after-market trades that followed release of earnings figures showing the Silicon Valley-based company added 5.2 million subscribers in the recently ended quarter to raise the total to 103.95 million for its streaming service.

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