



REMITTANCE RISES

The inflow hits a 5-month high in January mainly due to weak taka

PAGE B1

CHINA-BRITAIN RELATIONS

Xi tells UK PM that the two countries should take trade ties to a 'new level'

PAGE 9

NEW GRAFT MODEL

FREE OF COST

- 9 garment factories used duty-free privilege to import raw materials up to 22 times the limit, dodge tax no less than Tk 120cr
- Customs intelligence suspects raw material sold in local market

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Chittagong

Nine garment manufacturers have abused the Free of Cost facility and dodged tax of around Tk 120 crore by importing raw materials up to 22 times the permissible limit.

In violation of the rules, the firms sold these raw materials in local market, instead of using those for producing finished products.

All this startling information surfaced during the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate's (CIID) first-ever enquiry into cases of misuse of the facility. It is now probing similar accusations of tax evasion of Tk 500 crore against 20 other firms, said several CIID officials.

Under the FOC facility, a local garment manufacturer can import raw materials worth one third of its export earnings in the previous fiscal year without paying any tax. But the firm has to meet the condition that it

export finished garment items to a certain foreign company which pays for the raw materials.

The local firm is not allowed to sell the materials in local market. It can use those only for producing finished goods for export to that particular foreign company. Instead of opening a Letter of Credit (LC), the firm has to submit to the customs authorities a certificate issued by the bank concerned.

One of the nine firms in question imported raw materials under the facility in the current fiscal year even though it didn't export any finished garment items in the previous two fiscal years, said the CIID officials.

Talking to this newspaper, CIID Director General Moinul Khan said the directorate has found evidence of misuse of the FOC

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



While wickets kept falling at the other end, Bangladesh stand-in captain Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 83 was instrumental in the hosts putting up a big total on the second day of the first Test against Sri Lanka at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED



De Silva, Mendis lead SL fightback

MAZHAR UDDIN from Ctg

Skipper Mahmudullah Riyad's unbeaten 83 was the only highlight on the second day of the first Test for the home side as it helped Bangladesh post 513 in the first innings, but since then it was Sri Lanka who capitalised on the docile pitch that was yet to offer much assistance to the spinners.

Mominul Haque, who resumed the day on an unbeaten 175, could only add one run before being caught off Sri Lanka left-arm spinner Rangana Herath in the third over of the day which started with Bangladesh on 374 for four.

The visitors then rode on Dhananjaya de Silva's

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

TOP QUOTE

"All the 16 crore people [of the country] would be incorporated into the national pension system."

FINANCE MINISTER
AMA MUHITH
AT A PROGRAMME IN THE CAPITAL YESTERDAY

Get ready for both polls, protests

Khaleda to tell BNP grassroots, says party leaders ahead of executive committee meet tomorrow

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia is set to instruct her party leaders and activists tomorrow to prepare for the next parliamentary elections and also to be ready for a movement in case the government tries to hold one-sided polls "again".

She would come up with the instruction at the party's national executive committee meeting to be held at a city hotel tomorrow, five days before the delivery of the verdict in the Zia Orphanage Trust graft case against her.

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



Accompanied by her party leaders, Khaleda Zia arrives on the premises of a special court in the capital's Bakshibazar yesterday. The court is hearing the Zia Charitable Trust graft case against her.

PHOTO: BNP

Other side of a JU teacher

MUNTAKIM SAAD and MD ASADUZ ZAMAN

A professor at Jahangirnagar University secretly married one of his students, forced her to abort their first child and then divorced her three days after she gave birth to a second one, the victim said in a written complaint to the JU authorities.



Prof Afsar Ahmed

The woman, 29, is a PhD student at the university's Drama and Dramatics department.

In the complaint filed on January 17 to the JU vice chancellor, she said Prof Afsar Ahmed, 59, a teacher of the same department and also former pro-vice chancellor of the university, married her on November 24 in 2015.

The complainant, currently a teacher at another public university, told The Daily Star they developed a friendly teacher-student relationship during her graduation and master's at the department during 2006-2011. Later in 2014, the two developed a romantic relationship and married in 2015 with each other's consent.

But when she was pregnant with

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Stepping up fight for safe food

In interview with The Daily Star food safety authority chief says it's now better equipped to do its job

PORIMOL PALMA

People can expect tighter checks on contaminating food and its marketing as Bangladesh Food Safety Authority is gearing up its activities in a coordinated manner to ensure food safety from farm to plate.

Since its establishment on February 2, 2015, the BFSA has set up 71 safe food courts across the country, framed six rules, including those on labelling, additives, sampling and testing, and formed eight technical committees on various aspects of food safety.

The BFSA, which has a 33-member central coordination committee, has already assigned 725 sanitary inspectors of the food department and some city corporations as safe food inspectors.

"Still we have certain challenges in terms of skilled manpower and logistics, but we have come a long way. We hope to ensure better food safety in the days ahead," said BFSA Chairman Mohammad Mahfuzul Hoque in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star at his office on the eve of the first ever Safe Food Day in the country today.

The BFSA is observing the day, commemorating its founding day three years ago, to create mass awareness among people and bring together the industries, academics and regulators so that they all can contribute to one goal -- ensuring safe food for all and everywhere.

Speaking on the challenges of food safety, Mahfuzul said now major concern was the presence of heavy metals like lead in food. These metals in food may come from air, water or soil, he said.

"Indiscriminate disposal of used fuel oil, batteries and



Mahfuzul Hoque

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

SSC EXAMS Question leak allegations surface again

Education minister denies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite a number of measures and the government's stern warning over question paper leak, the Secondary School Certificate examinations began across the country yesterday amid controversy.

More than 20 lakh students sat for the Bangla First Paper exam with some guardians alleging that MCQ (multiple choice questions) part of the paper was leaked around 30 minutes before the test began at 10:00am.

Pictures of the "Kha" MCQ question set were doing the rounds on Facebook pages before the exam began and many of the questions matched those in the actual test paper, alleged a number of guardians.

However, officials of the education ministry and the Dhaka Education Board refuted the allegations.

Around 9:15 am, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid and education officials visited the exam centre at the Government Laboratory High School in the capital.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 3



ধুলো-ময়লায়
কম্বি হয়?