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Caring more for clothes than workers

Oxfam says how Aussie firms back 'systemic exploitation' in Bangladesh, Vietnam

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

Australian fashion brands have cared more for their clothes than the people making those, reveals a new report.

"Systemic exploitation" of workers has been enabled by Australian companies, whose buying practices compel factory operators to cut production cost, says the report by Oxfam Australia.

It uncovered that Australian firms put pressure on garment factories in many ways including fierce price negotiation, short-term contracts with factories, and reducing delivery time at one end while imposing fines for not meeting those squeezed deadlines on the other.

Oxfam, together with Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies and the Institute for Workers and Trade Unions in Vietnam, has interviewed more than 130 factory owners, managers and others in powerful positions, as well as 472 women working in Bangladesh and Vietnam factories.

The report released yesterday said 100 percent workers interviewed in Bangladesh were not paid a living wage, and nine out of 10 could not afford enough food for themselves and their families until their next monthly pay.

It found that 72 percent workers in factories supplying to major brands in Australia cannot afford medical treatment when they get sick or injured. In Vietnam, it was at 53 percent.

All the factories supply clothing to Australian brands such as Kmart, Target, Big W, Cotton On and more.

"The Australian fashion industry was worth almost \$23.5 billion in 2018 -- a staggering amount. But a system of entrenched exploitation and the

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Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan, chiefs of the three services, director general of Border Guard Bangladesh and other Armed Forces officials observe a minute of silence for the BDR carnage victims at the Military Graveyard in Banani yesterday. Another photo on page 10.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

PILKHANA TRAGEDY 10th anniv observed solemnly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a heavy heart, the nation yesterday observed the 10th anniversary of the Pilkhana carnage that left 74 people, including 57 army officers, dead.

The incident, which took place between February 25 and 26 in 2009, had left the nation numb, as people stood aghast at the extent of the atrocity perpetrated at Pilkhana, the then headquarters of Bangladesh Rifles, now Border Guard Bangladesh, in the capital's Dhanmondi.

To pay homage to the martyrs, representatives of the president, prime minister, home ministry, chiefs of the defence forces, BGB director general and the martyrs' family members laid floral wreaths at Banani military graveyard, reports BSS.

They also observed a one-minute silence and participated in a munajat to pray for eternal peace and salvation of the departed souls.

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DNCC BY-POLLS It's mostly Atiqul out campaigning

Others barely seen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only the Awami League candidate conducted electioneering at full throttle during the campaign of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayoral by-polls which officially ends tonight, while contenders from other parties were almost absent.

Ruling party candidate Atiqul Islam made door-to-door visits, brought out processions, held meetings and distributed leaflets seeking votes in the by-polls scheduled for February 28.

The election to councillor posts in the 36 new wards -- 18 under the Dhaka North City Corporation and 18 under the Dhaka South City Corporation -- will also be held on the same day.

Shafin Ahmed of Jatiya Party, Anisur Rahman of National People's Party, Shahin Khan of Progressive Democratic Party and independent candidate Abdur

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4 'robbers' killed in 'gunfight' with Rab

'Drug peddler' killed in another 'shootout'

STAR REPORT

Four alleged members of a Sundarban-based robber gang were killed yesterday in a "gunfight" with Rab in Chandpai range of the forest in Satkhira, Rab said.

The dead include Arif, leader of the gang locally known as Arif Bahini, said Mufti Mahmud Khan, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, adding that the identities of others were yet to be confirmed.

He said, "The gunfight ensued early in the morning when the bandits of Arif Bahini opened fire on a team of Rab-8, prompting them to retaliate, in Jongra Canal area."

"The four were caught in the line of fire while the others managed to flee," he said, adding that the bodies were handed over to Dacope Police Station in Khulna.

In Joypurhat, an alleged drug peddler was killed in a "gunfight" with Rab in Khetlal upazila early yesterday.

The dead Tofazzal Hossain, 40, was a resident of Moheshpur village in the upazila.

"Acting on a tip-off, a team of RAB-5 raided in Tausara village to arrest a group of drug peddlers around 1:45am," said ASP Azmal Hossain, commanding officer of Joypurhat RAB.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the miscreants opened fire on them, forcing them to fire back, triggering a "gunfight", the Rab official added.

Tofazzal sustained a bullet injury during the "shootout" while the rest escaped.

Rab members took him to Joypurhat Modern Hospital where doctors pronounced him dead.

A firearm, a magazine, and 150 bottles of Phensedyl were recovered from the spot, Azmal added.

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Acid thrown at an SSC examinee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

An SSC examinee suffered severe burns in an acid attack allegedly over a land dispute at Debidanga Jhargaoon village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila on Sunday night.

Tanjina Akhter, 17, a student of Jhargaoon High School, has been admitted to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Her father Mostafa and uncle Abu Hasan told this correspondent yesterday that they had a longstanding dispute over land with Amjad Hossain, another resident of the village.

They added that Amjad Hossain and his accomplices threw acid at Tanjina around 7:30pm on Sunday.

Contacted, Amjad denied the allegation.

Monjur Morshed, junior consultant of surgery, said 20 percent of the victim's

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Schindler's factory to turn into museum



MAIL ONLINE

New hopes to transform an abandoned factory building that once sheltered 1,200 Jews before their escape from Nazi rule during the Second World War into a museum are in motion.

The Czech factory in Brnec, made famous by Steven Spielberg's 1993 Hollywood blockbuster Schindler's List, was once the building that hundreds of Jews worked in before managing to escape almost certain death in the Holocaust.

The old factory is now set to be restored from its derelict state into a museum and cultural centre in honour of its owner and the man who helped saved the lives of hundreds of Jews through his world famous list - Oskar Schindler.

The factory, which will be called Schindler's Ark, will allow visitors to see where those escaping the

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Ninth grader 'raped' by neighbour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A ninth grader was allegedly raped by her neighbour in a village of Jashore's Jhikargachha upazila on Sunday night.

The victim's mother filed a case with Jhikargachha Police Station against Arafat Hossain Sunny, 25, who went into hiding after the incident.

The mother alleged that Arafat took her daughter to his house and raped her there.

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 26

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30

JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

OSCARS 2019 Olivia Colman, Green Book grab top prize

CNN ONLINE

British actress Olivia Colman defied all odds to scoop an Oscar on a night when Green Book also sprang a surprise by winning the award for best film.

Despite controversies surrounding Green Book, and many outspoken critics, the period drama about race relations in the 1960s felt like a more conventional best-picture choice than its two top rivals, both of which had to overcome key hurdles:

"Black Panther" represented the first superhero movie to earn such recognition, while "Roma" not only would have been the first foreign-language winner, but was likely hobbled by those who still see its distributor, Netflix, as an upstart in the movie world.

The Oscars compensated for a host-free ceremony with a night of breakthroughs, moving briskly through the categories in a

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Director Peter Farrelly speaks on stage after "Green Book" won the Best Picture award at the Oscars yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DUCSU POLLS JCD, quota reformists unveil panels

BCL rebels announce panel

DU CORRESPONDENT

A "rebel" faction of Bangladesh Chhatra League and quota reformists yesterday announced their panels to contest the upcoming Dhaka University Central Students' Union election.

Besides, two more panels -- one by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and another by leftist alliances -- were unveiled on the day.

Yesterday was the last day for collecting nomination forms to take part in Ducusu and hall union polls.

With the four, the number of panels for Ducusu polls rose to eight.

A day after the BCL announced a full-fledged panel, a faction of the pro-Awami League student body, led by vice-president of its recently dissolved central committee Sohan Rahman Khan, came up with a separate panel. He is the vice-president candidate of Ducusu polls.

He named Aminul Islam Bulbul, former organising secretary of Zahurul Haq Hall, and Md Roni, former deputy secretary of central BCL, as the panel's general secretary and assistant general secretary candidates.

At a press briefing at the Madhur Canteen, he named eight candidates out of 25-member panel for the Ducusu election.

"There are some disputes over the Chhatra League panel. So, we gave a partial panel and will declare the full panel after consulting with the TSC-based [socio-cultural] organisations," said Sohan.

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