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Your Right to Know

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"IT'S VERY DIFFICULT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY EXPORT COULD BE ONE SOLUTION. BUT THIS WILL CREATE A PROBLEM IN CASE OF A NATURAL CALAMITIES."
AGRICULTURE MINISTER ABDUR RAZZAQUE ON LOW PRICES OF PADDY



"I want to emphasise very clearly -- this is not a zero-sum game, it's a positive-sum game."
PM'S INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISER GOWHER RIZVI ON THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING.



"We absolutely need to save the Pacific to save the world."
UN SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTONIO GUTERRES AS HE FINISHES CLIMATE VULNERABLE PACIFIC ISLANDS TOUR



FREEING THE MEGHNA FROM GRABBERS Act or get sued

National River Commission warns at least a dozen govt authorities over inaction

TAWFIQUE ALI

The National River Conservation Commission has warned that it would take legal actions against at least a dozen government authorities for their inaction to free the Meghna from grabbers if they do not act within seven days.

The commission had earlier directed the authorities to take action against the grabbers but nothing happened since then. A few days before that, on February 9, The Daily Star ran a report on river-grabbing.

Frustrated, the commission on May 13 issued these latest warnings, three days after this paper carried yet another report on encroachment by powerful businesses.

"Grabbing a river is a criminal offence and so is the authorities' connivance with the grabbers," said a fuming Muzibur Rahman Howlader, chairman of the commission, at his office late last week.

"I have talked to the deputy commissioners and the BIWTA chairman, and Narayanganj river port officer directly and over phone several times on several occasions and requested them to take action to free the Meghna from the ruthless grabbers. But alas, to no avail!" he told this correspondent.

He said negligence and apathy towards enforcing river-protection laws were causing the plundering and destruction of rivers like the Meghna, Shitalakkhya, Turag, and the Balu.

Despite the commission's fervent calls and media exposé of powerful businesses and conglomerates occupying the river, over a dozen government authorities have oddly been silent. The commission three months ago had asked Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and the district administrations of Narayanganj and Munshiganj to evict the Meghna grabbers within seven days.

The commission in its May 13 letter warned the authorities of legal consequences if they continued to fail to protect the rivers.

The commission is mandated to prevent illegal grabbing and pollution of rivers, building of illegal structures on rivers, and ensure their natural flow and navigability, conservation, and multi-purpose uses for economic and social development.

The law, however, does not empower the commission to punish the authorities. It says the commission can make only recommendations.

The relevant ministries have the power to punish.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



A vessel is being built on a swathe of the Meghna river filled up for the shipyard. Illegal encroachment on the river is going on unabated. The photos were taken recently at different places in Narayanganj's Sonargaon.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Man arrested for raping a 7-yr-old girl

3 others arrested for attempt to rape, sexual assault

STAR REPORT

A man was arrested yesterday for raping a seven-year-old on Friday in Feni, while three others were arrested on charges of attempt to rape, sexual harassment and physical abuse in Pirojpur, Moulvibazar and Netrokona yesterday.

In Feni, when the seven-year-old girl was home alone around noon, their neighbour, Md Bahar, 25, entered their home in the absence of her parents and lured her with Tk 10 to go with him to a nearby under-construction shop, where he raped her, the victim's family and police sources said.

After the victim's mother came home and saw that she was not there, she set out to search for her daughter. When she went near the under-construction shop, she heard her daughter's screams. Sensing the mother's presence, Bahar fled the spot.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Frustrated farmers take to the streets

Hold protest in different dists demanding fair prices, want the govt to buy paddy directly from them

STAR REPORT

Stop discrimination and stand by farmers, demanded one placard. Buy rice directly from farmers, said another. Yet another screamed, "Save farmers, save agriculture."

Holding numerous such placards, farmers in different districts took to the streets yesterday, demanding higher prices for their produce.

They formed human chains, held press conferences and blocked roads in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Sunamganj, and Gaibandha. They also burned their rice on the streets in frustration.

A maund (37kgs) of rice is selling at Tk 500-600, which is much lower than the production cost. And farmers are incurring losses of around Tk 300 per maund, protesters claimed.

Disappointed by the low prices, one farmer in Rangpur set fire to his standing paddy last week. Many other farmers are threatening to stop growing rice since they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

India's marathon polls end today

Opposition effort on to form a mega alliance against BJP

AGENCIES

After a bitter campaign, India's marathon election closes today after almost seven weeks awash with insults, violence and fake news.

India today votes in the seventh and concluding phase for the remaining 59 seats that included Varanasi where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking to retain the seat.

The Indian Lok Sabha has 545 seats. Polling is going on for 543 seats and an additional two seats are filled by nominees from the Anglo Indian community.

On the eve of the final day of voting in the world's biggest democratic exercise, local media reports said Modi, 68, would also spend some time in a "mediation cave".

Having addressed more than 140 election rallies across the country, Modi yesterday arrived in Dehradun, the capital of the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand famous for its Hindu pilgrimage sites.

Modi's hectic campaign which started in March has seen him address three rallies a day on average, criss-crossing the length and breadth of the geographically diverse nation of 1.3 billion people.

From Dehradun, the Hindu nationalist premier travelled to Kedarnath and was due to go on to Badrinath to pay his

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Beware of going overboard



AL-AMIN

The long wait is over. Bangladesh won a multi-nation tournament after six abortive attempts when they beat West Indies by five wickets at The Village in Dublin in an extraordinary final where the pendulum swung from one end to the other after rain intervened.

The rasping drive for four through the covers that Mahmudullah hit for the winning runs was icing on a proverbial celebratory cake that the Tigers had been preparing over their six previous attempts since 2009, somehow spoiled each time by their opponents.

The bitter memories of those near misses, marked by famously hysterical sobs, collective brain-freeze moments and emotional breakdowns that led to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Govt pushing Khaleda Zia towards tragic consequence

BNP alleges

UNB, Dhaka

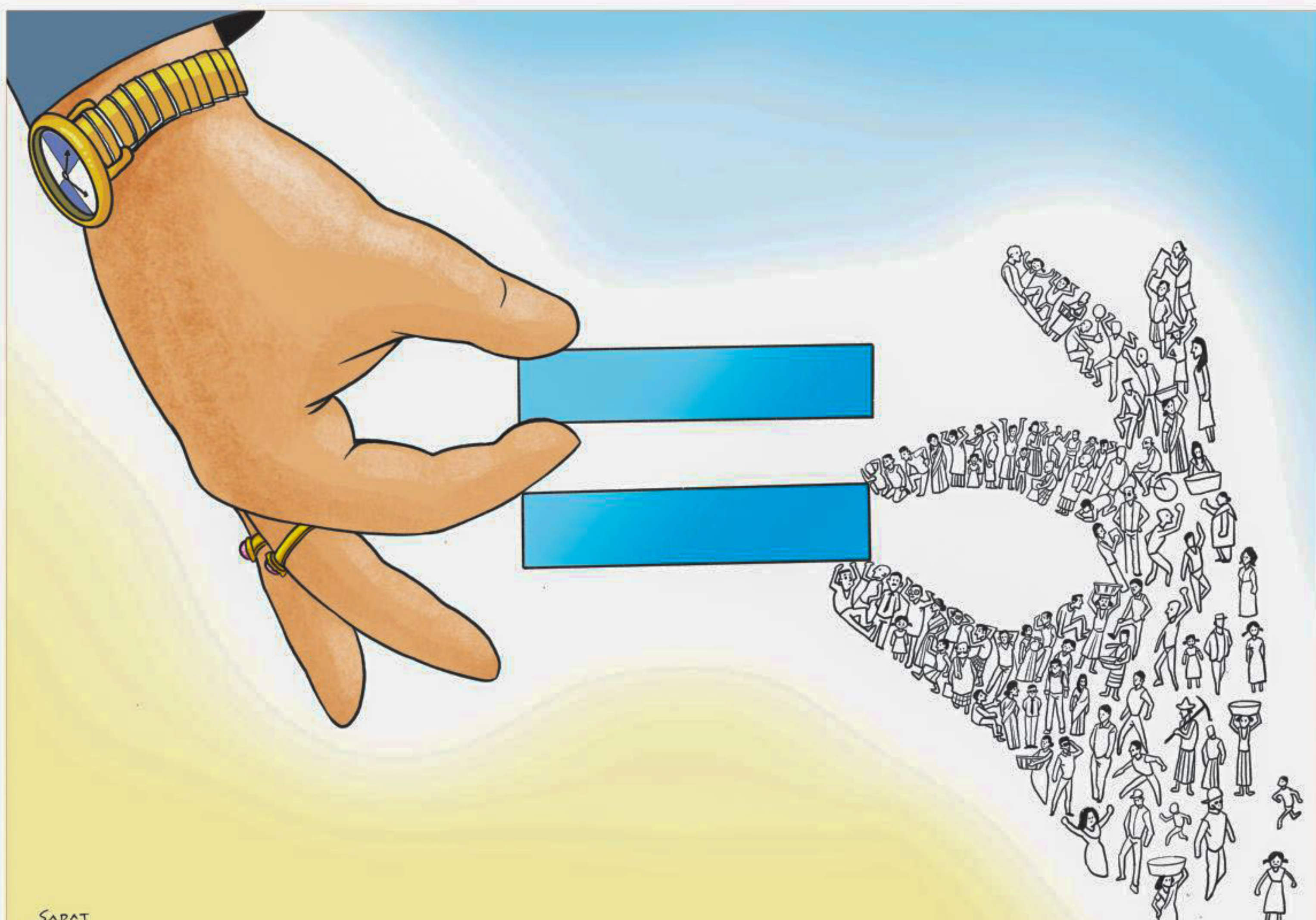
The BNP yesterday alleged that the government was pushing Khaleda Zia towards a tragic consequence through torturing her physically and mentally.

Speaking at a press conference, party standing committee member barrister Jamiruddin Sircar said keeping the BNP chairperson in jail depriving her of bail is "contrary to the constitution and human rights" since no case against her has been disposed of yet by the Supreme Court.

BNP standing committee members arranged the press conference at the party's Nayapalton central office, demanding Khaleda's release from jail and her proper treatment.

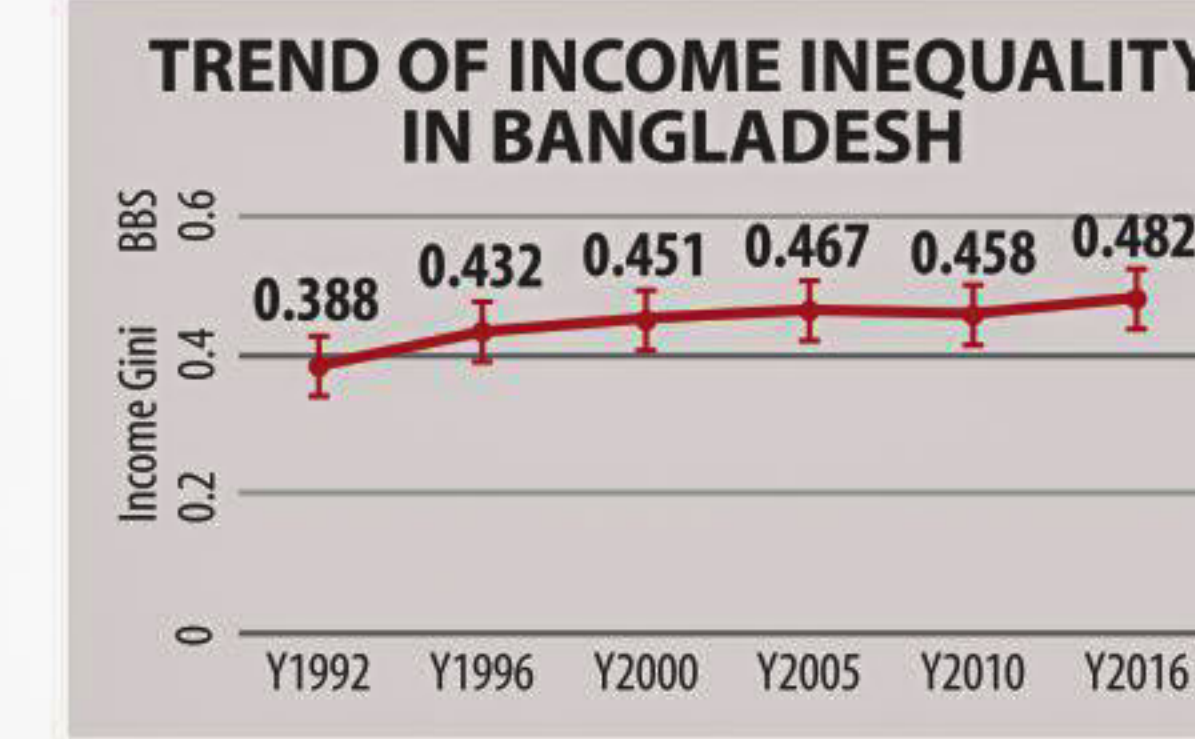
"Khaleda Zia's life and

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3



Inequality at all-time high

Finds BBS survey; rich-poor gap way out of proportion; appears as a puzzle to fast-paced GDP growth



REJAUJI KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi once said that growth that is not inclusive is not meaningful but just economic figures. And this proclamation seems to be gradually becoming relevant for Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has become the toast of the development world for its stellar growth momentum that is expected to place it amongst the top three fastest growing economies in the world by next year.

And yet, inequality in the country is at an all-time high. As per the latest Household Income and Expenditure

SEE PAGE 2 COL