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P8 Where death follow too closely



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B1 Imports of RMG raw material surge

'Importing' goods 'Made in Bangladesh'

CEPZ factory brings in finished products declaring those as raw materials

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

A Chinese company housed in the Chattogram Export Processing Zone imported finished goods with "Made in Bangladesh" labels by declaring those as raw materials, in an incident that violated both local and international rules.

The finished goods were intended for Dollar Tree, a discount variety store chain in the US, which has been locked in a trade war with China since 2018 as part of former US President Donald Trump's "America First" economic policy.

Earlier in May, Chattogram Bond Customs officials seized 7.6 lakh units of bags, earphone boxes and paintbrushes worth Tk 1.53 crore from the factory of Conda Art Materials Bangladesh, one of 114 foreign companies operating in the CEPZ.

Conda Art Materials is a subsidiary of Ningbo Conda Art Supplies Group, a leading art and craft materials provider that ships products to more than 90 countries and sells on Alibaba's Tmall and Amazon from its 66,000 square metre manufacturing base on Daxie Island, located 40 kilometres from Ningbo City.

In October 2019, it opened a factory in CEPZ, Bangladesh's first export processing zone that was established in 1983.

As a factory located in an EPZ, Conda Art is allowed to import raw materials duty-free as per its bond licence. But Conda declared the finished goods, which carry a 73 percent levy, as raw materials for canvas panels -- evading duties of about Tk 1.39 crore.

In making the false declaration, Conda Group would have dodged the World Trade Organisation's rules of origin when its factory in CEPZ did not have the equipment to manufacture those products.

"This is the first time such a fraud has been identified in the country," Hossain Ahmed, member of the National Board of Revenue's customs export, bond and IT department, told The Daily Star on June 23.

According to the customs rule, if an export-oriented company imports finished products by declaring those as raw materials under the duty-free facility, it will be asked to pay the dodged revenue as well as a penalty.

The authority can also suspend the company's bond licence for the offence.

Conda Art though was ordered to pay Tk 1.39 crore as dodged revenue and Tk 2.76 crore as a penalty, with its bond licence staying intact.

All the previous export and import data of Conda Art is being collected from the servers of the NBR and the Bangladesh Bank, Bond Commissioner AKM Mahbubur Rahman told The Daily Star.

Action will be taken in this regard after a detailed

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A relative of one of the 11 killed in the Mirsharai train-microbus collision on Friday sobs near the grave of his cousin after the latter was laid to rest yesterday at Khandakia village of Hathazari in Chattogram.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

'Couldn't help but drag them for half kilometre'

Says traumatised loco master; villagers say they never saw so many deaths

MOHAMMAD SUMAN and SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The locomotive driver of the Mahanagar Prabhati train, which hit a microbus on Friday morning killing 11, said he had no time to pull the brakes.

The train collided with the vehicle the very moment he saw it, he said.

"I only had a few seconds to register what had happened. I immediately pulled the brakes but it was way too late, because trains take at least 427 meters to come to a complete halt," loco master Zahirul Haque Khan told journalists when the train reached the Chattogram Railway Station around 5:00pm, three and half hours after the accident.

"There were no signal lights at this crossing, because it is not listed by the railway [authorities]. A tree obstructed the view to the gate bar, so I also could not tell if the bar was



hoisted.

"The train rammed the microbus and then dragged it several hundred metres down the track," he said, adding, "When it came to a halt, I got off the train and went over to the microbus. By that time, the damage was done."

His quick reflex in pulling the brake, however, may have contributed to saving the life of one Md Jonayed.

Jonayed, an HSC student, is one of the seven who survived the

collision.

"When our vehicle reached the rail line, the train hit us before we realised anything. After the collision, I lost my senses. I later discovered myself on the ground beside the rail track," said Jonayed, who is currently admitted to Chattogram Medical College Hospital.

Of the seven, six are undergoing treatment in the neurosurgery department of the hospital, while another -- Pavel -- was in Intensive

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DEATHS AT LEVEL CROSSINGS Last year's tally surpassed already

Says Road Safety Foundation, blames railway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The number of accidents and deaths at level crossings saw a sharp rise this year as over 80 percent of the crossings under the country's railway network remain either unauthorised or unmanned, says Road Safety Foundation.

At least 74 people were killed in 35 rail-related accidents at level crossings until Friday, when 11 died as a train hit a microbus at a level crossing in Chattogram's Mirsharai upazila.

The number is much higher than that of last two years, according to the organisation working for safe roads and railways.

It said 43 level-crossing accidents claimed 76 lives in 2021 and 69 lives ended in 38 accidents in 2020. The accidents and deaths at other parts of rail lines were not included.

The foundation collected data from media reports and shared those yesterday as the country is reeling from the Mirsharai tragedy.

The accident in Mirsharai brings to the fore the unsafe level crossings again, it said, adding that the accidents happened when around 70 percent authorised level crossings do not have dedicated manpower. Besides,

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Kids aged 5-11 may get jabs next month

First consignment of special Covid shots in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first consignment of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines developed especially for children has reached the country yesterday, and inoculation of those aged five to 11 might begin next month.

The country has received over 15 lakh doses of the vaccine in this regard, Dr Shamsul Haque, member

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Don't miss today's special issue

SUSTAINABLE BANKING IN BANGLADESH



This footbridge at Kundabari over Bharani canal has been in this sorry state for over 20 years. Over 3,000 locals of Bakerganj in Barishal, including children and people with challenges, use this bridge every day.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

UN HR COMMISSIONER'S VISIT Rights issues, Rohingyas to figure high

PORIMOL PALMA

UN Human Rights Commissioner Michelle Bachelet will be focusing on human rights situation in Bangladesh, Rohingya crisis, and climate change during her four-day visit here that begins on August 14.

Arriving at the invitation of the Bangladesh government, she is likely to call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal and Law Minister Anisul Huq.

The former president of Chile, who has been appointed UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2018, may also hold meetings with the UN representatives and civil society groups and visit Rohingya camps in Cox's Bazar and a climate vulnerable site to learn of how climate change is affecting human rights situation in Bangladesh, said officials.

"Previously, Michelle Bachelet's schedules were fixed but changed thrice -- in February, April and May. But she had to cancel the schedules for various reasons, including sickness," a foreign ministry official told The Daily Star yesterday.



Michelle Bachelet

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