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## MAY DAY Even minimum wage eludes the workers

ZYMA ISLAM and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The readymade garment sector is just one of 42 industrial sectors for which the government decides the minimum wage.

Workers of 24 of the remaining 41 sectors have a minimum wage less than that of an RMG worker. The lowest wage in 10 of the sectors is half or less than half of an RMG worker's minimum pay.

Employees in most of these sectors in the past have not had any nationwide trade union representatives speaking for them in the wage boards formed to set their minimum pay.

RMG workers are now campaigning to get their minimum wage raised to Tk 22,000, from the Tk 8,000 set in 2018, so that their pay is in accordance with the current market prices of essentials.

The RMG workers' pay hike demand is being backed by national and international trade unions at a time when inflation is at 9.33 percent, a rate just short of the 10-year-high of 9.52 percent recorded last August.

The minimum wage in at least 27 sectors was set in 2018 or before and the workers are struggling

Filling station workers' last wage board was in 1987  
Underage workers' legal wage is still Tk 2,500 a month  
Lowest wages are in tea estates, hotels and restaurants  
Trade unions are often absent during wage negotiations

to make ends meet as silence reigns over their collective bargaining movements.

The last time filling station workers had their minimum wage set was in 1987. Thirty-six years later, their minimum pay is still Tk 792.

Many workers in this sector have no clue that it is a listed sector and they are legally entitled to negotiate their wages.

Md Milon of Poribar Petrol Traders, a filling station in Shahbagh, has been working for 25 years at the pumps.

He gets Tk 12,000 a month.

He and seven other workers at the filling station expressed amazement at the concept of a wage board.

"If we get the wage board, it would be great. I will have job security," he said.

Thankfully, the negotiations for minimum wage in this sector are now going on after 36 years, but that the sad thing are no nationwide filling station workers' union representatives on the wage board,

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### HOLIDAY

The Daily Star offices will remain closed today on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, the newspaper will not come out tomorrow.



## WORLD BANK: BANGLADESH'S LARGEST DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

\$39b committed so far

Bangladesh currently has the largest ongoing IDA programme with about \$15.3b in financing for 53 projects

**Aug 17, 1972:** Bangladesh becomes member of IMF & WB

**Oct, 1972:** Four projects totalling \$59m reactivated to address urgent development priorities

**Nov 30, 1972:** Gets first IDA loan worth \$50m to reconstruct key sectors of war-torn country

**1973:** First water supply projects for Dhaka and Chattogram approved

**1975:** \$15m provided to address family planning and health challenges

**1979:** First energy project approved for \$28m for Khulna district

**1980:** \$51m provided to build cyclone buffer and increase access to primary schools

**1988:** \$62.3m provided to build rural infrastructure in eight districts

**1989:** \$25m provided to develop exports

**1994:** \$200m provided to build Bangabandhu bridge over Jamuna river

**2002:** \$190m provided to develop solar home systems

**2009:** Yearly commitment crosses \$1b for the first time

**2011:** Approves project to develop

reliable NID

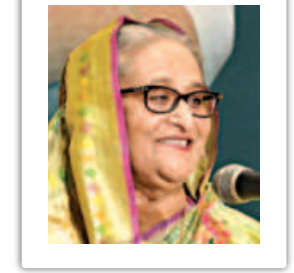
**2013:** \$875m provided to improve safety net programmes and reinforce coastal embankments

**2015:** Yearly commitment crosses \$2b

**2018:** Yearly commitment reaches \$3b



First meeting between Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and WB President Robert McNamara in Dhaka on January 31, 1972 at the Prime Minister's official residence



## IMF chief lauds the leadership of Hasina

UNB, Washington

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has lauded the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

"Bangladesh is a role model in the world [in terms of its overall development] which makes its economy stable even after the coronavirus pandemic," the IMF chief said while paying a courtesy call on Hasina at The Ritz Carlton

## Productive, transformative relationship

SYED AKHTAR MAHMOOD

In the aftermath of independence, when Bangladesh was in desperate need of aid for rehabilitation and reconstruction, it took a while for the country to establish a substantial relationship with the World Bank.



An important issue was the sharing of the foreign debt burden (incurred before 1971) between Pakistan and Bangladesh. It took some time to resolve this. Once this was settled, the WB could engage in a substantial manner in Bangladesh.

Starting in the early 1980s, the WB started attaching certain policy conditionalities to its loans to Bangladesh, in keeping with its stance across the developing world.

Its less than satisfactory experience with project loans, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, convinced the WB that certain structural changes were needed in the policy framework of developing countries without which the goal of development

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## POST-LDC CHALLENGES WB to equip Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Equipping Bangladesh to face the challenges of graduation from the least-developed country bracket is the main agenda for the World Bank Group as it embarks on its next 50 years of partnership.

The plan has been outlined in the multilateral lender's country partnership framework for 2023-2027, which will be presented before Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today at a daylong event at the WB headquarters in Washington DC to celebrate 50 years of partnership with Bangladesh.

"The relationship had its ups and downs but the WB stuck to its mandate of being a partner in development," said Zahid Hussain, a former lead economist of the WB's Dhaka office.

The trough in the relationship came in June 2012, when the WB pulled out its \$1.2 billion funding to build the Padma bridge after it found "credible evidence corroborated by a variety of sources" that pointed to a high-level corruption conspiracy among Bangladeshi government officials, SNC Lavalin executives and private individuals in connection with the project.

"The frostiness lasted very briefly. The incident did not have a lasting effect on the WB's lending to Bangladesh," he said.

Two years after the Padma bridge incident, Bangladesh became the largest recipient of

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## An evolving partnership

SADIQ AHMED

The 50 years of development partnership between the World Bank and Bangladesh is marked with mixed feelings.

There have been many controversies, the most serious of which is the Padma bridge financing debacle. There is also a perception that the WB conditionalities in the context of the structural adjustment loans have often been hurtful to Bangladesh's development.

Despite these concerns, few would deny that the financing and the knowledge sharing from global experiences brought in by the WB have facilitated progress in several areas of Bangladesh's development, especially in education, social protection, irrigation and flood control, transport and environment.

The WB began this partnership with a \$50 million Emergency Recovery Credit in 1972. Since then, the WB committed more than \$38 billion in financing.

Today, Bangladesh has the largest ongoing programme of the International Development Association (IDA), the arm

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## The PM is now on an official visit to the US mainly to attend the celebration of Bangladesh's 50 years of partnership with the World Bank scheduled for today.

Hotel in Washington DC on Saturday.

Georgieva was leading an IMF delegation at the meeting, Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen told reporters at a press briefing.

Hasina is now on an official visit to the US mainly to attend the celebration of Bangladesh's 50 years of partnership with the World Bank scheduled for today.

Momen said the IMF chief highly praised the unprecedented advancement of Bangladesh in various sectors under the dynamic leadership of Hasina that has made country's economy stable after the pandemic.

The IMF chief said leadership like that of the Bangladesh prime minister

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### SOCIAL SAFETY NET

## Non-eligible ones eat up Tk 1,500cr a year: CPD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 25 lakh benefit frauds are taking around Tk 1,500 crore every year from social safety net programme meant for the elderly and widows, according to the Centre for Policy Dialogue.

Besides, an estimated 33 lakh old people and 25 lakh widows eligible for the safety net support are not covered

by the programme, said Anshu Shamim Alam Shibly, research associate at the CPD.

The information was revealed yesterday at a discussion titled "How to improve coverage and effectiveness of the Social Safety Net Programmes: Findings from a primary survey".

The CPD and the Christian Aid jointly organised the event at the Brac

Centre Inn.

The government's social safety net programme provides a monthly allowance of Tk 500 to each of around 57 lakh elderly people and 25 lakh widows.

But among the beneficiaries, almost 30 percent of the elderly and 33 percent of the widows are not

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### GAZIPUR CITY POLLS

## RO cancels Zahangir's nomination

### Suspended mayor hints at invisible pressure behind it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nomination papers of Mohammad Zahangir, the suspended mayor and an aspirant in the upcoming Gazipur city polls, have been cancelled.

Md Faridul Islam, the returning officer, announced the Election Commission's decision in a press conference, saying Zahangir is a loan defaulter.

"We have information from Bangladesh Bank's Credit Information Bureau (CIB) that he [Zahangir] became a loan defaulter as a guarantor," he said.

Zahangir said he will appeal to the EC against the scrapping of his candidature.

The decision comes after the nomination papers of the candidates were scrutinised at the Returning Officer's office yesterday.

After verification, the returning officer announced the cancellation of the nomination papers of three mayoral candidates including Zahangir.



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Muhammad Salimullah (1938 - 2023)

## WE DEEPLY MOURN

The Board of Directors and the employees of Jayson Group of Companies are deeply grieved at the sad demise of Muhammad Salimullah a renowned industrialist who died on 30/04/2023 at 2:39 am (Inna lillahi wa inna ilaihi rajeun). He was 85 years old.

We pray to almighty Allah for the salvation of his departed soul.



In Memory of

Mubarak Ali  
1933 - 2023  
Managing Director  
Olympic Industries Limited

With immense sadness, the Board of Directors announces the passing of our Managing Director, Mr. Mubarak Ali, on April 28, 2023. Mr. Mubarak Ali was a visionary leader and catalyst behind the remarkable success of Olympic Industries Limited. He inspired many and will be fondly remembered for his unwavering dedication to the company, his family and Bangladesh. Please pray for his departed soul.

অসহ্য দুঃখের সাথে কোর্ট অফ ডিরেক্টরদের পক্ষ থেকে জানাচ্ছে যাচ্ছে যে, গত ২৮ এপ্রিল, ২০২৩ তারিখে আমাদের ব্যবস্থাপনা পরিচালক (ম্যানেজিং ডিরেক্টর) জনাব মোবারক আলী শেখ নিহত হওয়া করেছেন। অসম্পূর্ণ ইতিহাসিক নিমিত্তে এর অজ্ঞেয় এই অসাধারণ সাফল্যের পিছনে জনাব মোবারক আলীর দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি এবং বিচলন পুষ্টিয়ত সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা পালন করেছেন। তাঁর অক্লান্ত অসম্পূর্ণ ইতিহাসিক নিমিত্তে এই সফল অর্জন করতে সক্ষম হয়েছেন। আমরা সবাইয়ের আত্মার মার্গদর্শকতা কামনা করছি।



## DU bars Prof Imtiaz from all academic activities

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University yesterday barred Prof Imtiaz Ahmed, of Center for Genocide Studies, from engaging in any academic activities of the university for allegedly distorting the country's history and defaming Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The decision was made at a meeting of the university's syndicate after a probe committee placed its report, said a press release issued by the public relations offices of the university.

DU Vice-Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman presided over the meeting.

According to the press release, the book titled "Historicising 1971 Genocide: State versus Person (UPL-2009)" by Imtiaz Ahmed defamed the father of the nation and distorted the history of the Liberation War.

The syndicate called on Imtiaz and publisher UPL to immediately withdraw the book, published in 2009.

The syndicate also requested the government to take legal action against those who insult Bangabandhu and are involved in distorting the history of the Liberation War, the press release said.

## Woman alleges assault in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 20-year-old woman alleged that four or five security guards assaulted her and shaved her head in the Bashundhara residential area yesterday morning.

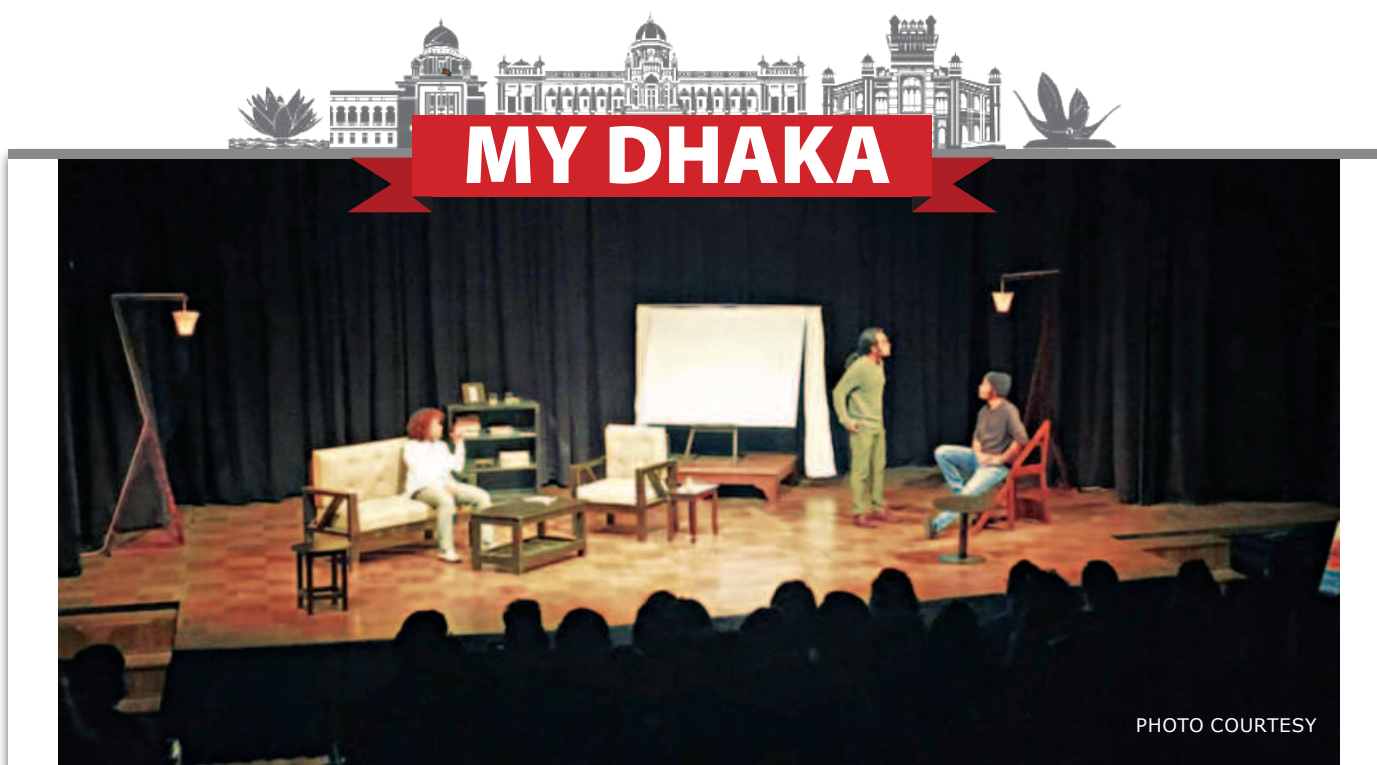
She was preparing for university admission tests at her flat in Block-D around 8:00am when four to five unidentified security guards of the residential area came and forcibly took her to Madani Avenue Nursery, she wrote in a complaint filed with Bhatara Police Station.

The guards then assaulted her and shaved her head, she said, adding that she managed to call her mother around 11:00am.

Her mother, sister, and a team from Bhatara Police Station went to the scene and rescued her around 4:00pm, but the guards fled when they saw police coming.

The complaint mentioned that she

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OPEN SPACE THEATRE

## Captivating audience WITH 'ART'

RBR

Written by the famous French playwright, Yasmina Reza, and translated and directed by M Arifur Rahman, "Art" was performed recently at the Experimental Theatre Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. This is Open Space Theatre's fourth production following the immensely popular stage performances of "12 Angry Men", "And Then There Were None", and "Arsenic and Old Lace".

A comedy about the relationship between three friends – Marc, Serge, and Yan – Art explores the subtle intricate nature of friendship where ego, frivolity, and inter-dependence play a part.

Arifur Rahman's direction of Art is highly acclaimed for its naturalistic performance and brilliant adaptability. He has masterfully translated Reza's work into Bangla, bringing the humour and the nuances of the play to life. An actor par excellence, Rahman brought the stage to life with appealing support from fellow performers, Tahmid Suprav and Ritwik Mahubb.

"The Open Space Theatre's production of Art was an entertaining experience. The play explored the complex and often humorous dynamics of a group of friends whose relationship is challenged by

the purchase of an expensive, white painting. The actors delivered good performances with witty dialogues and captivating stage presence.

"The minimalist set design and clever use of lighting added to the overall aesthetic.



The play provided a perfect balance of comedy and drama that kept the audience engaged throughout. Overall, Art is a highly recommended theatrical performance that was both thought-provoking and entertaining," says Paula Aziz, a theatre aficionado.

Open Space Theatre was established on January 7, 2017 by Mahjabeen Chowdhury and M Arifur Rahman. They aimed to make Dhaka "the city of theatre", where going to theatre becomes an intrinsic part of everyone's lifestyle.

As people have unlimited entertainment options at home and on their phones, it takes spectacular performances to bring them out of their homes and into the auditoriums. And it is exactly here that Chowdhury grabbed people's attention.

Mahjabeen says, "In our entertainment-deprived city, good quality theatre is what people crave. Whenever possible, we try to stage shows at different university campuses to make theatre popular among students. Recently, we introduced a special student discount. Most of our shows are filled with new theatre audiences, and they keep returning to watch all of our productions. It really doesn't matter whether the script is an adaptation or taken from a local source. What truly matters is the performance."

Open Space Theatre is a platform that provides a positive, judgement-free, practical environment for the audience to learn about theatre at their own pace and escape the drudgery of life.

## Librarian shot dead in Rajbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajbari

Criminals shot a librarian dead in Pangsha upazila of Rajbari last night.

Mizanur Rahman worked at the Pangsha Pilot Girls High School. He also had a fertiliser-insecticide business in Hossendanga Bazar.

Mizanur was returning home from his shop on a bike along with two others. They only managed to ride about 500 metres when the criminals ambushed them and shot Mizanur around 9:45pm.

The others were unscathed, said Shahidul Islam Maruf, his brother-in-law.

Rajbari SP MM Shakiluzzaman said Mizanur died on the spot.

## 'Cattle thief' beaten to death in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

A man, accused of stealing cattle, was beaten to death by angry villagers in Tangail's Mirzapur upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Mannan, 54, of Katuee village in the adjacent Delduar upazila.

He was caught red-handed by locals with a cow from a crop field in Ufulki village, said Saheb Ali, a member of Jamurki union.

They later gave Mannan a beating, leaving him dead on the spot, he added.

Mirzapur Police Station OC Abu Saleh Mohammad Masud Karim said the body was sent to Tangail General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

## Worker dies under tractor trolley

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A day labourer died after being run over by a tractor trolley in Ajmiriganj upazila of Habiganj yesterday afternoon.

Aminur Mia, 35, was pulling a wheelbarrow carrying a paddy threshing machine, when he was run over by the paddy-laden trolley, which was entering the small road of Shantipur village from the Baniachong-Ajmeriganj road.

He died on the spot, said Ajmiriganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Masuk Ali.

## 2 held with goods stolen from Rampal plant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

Two men were arrested with goods worth about Tk 3.2 lakh stolen from the Rampal thermal power plant in Fakirhat, Bagerhat.

Rab arrested the thieves – Biplab Hossain, 19, of Pabna and Mehedi Hasan Shanto, 23, of Khulna – in Katakhal area of the upazila Saturday night.

At the time, they recovered 5,495kg of iron tools, 50kg of copper wire, and a mini truck used in the theft.

"The two thieves and the recovered goods were handed over to Fakirhat Police Station. A case was filed in this connection," said Rab-6 Company Commander Md Badruddoza.

## An evolving partnership

FROM PAGE 1

of the WB that provides concessional financing. In aggregate, the WB is also the country's largest external supplier of development funding. Additionally, the IFC and MIGA have provided some \$3 billion to support the Bangladesh private sector.

The functioning of the WB as a development partner has evolved over time.

In the early years, the relationship was often perceived by Bangladesh policymakers as one of arrogance and an inflexible "take it or leave it" stance of the WB.

Policymakers often felt that the WB staff dealing with low-income countries like Bangladesh were very arrogant, with a know-all and inflexible attitude.

The carrot of loan financing was often used as a source of power and authority. And the design brought in from Washington was pushed as the only way to go.

There was little willingness among the WB staff to listen and learn from country knowledge and experiences.

There was also a perception that both the Bretton Woods Institutions, the WB and the IMF, were captured by G7 leadership, especially the US, and their domestic policy agenda found its way into the functioning of the two global financial institutions.

The unfortunate Padma bridge debacle that substantially hurt Bangladesh's relationship with the WB is cited as a prime example of this political capture of the WB by the US. In recent years, there has been marked improvement in the way that the WB conducts business with its member countries.

The word "donor" has been replaced by "development partner", country offices have been established with an empowered country director located in the country and available for consultation and conflict resolution on call, and country partnership documents are prepared with full consultation and involvement of country officials.

## WB to equip

FROM PAGE 1

loans from the International Development Association, the WB arm that provides concessional loans to the world's poorest nations, according to Hussain.

"Going forward, it has now become clear how the WB will extend its assistance. The CPF's main focus would be increasing private sector competitiveness for post-LDC graduation, adaptation to climate change and mitigation, and inclusive growth," he added.

The CPF will support Bangladesh's goal to achieve upper-middle-income country status by 2031 by helping the country address key barriers to higher and sustainable growth, said Abdoulaye Seck, the WB's country director.

The annual allocation from IDA is expected to be within the \$1.5-2 billion per annum range.

"Together with a current balance of about \$8.24 billion to be disbursed under the existing projects, this offers an opportunity for a series of transformational projects across key sectors."

Some of the transformational projects earmarked include the development of an economic corridor centring on Jamuna River, restoration of the ecology of Dhaka rivers, Bay Terminal project, modernisation of public sector operation, and learning acceleration in secondary education.

At the same time, the International Finance Corporation, the WB arm that helps develop the private sector in developing countries, will strive to increase its investment programme to \$900 million per annum, including mobilisation.

The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, the WB arm that promotes investment in developing countries by offering political and economic risk insurance, will continue to support its existing portfolio of \$1.1 billion in gross outstanding exposure across the energy and manufacturing sectors.

In collaboration with the IFC, MIGA will seek to support foreign direct investment into the country through its guarantee instruments as well as find opportunities to use its trade finance support instruments.

## Productive, transformative

FROM PAGE 1

will remain unfulfilled.

The conditionalities covered a wide ground including privatisation, import liberalisation, pricing reforms such as removal or reduction of subsidies, improving tax collection, financial sector reforms and improved public financial management.

Many Bangladeshis believe that many, or most, of the conditionalities imposed by the WB have been inappropriate and possibly harmful to the country.

They believe that successive governments have accepted these conditions due to their undue dependence on the donors and their inability, or lack of inclination, to push back on donor demands.

While valid in some cases, by and large, such concerns are misplaced, as reflected in the case of the closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills, one of the most contentious policy actions asked for by the WB.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the WB provided several loans to help modernise the state-owned jute industry. The results were not satisfactory.

The WB then concluded that it will be better for Bangladesh to privatise some jute mills and close the rest. The most significant example of closure is that of Adamjee Jute Mills. This happened in 2002, leading to a job loss of 26,000.

Many people in Bangladesh were critical of this decision and accused the WB of supporting the de-industrialisation of the country.

However, it is not widely known that an export processing zone was subsequently developed on the land of the former Adamjee Jute Mills and that, by mid-2019 (the latest period for which I have data), more than 55,000 people have been employed in the zone. This is double the number of jobs lost when Adamjee closed.

A dynamic economy requires a regular process of reallocation of resources from activities that are no longer profitable to those that are more promising.

The WB's advice to close the Adamjee Jute Mills was in line with this important lesson of economics and the performance of the Adamjee EPZ has vindicated this position.

The WB Group has also played an instrumental role in the development of the economic zones program of the country. This is a good example of how the WB Group can bring together its rich set of instruments, spread across its various parts, in the service of a transformative agenda.

In 2007, the International Finance Corporation, the private sector arm of the WB Group, published a report where it argued for a more organised and environmentally friendly industrialisation process in Bangladesh through the establishment of several economic zones in the country.

Once the government accepted the arguments and decided to go for an ambitious economic zones programme, the IFC helped draft the Economic Zones Act and associated rules and regulations, and supported the establishment and institution building of the Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority.

Later, the WB stepped in with loans to help build the infrastructure in the zones. Now there is some talk of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), another arm of the WB Group, coming in with guarantees to encourage foreign investment in these zones.

Going forward, the emphasis will increasingly be on creating the enabling environment for private sector investment, whether domestic or foreign.

This would involve assistance in improving the investment climate, catalysing private foreign investment and de-risking private investment. While the traditional lending and knowledge work of the WB will remain important, we are likely to see an increased engagement of IFC and MIGA in Bangladesh.

In summary, despite some frictions and tensions, the relationship between the Bangladesh government and the WB Group has been largely productive.

The often strived to develop a common vocabulary to communicate with each other, trying to understand each other's positions and limitations.

And, when they did find a common vocabulary, as they often did, the deliberations turned out to be productive and the results positive and, at times, even transformative.

The author is a former global lead of the World Bank Group's regulatory reforms and public-private dialogue

## IMF chief

FROM PAGE 1

is necessary to go ahead with prosperity confronting all hurdles, according to Momen.

Georgieva said Bangladesh has achieved the remarkable progress due to massive infrastructure development, widespread connectivity and maintenance of law and order.

She also hailed Bangladesh's success in maintaining macro-economic stability.

Momen said Hasina briefed the global lender chief of her government's initiatives to maintain the pace of overall development of her country.

The PM said Bangladesh has taken the \$4.7 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund as a "breathing space".

"The development of the country didn't come overnight; it has rather been the result of longtime planning."

The PM said she planned how she wanted to develop Bangladesh when she was in jail (for about 11 months from July 16, 2007) and started working with the plan after assuming power for the second time in 2009.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Abdur Rouf Talukder separately told reporters that the IMF always stood by Bangladesh over the last 14 years to maintain stability in the macro economy.

He said Bangladesh is currently engaged with a programme of \$4.7 billion with the IMF that Bangladesh got only after two weeks of negotiations despite the fact many countries fail to get loans after years of negotiations.

"The IMF will continue such cooperation in future," he said, quoting the global lender chief.

The BB governor said the PM hailed the IMF role in the journey of Bangladesh's development.

Under a programme approved in January this year, Bangladesh will get the \$4.7 billion loan in seven instalments over the next 42 months. The average interest on the loan will be 2.2 percent.

Bangladesh has already received the first tranche of \$476.2 million of the IMF loan.



## Pro-people healthcare will be a fitting tribute to him

### Speakers tell memorial event on Dr Zafrullah

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial event yesterday said continuing the fight for a pro-people healthcare system in the country would be a real tribute to Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury – a fearless freedom fighter and founder of Gonoshasthaya Kendra.

He passed away on April 11 at the age of 81.

To commemorate Dr Zafrullah's lifelong fight for the rights of the people, Swasthya Andolon (Health Movement) organised the event, titled "Struggle for a Pro-people Healthcare", at Dhaka Reporters Unity.

Poet and columnist Farhad Mazhar presented an introductory speech on the life and works of Dr Zafrullah.

"The usual policy of his work was being with the people; trying to understand their problem as his point of view and not that of any expert isolated from the people," he said.

"If the younger generation – who will change Bangladesh in future – cannot differentiate corporate science and real science, they would not be able to change anything truly," added Mazhar.

He highlighted that the people-oriented philosophy of Dr Zafrullah led him to work on the National Drug Policy in 1982 and the Health Policy in 1990.

"He became successful in the case of the drug policy... [But] his initiative to adopt a health policy failed due to the opposition of the majority of physicians and health experts," Mazhar said.

He also mentioned that the drug policy has a spirit of upholding national interest.

In his opening speech, Prof Dr Rashid-E-Mahbub, president of Health Rights Movement's national committee, highlighted how Dr Zafrullah was active in every pro-people movement.

"We have to remember him by completing his unfinished tasks," he said.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said Dr Zafrullah was a lifelong freedom fighter.

"He was a man who would have joined anyone for the sake of upholding the masses' interests," she said.

Monzur Qadir, coordinator (health division) at Gonoshasthaya Kendra, pledged to complete the unfinished task of Dr Zafrullah.

Dr Foyzul Hakim, Prof Dr M Muzaherul Huq, Dr Mushtuq Hussain, Samia Afrin and Prof Sohel Reza Chowdhury also spoke at the event.

Zafrullah Chowdhury's wife Shireen Huq and son Bareesh Hasan Chowdhury were also present.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting with IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva at the meeting room of The Ritz-Carlton hotel on Saturday (Washington time).

PHOTO: P10

## Govt depriving Khaleda of advanced treatment overseas

### Says Amir Khasru

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday alleged that the government is depriving Khaleda Zia of advanced medical treatment abroad.

"She's unjustly sent to jail in false cases. She has been deprived of treatment. Her condition is not good. She's being denied the specialised treatment she needs at a specialised hospital abroad," he said.

Khasru made the remarks while briefing reporters after a meeting with Ganatantrik Bam Oikya at BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office.

Though doctors have long been repeatedly talking about sending Khaleda overseas for advanced treatment, he said the government has been ignoring it.

He said, "Everyone from the president to the lower-level politicians in Bangladesh often go abroad for treatment. But Khaleda Zia is being deprived of it."

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia was admitted to Evercare Hospital on Saturday night for some medical tests and required treatment. She has been kept under close observation in a cabin at the hospital.

## Khaleda's illness a part of BNP's plan

### Says Hasan Mahmud

UNB, Dhaka

Khaleda Zia is physically alright, but she is being shown ill as part of BNP's political plan, said Information Minister Hasan Mahmud.

The minister made the remarks during an exchange of views with the leaders and journalists of Bangladesh Chalachitra Sangbadik Samity at the Secretariat yesterday.

"BNP's real objective is to make Khaleda Zia sick and make her appear sick. BNP has been doing it from the very first for gaining political interest," he said.

"A few days ago, BNP leaders said if Khaleda Zia is not taken abroad for treatment; her life will be in danger. But we have seen that she is physically well with treatment at a local hospital. It proves that BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul's claim about Awami League keeping Khaleda sick to keep her away from politics is not true," he added.

## POLICY REGARDING DOMESTIC WORKERS

# Protection remains only on paper

NILIMA JAHAN

The Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2015, which aims to safeguard the rights and well-being of over two million domestic workers – mostly women and children – have remained unimplemented for the past eight years due to the government's lack of political will and negligence.

The major stakeholders, including domestic workers, employers, and law enforcement officials, are still unaware of the policy and the need for adequate resources and training to respond effectively to rights violations.

Despite being required to meet every six months, the central monitoring cell, established under the labour ministry three years ago to oversee the implementation of the policy, failed to convene a meeting even once, said Abul Hossain, advisor of National Domestic Workers Union.

Furthermore, the monitoring cells that were supposed to be formed at the city corporation, district, and upazila levels – headed by chief executive officers, deputy commissioners, and UNOs – were never established.

Hossain expressed his concerns over the absence of inspection teams. The teams should have included mayors of the respective city corporations or municipalities, union parishad chairs, local elites, and government representatives under the local government.

Last year, the High Court condemned the policy for being "incomplete" and "vague" as it did not provide specific information such as the amount of compensation for victims of violations, payment method, number of leave days, and

the appeal process for domestic workers who were denied leave.

As a result, domestic workers are still subjected to various forms of abuse, including sexual abuse (4 percent), physical abuse (21 percent), mental abuse (67 percent), and verbal abuse (61 percent), found a recent study by Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies and Dnet.

However, 95 percent of workers did not report the abuse to anyone – as domestic violence is considered a

leave, while 87 percent of domestic workers have no days off. Most work for more than 12 hours per day.

More than half of the workers suffer from health issues such as asthma, skin diseases, fever, and urine infections, and mostly seek treatment from dispensaries.

Most domestic workers in Bangladesh earn Tk 5,311 per month, which 96 percent of them believe is insufficient to cover basic needs. Also, 23 percent of these workers incurred hospitalisation expenses in the past year, costing Tk 25,999.

The study recommended implementing existing policies and laws, raising awareness of compensation and survivor rights, creating a compensation fund, establishing a minimum wage to address the issues faced by them and training law enforcement to handle gender-based violence cases and ensuring safe working conditions.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, emphasised the importance of bringing domestic workers under the purview of the existing labour law to effectively implement the policy.

"Without the law, the government cannot be made responsible," she said.

"To provide domestic workers with equal pay and protection has been a persistent challenge due to the nature of their work and economic disparities among employers. To address this, different employment grades should be established, and formal appointments with job security should be offered," she stated.

"Besides, registering and inspecting child domestic workers regularly is crucial to combat the culture of impunity surrounding the abuse that they face," she said.

**Domestic workers in Bangladesh are still subjected to various forms of abuse, including sexual abuse (4 percent), physical abuse (21 percent), mental abuse (67 percent), and verbal abuse (61 percent). More than half of the workers suffer from health issues such as asthma, skin diseases, fever, and urine infections, and mostly seek treatment from dispensaries instead of hospitals.**

regular occurrence to them and they do not seek legal measures against it.

Around 99 percent of domestic workers are unaware of the policy, while only 66 percent of employers have some knowledge about it.

Titled "Decent work and intersections with VAW/GBV: A study on Domestic Workers in Bangladesh", the study also revealed that despite the policy guaranteeing 16 weeks of maternity leave, only 0.5 percent of them are eligible for paid

## SSC, equivalent exams begin

STAR REPORT

The Secondary School Certificate and its equivalent examinations began across the country yesterday morning.

The exams started with Bangla (first paper) while the duration of the exam was from 10:00am to 1:00pm. According to the education ministry, 20,72,163 candidates are likely to take this year's SSC and equivalent exams. The exams will be held on all subjects with full marks but on revised syllabuses.

Meanwhile, while visiting SSC exam centre at Badda High School in the capital, Education Minister Dipu Moni said, "If anyone tries to spread rumour over question paper leak, strict action will be taken."

Regarding the schedule of SSC and HSC exams next year, the education minister said the government is considering to start the exams earlier, giving proper time to the candidates to prepare themselves.

## AC FAILURE FOR 13 DAYS Cardiac surgery to resume tomorrow at NICVD

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities of National Institute of Cardiovascular Disease and Hospital (NICVD) said they would resume cardiac surgeries – which has remained halted since April 18 for failure of the air-conditioning system at the intensive care units – from tomorrow.

Public Works Department has completed the repair works yesterday and handed over the ICU to the hospital authorities, SM Forhaduzzaman Azad, sub-divisional engineer of PWD, confirmed The Daily Star.

Prof Monzur Alam, head of Cardiac Surgery Unit, said the authorities have prepared for bypass surgeries on two patients and valve implantation on another.

While visiting the cardiac surgery ward (15 and 16) yesterday, multiple patients said they were relieved that the surgeries will resume shortly.

The hospital accommodates 1,200 indoor patients at a time against its 800-bed capacity and has two ICUs with a total of 48 beds.

Patients often require intensive care for 3-7 days following a surgery.

## PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES Raise voice against torture on students by BCL activists

DU CORRESPONDENT

Torture on students by the members of Chhatra League has become a common occurrence in public universities of the country, said speakers at a webinar yesterday.

During a programme titled "Torture on Students at Universities", the speakers expressed that the reason why such activities continue to occur is because the majority of students and teachers do not speak out against them.

The event was attended by university teachers, student leaders, and politicians who all shared their concerns about the matter.

The speakers highlighted how the ruling party's student leaders are known to take over residential dorms to establish their dominance and control the general students, leading to an intimidating atmosphere in the halls.

Despite this, neither the university authority nor the government has taken steps to address the issue, and civil society members have not been vocal about it either.

## Eleven more hospitalised with dengue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least nine dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new ones, the total number of dengue cases rose to 986, according to the DGHS.

The total number of deaths stands at 11 this year.

Some 44 dengue patients are still undergoing treatment while 986 have been released from hospitals.



South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-Keun yesterday visited The Daily Star Centre and interacted with the newspaper's Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and other senior journalists. He also sat for an interview.

PHOTO: STAR

## New UK envoy in town

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

British High Commissioner Designate to Bangladesh Sarah Cooke arrived in Dhaka yesterday.

She succeeded Robert Chatterton Dickson.

On her appointment, Cooke said she is delighted and deeply honoured to be returning to Bangladesh.

"I am committed to strengthening the long and friendly bilateral relationship... between our two countries," she said.

Cooke previously served in Bangladesh from 2012-2016, as the Country Representative for the Department for International Development (DFID).

**PRAYER TIMING**  
MAY 1

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:15	12:45	4:45	6:31	8:00
JAMAAT 4:50	1:15	5:00	6:35	8:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Seraj Uddin's death anniversary

STAR REPORT  
Today is the 38th death anniversary of Seraj Uddin Ahmed, founder chairman of Elite Paint Group of Companies.



He was also founder director of Arab Bangladesh Bank Ltd, former president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries, former chairman of Tea Traders Association. A milad mahfil will be held at his Gulshan residence and Chattogram.

It's unacceptable

FROM PAGE 5  
to comprehend how Siddique could make such remarks," said Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam. She opposed Siddique's remark suggesting that women should not be present at funeral prayers.

"While women may not lead the funeral prayers, they certainly have the right to be present," she said. Ain O Salish Kendra also condemned Siddique's behaviour. It is worth noting that the parliamentary standing committee on the Liberation War ministry

had recommended finding an "alternative" to female upazila nirbahi officers' presence during the guard of honour performed for freedom fighters following their demise. However, the recommendation was later cancelled following protests by rights activists.

Raise voice against torture

FROM PAGE 3  
To combat this problem, the speakers recommended that university students' unions become more active. Speakers at the webinar

included Head of the Global Labor Organization of South-Eastern Asia, Niaz Asadullah, Associate Professor of the School of Education at Queensland University Obaid Hamid,

Secretary of Sujon Badiul Alam Majumdar, Prof Gitariya Nasreen of DU Journalism department and Assistant Professor of Economics Department Dr Rushad Faridi.

Rabindra festival to be held in NY May 6, 7

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day Rabindra Utsav, organised by Rabindra Sammilan Parishad USA, is going to be held in New York on May 6 and 7. The partner organisations are Cultural Association of Bengal and Bangla World Wide.

Columbia University Prof Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak will be the chief guest while Rabindra Sangeet artist Rezwana Choudhury Bannya will inaugurate the event.

Price Sensitive Information



This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of ONE Bank Limited in its 356th Meeting held on April 30, 2023 from 3:00 p.m. at its Board Room, Corporate Headquarters, HRC Bhaban, 46 Kawran Bazar C.A., Dhaka-1215, has approved/decided/recommended the followings in respect of 24th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Shareholders of the Bank for the year ended December 31, 2022.

- Recommended Dividend : 5% Stock Dividend subject to approval from Bangladesh Securities and Exchange Commission (BSEC).
- Date and Time of 24th AGM (Virtual) : August 10, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.
- Record Date for AGM : June 8, 2023

AGM Venue	Virtually by using Digital Platform	link <a href="https://obl.bdvirtualagm.com">https://obl.bdvirtualagm.com</a>
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Particulars	Dec 31, 2022	Dec 31, 2021
Net Asset Value (NAV)	Tk. 18,379,798,831	Tk. 17,473,661,601
Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share *	Tk. 18.74	Tk. 17.82
Earning Per Share (EPS) *	Tk. 1.42	Tk. 0.77
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)*	Tk. 1.73	Tk. 4.36

Particulars	Dec 31, 2022	Dec 31, 2021
Net Asset Value (NAV)	Tk. 18,783,649,218	Tk. 17,712,594,664
Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share *	Tk. 19.15	Tk. 18.06
Earning Per Share (EPS) *	Tk. 1.59	Tk. 0.86
Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)*	Tk. 1.73	Tk. 4.36

\* NAV Per Share, EPS and NOCFPS for the year 2021 have been restated taking into account the increase of number of Ordinary Shares due to issuance of Bonus Shares for the year ended December 31, 2021 as approved by the shareholders in the 23rd AGM of the Bank held on August 11, 2022.

• To change the registered name of the Bank to 'ONE Bank PLC' from 'ONE Bank Limited'.

The Board also decided to change of the registered name of the Bank to 'ONE Bank PLC' from 'ONE Bank Limited' in accordance with the Companies Act, 1994 (amended in 2020) and to amend the relevant clauses of the Memorandum & Articles of Association of the Bank subject to approval of the Regulatory Authorities.

• Emphasis of Matter, extracts from the Independent Auditors' Report are as follows: Quote "without modifying our opinion, we are drawing attention to the following matters":

(i) As disclosed in note # 7.13 to the financial statements, the Bank has explained the basis for measurement and recognition of provision required, maintained and the shortfall of provision against the loan and advances. The Bank also disclosed about the deferment allowed by Bangladesh Bank in this regard.

(ii) As disclosed in note # 13.3 to the financial statements, the Bank reported the Capital to Risk-Weighted Assets Ratio. As per BRPD Circular No. 18 dated 21 December 2014, the Bank had to maintain Minimum Total Capital plus Capital Conservation Buffer @ 12.50% both in the case of Solo and Consolidated basis. However, the Bank has maintained Minimum Total Capital plus Capital Conservation Buffer 11.77 % and 11.89 % in the case of Solo and Consolidated basis, respectively.

(iii) In note # 2.22(a) to the financial statements, the Bank disclosed the actions to be taken to comply with the requirements of para 263(1) of the Labour Rules 2015.

• Disclosures on recommendation of Stock Dividend:

(i) Stock Dividend has been recommended for utilization of its retained amount as Paid up capital to strengthen the Capital Base of the company under BASEL-III accord to be utilized for sustainability and expansion of business of the Bank.

(ii) The Bonus Dividend is declared out of Accumulated Profit of the Company.

(iii) The Bonus Dividend is not declared from Capital Reserve or Revaluation Reserve or any Unrealized Gain or out of Profit Earned Prior to Incorporation of the Company or through reducing Paid up Capital or through doing anything so that the post-dividend retained earnings become negative or a debit balance.

The Share Transfer Books of the Bank shall remain closed on June 8, 2023 i.e. on the 'Record Date'. The Shareholders whose names appear in the Share Register on the 'Record Date' only shall be entitled to the Dividend for the year 2022.

N.B. The Bank had earlier received Bangladesh Bank's approval to declare Dividend today i.e. April 30, 2023 at 3:50 p.m.

By order of the Board,  
*John Sarkar*  
John Sarkar  
DMD & Company Secretary

Dhaka  
April 30, 2023

**PHARMA AIDS LIMITED**  
345 Segun Bagicha, Ramna, Dhaka-1000  
**PRICE SENSITIVE INFORMATION**

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of the Company in its 143rd Board Meeting held on 30th April, 2023, at 3:00 P.M. in the Conference Room at the Registered Office at 345 Segun Bagicha, Dhaka-1000, has approved the Third Quarter (Q3) Un-Audited Financial Statements of the Company for the period ended on 31st March, 2023, and disclosed the following financial indicators:

Particulars (Tk)	As at 31 March 2023		As at 30 June 2022	
i) Net Asset Value (NAV) (in lac)	2,915.28		3,083.52	
ii) Net Asset Value per Share (NAVPS)	93.44		98.83	
	01 July 2022 - 31 March 2023	01 July 2021 - 31 March 2022	01 January 2023 - 31 March 2023	01 January 2022 - 31 March 2022
iii) Net Profit After Tax (in lac)	1.68	477.79	(37.63)	144.41
iv) Earnings per Share (EPS)	0.05	15.31	(1.21)	4.63
v) Net Operating Cash Flow per Share (NOCFPS)	5.52	15.37	---	---

Reasons for significant deviations and the details of the Third Quarter (Q3) Un-Audited Financial Statements for the period ended on 31st March 2023 are available in the website of the Company at [www.pharmaaids.com](http://www.pharmaaids.com)

By the order of the Board  
Sd/-  
Faizul Hassan  
Managing Director

Date: 30 April 2023

**Mercedes-Benz Car for Sale**  
One brand new purchased Mercedes-Benz sedan C180, Model/Reg. 2015, 1595 CC, mileage only 6,650 Km, good condition. Road 11, Building 5, Block G, Banani.  
**Call: 01729-094674, 01750-728612**  
<https://bikroy.com/en/ad/mercedes-benz-c-class-2015-for-sale-dhaka-1>

**Car for Sale**  
**Kia Sportage:** Color-White, Model/Reg: 2011, Serial-13, Tiptop condition, sunroof, alloy rim, 1998 CC, 90,200 Km. Road 11, Building 5, Block G, Banani.  
**Call: 01729094674, 01750728612**  
<https://bikroy.com/en/post-ad/confirm?slug=kia-sportage-2011-for-sale-dhaka-868>

**BANGLADESH AUTOCARS LTD.**  
110 TEJGAON I/A, DHAKA-1208  
Summary of financial results for the 3rd Quarter March 31, 2023.

	31.03.2023	31.03.2022
1. Net Profit/Loss after tax	Tk 2,041,101	Tk 1,912,083
2. Earnings Per Share	0.47	0.44
3. Net Assets value	7.26	7.02
4. NOCFPS	1.00	1.00

The 3rd Quarter Un-Audited Financial Statements of BD. Autocars Ltd. for the period ended on March 31, 2023. The Details are available in the website of the Company at [www.bdautocars.com](http://www.bdautocars.com)

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর  
শাহেদ, ঢাকা-১০০০  
১৯৭১: পলহোতা-নির্বাচন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরে তখন নির্মাণ (২ম সংশোধিত) গ্রন্থ  
পুনঃপ্রকাশ নং-০২/২০২২-২০২৩, ০১০২ তারিখ: ৩০/০৪/২০২৩ খ্রি.

সংশোধিত পুনঃপ্রকাশের বিবরণ

বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরে বাস্তবায়নধীন ১৯৭১: পলহোতা-নির্বাচন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরে তখন নির্মাণ (২ম সংশোধিত) প্রকল্পের আওতায় "কম্পিউটার ও জাদুঘরিক প্রযুক্তি সমন্বিত" কাজ করার জন্য প্রকৃত যোগ্যতা ও অভিজ্ঞতাসম্পন্ন তিনজন প্রকল্পের নিকট থেকে পুনঃপ্রকাশের আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

সংশোধিত পুনঃপ্রকাশের বিবরণিত তথ্যসমূহ সরকার পলিসি (সিডিউল) বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরের নিম্নলিখিত ওয়েবসাইট [www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd](http://www.bangladeshmuseum.gov.bd) থেকে বিনামূল্যে ডাউনলোড করা যাবে। এই পুনঃপ্রকাশের দাপ্তরিক পর্যালোচনা কার্যক্রম ০২/০৪/২০২৩ থেকে ০৯/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে এবং সর্বশেষ ২০/০৪/২০২৩ তারিখ বেলা ১২.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘরে রক্ষিত প্রকল্পের বাস্তবায়ন দপ্তর কর্তৃক হবে। কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে যে কোন/সকল সরকারি গ্রন্থ বা বাস্তবায়ন কর্মসূচি বাস্তবায়ন করে নেওয়া হবে।

(গণিত) মো. মাহমুদুল হক  
সচিব (প্ৰশাসনিক)  
বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় জাদুঘর  
প্রকল্প পরিচালক (অতিরিক্ত দায়িত্ব)  
১৯৭১: পলহোতা-নির্বাচন আর্কাইভ ও জাদুঘরে তখন নির্মাণ (২ম সংশোধিত) শীর্ষক প্রকল্প।

GD-755

**CAREER**

**PROTIK GROUP** is a leading group engaged in Real Estate Business, Export Oriented Ceramics Industry, International Trading, Food & Allied Product Industry is looking for hard working result oriented and professionally sound personnel and also he must have capable to Ceramics Plant of Porcelain Tableware for its **PROTIK FINE CERAMICS LTD. (PFL):**

**Senior General Manager (Plant)**

B.Sc Engineering / M.Sc in Related Field from any reputed University with minimum 3-7 years working experience. The candidate should have vast knowledge to run a Porcelain Tableware Plant in a reputed ceramics company.

The candidate of Bangladeshi & abroad can apply for the above position.

Educational qualification may be relaxed in case of highly experienced candidate.

Any other conditions and facilities as per our company rules & regulations.

If you think that you are the right candidate for the above posts, please send your resume along with recent passport size photographs and relevant papers within 7 (seven) days of publication of this advertisement to the

**HR, PROTIK GROUP**  
Green Meher Tower (3rd & 5th Floor), House # 12/A, Gulshan North Avenue, Block-NW(F), Gulshan-2, Dhaka-1217, Bangladesh  
E-mail: [career@protikgroup.com](mailto:career@protikgroup.com)

**BIRDEM GENERAL HOSPITAL**  
(An Enterprise of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh)  
122 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000, Bangladesh.  
☎: 41060501-24, Fax: 41060476  
Website: [www.birdembd.org](http://www.birdembd.org) or [www.dab-bd.org](http://www.dab-bd.org)

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**

Invitation Ref. & Date : BIRDEM/Purchase/10-Group (Medicine & MSR Items)/2023/01 Dated : 29 April 2023

01.	Name of Works	Supply of Medicine & MSR items for BIRDEM General Hospital for the year 2023 - 2024				
02.	Details of Work	Group-01: Medicine Items.	Group-06: Stationery & other Items.			
		Group-02: Surgical Items.	Group-07: Crockeries & Miscellaneous Items.			
		Group-03: Linen Items.	Group-08: Hardware & Sanitary Items.			
		Group-04: Gauge-Bandage, Dressing & related Items.	Group-09: Electro Mechanical Items.			
		Group-05: Chemical & Reagents Items.	Group-10: Cleaning Materials Items.			
03.	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method (OTM)				
04.	Source of fund	BIRDEM General Hospital				
05.	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Director General, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.				
06.	Name & address of the office selling tender documents	Procurement Section, Room: 230, 1 <sup>st</sup> floor of OPD Building, BIRDEM General Hospital, Shahbag, Dhaka-1000.				
07.	Date of selling of tender documents	Tender documents will be available from 06 May 2023 to 03 June 2023 on all working days (09.00 am to 01.00 pm).				
08.	Tender closing date	05 June 2023 (From 08.00 AM to 12.00 PM).				
09.	Tender opening date	05 June 2023 at 12.30 Noon (In presence of the tenderers or their authorized agent, if anybody available).				
10.	Price of tender document (For each group)	Group: 1, 2 & 5 = 5,000/ (Five Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)				
		Group: 3, 4, 8 & 9 = 2,000/ (Two Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)				
		Group: 6, 7 & 10 = 1,000/ (One Thousand) Taka Only. (Each Group)				
11.	Tender Security	Name of Group	Tender Security Amount (BDT)	Comments		
		Group-01	1,00,000.00	Group-06	10,000.00	Said amount for each group have to be deposited in the form of Demand Draft or Pay-order from any local commercial bank in favor of BIRDEM General Hospital.
		Group-02	50,000.00	Group-07	10,000.00	
		Group-03	30,000.00	Group-08	20,000.00	
		Group-04	30,000.00	Group-09	20,000.00	
Group-05	50,000.00	Group-10	10,000.00			
12.	Eligibility of tenderers	a. The tenderers should be manufacturer or their authorized supplier/distributor/dealer or seller of the items.				
		b. Each group & item of the lot shall be evaluated separately.				
		c. The tenderers should have valid & updated trade license, TIN, VAT & Income Tax Certificate.				
13.	Detail specifications, terms & conditions, warranty & After sales services are enumerated in the tender schedule.					
14.	BIRDEM authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.					

Note: In case of holiday or any unavoidable circumstances last date of dropping & opening will be the next working day.

*29/4/23*  
Director General  
BIRDEM General Hospital

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**UNION BANK LTD**  
SHARIAH BASED BANK

Head Office: Bahela Tower, 72, Gulshan Avenue, Gulshan-1, Dhaka - 1212  
Phone: +880222297310 (PABX), Fax: +8802-22280523, [www.unionbank.com.bd](http://www.unionbank.com.bd)

**DISCLOSURE ON UN-AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER (Q1) ENDED ON MARCH 31, 2023**

This is for information of all concerned that the Board of Directors of Union Bank Limited in its 100th Meeting held on April 30, 2023 Sunday at 3.00 p.m. at the Board Room of Head Office, Dhaka among others, has approved the un-audited financial statements for the First Quarter (Q1) ended on March 31, 2023 and disclosed the following financial indicators of the Bank:

(Amount in BDT)

Comparative Statement			
Sl. No.	Particulars	Jan 01 to Mar 31 2023	Jan 01 to Mar 31 2022
1.	Net Asset Value (NAV) Per Share	15.83	14.82
2.	Earnings Per Share (EPS)	0.36	0.35
3.	Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share (NOCFPS)**	4.69	(1.36)

\* Net Operating Cash Flow Per Share has been increased to BDT 4.69 compared to that of previous period (Q1, 2022) mainly due to increase in Investment Income received, decreased in profit paid on deposit and also increased in other liabilities.

The details of the un-audited Financial Statements of the Bank for the First Quarter (Q1) ended on March 31, 2023 will also be available in the website of the Bank at [www.unionbank.com.bd](http://www.unionbank.com.bd)

Dated: April 30, 2023  
Dhaka.

Sd/-  
Ali Hossain Bhuiyan ACS  
Company Secretary



Death-row war criminal held in Gazipur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion has arrested a fugitive war criminal, who was sentenced to death for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War. Montaz Ali Bapary alias Montaz, 76, was arrested from Gazipur's Chandra area Saturday night, Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of Rab-3, told a press briefing yesterday. The Rab CO said Montaz had been hiding since 2016. He moved to his son's house in Chandra in November 2022 from where Rab members arrested him. On October 15, 2019, the International Crimes Tribunal handed death penalty to five people of Gaibandha, including Montaz for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War. According to the tribunal's investigation agency, the war criminals including Montaz were involved in four incidents of killings, abduction, confinement, torture, arson and looting.

Equal wage still elusive

No increase in remuneration for temporary tea workers

MINTU DESHWARA

Hundreds of temporary tea workers in the country are suffering due to a poor pay structure. Many of them are paid around 30 to 50 percent lower wages than permanent workers. In August last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed tea estate owners to raise the daily wage of tea workers to Tk 170 from the previous Tk 120. As per her directives, the tea estate owners are now paying Tk 170 for permanent workers. However, the wages of many temporary workers were not raised. "Most temporary tea workers



discrimination in terms of wages but to no avail. Asked, Golam Mohammad Shiblee, chairman of the Sylhet chapter of Bangladesh Tea Association, a platform for tea garden owners, said, "Plucking is the main work in a tea garden. Temporary workers, who pluck leaves, get wages equal to permanent workers. But those who work less than eight hours or work on contract or shift are paid a lower wage."

The association's chairman M Shah Alam said, "I'm not entirely aware of this. We have received no such complaints regarding wage discrimination." According to the latest data from the Statistical Handbook on Bangladesh Tea Industry-2019, there are 166 tea gardens in the country where 1,03,747 permanent workers and 36,437 temporary workers are involved. Contacted, Major General Md Ashrafur Islam, chairman of Bangladesh Tea Board, said, "We have asked all tea estate owners to pay equal wages to permanent and temporary workers."

"We will investigate in case any such wage discrimination is taking place," he added.

**"I work as much as a permanent worker but get paid way less. It is very difficult to survive with such a poor wage."**

BRITISH ROY Temporary tea worker

get Tk 120, while some others get only Tk 70 to Tk 80. Rubber workers get Tk 110," said Karthik

Nayek, president of Sonachara Tea Garden Unit of Bangladesh Tea Workers Union. Moreover, the families of permanent workers are entitled to food rations, which is not the case for temporary workers. Even, family members of permanent workers get food rations.

"I work as much as a permanent worker but get paid way less. It is very difficult to survive with such a poor wage," said British Roy, a temporary tea worker

at Moulvibazar's Sreemangal upazila. As per Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006, workers must be paid equal wages for equal work, said Rajat Biswas, general secretary of the Moulvibazar district unit of the Bangladesh Trade Union Sangha.

Pankaj Kondo, vice-president of Bangladesh Cha Sramik Union central committee, said that they have repeatedly requested tea garden owners to end the

RO cancels Zahangir's nomination

FROM PAGE 1

The other two are independent candidates Oliur Rahman and Abul Hossen.

On April 27, Zahangir's supporters submitted his nomination papers as an independent candidate.

He also submitted nomination papers for his mother, Zaida Khatun, who too would be running for the mayor post.

The returning officer, however, declared Zaida's nomination valid.

Zahangir, who was present at the press conference in the city's Bongo Taj Auditorium, however, refuted the allegations against him and accused the returning officer of bias.

"I have been treated unfairly. The bank authorities have given written and verbal statements regarding the payment of installments to the bank's creditors. Still, what you have done was a biased act," he told the

returning officer. Speaking to the journalists, he said he will appeal to the EC against the decision.

"The Election Commission has moved away from its neutral stance. I do not know under which invisible pressure they did it," he said.

"I want justice. If required, I will move the High Court and Supreme Court," he said, alleging that the decision was undemocratic.

Zahangir claimed that all the documents were submitted to the EC through the lawyer and bank authorities, but the EC cancelled his nomination papers, citing CID.

"I mortgaged my own land for humanitarian reasons to save an industrial establishment. I didn't take the money myself and the company is paying the loan."

Meanwhile, the EC said it will issue a show-cause notice to Awami League-backed mayoral candidate

Azmat Ullah Khan for allegedly violating the electoral code of conduct.

"It has been decided to issue a show-cause notice to Azmat Ullah Khan. An explanation will be sought from him and he will be asked to come to the commission and explain the matter," EC Md Alamgir told the journalists.

The EC alleged that Azmat Ullah Khan, also the president of Gazipur city AL, violated the electoral code of conduct while submitting his nomination papers on Thursday.

Violating the rules, at least 10 leaders and activists accompanied Azmat Ullah Khan from the main entrance to the office of the returning officer. Many leaders and activists were rallying on the road at that time.

The Gazipur City Corporation election will be held on May 25. The deadline for withdrawing candidacy is May 8.

Official notice from Dhaka North City Corporation regarding e-Tender Notice (OTM) for the procurement of 500KVA Sub-station and 150KVA Diesel Generator. Includes details of tender ID, name of works, and contact information for the Executive Engineer.

Evacuation of Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladesh embassy's charge d'affaires, Tareq Ahmed, is now in Port Sudan to supervise the evacuation process.

Sudan-Bangladesh Friendship Association has written a letter to the Bangladesh embassy requesting it to arrange overnight accommodation

in Khartoum, said its president Anisur Rahman.

The pick-up point decided by the embassy is an open place and it might not be safe, he added.

"The situation in Khartoum was always changing. The place safe today may not be the same tomorrow," Alam said. On complaints that calls

to the hotline numbers opened by the embassy often are not answered, he said poor internet connectivity was probably causing it. He advised sending text messages on WhatsApp.

Bangladesh tried without success to contact the conflicting groups of Sudan for creating a safe passage for evacuation.

Janata Bank Limited Estate Department Invitation For Re-Tender. Details of procurement for Masiba Brand Lift and Housan Brand Lift. Includes tender details, eligibility criteria, and contact information.

বাংলাদেশ শিশু হাসপাতাল ও ইনস্টিটিউট নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি. Recruitment notice for various positions including medical and administrative staff. Includes details of the institution, positions, and application procedures.





# 10 years since Rana Plaza tragedy

## Workers' Health-Safety & Trade Union Rights: Where are we now?

**Solidarity Center and IndustriAll Bangladesh Council (IBC), with the support of USAID, organised a roundtable titled "Workers' Health-Safety & Trade Union Rights: Where are we now?" on the occasion of 10 years since the Rana Plaza tragedy on April 13, 2023. Here we publish a summary of the discussion.**

**Kutubuddin Ahmed, General Secretary, IndustriAll Bangladesh Council (IBC)**



Following the tragic Rana Plaza incident, IBC and several other organisations joined forces to improve conditions for workers. A committee was formed to investigate the accident, and 36 individuals, including Sohul Rana, were held accountable. The recent release of Sohul Rana on bail has been strongly criticized by trade unions, and it is important that all those responsible face exemplary punishment.

The Accord and Alliance have made significant progress in improving fire and building safety in around 1,800 industries. However, the RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) has not produced expected results



the root cause of the unrest.

**Mohamad Anis Agung Nugroho, Programme Manager, International Labour Organization (ILO)**



In the process of amending labour laws, including the EPZ law, the involvement of trade unions is crucial. Currently, the ILO is preparing a technical note on these amendments, and I am confident that trade union members will actively contribute their input to this process. The RMG sector has witnessed a significant improvement in occupational safety and health. However, there has been a recent increase in non-compliance, and the grievance redressal mechanism has been on the decline.

Out of the 440 factories where the ILO's Better Work programme is implemented, 147 of them have registered trade unions according to the Department of Labour's website. However, during our factory visits, we were only able to meet with the executive committee of 56 factories, leaving 91 factories on the Department of Labour's trade union list where we were unable to identify or meet their executive committees. And out of the 56 factories, only seven had collective bargaining agreements.

**Amirul Haque Amin, President, IndustriAll Bangladesh Council (IBC)**



The Rana Plaza incident is often labelled as an "accident," but it was actually a murder. The workers had identified cracks in the building and refused to work there, but they were coerced into joining the factory. Therefore, I believe it is necessary to take a firm stance on the matter.

We are aware that crores of taka were donated to the Rana Plaza Trust fund. It is imperative for the government to reveal how the funds have been utilised.

There were 31 brands that had orders in the five factories of Rana Plaza. Following the incident, 19 of these brands contributed to the Rana Plaza fund, while 12 did not including Walmart. These 12 brands are still operational in Bangladesh, yet we have failed to take any action against them. It is unfortunate that only 46 brands have signed the International Accord.

Finally, we must ensure that workers can exercise their right to organise, strike, and bargain without any hindrance.

**AKM Nasim, Country Program Director, Solidarity Center- Bangladesh office**



The representation of workers is in jeopardy, as many unions often exist only in names. There is no effective participation of workers in safety committees also. The ongoing effort of many to replace the unions' rights of collecting bargaining with so-called social dialogue is detrimental to the interest of the workers.

We have been discussing the need to reform labour laws, which presents an opportunity to address these issues. We also need to ensure the implementation of national labour laws in EPZs. The workers of newly established Economic Zones (EZs) are also deprived of the freedom of association rights as the EPZ labour law is applicable to them, not the national labour law. If we can ensure workers' rights to organise and collective bargaining, and safety in every workplace, it will be a fitting tribute to those who lost their lives in industrial disasters such as Rana Plaza.

**Tanjim Ferdous, In-charge of NGO and Foreign Missions at the Business Development Team, The Daily Star, & Moderator of the session**



Undoubtedly, the garment sector is one of the most significant economic drivers in Bangladesh, primarily due to the availability of easily accessible labour. However, the industry's failure to prioritize the safety and well-being of its workers has resulted in numerous hazardous incidents, predominantly fire outbreaks. The collapse of Rana Plaza in Savar on 24 April 2013 resulted in the death of 1,135 people and injuries to 2,500 others. Subsequently, efforts were made to enhance compliances within the sector. Thanks to the support of donor agencies, labour unions, and national level organisations, notable progress has been made. This discussion centres around evaluating the improvements made in the labour conditions over the past decade and exploring further avenues for improvement.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving occupational safety, health, and labour rights is a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders should be held accountable for workplace safety and labour rights.

Ensure effective implementation of the International Accord in Bangladesh

The involvement of trade unions is essential in the process of amending labour laws, including the EPZ law.

The ILO roadmap should be implemented properly.

Ensure that workers can exercise their right to organize, strike, and collectively bargain without any hindrance.

To ensure the proper representation of workers' voices, the process of forming trade unions should be made fast, more transparent and streamlined.

Replicate the advancements in industrial safety achieved in the export-oriented RMG sector in all industries in Bangladesh.

Ensure that the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) operates efficiently and with integrity to protect the safety and health of workers in the workplace.

Establish hospitals in industrial areas to cater to the health needs of workers.

The injured workers must have access to adequate compensation, rehabilitation support and opportunity to return to work.

and have limited scope for workers to voice their concerns. The replacement of Accord with RSC has not produced expected results, with RSC failing to take a neutral stance and taking a long time to address complaints. The process for registering a trade union has become lengthy, with only a small group being selected while others face harassment. Communication between unions and workers is lacking, hindering their performance. To address these issues, a productive working relationship between owners and workers is needed, with active participation and proper representation of workers. Freedom of Association and workers' representation must be prioritised, and union registrations and complaints should be processed in a timely manner. The process of forming trade unions should be transparent. RSC's effectiveness should also be improved.

**Peter D. Haas, United States Ambassador to Bangladesh**



Rana Plaza drew the world's attention to the unsafe conditions for Bangladesh's factory workers and raised important questions around safety and transparency in the global garments industry.

Today, garments factories in the export sector are safer due to agreements among unions, global brands, and employers who work together under the former Accord and Alliance.

Bangladesh has digitized the trade union registration process, which will help workers form unions and complete their registrations. They've also digitized the labour inspection section to improve data accessibility and transparency. In order to become a SMART, developed Bangladesh, workers' safety and labor rights will need to be ingrained in Bangladesh's ethos. In that regard, here are three areas where Bangladesh might focus moving forward:

First, Bangladesh should seek to replicate its progress in industrial safety in the export-oriented RMG sector throughout the entire economy. We are all aware of the recent fire outbreak in Bangabazar, explosion at the Seema Oxygen Plant, the fire at a container depot in Chittagong, and the Hasheem Food factory fire. These examples illustrate the need for stronger inspections and enforcement of labour laws across all industry sectors.

Second, Bangladesh should further strengthen the right of workers to form and join independent trade unions and to collectively bargain for better work conditions. The rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are enabling rights for the realization of all other labour rights. When workers can form or join independent unions, they can defend their rights and collectively advance their interests. In fact, the decrease in work-related accidents in the industrialized world is largely due to the courageous efforts of organised labour. Unionized workers are empowered to negotiate conditions more equally with employers, demand better wages, and challenge unsafe working conditions. Unions also play a key role in advancing democratic values at the workplace. Workers must also have access to remedies for labour and safety violations. Collective bargaining agreements can protect workers who refuse precarious work assignments or confront management on health and safety concerns.

And third, all stakeholders must be held accountable for workplace safety and labour rights, as improving occupational safety and health and labour rights is a shared responsibility. Governments, manufacturers, brands, buyers, workers, unions, and consumers all have a critical role to play in ensuring that goods are produced safely and that everyone in the process earns a fair return. Governments must play a critical role in developing strong labour protections and ensuring that they are respected. Manufacturers must prioritise keeping their workers safe and finding ways to collaborate with their workforce.

International brands and buyers must do more to demand that labour rights are respected throughout their supply chains. This means adopting purchasing and pricing strategies that support living wages and promote high labour standards among their suppliers. Workers and their unions must advocate for their rights transparently and peacefully, and consumers must be mindful of the working conditions of the people they buy from.

**Anwar Hossain, Chairman of National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE) & President of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSJ)**



Bangladesh must prioritise the establishment of strong and independent trade unions to facilitate constructive dialogue between workers and employers. The absence of such unions has been a major obstacle in resolving disputes and addressing issues in the past, as evidenced by the tragic Rana Plaza incident. Empowering workers with the right to collective bargaining and freedom of association will allow them to voice their concerns and negotiate for better working conditions. Strengthening workers' rights through the formation of robust trade unions is crucial for a safer and fairer workplace environment in Bangladesh.

**Razequzzaman Ratan, President of Samajtantrik Sramik Front (SSF)**



The tragedy at Rana Plaza highlighted the critical need for functioning trade unions in Bangladesh, one that can effectively represent and advocate for workers' rights. Currently, there are over 9,000 trade unions in the country, but many are either dysfunctional or too afraid to stand up for workers' interests.

The monitoring system in place prior to the disaster was inadequate, with 218 significant incidents occurring before the Rana Plaza collapse, and major troubles persisting even after the event. For example, just one month before the Shezan factory fire, the factory had been given a satisfactory rating during monitoring. Despite an increase in the number of factory inspectors from 92 to 393 and upgrades to their equipment, the safety at factories remains unsatisfactory. Moreover, there is no accountability for inspectors after such incidents.

There are no dedicated hospitals for workers in industrial areas. There are also no provisions for the rehabilitation of injured workers and their return to work have not been addressed.

The maximum penalty of four years of imprisonment for those responsible for factory catastrophes is farcical and does not reflect the severity of the situation.

**Nazma Yesmin, Director of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)**



The Rana Plaza incident claimed the lives of 1,138 workers, yet there has been no significant policy-level change since then. When the labour law was amended in 2018, many labour rights were curtailed, especially maternity benefits for female workers.

The current draft should ensure a worker's compensation in any trouble, in line with ILO Convention 121 and serious injury provision 155. The victims of Rana Plaza are traumatised and unable to return to work; their mental health treatment should be addressed adequately. Although they received initial treatments, they were not compensated at later stages. These are their rights, not favours.

**Chandan Kumar Dey, President of Bangladesh Independent Garment Workers' Union Federation (BIGUF)**



Since the Accord was forced to leave the country, the situation in garment factories has regressed, resembling the conditions that led to the Rana Plaza disaster. Safety inspections have become perfunctory and do not adequately address legitimate safety concerns. Moreover, information about the safety conditions of factories, including fire safety and building codes, is not readily available. We propose the appointment of a permanent safety supervisor in all factories to ensure compliance with safety measures, such as checking fire extinguishers and keeping emergency exits clear. Genuine trade union workers should be allowed to engage in collective bargaining, given the worsening work conditions in EPZs.

**Ruhul Amin, President of Bangladesh Federation of Workers' Solidarity (BFWS)**



Unfortunately, we have seen a shift from bargaining to negotiations and social dialogues in recent years, despite the absence of any provisions for these in our labour laws. As a result, our collective bargaining power has diminished, leaving our 1,200 trade unions with a little capacity to negotiate effectively on behalf of workers. These unions are often established and led by owners and worker representatives who do not genuinely represent the interests of garment workers.

**China Rahman, General Secretary of Federation of Garments Workers (FGW)**



The Accord has made significant strides, particularly in the areas of building and fire safety, as well as addressing workers' health and bargaining issues. However, the reinstatement of Accord International is necessary to ensure the sustainability of Bangladesh's RMG sector.

Women employees face several challenges, including a lack of childcare facilities, restrictions on continuing work after having two children, and frequent harassment for joining trade unions. As a result, the number of women workers in the RMG sector is declining.

**Advocate Faruq Hossain, Assistant Legal Officer, Safety & Rights Society**



The tragedy at Rana Plaza highlighted the inadequacy of our rescue capabilities, necessitating a critical assessment of our advancements in this domain. Additionally, given the higher safety risks associated with taller industrial buildings, it is imperative that we deliberate on imposing limitations on their height to ensure the safety and well-being of workers.

**Kawsar Ahmed Polash, President of the United Federation of Garments Workers**



Previously, according to labour laws, workers were required to join an industry if it was relocated within five kilometres. However, the provision has been amended to 40 kilometres, and workers who do not join the new location will not receive their service benefits. This is a blatant infringement of labour rights.

During industrial unrest, the workers are often held responsible without identifying



We are gathered here today to remember the tragic collapse of Rana Plaza. We mourn for the 1,138 people who were killed. We mourn for their families and friends who miss them every day. And we mourn for the injustice in the system that allowed this preventable tragedy to occur. In their memories, let us recommit ourselves to the collective struggle for safe, healthy and just workplaces.

**Monika Hartsel, Deputy Country Program Director, Solidarity Center- Bangladesh office**



Despite numerous initiatives taken after the Rana Plaza tragedy, there are still obstacles hindering the improvement of workers' situation in Bangladesh. Workers who attempt to unionize are being blacklisted from the Workers' Database, preventing them from securing employment elsewhere. Safety committees established in most factories do not adhere to regulations



## INTERNATIONAL

Ukraine  
retains  
Bakhmut  
'road of life'  
Russia's Wagner  
boss threatens  
troops withdrawal

REUTERS, Kyiv

Ukraine remains in control of a key supply route into Bakhmut, a military spokesperson said yesterday, as the head of Russia's mercenary Wagner Group threatened to withdraw some of his troops from the eastern city if Moscow did not send more ammunition.

Russian forces have been trying for 10 months to punch their way into the shattered remains of what was once a city of 70,000. "For several weeks, the Russians have been talking about seizing the 'road of life,' as well as about constant fire control over it," Serhiy Cherevatyi, a spokesperson for



Saudi Royal Navy officials help civilians on board their ship to be evacuated to Saudi Arabia from Sudan to escape the conflicts, in Port Sudan, Sudan yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Ukrainian troops in the east, said in an interview with local news website Dzerkalo Tyzhnia.

"Yes, it is really difficult there ... (but) the defence forces have not allowed the Russians to 'cut off' our logistics."

Ukraine's top military command said in its daily update yesterday that its forces had repelled 58 Russian attacks over the past day along the part of frontline stretching from Bakhmut through Avdiivka.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of Russia's Wagner Group, who has often claimed unverifiable successes, said that his forces have advanced some 100 to 150 metres (109 to 164 yards) in Bakhmut, leaving just under 3 square km of the city in Ukrainian hands.

But he said he lost 94 troops.

In a nearly 90-minute video interview with Russian military blogger Semyon Pegov published on Saturday, Prigozhin threatened to withdraw troops from Bakhmut, saying they had enough ammunition left only for days.

Meanwhile, a pre-dawn Ukrainian strike on a Russian border village killed four people and wounded two others, the governor of Russia's western Bryansk region said.



Saudi Royal Navy officials help civilians on board their ship to be evacuated to Saudi Arabia from Sudan to escape the conflicts, in Port Sudan, Sudan yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

## HARASSING PHILIPPINE VESSELS

US demands China stop  
'provocative, unsafe' acts

AFP, Washington

The United States called on China to stop "provocative and unsafe conduct" in the disputed South China Sea after a recent near-collision with a Philippines coast guard boat there, ramping up rhetoric ahead of a visit by the Filipino president to the White House.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller, in a statement two days before President Joe Biden is to host his Philippine counterpart Ferdinand Marcos Jr., on Saturday said the incident was a reminder of China's "harassment and intimidation" of Philippine vessels in the contested waterway.

"We call upon Beijing to desist from its provocative and unsafe conduct," he said, adding that any attack on Philippine armed forces would trigger a US response.

Biden has been working to bolster relations with Asian allies as the US-Chinese relationship remains in a historically deep chill, and the Philippines' proximity to key sea lanes and Taiwan gives it particular strategic importance.

The near-miss Sunday off the Spratly Islands was the latest in a long string of maritime incidents between China and the



Philippines.

Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire South China Sea, ignoring an international ruling that the assertion has no legal basis.

AFP was one of several media outlets that witnessed the incident after journalists were invited to join two Philippine Coast Guard boats on a six-day patrol of the waters, visiting a dozen islands and reefs.

The Philippines vessels approached Second Thomas Shoal, known in China as Ren'ai Jiao, in the Spratly archipelago.

As one boat, the BRP Malapascua, which was carrying Filipino journalists, neared the shoal, a Chinese Coast Guard vessel more than twice its size sailed into its path. AFP journalists watched the incident

from the other Philippine Coast Guard boat, which was less than a kilometre away.

The Malapascua's commanding officer said the Chinese ship came within 45 metres of his boat and only his quick actions avoided the steel-hulled vessels crashing into each other.

The Chinese foreign ministry said Friday that the Philippine boats had "intruded" without China's permission and called it a "premeditated and provocative action."

But Manila hit back, saying that "routine patrols in our own waters can be neither premeditated or provocative" and insisting they will continue to conduct the patrols.

The near-miss came just a day after Marcos hosted Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang for talks in Manila aimed at defusing tensions in the waterway.

Marcos has insisted he will not let China trample on the Philippines' rights in the sea, and has gravitated toward the United States as he seeks to strengthen defense ties.

"We will reaffirm our commitment to fostering our long-standing alliance as an instrument of peace and as a catalyst of development in the Asia Pacific region," Marcos said in a pre-departure statement yesterday.

CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER  
Biden aims dirts  
at Fox News

REUTERS, Washington



US President Joe Biden on Saturday, in a possible preview of a 2024 presidential campaign theme, attacked news outlets he said used "lies told for profit and power" to stir up hatred, as he coupled his remarks with pointed jokes about Fox News. Speaking at the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner, Biden referred to "truth buried by lies," in an apparent reference to false conspiracy theories that his 2020 election win was the result of a massive voter fraud. "Lies told for profit and power. Lies of conspiracy and malice repeated over and over again designed to generate a cycle of anger and hate and even violence," Biden said. That cycle, Biden added, has emboldened local jurisdictions to ban books, and "the rule of law and our rights and freedoms to be stripped away." Zeroing in on what he characterized as "an extreme press," Biden at the same time joked that if he called Fox News "honest, fair and truthful then I can be sued for defamation." Earlier this month, Fox Corp settled a defamation lawsuit by Dominion Voting Systems for \$787.5 million in a case that centered around Fox's false claims that the 2020 presidential election had been manipulated in favor of Biden.

'Even one American  
in Iraq is too much'  
Iran leader Khamenei tells  
Iraqi president

CNN ONLINE

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei decried the presence of the US military in Iraq during a meeting with Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid in Tehran on Saturday. "The presence of even one American in Iraq is too much," Khamenei said, Iranian state media outlet IRNA reported. "Americans are not friends with anyone and are not even loyal to their European allies," Khamenei said, as he called for Iran and Iraq to expand "bilateral cooperation." Khamenei's comments follow US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin's unannounced trip to Baghdad last month, when Austin said US troops were "ready to remain in Iraq." Iraqi President Rashid, in a statement after his meeting with Khamenei, underscored the importance of Iraq-Iran relations but did not respond to his comments on the presence of Americans in Iraq. Austin, who in March became the highest-ranking Cabinet official to visit Iraq since the start of the Biden administration, had said he was in the country to "reaffirm the US-Iraq strategic partnership as we move toward a more secure, stable and sovereign Iraq." His visit came days before the 20th anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq that ousted dictator Saddam Hussein from power. "Now looking forward, US forces are ready to remain in Iraq at the invitation of the government of Iraq," Austin said.

## Japan, S Korea

FROM PAGE 12

Chattogram highway via Basila, Mohammadpur, Jigatola, Science Lab, Nilkhet, Azimpur, Central Shaheed Minar, Gulistan, Motijheel, Kamalapur, Mugda, and Demra, under the government to government Public-Private Partnership model with Japan.

But later the mode of finance was changed and the route from Kamalapur was also changed.

Now the route from Kamalapur would be Damirpara Signboard-Narayanganj. It would have a branch line from Gulistan to Sadarghat. The project's total length would be 35km, which was 24km before.

MRT LINE-4

As per the earlier decision, the line was supposed to be from Kamalapur to Narayanganj that will go under Dhaka-Narayanganj rail line. But now the 16km line would go up to Narayanganj's Madanpur from Kamalapur.

SECOND PHASE

Meanwhile, the metro authorities have a plan to expand the rail network and connect more areas with the capital in the second phase. They want to start preliminary works like pre-feasibility studies after preparatory works for MRT Line 2 and 4 are done.

In the phase, MRT Line 6 is supposed to be expanded up to Gazipur from Uttara and Diabari to airport. MRT Line 1 is expected to be stretched up to Madhabdi of Narsingdi and Keraniganj.

MRT Line 5 (northern route) is expected to be expanded up to Baipail of Savar and MRT Line 5 (southern route) up to Bhulta of Narayanganj.

"We plan to start a pre-feasibility study for expanding the MRT Line-6 from Uttara to Tongi, along with the feasibility studies of MRT Line-2 and 4," said MAN Siddique.

Citing ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of road transport and highways division, different media reported that Japan would assist in the expansion work of MRT Line-6 from Uttara to Tongi.

Contacted, he said yesterday that Japan would provide overall cooperation in all metro rail projects under a memorandum of cooperation signed during the prime minister's recent visit there.

## Casino 'kingpin'

FROM PAGE 12

defence completed their arguments, and the court recorded the statements of 37 prosecution witnesses, including the complainant in the case.

The judge framed charges against Salim Proddhan on October 30, 2021.

On February 4, 2021, Anti-Corruption Commission Deputy Director Gulshan Anwar Pradhan, also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka.

Salim came to the fore in 2019 when law enforcers conducted drives against illegal casino businesses.

He was arrested on a Bangkok-bound Thai Airways flight at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka on September 30, 2019, over his alleged involvement in running an online casino business.

## Khaleda

FROM PAGE 12

Hospital for some medical tests and required treatment.

Since her conditional release in 2020, the BNP chief has been receiving treatment at the hospital under a medical board headed by cardiologist Prof Shahabuddin Talukder.

Dr Zahid said the medical board had a meeting on Saturday night following Khaleda's admission to the hospital, and they suggested various medical tests.

"We have already gotten the reports of some tests, and the medical board will sit this [Sunday] evening again to review the reports and decide the next course of her treatment. The medical board gave her initial treatment after observing her condition yesterday [Saturday]," he said.

Zahid said some members of the medical board examined her physical condition in the morning.

About the reason behind her admission to the hospital, he said the BNP chief's health check-ups and treatment were necessary as some new symptoms appeared along with

her previous diseases. "It is not right to talk about the patient's illness in the media. I can only say she has been suffering from various diseases, including heart, liver, and kidney complications... some of them have deteriorated a little. That's why she has been admitted to the hospital for check-ups and treatment," the physician said.

Asked how long Khaleda will stay in the hospital, he said, "It will depend on the decision of the medical board and her physical condition. So, nothing can be said at this moment."

Three more cases, including narcotics, were also filed against him, and those are now pending with different courts in Dhaka.

Soon after the verdict, Salim's Russian wife, Anna Proddhan, who was present at the court, expressed dissatisfaction and said she would challenge it with the higher court.

AFP journalists watched the incident

from the other Philippine Coast Guard boat, which was less than a kilometre away.

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But Manila hit back, saying that "routine patrols in our own waters can be neither premeditated or provocative" and insisting they will continue to conduct the patrols.

The near-miss came just a day after Marcos hosted Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang for talks in Manila aimed at defusing tensions in the waterway.

Marcos has insisted he will not let China trample on the Philippines' rights in the sea, and has gravitated toward the United States as he seeks to strengthen defense ties.

"We will reaffirm our commitment to fostering our long-standing alliance as an instrument of peace and as a catalyst of development in the Asia Pacific region," Marcos said in a pre-departure statement yesterday.

## Even minimum wage eludes the workers

FROM PAGE 1

documents show. The workers are being "represented" by the president of the Khulna Divisional Tank-lorry Workers Union. This is happening in a country that has nearly 4,800 filling stations.

The wage board had their first meeting on February 16.

Workers in the leather processing factories in Posta and Lalbagh are on a similar boat.

They apply salt to rawhide before sending it to tanneries. Since their job is at the bottom of the shoe-making supply chain, they often remain invisible to international buyers who usually ensure compliance of tanneries.

In 2020, Tk 8,025 minimum wage was declared for them when they had none of them or their trade unions representing them in the wage negotiations.

A line leader of one of the biggest and most compliant tanneries had sat in to represent them.

Now, the workers get paid Tk 20 for every piece of hide that they process.

"Earnings are good during the two Eids when there is a lot of work. But the rising cost of beef has shrunk our earnings," a worker said.

If people are buying beef less, fewer cattle are slaughtered and fewer rawhide are required to process.

Workers speaking anonymously to this correspondent showed cracked skins of hands calloused by rubbing salt on hides all day. They said their pay does not allow them to get

treatment for these.

In 2022, the minimum wage for a sawmill worker was fixed at Tk 17,900. Many workers, however, do not know about the minimum wage and many owners have no intention to comply with the law.

Al Makkah Saw Mill has been at Mirpur-10 for 30 years. Khalilur Rahman, a co-owner and manager, stated flat out that he cannot pay workers according to the wage board.

Fourteen workers in the mill are paid between Tk 5,000 and Tk 12,000 a month, far below the government-set rate.

Md Julhas, manager of Cumilla Timber Saw Mill next door, pays his workers between Tk 200 and Tk 400 a day, which means the workers can only earn between Tk 5,000 and Tk 10,000 a month.

The minimum wage for automobile workshop employees was fixed at Tk 7,610 in 2018, but the workers actually get a pittance.

Md Rasel, owner of Ayad Auto Tech at Mohammadpur's Beribadh, used to get paid as per the wage board when he worked in a larger and well-established workshop. He, however, pays his mechanics Tk 5,000 a month.

"... I cannot let them [his mechanics] know about it. Nobody gives these [pay according to the wage board] unless they are a big company," he said.

He employs about 15 people.

One of his mechanics explained that the only way that he can make ends meet in this economy is by attending house calls after hours and

by pilfering parts.

There are 12 types of jobs that have an official minimum wage that is less than Tk 5,000.

Workers in tea estates, hotels and restaurants, iron foundries, engineering workshops, ayurvedic factories, match factories, hosiery factories, and tailoring shops are getting such pay.

Employees in salt crushing, soap and cosmetics, cotton textile production, bakeries and confectionaries, cold storages, and shrimp processing get between Tk 5,000 and Tk 7,000.

Of these sectors, cotton textiles, tea estates, and shrimp processing plants are primarily export-oriented industries.

Bangladesh last year exported cotton textiles and shrimp worth \$770 million and \$532 million.

The minimum wage for workers at shrimp processing plants was set at Tk 6,700 in 2022, a year in which Bangladesh saw the highest inflation in a decade.

The wage for underage workers in industries and factories is a mere Tk 2,500.

On Saturday, Asia Floor Wage Alliance said that they interviewed 300 RMG workers from 63 factories and found that an RMG worker consumes on average only 1,950 kilocalories every day when the standard is 3,000 kcal for those involved in physical labour.

This is because RMG workers earn on average only Tk 10,000 a month, it found.

The survey also found that people had to pay between Tk 500 and Tk 6,000 in bribes to avail the allowance for the elderly.

Prof Bazul Haque Khondker, chairman of South Asian Network on Economic Modeling, said the amount taken by non-eligible individuals could be more than Tk 1,500 crore.

## Non-eligible ones eat up

FROM PAGE 1

ineligible for the allowance. Moreover, around 12 percent get multiple allowances.

Considering high inflation, the social safety net allowance should be raised from Tk 500 to Tk 2,500 and primary school stipend programme allowance from Tk 150 to Tk 2,000, the CPD recommends.



# The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR: LATE S. M. ALI

## Time to equip fire service properly

### Increasing fire risks mean the fire service too must increase its capability

We are quite concerned about how ill-equipped the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) remains to deal with the growing threat of fire in our cities, especially the capital. While the number of fire incidents has doubled in the last 14 years thanks to unplanned urbanisation – it was 12,182 in 2009, which swelled to 24,102 by 2022 – the capacity of the fire service hasn't grown concomitantly. This is quite frustrating.

There is no doubt that firefighting has become much more difficult these days. Firefighters have to deal with traffic on their way to a scene, often through narrow streets ill-fitted for large vehicles. Then there is the challenge of finding water in a city with few ponds and lakes. Once on location, they also have to deal with curious onlookers crowding round the scene, and the increasingly tricky fire situations putting their life at greater risk, as seen in some recent incidents. Against such a backdrop, it is unacceptable that the firefighters would also be hamstrung by institutional challenges such as lack of training and proper equipment, manpower crisis, budget constraints, etc.

It is partly because of these problems that 14 firemen were killed and 225 injured while on duty over the last five years, according to an estimate. These challenges have been highlighted in a recent report by this daily which shows how the fire service is being overwhelmed by the triple whammy of increased fire incidents, increased external challenges, as well as internal issues. One of the issues that has been flagged is the lack of training and specialisation. Firefighters need both advanced and specialised training. As a former fire chief has said, there should be specialised teams within the fire department to tackle different kinds of fire situations. "Police or Rab have their specialised units like the bomb disposal unit or cybercrime unit, but for firefighters, there are no specialised units," he said.

Given the situation, there is a dire need for increasing budget support to the FSCD as well as recruiting and training more firefighters. In the current fiscal year, the FSCD got a budget of around Tk 733.57 crore, which translates to around Tk 44 per capita. For context, this is far less than what the Delhi state government spends (around Tk 332) or West Bengal spends (around Tk 65) per capita. Also, in any modern city, the ratio of police and firemen should be 2:1, meaning one firefighter against two policemen. In Bangladesh, however, there are less than 14,000 firefighters against 2.13 lakh cops. These people – as first responders to fires, explosions, road crashes, landslides, launch capsizes and other calamities – endure physical and mental trauma on a regular basis. They need more, not less, support, and not just financial. Before expecting them to save citizens from every calamity imaginable, we need to create a conducive environment for them to function, both for their sake and that of the wider society.

We, therefore, urge the higher authorities to properly fund, equip and train the fire service so that it can serve us better going forward.

## Fuelled by inefficiency

### Govt must phase out inefficient power plants, rethink energy policy

The government's ambitious energy policy over the past decade increasingly appears to have been built on irregularities, inefficiencies, and a lack of accountability of various stakeholders. A recent study conducted by the Coastal Livelihood and Environmental Action Network (CLEAN) explains why, despite generating 58 percent more than what we need, there are still power shortages in the country. It notes that of the 150-157 active power plants currently in operation, only 39.8 percent are running properly. A whopping one-third of the fossil-fuel-based power plants were found to be faulty, with 18 percent suffering some form of mechanical problems. Out of the 43 state-owned power plants, as many as 22 were found sitting idle for more than half the time, while nine out of 23 publicly owned independent plants suffered fuel crises for approximately 40 percent of the time.

Since the current government came to power, it has increased the country's electricity generation fivefold, reducing load-shedding dramatically (till it reappeared in our lives last year). To do so, it built fossil-fuel-fired power plants – often ignoring protests from activists about their harmful impacts on the surrounding communities and environment – and gave permission to set up quick rental power plants across the country. A decade later, it appears we never really needed all of these power plants. In fact, we have been paying an incomprehensible amount of money as capacity charges for many of these plants to essentially sit idle every year. The CLEAN study found that the 12 worst performing plants, which stayed out of operation or faced technical difficulties for the longest time, were actually paid Tk 2,336 crore in capacity charges in the past year alone.

The study also found that the solar power plants ran without problems for 97.8 percent of the time, and that if we replaced the liquid-fuel-based power plants during the day with solar, we could have saved \$322.15 million every year. The question is: why are we still operating and investing in fossil-fuel-based power plants when cheaper, cleaner, and more efficient alternatives are available?

It is horrifying that the government invested so much money in establishing these power plants, without proper planning to begin with, and then did not even bother to ensure their smooth operation. At a time when the country is suffering from the worst economic crisis in over a decade, what possible justification can there be for such wastage of public funds? Instead of focusing on reducing the many inefficiencies in the energy sector, the authorities, unfortunately, seem bent on rewarding poor performers and passing down the ever-escalating costs of power generation to the consumers. Over the past year, we have not seen any indication that the government will move away from this course of action.

We ask the government to rethink its current policy, take urgent steps to phase out non-performing power plants, and address the inefficiencies that are driving electricity prices upwards for consumers. We urge them to open their eyes – the statistics quoted above speak for themselves.

# How different is Dhaka's outlook from the US Indo-Pacific Strategy?



Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist. His Twitter handle is @ahmedkal

KAMAL AHMED

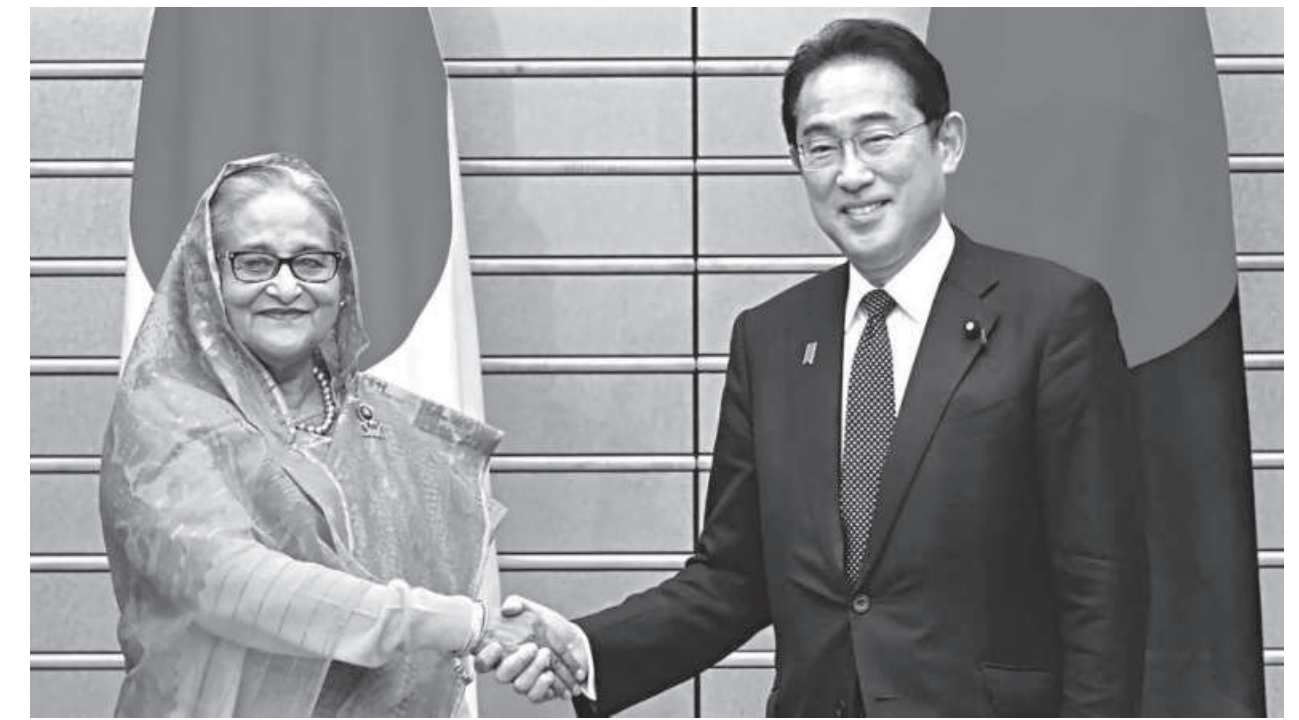
After months of speculation and anticipation, Bangladesh has unveiled its "Indo-Pacific Outlook (IPO)," which "envisions a free, open, peaceful, secure, and inclusive Indo-Pacific for the shared prosperity for all." The United States, which originally conceived and floated the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS), has been urging Bangladesh for the last few years to join them in implementing the IPS. Though Bangladesh doesn't use the term strategy or IPS, the vision it lays out is remarkably similar to the IPS.

If we review the joint statement made on June 2, 2022 after the second Bangladesh-US High-Level Economic Consultation held in Washington, it would be difficult to differentiate the language. The joint statement under the subhead Infrastructure/Trade reads, "Both countries share a common vision of a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and secure Indo-Pacific region with shared prosperity for all."

These words have been repeated innumerable times by the US officials to define both the IPS and Quad, another smaller alliance among the US, Australia, Japan and India. On July 28, 2021, after the US-India Strategic partnership dialogue held in Delhi, US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken said, "We share a vision – India and the United States – of a free, open, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. We'll work together to make that vision a reality."

Secretary Blinken amplified this vision again in his recent Asia tour that included the G7 foreign ministers' meeting in Tokyo. Before going to Tokyo, he visited Hanoi and on April 15, he said, "Our countries can advance a free and open Indo-Pacific, one that is at peace and grounded in respect for the rules-based international order. When we talk about 'free and open,' we mean countries being free to choose their own path and their own partners and that problems will be dealt with openly; rules will be reached transparently and applied fairly; and goods, ideas, and people will flow freely across land, the seas, the skies, and cyberspace."

Rules-based international order, free flow of goods, capital, services and people, across the seas, the skies and cyberspace are all included in the objectives set by Bangladesh in its outlook. The Bangladesh Japan Joint Statement on Strategic Partnership



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with her Japanese counterpart Kishida Fumio at the Prime Minister's Office of Japan on April 26, 2023.

PHOTO: PIO

issued after the formal talks between Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Prime Minister Kishida Fumio on April 26 also provides some idea as to why our foreign ministry chose to publish its IPO prior to her three-nation tour – to Japan, the US and the UK. All these three nations have significant roles in pursuing the policy of open and free Indo-Pacific with a shared goal of countering China's growing political, economic, and military power.

It's worth noting that the Bangladesh-Japan joint statement begins with the two prime ministers' reaffirmation of "their commitment to realising a free and open Indo-Pacific based on the rule of law, where the rights, freedoms and sovereignty of all countries, regardless of size or power, are protected by international law, rules and norms." They particularly affirmed that "maritime order based on common values such as freedom of navigation is a cornerstone for stability and prosperity of the international community and that the use of the sea as global commons will contribute to the development of (the) blue economy."

Similar objectives had been expressed earlier in the joint statement

issued at the Second Bangladesh-US High-Level Economic Consultation. The statement added that the US briefed Bangladesh on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), and Bangladesh welcomed additional information on the supply chain resilience and decarbonisation pillars of the IPEF. Bangladesh also sought US technical assistance to sustainably

remote Spratly archipelago. China claims almost the entire South China Sea, including the Spratly Islands, which is also claimed in part by the Philippines.

China still maintains its claim defying the 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in favour of the Philippines. There are also competing claims by Malaysia,

explore its ocean resources and further develop its blue economy, it noted.

All these interactions took place well after China's warning of "substantial damage" to ties if Bangladesh joined the US-led Quad alliance. On May 10, 2021, the then Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming said Bangladesh should not join Quad, and if it did, then Dhaka's relations with Beijing would "substantially get damaged." Terming Quad a military alliance aimed against China's resurgence and its relationship with neighbours, he claimed Bangladesh would not derive any benefits from the initiative.

All these statements and documents clearly show that keeping trade routes between Asia and the rest of the world free, open, and secure is at the core of the Indo-Pacific strategy or outlook. How China appears on the opposite side of the new strategic convergence of other nations is perhaps being better portrayed in the recent cat-and-mouse sea chase in the South China Sea. A BBC journalist, who witnessed and recorded the encounter on April 23, said a Chinese Coast Guard ship blocked a Philippine patrol vessel, causing a near collision in the waters near Second Thomas Shoal in the

Vietnam, Brunei, and Taiwan. The sea encounter took place just a day after Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr met Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Manila, and expressed hope for open communication lines on the South China Sea dispute. Similar territorial disputes exist between China and Japan in the East China Sea.

The unveiling of the Indo-Pacific Outlook has been broadly welcomed by many Bangladeshi analysts and diplomats, who have pointed out that it is based on the dictum "Friendship towards all, malice towards none." Whether this dictum would be enough to address the Chinese concern about committing to the objectives of rules-based order and a free and open Indo-Pacific has to be seen in the coming days.

There are also suggestions that this policy is aimed at making up with the US as the latter's insistence on making the next parliamentary elections free and fair and criticisms over human rights abuses and press freedom in Bangladesh have caused some strain in the bilateral relations. But the question is even if there was such an intent, whether that would have enough soothing effect.

# The environmental and social injustices of shrimp aquaculture



Saira Shahid is pursuing the Master of Urban Planning degree at the University of Washington in the US.

SAIRA SHAHID

Shrimp aquaculture – the farming of shrimp for commercial export – was promoted in Bangladesh as a solution to combat the impacts of climate change as well as to promote economic growth by expanding non-crop agriculture. This practice, while providing short-term economic benefits, has done more harm than good and has introduced new social and environmental injustices to the country's coastal villages. This case is an example of how well-meaning climate solutions can have detrimental effects on the communities at the centre of the issue. It is also a lesson that successful adaptation strategies should be a collaborative effort among grassroots organisations, community members, policymakers, and practitioners.

Since Bangladesh's independence in 1971, intensive shrimp aquaculture was expanded as a means of bolstering economic growth. Paddy fields were flooded and turned into shrimp cultivation enclosures called *gher*. The government saw this practice as a lucrative export opportunity, while development agencies promoted it as an adaptation strategy to climate change. If farmers can't keep the

rising sea levels from destroying their fields, they could at least use the increased saltwater to grow something else. However, the case of shrimp aquaculture in Bangladesh is an example of how some adaptation strategies make people more – not less – vulnerable.

There is a general agreement that the coastal regions of Bangladesh are experiencing environmental impacts such as rising soil salinity, waterlogging, and decreased biodiversity. But there is a disagreement about what causes these transformations. Developers and government agencies attribute them to climate change, while residents of the impacted villages attribute them to direct local changes, especially the transition from rice farming to shrimp aquaculture.

One of the main environmental impacts of shrimp farming is a drastic shift from a multifunctional mangrove ecosystem to a privately-owned, single-function aquaculture system. As saltwater from shrimp cultivation salinates the surrounding soil, the land is made unsuitable for growing trees and produce. Additional environmental impacts are degraded biodiversity, sedimentation, pollution,

and disease.

Not only has shrimp aquaculture caused environmental degradation, but it has also led to a loss of livelihood. In the village of Kolanihat in Khulna, a district in southwest Bangladesh, outside investors came into the district and started making *gher* on agricultural lands. Landowners were given offers to buy or lease their land for these *gher*, but they were rarely or never paid (Paprocki, *Threatening Dystopias: The Global Politics of Climate Change Adaptation in Bangladesh*, 2021). Similar experiences were shared in the neighbouring Satkhira and Bagerhat districts.

As shrimp farms salinate and waterlog the surrounding land, trees and vegetation die out, leading to a lack of shade and harsher work environments. Before this ecological change, farmers used to grow fruits and vegetables in abundance to share with their neighbours. Now, they have to travel elsewhere to buy produce, with no excess to share (Paprocki, 2021). Shrimp agriculture also contributes to potable water scarcity, leading villagers to travel several kilometres a day to bring back drinking water. Many resort to collecting drinking water during the monsoon season and rationing during the dry season, leading to serious health consequences.

Shrimp aquaculture also exacerbates the existing gender inequalities. Outmigration is gendered; men who worked in paddy fields are forced to migrate to urban areas to find work. Women are then left to take on increasing household and farm responsibilities. Residents

also reported an increase in gendered violence; outsiders who settled in villages for the shrimp business harassed and committed violence against women, especially if they were alone or if it was late at night (Paprocki, 2021).

While development agencies have been promoting shrimp aquaculture as an adaptation strategy to climate change, communities have been mobilising around a different vision of the future by creating local movements against commercial shrimp aquaculture. In 1990, a village in Khulna resisted an armed attack led by a wealthy businessman, who tried to forcibly flood and seize their embankments. Because of their protests, the village's fields are still full of rice paddies and vegetable gardens. Similar uprisings have occurred in other villages, and local community members have been organising efforts to fight back against forced aquaculture. As part of Nijera Kori, landless farmers have been organising against commercial shrimp aquaculture for the last 30 years.

Effective climate action should be just, equitable, and centre the voices of people who are disproportionately affected by climate change. Using shrimp aquaculture as a climate change solution was a top-down approach shaped by the existing systems of power and resource distribution. In order to create and implement equitable climate solutions, it's crucial to understand the work being done at the local grassroots level and to work together as community members, practitioners, and policymakers.



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR DAY 2023

# Making Bangladeshi workers safe for capitalism

What has changed since the Rana Plaza collapse 10 years ago?



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SHEHZAD MARIFEEN

On April 6, 2023, the High Court granted bail to Sohel Rana, the owner of the building whose collapse caused one of the deadliest industrial disasters in history. The news came just over two weeks before the 10th anniversary of that day, reminding us again that history repeats itself, "first as tragedy, second as farce." The bail was later halted, but the message was clear, further reinforced by the BGMEA's recent call for an Industrial Police unit in the DMP area and the newly formed wage board announced just days later. None of the labour organisations whose relentless calls for a Tk 25,000 minimum wage finally resulted in a new board were consulted, and the labour representative chosen has a very predictable affiliation.

All of this is par for the course, but it does provide a break from the steady dose of self-congratulatory optimism that buyers, factory owners, and the state have been pouring into the industry's "image" in recent years. The narrative is simple: against all odds, our ready-made garment (RMG) industry is not only thriving (aiming for \$100 billion exports by 2030), it has also – through the joint efforts of these three parties – made life better and safer for the industry's workers. Exit Rana Plaza, enter happy workers and "green" factories. All of this begs the question: "safer" how, from what, and to what end?

Undoubtedly, it is the brands/buyers that have benefited the most from this celebratory narrative. In the aftermath of the Rana Plaza collapse, these brands, in concert with transnational bodies like the International Labour Organization (ILO), rolled out an

elaborate system of fire and building safety codes. Together, the EU-led Accord and US-led Alliance, along with other transnational agreements, made up a multi-level, multi-party "compliance" and monitoring regime (Rahman, *The Daily Star*, April 21, 2016), which alongside the championing of unionisation has been hailed as ushering a new age of worker safety.

Yet, matters are not that simple, as Dina Siddiqi has repeatedly pointed out. Accord Alliance became one component in a pre-existing, audit-based global monitoring regime, accountable to no one, functioning primarily to shield Western brands from liability (LeBaron et al., 2017), depoliticising the question of workers' safety and placing the burden on "corrupt" Third World national governments and their "ruthless" industrialists, all while continuing to enable the very same "scandalous" conditions (Siddiqi, *HimalSouthasian*, January 11, 2022). After all, Rana Plaza would not have claimed any lives if the garment workers and only the workers had not been coerced to enter a building that they knew could collapse at any moment. They were killed just as much by production targets as by falling beams.

The most stunning manifestation of this indifference came with the billion-dollar order cancellations we saw during the pandemic. These cancellations also provided our industrialists with an opportunity to use the workers' plight as a bargaining chip, a concern that disappears whenever it comes to unpaid wages, mandatory overtime, denied

leave, abuse, harassment, and the disciplining of "troublemakers." We do see it, however, in the celebrations of all that factory owners apparently do for workers, including supporting some of them in higher education. As Taslima Akhter has pointed out, such individual success stories simply distract from the fact that the vast majority of workers are still compelled

to discipline workers – all of this leaves little room for doubt. Three years ago, my colleague Seuty Sabur and I wrote about the total abandonment by the state that workers faced during the time of lockdowns (*The Daily Star*, April 4, 2020) – an acute manifestation of a more general phenomenon. The fiction of "national wealth" – made possible

to discipline workers – all of this leaves little room for doubt.

Three years ago, my colleague Seuty Sabur and I wrote about the total abandonment by the state that workers faced during the time of lockdowns (*The Daily Star*, April 4, 2020) – an acute manifestation of a more general phenomenon. The fiction of "national wealth" – made possible

skyrocketing prices) and the limits/temptations of an NGO-ised and ineffective trade unionism (Siddiqi, *The Daily Star*, April 21, 2017). The very structure of supply chain capitalism makes collective action at the site of production toothless, as there is always another factory – and indeed another country – to source from. Under these conditions, factory owners and the state have managed, after years of vehemently opposing unionisation, to transform the registered union into an instrument of labour discipline. Small wonder, then, that garment workers have had the most success through militancy outside of them (Ashraf & Prentice, 2019).

If supply chain capitalism neutralises union action, we may have better luck, as Vijay Prashad (2015) has long argued, with struggles at the sites of living/consumption instead. At the very least, land reform and housing, social welfare, public education and healthcare, utilities, energy and transport, etc are all sites where garment workers' struggles can become interlinked with those of others, and through which workers' lives might become a little less precarious, giving them greater bargaining power on the factory floor.

None of this can happen, however, without directly engaging the state. If fast fashion must dominate the "national interest," then at the very least we must compel the state apparatuses to play a truly mediating role on behalf of "the nation." Are there alternatives to RMG export dependence? Perhaps, or perhaps not, but it does not seem that anyone in the corridors of power is concerned with even considering the question; we must make them. The state remains the only party in the triumvirate over which ordinary citizens, including garment workers, have even theoretical control. Turning that theoretical control into an actual one can make the difference between mere factory "compliance" and workers actually living full and dignified lives.



Rana Plaza would not have claimed any lives if RMG workers like Poly Akhter had not been coerced to enter a building that they knew could collapse at any moment. PHOTO: TASLIMA AKHTER

to sacrifice their education, health, and dignity on a daily basis (*The Daily Star Bangla*, January 11, 2023). Record-breaking sales also tend to turn into doom-and-gloom narratives whenever workers come knocking on the factory doors for liveable wages. The difference between individualised charity and decent wages, of course, is that the latter can potentially reduce the precarity that ensures the disposability/exploitability of the worker in the first place. Make workers safer, yes, but not too much.

Trapped between foreign capital and our *comprador* bourgeoisie, it

of workers to have a liveable wage, and that both the law and law enforcement behave as the industry's private service. The tortuous legal processes that have kept the Rana Plaza collapse, Tazreen fire, and other cases permanently suspended (Mustafa, *Prothom Alo*, April 23, 2023), the total lack of legal compensation for the victims of any of these cases, the legal impediments erected to ensure that only owner- and state-friendly unions get to register and operate (Karmakar, *Prothom Alo*, May 1, 2021), and the ease with which law enforcement and political muscle is leased out to factory owners eager

because of commodity production and the fact that one taka is as good as any other – makes it easy enough to believe that the unprecedented levels of wealth flooding Bangladesh today is *everyone's* wealth, and we can forget for the moment the gulf between those who command that wealth and those who do not. It is not an accident that the latter are precisely those who are compelled to pour their lives into producing that very prosperity.

What, then, is to be done? Our garment workers face a double bind today, trapped between growing precarity (rural dispossession,

## Time to prioritise social justice



Gilbert F Houngbo is the director-general of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

GILBERT F HOUNGBO

May 1 is widely known as International Labour Day, a day when we celebrate the contribution of workers worldwide. It is a moment for pride, celebration, and hope.

After three years of the Covid-19 crisis, followed by inflation, conflict, and food and fuel supply shocks, we badly need this. But the promises of renewal made during the pandemic, of "building back better," have so far not been delivered for the great majority of workers worldwide.

Globally, real wages have fallen, poverty is rising, and inequality seems more entrenched than ever.

Enterprises have been hard-hit. Many could not cope with the cumulative effects of recent unexpected events. Small and micro-enterprises were particularly affected, and many have ceased operations.

People feel that the sacrifices they made to get through Covid-19 have not been recognised, let alone rewarded. Their voices are not being heard clearly enough. This, combined with a perceived lack of opportunities, has created a disturbing level of mistrust.

It doesn't have to be like this. We are still the masters of our fate. But if we are to shape a new, more stable, and equitable world, we must choose a different path – one that prioritises social justice.

I believe this is not only doable, but essential for a sustainable and stable future. So, how do we get there?

First and foremost, our policies and actions must be human-centred, to allow people to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, economic security, and equal opportunity. This approach is not new, it was set out and agreed in the aftermath of World War II, when the ILO's international membership signed the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia.

This visionary document set out guiding principles for our economic and social systems – that they should not be turned exclusively to hitting specific growth rates or other statistical targets, but to address human needs and aspirations. This means focusing on



STOCK IMAGE

inequality, poverty alleviation, and core social protection. The most effective way to do this is by providing quality jobs so that people can support themselves and build their own futures – "Decent Work for All," as Sustainable Development Goal 8 terms it.

It means realistically addressing the long-term structural transformations of our time; ensuring that new technology creates and supports employment; proactively facing the challenges of climate change and ensuring we offer the jobs, skills training and transition support necessary for workers and businesses to benefit from the new low-carbon era; and treating demographic changes as a "dividend" rather than a problem, with supporting action on skills, migration and social protection, to create more cohesive and resilient societies.

We also need to reassess and refashion the architecture of our social and economic systems, so that they support this change of course towards social justice, rather

than continuing to channel us into a policy "doom loop" of inequality and instability. We must reinvigorate labour institutions and organisations so that social dialogue is effective and vigorous. We must review laws and regulations affecting the world of work, so that they are relevant and up-to-date and able to protect workers and support sustainable businesses.

To make all this happen, we need to recommit to international cooperation and solidarity. We must enhance our efforts and create greater policy coherence, particularly within the multilateral system, as the United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres calls it. This is why we need a Global Coalition for Social Justice. This coalition will create a platform to bring together a broad range of international bodies and stakeholders. It will position social justice as the keystone of the global recovery, so that it is prioritised in national, regional and global policies and actions. In sum, it will ensure that our future is human-centred. We have the chance to reshape the world we live in – economically, socially, and environmentally. Let us take this opportunity and move forward to build the equitable and resilient societies that can underpin lasting peace and social justice.

**রাঙ্গামাটি বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়**  
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ওয়েবসাইট: [rmstu.edu.bd](http://rmstu.edu.bd); ই-মেইল: [contact@rmstu.edu.bd](mailto:contact@rmstu.edu.bd)  
সূত্র নং: রাবিপ্রবি/প্রকিউরমেন্ট/পাবকোমপার/সরঞ্জামাদি/২০২২/২২৯; তারিখ: ৩০/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ

**Invitation for Tender**  
**Rangamati Science and Technology University**

1. Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education.
2. Agency	University Grants Commission of Bangladesh.
3. Procuring entity name	Rangamati Science and Technology University.
4. Procuring entity district	Rangamati.
5. Invitation for	Goods.
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>	
6. Procurement method	Open Tender Method (OTM).
7. Budget and source of fund	GoB.
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>	
8. Tender approval date	রাবিপ্রবি/প্রকিউরমেন্ট/পাবকোমপার/সরঞ্জামাদি/২০২২/২২৯; তারিখ: ৩০/০৪/২০২৩খ্রিঃ
9. Tender Package No.	OTM.
10. Tender publication date	01/05/2023
11. Tender last collection date	15/05/2023 (office hours).
12. Tender closing date and time	16/05/2023; 12:00pm.
13. Tender opening date and time	16/05/2023; 12:30pm.
14. Name & address of the offices	Collection of tender document: Procurement Department, Administrative Building-2, Rangamati Science and Technology University, Jhagrabil, Rangamati-4500. Receiving tender document: Procurement Department, Administrative Building-2, Rangamati Science and Technology University, Jhagrabil, Rangamati-4500.
15. Place of opening tender	Procurement Department, Administrative Building-2, Rangamati Science and Technology University, Jhagrabil, Rangamati-4500.
16. Price of tender document	500.00/- (five hundred Taka only).
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>	
17. Brief eligibility and qualification of tender	a) Updated trade license, b) TIN certificate, c) VAT registration certificate, d) Bank solvency certificate e) The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of Research Equipment of at least 02 (two) contract successfully completed within the last 05 (five) years, with a value of at least Tk. 10 lac, f) The amount of the Tender Security shall be Tk. 20,000/- (twenty thousand) Taka in favour of Vice-Chancellor, Rangamati Science and Technology University, Rangamati. and g) Experience in relevant work and other qualifications as mentioned in tender documents/schedule.
18. Brief description of works	"Purchase of Research Equipment for Rangamati Science and Technology University, Rangamati".
<b>PROCUREMENT ENTITY DETAILS</b>	
19. Name of official inviting tender	Abdul Gafur.
20. Designation of official inviting tender	Assistant Director (P&D).
21. Address of official inviting tender	Rangamati Science and Technology University, Jhagrabil, Rangamati-4500.
22. Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: 01830161369
23. Special instruction	1. The procuring entity preserves the right to reject all tenders or annul tender proceeding. 2. If it is not possible to open the tender on the schedule date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be opened on the next working day at the same time and same venue.

Abdul Gafur  
Assistant Director (P&D)  
Rangamati Science and Technology University  
GD-751

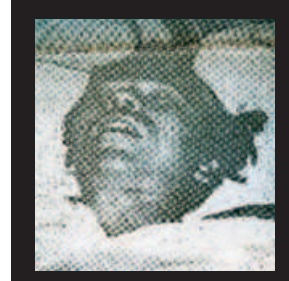
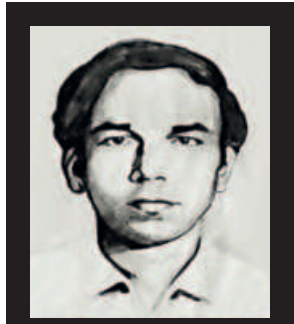


# The Struggle for Justice and Dignity

## A historical timeline of the labour movement in Bangladesh



Sashipada Banerjee, founder of Working Men's Club (1870)



Dead body of Tajul Islam, trade union leader of Adamjee Jute Mill.

The labour movement in Bangladesh has a rich and complex history that dates back to the 19th century. From the struggle for independence from British colonial rule to the fight for workers' rights and better working conditions, the labour movement has played a critical role in shaping the country's political and economic landscape.

Here is a comprehensive timeline of the labour movement in Bangladesh, highlighting key events and milestones that have shaped the movement's trajectory. From the early days of colonial rule to the present day, the timeline documents the challenges and successes faced by workers in their quest for justice and dignity. By examining the historical context of the labour movement, we hope to shed light on the ongoing struggles faced by workers in Bangladesh and inspire further action towards a more equitable future.

—Priyam Paul & Shamsuddoza Sajen, *The Daily Star*

**April 16, 1853**

The beginning of the modern industrial worker in the Indian Subcontinent is marked by the inauguration of the railway line from Mumbai to Thane.

**April-May, 1862**

Indian railway men of Howrah Railway Station joined the first ever strike demanding an 8-hours-a-day working hour.

**1870**

Sashipada Banerjee established the Working Men's Club which is considered to be the first labour organization in Bengal. In the same year, he started publishing *Bharat Sramajibi* (Indian Laborers), a journal exclusively devoted to the labourers, from Kolkata.

in Kushtia, East Bengal, with the Swadeshi spirit.

**1911**

The Indian Factories Act underwent an amendment that introduced the first legislative restrictions on men's working hours, fixing a 12-hour workday. Additionally, the amended act emphasized the significance of ensuring the health and safety of workers. It is worth noting that these positive changes were a direct result of the workers' long struggle.

**1919**

ILO adopted its first convention on limited hours of work and adequate rest periods for workers.

**October 17, 1920**

Indian Communist Party was established in Tashkent.



Tea labourers demand that May 20 be recognized by the state as Tea Workers' Day.

**October 31, 1920**

All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was established. It provided an early backbone to trade unions in East Bengal.

**May-August, 1921**

Mulluk Cholo Movement. On May 20, 1921, colonial troops brutally attacked tea workers who were stranded at Chandpur railway station, reminiscent of the Jallianwala Bag massacre. The workers, seeking to escape serfdom, abandoned the tea estates in Chargola and Longlai valleys in Sylhet and marched en masse towards their hometowns. This mass exodus caused political upheaval for nearly three months, from May 3 to August 3, 1921. The tea workers' widespread strike was soon followed by equally significant strikes by workers of the Assam Bengal Railways and Inland Steamer Navigation.

**December, 1922**

MN Roy presented a programme of action which included the following demands: (1) Establishment of minimum wages in all industries through legislation; (2) Implementation of an eight-hour workday, limited to five and a half days a week, for male adults. Special regulations would be put in place for women and child labour; (3) Employers would be legally required to provide workers with a certain standard of comfort in regards to housing, working conditions, and medical aid; (4) Protective legislation would be enacted to provide old age, sickness, and unemployment insurance for all industries; (5) Recognition of labour organisations as legal entities, with workers' right to strike in order to enforce their demands; (6) Establishment of workers' councils in all major industries to defend labour rights, with the state providing protection for their function; and (7) Introduction of profit-sharing schemes in all large industries.

**1923**

The Workmen's Compensation Act was enacted, which required businesses to provide compensation to employees who suffer work-related injuries resulting in disability or death.

**1926**

The Trade Unions Act was passed, which made provisions for the registration of trade unions and defined the law related to registered trade unions in certain respects.

**Nov-Dec, 1907**

Railway Strike in Bengal demanding wage increase. They succeeded to get a famine allowance.

**1908**

The Mohini Cotton Mill was established

industry.

**1939**

The Maternity Benefit Act was passed, which prohibits the employment of a female worker for six weeks before and six weeks after delivery.

**1945**

Sreehatta Zilla Cha Sramik Union (Tea Estates) was established as a member union of AITUC.

**May, 1946**

Faridpur District Cycle Rickshaw Drivers Union was formed. September 28, 1947 the Eastern Pakistan Trade Union Federation (EPTUF) was formed with Dr. AM Malik as president and Faiz Ahmad as secretary. The EPTUF was created based on a resolution adopted by the AITUC General Council



Rana Plaza Tragedy, 2013.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

collective bargaining.

**June 7, 1966**

The Awami League's Six-Point Programme was widely supported in the industrial areas of Narayanganj, Tejgaon, Tongi, and Chittagong, leading to widespread protests and strikes. Police resorted to firing in these areas, resulting in the deaths of several workers. In defiance of the imposition of Section 144, workers from the Narayanganj industrial area organized a procession towards Dhaka.

**1969**

The workers in East Pakistan played a significant role in the Gherao Movement and the mass uprising that resulted in the downfall of Ayub Khan's dictatorship.

**1970**

Nur Khan labour policy introduced.

**On November 29, 1907, the Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette, a Scottish newspaper, published a report on the railway strike in Bengal.**

**On November 29, 1907, the Greenock Telegraph and Clyde Shipping Gazette, a Scottish newspaper, published a report on the railway strike in Bengal.**

**FACTORIES ACT FOR INDIA.**  
TWELVE HOURS' DAY FOR ADULTS.  
CALCUTTA, March 21.  
With the support of all the provincial Governments, the Viceroy's Council yesterday passed a Factories Act, establishing a maximum of 12 hours' work a day for all adults, and six hours for children, thus introducing for the first time direct legislative restrictions on the hours of men's labor, notwithstanding the continuous opposition of the Bombay cotton and Calcutta jute firms.

**On March 25, 1911, the Advertiser, an Australian newspaper, published news about the recently amended Indian Factories Act. The report placed particular emphasis on the new 12-hour working day for adult workers.**

**1971**

Workers played a pivotal role in the Liberation War. The ILO/SIDA Mission Report (1973) observed: The bulk of the labour force had joined the war of liberation as the working class had come to realise that the key to their true emancipation was the liberation of their motherland from the monopoly rule of the "22 families" and they fought the enemy successfully. The success in their struggle for liberation was accompanied with a high sense of expectation.

**March, 1972**

Bangladesh Government nationalised all the major industries in the country.

**June 1, 1973**

The government established wage commission.

**January, 1975**

The government imposed a ban on all strikes and lockouts.

**May, 1976**

Workers' agitation in Dhaka and

Comilla region. Gherao at Meghna Textile.

**July 26, 1980**

Restriction put on non-workers to being members of trade unions through amendment of the Industrial Relations Ordinance.

**March 24, 1982**

General Ershad seized power and bans all kind of political activities including trade union activism.

**April 13, 1983**

In a significant move, twelve trade unions came together to establish the Sramik Karmachari Oikko Parishad (SKOP). This alliance played a crucial role in the Anti-Ershad movement and exerted pressure on the military government to lift the embargo on trade union activities. As a result of SKOP's efforts, the Ershad regime was compelled to permit trade union activities once again.

**March 1, 1984**

The government agents killed Tajul Islam, the trade union leader of Adamjee Jute Mill. In response to this murder, a complete strike was observed in Adamjee Jute Mill.

**December 6, 1990**

Fall of the dictatorial rule of Ershad. Workers play a crucial role in the anti-Ershad movement.

**January 7, 1995**

SKOP issues 8-point demands that urges the government to respect and implement the agreement signed on July 6, 1992 and later with the labour organisation of different industries.

**June 20, 2000**

SKOP called 24-hour strike demanding national minimum wage structure which is yet to be formed.

**2006**

Enactment of Bangladesh Labour Act, 2006

**November 24, 2012**

At least 117 killed in a fire in Tazreen Fashion factory.

**April 24, 2013**

The collapse of Rana Plaza resulted in the deaths of 1,132 people and injuries to over 2,500 others. Consequently, the USA suspended GSP for Bangladesh due to severe deficiencies in workplace safety and labor rights.

**2018**

A wage board was formed for RMG workers, which fixed a minimum wage of Tk 8000.

**July 1, 2020**

The government announced the closure of 25 state-owned jute mills, rendering thousands of workers unemployed. Since the announcement, the jute mill workers have been protesting against the decision.

**July 2021**

Massive fire at Shezan Juice Factory claims 52 lives

**27 August, 2022**

After a nationwide demonstration by tea workers, their daily wage was set at Tk 170.

**April 9, 2023**

The government has established a new wage board to assess the minimum monthly wages of garment workers, as labour organizations demand Tk 25,000 due to the high inflation in the country.

**The bulk of the labour force had joined the war of liberation as the working class had come to realise that the key to their true emancipation was the liberation of their motherland from the monopoly rule of the "22 families" and they fought the enemy successfully. The success in their struggle for liberation was accompanied with a high sense of expectation.**



(1) MN Roy, marked with a red dot, can be seen in this photograph taken during the second conference of the Communist International in 1920, along with Lenin and other delegates. (2) Mohini Mill, Kushtia (3) Entrance of Adamjee Jute Mills in 1950. (4) A procession during the 1969 mass uprising against the Pakistan government is led by a street child in Dhaka. Photographer: Rashid Talukder



## Tigers' den shifts to Chelmsford

SPORTS REPORTER

In less than a month after facing Ireland at home for a full series, Bangladesh team are expected to be in England by tonight as the Irish side await to lock horns with the Tigers in a three-match ODI series, part of the ICC Men's World Cup Super League.

One-half of the Bangladesh contingent were set to board the first flight at 1:40 am on Sunday midnight, comprising a majority of the team management alongside Yasir Ali and Najmul Hossain Shanto.

The second group, involving a majority of cricketers, the likes of skipper Tamim Iqbal and others, are scheduled to board the morning flight at 10:15 am today.

As far as the ones engaged in the Indian Premier League (IPL) are concerned, Liton Das, who featured for Kolkata Knight Riders but had to return back prematurely due to a family emergency, is expected to join the Tigers on May 2. Mustafizur Rahman, too, is also expected to leave the Delhi Capitals camp on the same day to reunite with his compatriots in England.

Meanwhile, Shakib Al Hasan, who is currently in the United States with his family, is expected to join the Tigers ahead of their only practice game, slated for May 5.

Tamim and his troops will encounter Ireland in the series opener on May 9, while the remaining games are scheduled on May 12 and 14, respectively, and will also be hosted by Chelmsford.

Leading up to the tour, Bangladesh head coach Chandika Hathurusingha conducted a brief three-day training camp in Sylhet.



PHOTO: BFF

Bangladesh contingent celebrate after the girls in red and green earned a 3-0 victory against hosts Singapore and thus guaranteed a spot in the second round of the AFC U-17 Women's Asia Cup Qualifiers yesterday.

## Prity ensures Bangladesh progress with flying colours

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh sealed their place in the second round of AFC U-17 Women's Asia Cup Qualifiers as group champions with an emphatic 3-0 win over hosts Singapore in Group D's last and final match at the Jalan Besar Stadium yesterday.

Sauravi Akanda Prity struck a brace from the spot while Sultana Akter netted another to confirm Bangladesh's progress in the competition.

Bangladesh, who previously had twice played the finals of the AFC U-16 Women's Championship, were faced with a must-win game to ensure progress, and the girls in red and green did not disappoint as they passed a tricky Singapore test with flying colours. They were also boosted by a home-like environment as a few thousand expatriate Bangladeshi spectators were seen, on Facebook live, chanting "Bangladesh, Bangladesh!" throughout the match.

Meanwhile, Malaysia, Australia, Vietnam, India and Philippines have already booked their places as group toppers.

Two more teams from Group E and H are left to join the aforementioned group champions. The participating teams in the eight-team second round, split into two groups, will play the round-robin league matches from September 16 to 24. Afterwards, the top two teams from each group will advance further and will be joined by defending champions Japan, DPR Korea, China and hosts Indonesia in the eight-team final round in April, 2024.

## Napoli's Scudetto party put on hold

AFP, Naples

Napoli will have to wait a bit longer to seal a first Serie A title in 33 years after being held to a 1-1 draw by Salernitana on Sunday.

Runaway league leaders Napoli needed to win to secure their third league crown with six games remaining in the season after Inter Milan beat closest challengers Lazio 3-1 earlier in the day.

And Naples thought a generation of frustration was set to come to an end when Mathias Olivera headed the hosts into the lead just after the hour mark.

But the long-awaited Scudetto party will have to be put on hold for at least a few more days after Boulaye Dia's stunning strike six minutes from time ensured Salernitana escaped with a point.

However, the coming midweek round of matches could finally end Napoli's long wait for glory.

Luciano Spalletti's team are 18 points ahead of Lazio but Juve can close that gap to 17 by winning at Bologna in Sunday's late match and moving into second place.

Depending how that match and Juve and Lazio's games on Wednesday go Napoli could be crowned champions before they take the field at Udinese on Thursday night.

Regardless, a win in Udine will ensure Napoli's current stars emulate Diego Maradona, who led southern Italy's biggest club to their only previous league titles in 1987 and 1990.

Pushed by a feverish crowd, decked out in blue and white, Napoli started on the front foot and almost went ahead seconds after kick-off when Victor Osimhen headed Hirving Lozano's cross just wide.

However Serie A's leading scorer Osimhen was the hosts' only threat in a what turned out to be a frustrating first half in which Salernitana defended deep and largely kept Napoli at bay.

The crowd was increasingly apprehensive until Olivera headed home the opener, causing an eruption of joy inside and outside the stadium.

Those fans in the stadium had begun queuing outside the stadium nearly five hours before kick-off, but it was all to be in vain as Dia stunned the whole city into silence.

## MSC face Abahani sans Shakib, Miraz



Mohammedan will be depending on veterans Imrul Kayes (L) and Mahmudullah Riyad (2L) for the Super League opener against Abahani in absence of Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz. On the other hand, Abahani possess available stars in Mohammad Naim, Afif Hossain and Anamul Haque Bijoy (R), who continued his rich vein of form in DPL from last season.

PHOTOS: FIROZ AHMED

SPORTS REPORTER

The Dhaka Premier League (DPL) Super League stage is set to begin from today with high-profile domestic matchups Mohammedan Sporting and Abahani Limited facing off on the first day of the Super League phase.

The game will begin at 9 am (BST) at Mirpur's Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium.

Abahani, on 20 points, are second in the table behind Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi on virtue of head-to-head differential. Mohammedan, meanwhile, lie in fifth with 13 points.

Abahani skipper Mosaddek Hossain was hoping the match will have a high-voltage feel in the Super League phase, having won the first group phase fixture against

Mohammedan by six wickets.

"We do feel it (excitement). When I began playing Premier League, Abahani Mohammedan was always a high-voltage fixture. I've faced it myself as well and hope we will get a similar feel in the Super League phase," Mosaddek told the media yesterday.

Mohammedan's Imrul Kayes had led Sheikh Jamal to the league title last season but this time he is hoping to remain in the top half of the table. The game would lose a bit of its lustre with Shakib Al Hasan and Mehedi Hasan Miraz unavailable for the Super League due to national team duty.

Leg spinner Jake Lintott has been replaced by Sri Lankan Kamindu Mendis. Abahani will have their key players available

and in form for the game. Along with Imrul, Mohammedan will be hoping experienced Mahmudullah Riyad takes charge of matters.

"Most of the teams will not have national team players available. So that problem doesn't solely belong to us. We will face problems but other teams will have issues with combinations. I feel that those who are taken as backups are faring well.

"If we can start well, we will try to score big. If we can make a big score they will be under pressure. We want to play good cricket," skipper Imrul told reporters yesterday.

Elsewhere, Sheikh Jamal will face Gazi Group and Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's Legends of Rugganj will take on Prime Bank on Monday's other fixtures in Fatullah and Savar respectively.



## CITY CLAIM TOP SPOT

Manchester City claimed top spot in the Premier League for the first time since February as Erling Haaland reached yet another milestone in a 2-1 victory at Fulham on Sunday. It took Haaland only three minutes to score his record-equalling 34th Premier League goal of an extraordinary debut season in England. With the Norwegian tucking away a penalty, it moved him level with Alan Shearer and Andy Cole's Premier League season tally. City are now top with 76 points to Arsenal's 75 and also have one extra game to play.

PHOTO: REUTERS



PHOTOS: REUTERS/TWITTER

## Barca close in on title, Benzema on Lewy

AGENCIES

As predicted, both Real Madrid and Barcelona lived up to their reputation and comprehensively won their respective home matches on Saturday.

Real beat Almeria 4-2 to cut the gap to eight points before Barca thrashed 10-man Real Betis 4-0 to tighten their grip on top spot and moved a step closer to their 27th LaLiga title with 11-point advantage.

However, another battle has been heating up after completion of the 32nd round of matches as Karim Benzema climbed to 17 goals in La Liga this season with his treble, now two behind Robert

Lewandowski.

Barca's Polish striker leads the way for the Pichichi Trophy, a notable personal honour by leading sports newspaper Marca for a leading La Liga goalscorer, but faces stiff competition for the title this year.

With his goal against Real Betis, Lewandowski has now 19 goals after scoring the opening goal against Real Betis. The Pole has scored in two consecutive games, against Rayo and Betis, and has regained some momentum after a poor run of form in front of goal. Benzema's goalscoring comeback,

however, has him closing in on Lewandowski, who has been the outright leader for much of the campaign. The Frenchman, who has been hampered by injuries, scored two hat-tricks in recent matches, the first coming against Real Valladolid and the one against Almeria at the Estadio Santiago Bernabeu.

Benzema is set to play the remaining matches against Real Sociedad, Getafe, Valencia, Rayo Vallecano, Sevilla and Athletic Club while Lewandowski have fixtures against Osasuna, Espanyol, Real Sociedad, Valladolid, Mallorca and Celta Vigo.



## STRIFE-TORN SUDAN Evacuation of Bangladeshis to start tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Evacuation of some 700 Bangladeshis from the Sudanese capital Khartoum will begin tomorrow, said Shahriar Alam, the state minister for foreign affairs, yesterday.

They will be taken from Khartoum to Port Sudan, a distance of more than 800 kilometres, by buses, he told reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday.

From there, they will be transported by sea to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. From Jeddah, the Bangladeshis will be brought to Dhaka by Biman planes.

Saudi Arabia is providing Bangladesh with the ships required for the evacuation from Port Sudan to Jeddah, Alam said.

An estimated 1,500 Bangladeshis live in Sudan.

Given the serious security concerns, Alam urged the remaining Bangladeshis to immediately register for evacuation.

It has been reported that they are living in uncertainty amid a shortage of essential supplies and widespread looting.

Only around 35 Bangladeshis safely left Sudan with the help of their employers.

The Sudanese army yesterday said it was attacking the city from all directions, with air strikes and heavy artillery, to flush out its paramilitary rivals called the Rapid Support Forces.

More than 500 people have been reported dead since fighting erupted on April 15.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



A candidate goes over his textbook for a last-minute revision, right before sitting for the Bangla (first paper) test as SSC exams began across the country yesterday. The photo was taken in front of the exam centre in Motijheel Government Boys High School.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



## Khaleda's condition improves slightly

Says her physician

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has been kept under close observation by physicians at the city's Evercare Hospital for various ailments, said her personal physician, Prof Dr AZM Zahid Hossain.

"Madam [Khaleda] is under the close observation and supervision of doctors in a cabin. Her condition has improved a little as she has been given treatment as per the advice of her medical board," he told journalists yesterday.

Earlier on Saturday night, the BNP chief was admitted to Evercare

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2

## DIGITAL SECURITY ACT 'Arbitrary misuse' of the law continues 8 arrested in 7 cases in April alone, says rights body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The harassment of journalists and activists continues unabated through the arbitrary misuse of the Digital Security Act, as eight people were arrested in seven cases filed under the act in April alone, said human rights body Manabdhikar Shongskriti Foundation (MSF).

In March, 10 cases were filed under the DSA, it said.

In a report issued yesterday and signed by its Founder Sultana Kamal, the rights body demanded the repeal of the act.

The report was based on news articles published by 10 media outlets, which were verified by human rights activists.

It said six of the cases filed under the DSA last month were for "tarnishing the images" of the country or high-ranking government officials through social media posts, shares and comments.

One case was filed against three journalists in Khulna in March, but there was no report on it until April 1.

The eight arrested in cases filed in April included a journalist, a teenager, and a BNP activist.

In the report, MSF said that though the DSA has been heavily criticised, it is still being misused to harass and prevent people from voicing their opinions.

## METRO LINE-2, -4

# Japan, S Korea, WB show interests

Claim metro authorities

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Japan, South Korea and the World Bank have expressed interests in financing the preparatory works for two more metro rail lines, said the authorities.

Mass Rapid Transit lines 2 and 4 will link Narayanganj with the capital.

Besides, the metro authorities said they have planned to start a pre-feasibility study to expand MRT Line-6 up to Tongi from Uttara, along with feasibility studies of the two lines.

"Japan, Korea and the World Bank have expressed interests in funding the studies for MRT Line-2 and -4. They also showed interests in investment projects. However, nothing has been finalised yet," MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd, told The Daily Star yesterday.

DMTCL, a state-run company, is the implementing and operating agencies of all metro rail projects.

In the first phase, the government plans to build around 140km metro rail network with six lines crisscrossing Dhaka and adjacent areas by 2030.

Country's first metro rail line - MRT Line-6 - partially came into operation between Uttara and Agargaon in December last year while physical works of MRT Line-1

### Mass Rapid Transit lines 2 and 4 will link Narayanganj with the capital.

began in February this year.

Physical works of MRT Line-5 (northern route) are expected to start July this year while the preparatory works of MRT Line-5 (southern route) are going on with the funding of Asian Development Bank.

MRT Line-6, which will be 21.26km rail line from Uttara to Motijheel, is being implemented at

a cost of Tk 33,472 crore.

MRT Line-1, the 31.24km line with the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur section underground and Notun Bazar to Purbachal section elevated, is being constructed at a cost of Tk 52,561.43 crore.

MRT Line-5 (northern route) will be a 20km line from Savar's Hemayetpur to Bhatara via Gabtoli, Mirpur, and Gulshan. The project cost is Tk 41,239 crore.

The three projects are being implemented with Japanese soft loan.

MRT Line-5 (southern route), which will be 17.3km long from Gabtoli to Dasherkandi via, Shyamoli, Panthapath, Karwan Bazar, Rampura and Aftabnagar, is expected to be done with the funding of ADB.

MRT Line-2

MRT Line-2 was supposed to be constructed from Gabtoli to Chittagong Road on Dhaka-

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

## Signs of recent water found in Mars sand dunes

VOA NEWS ONLINE



Water may be more widespread and recent on Mars than previously thought, based on observations of Martian sand dunes by China's rover.

The finding highlights new, potentially fertile areas in the warmer regions of Mars where conditions might be suitable for life to exist, though more study is needed.

Friday's news came days after mission leaders acknowledged that the Zhurong rover had yet to wake up since going into hibernation for the Martian winter nearly a year ago.

Its solar panels are likely covered with dust, choking off its power source and possibly preventing the rover from operating again, said Zhang Rongqiao, the mission's chief designer.

Before Zhurong fell silent, it observed salt-rich dunes with cracks and crusts, which researchers said likely were mixed with melting morning frost or snow as recently as a few hundred thousand years ago.

Their estimated date range for when the cracks and other dune features formed in Mars' Utopia Planitia - a vast plain in the northern hemisphere - is sometime after 1.4 million to 400,000 years ago or even younger.

**"Though the DSA has been heavily criticised, it is still being misused to harass and prevent people from voicing their opinions. Rather than relying on the Penal Code, the law is being exploited to silence and intimidate individuals...." - MSF**

"Rather than relying on the Penal Code, the law is being exploited to silence and intimidate individuals - a practice that must be stopped."

The foundation added that at least 54 journalists were humiliated, harassed and tortured in April.

Of them, 19 were subjected to legal harassment, three were sued under the DSA, one was arrested in a case filed under the act, while a charge sheet in a DSA case against another journalist was submitted to a court.

Meanwhile, a woman journalist was barred from leaving the country in an ongoing case under the Official Secrets Act. Three other newsmen were sued under the ICT act and five in an extortion case, the report further said.

Last month, 22 journalists were attacked by vested quarters for covering news. Of them, seven were injured while gathering news, four were harassed and two were threatened with death.

Another reporter was killed after being run over by a truck in Nilphamari.

The MSF report said 338 political activists, including 259 BNP and 71 Jamaat members, were arrested in April.

In the report, the foundation also mentioned incidents of extra-judicial killings, custodial deaths, other rights violations by law enforcers, and the spate of fires that took place throughout the month.



PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Woodcutters toiling to cut through a large piece of timber in Mohammadpur's Beribandh yesterday afternoon. Each of these men will receive Tk 500 at the end of their day's work. Though May Day, otherwise known as labour day, is officially celebrated throughout the country every year, the working conditions, facilities and wages of day labourers are yet to improve.

## MONEY LAUNDERING Casino 'kingpin' Salim Prodhan jailed for 8 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced casino "kingpin" Salim Prodhan to eight years' imprisonment in a case filed over amassing Tk 57.79 crore illegally and laundering about Tk 22 crore.

Judge Md Badrul Alam Bhuiyan of Dhaka's Special Judge's Court-8 handed down the verdict in the presence of the convict at the court.

The judge also fined him Tk 11 lakh, in default of which, he will have to serve seven months more in jail.

In the verdict, the judge said the prosecution was able to prove the charges brought against the accused beyond any doubt.

The judge also said Salim Prodhan amassed his wealth from online casino businesses and moved his illicit income to Thailand and the US.

Earlier, the prosecution and

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Salim Prodhan