



DHAKA MONDAY MAY 1, 2023

REGD. No. DA 781

VOL. XXXIII No. 103

BAISHAKH 18, 1430 BS

www.thedailystar.net

SHAWWAL 10, 1444 HJRI

16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE : TK 15.00



US warns Beijing over South China Sea conduct



The Struggle for Justice and Dignity



U-17s advance to Round-2 of Asian Cup Qualifiers



Bogura foundry industry almost future-proof

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 Shahabagh, 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,

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

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

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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



SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

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

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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

SEE PAGE 7 COL 4

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.



SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



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.

