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## Labour rights critical to growth of RMG sector

US ambassador says about Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Peter Haas yesterday said his country looks forward to deepening work with the private sector and other stakeholders in Bangladesh to advance internationally recognised labour rights in the RMG industry and beyond.

“The recent minimum wage review for the readymade garment sector has demonstrated the clear need for an objective, inclusive, and evidence-based National Wage Policy that addresses the severe economic challenges faced by garment workers,” he said while speaking at an event marking Bangladesh Cotton Day 2023.

Haas said strong labour laws and their

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Despite the rain and cold gusts of wind yesterday, people waited patiently to collect kitchen essentials at subsidised prices from a TCB truck in Dhaka's Shantinagar area. As market prices of commodities keep soaring, people from low-income groups have no option, come rain or shine, other than waiting for these trucks.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

UTTARA-MOTIJHEEL METRO

## Service until 8:00pm not before April

DU, Bijoy Sarani stations open on Dec 13

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Metro rail passengers of the Agargaon-Motijheel section may have to wait until April to have 12-hours-a-day service.

They may have to wait until July for service until midnight on the entire Uttara-Motijheel section, hinted metro rail authorities yesterday.

The Dhaka University and Bijoy Sarani stations will open on December 13, they said, adding that the duration of services on the Agargaon-Motijheel section will remain the same, 7:30am to 11:30am.

MRT/Rapid pass holders, however, can get on trains as soon as 7:10am at Uttara end and as late as 12:12pm at the Motijheel end.

MAN Siddique, managing director of Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL), at a press conference yesterday said the Karwan Bazar and Shahbagh stations on the Mass Rapid Transit-6 will open within January.

He said after all the stations are in service, they would start increasing service time.

Metro service on the Motijheel-Kamalapur section is expected to begin in June 2025, he said.

MAN Siddique said around 1.51 crore people used the metro so far and over one lakh people use the service daily.

## Moscow against any sanctions from US, West

Says Russian ambassador to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Russian Ambassador to Bangladesh Alexander Mantyskiy yesterday said they are against any “illegal actions” – sanctions or others – taken by America or other western countries against a country.

“We are against any illegal actions ... We will be against any sanctions or steps here,” he said at an event titled “Talks with Ambassadors”, organised by the Swadhinata Sangbadik Forum at the Jatiya Press Club in Dhaka, reports UNB.

He hoped that nothing like that would come but they would hold discussions on how to assist Bangladesh if sanctions are imposed.

“Russia recognises sanctions only when imposed by the UN Security Council.”

The comments came at a time when the US has been calling for free and fair polls in Bangladesh.

In May, Washington also announced a visa policy, saying those undermining the election will be denied US visa. Earlier in 2021, it imposed sanctions against Rab and seven of its officials.

US and Russian officials also exchanged statements and counter-agreements over the Bangladesh polls.

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova at a weekly briefing in Moscow on November 22 said the

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## 350 killed as Israel pounds south Gaza

UN says 85pc of the Palestinian enclave’s population now displaced

AGENCIES

Israel yesterday attacked the Gaza Strip’s biggest cities killing 350 Palestinians and forcing tens of thousands to flee to rapidly shrinking areas of refuge.

Gazans crammed into Rafah on the southern border with Egypt, heeding Israeli leaflets and messages saying that they would be safe in the city after successive warnings to head south.

But more than 20 people were killed in apartments there late on Wednesday sheltering displaced civilians from the north, said Eyad al-Hobi, a relative of some of those killed.

“All apartments in the building suffered serious damage,” he said as people brought out two apparently lifeless children.

Another relative, Bassam al-Hobi, said the building had been hit by three rockets.

“They targeted women and children, as you can see, and the guests who were told the south would be safe,” he said, gesturing to bodies wrapped in white cloth, some small, lined up on the ground and surrounded by mourners.

In southern Gaza’s largest city, Khan Younis, residents reported several Israeli air strikes and non-stop tank fire in the city’s east.

In Washington, a senior State Department official said US Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with Israel’s

strategic affairs minister yesterday and told him Israel needs to do more to protect civilians in its offensive in southern Gaza.

Meanwhile, UN aid chief Martin Griffiths yesterday said there were promising signs that the Kerem Shalom crossing in Israel could soon be opened to allow more humanitarian aid into Gaza.

- Death toll in Gaza rises to 17,177 as Israel’s war on Gaza enters third month
- Israeli raid kills 22 members of Al Jazeera correspondent’s family
- Children among many wounded in Khan Younis hospital
- UN chief warns of ‘complete break down’ of public order

A guided-missile attack from Lebanon killed a 60-year-old farmer in northern Israel yesterday, Israel’s public broadcaster Kan said, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu warned that Beirut would be turned “into Gaza” if Hezbollah, a Hamas ally, started an all-out war.

Israeli troops reached the heart of Khan Younis on Wednesday in a new phase of the war, now entering its third

month. Health officials said three people were killed there yesterday.

Ambulances and relatives rushed the wounded into the city’s Nasser hospital, but even the floor space inside was full. Two badly wounded children lay on a trolley and a bloodstained young boy lay screaming among the patients on the floor.

“The injuries are very severe,” said doctor Mohamed Matar. “The situation is catastrophic in all senses of the word... We can’t treat the injured in this state.”

In northern Gaza, Qatar-based Al Jazeera said an Israeli bombardment of Jabalia Camp yesterday killed 22 relatives of its Gaza correspondent Moamen Al-Sharafi.

In the past 24 hours alone, 350 people had been killed, Gaza’s health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra said.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned he expects “public order to completely break down soon due to the desperate conditions” in Gaza, with “potentially irreversible implications for Palestinians as a whole”.

The Gaza health ministry said 17,177 Palestinians had been killed and 46,000 wounded since Oct 7, when Israel began bombing Gaza.

The UN Palestinian Refugee Agency (UNRWA) said 1.9 million people – 85 percent of Gaza’s population – had been displaced and its shelters were four times over capacity.

## Magnetic surgical robot makes debut in Chile hospital

REUTERS, Santiago

A robot that uses powerful magnets to perform less invasive and more efficient surgeries completed its first international procedure, a gallbladder removal, at a public hospital in Chile this week, according to the company that developed the technology.

The MARS surgical platform at the Luis Tisne hospital in Santiago allows surgeons to “attach a small magnet to organs, like the liver, and use robotic arms with high powered magnets on the patient’s belly to manipulate organs out of the way,” according to Levita Magnetics, the California-based start-up that created robot.

The system also “gives the surgeon control of the camera, which allows for better visualization, it is much more stable. And in surgery, seeing is everything,” said Alberto Rodriguez-Navarro, doctor and founder of Levita Magnetics, the California-based start-up that developed the MARS platform.

“It is better for the patient, with fewer incisions and less pain, faster recovery,” Rodriguez-Navarro told Reuters after the surgery.

“For the surgeon, it’s better since it allows him to be more efficient and, for the system, it allows more surgeries to be done per day.”

The platform was cleared by the US Food and Drug Administration in September and conducted its first commercial surgery at the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio in October.



## Transfer of 158 more UNOs, 338 OCs okayed by EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday approved the transfer of 158 more upazila nirbahi officers and 338 officers-in-charge of police stations ahead of the January 7 national polls.

The decision was made in the afternoon after the EC approved two proposals from the public administration ministry: one for the transfer of 110 UNOs and another for the transfer of 48, EC Secretary Jahangir Alam said.

He added that the OCs will be transferred to other police stations within the same district or in other districts.

At least 32 OCs of police stations under the DMP were transferred to other stations, also under the metropolitan police.

“The UNOs will be transferred to upazilas in other districts, but within the same division of their current work station.”

Earlier in the day, Election Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) Ahsan Habib Khan told The Daily Star they approved the proposal regarding the transfer of the OCs in line with the recommendation of the authorities concerned.

Anwar Hossain, deputy inspector general (operations) at the police headquarters, said, “The transferred OCs

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**THE THREE MUSKETEERS**  
Something caught the attention of three Asian green bee-eaters in Chattogram’s Karnaphuli! This strikingly beautiful bird has a vast range across the globe and isn’t migratory. However, it can have seasonal movements depending on rainfall and food availability. As it feeds mostly on insects (especially bees, as the name suggests), it is found in grasslands and lowland forests, often quite far away from water – unlike other bee eaters. The only time it ventures near water is for bathing, which it does with a single dip during flight. However, it prefers sand-bathing more often. An abundant and fairly tame bird, it has also become used to urbanisation as it readily makes use of fences or electric wires for perching.

PHOTO: NOBLE CHAKMA

## Woman dies in police custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

A woman died in police custody in Narsingdi yesterday, hours after detectives detained her from the district’s Bhelanagar area when she was allegedly carrying some cannabis.

Nurtaj Begum, 53, from South Kanda Para area of the district, died around 8:00am, said ANM Mizanur Rahman, director of the 100-bed district hospital.

The district police formed a three-member committee to investigate her death.

Nurtaj’s son Rajib Mia said police did not inform the family either about her detention nor about her subsequent hospitalisation.

“Three men in plainclothes came to our house around 11:00am [yesterday] and introduced themselves as police. They said my mother died while undergoing treatment,” he said.

The body was taken to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital for an autopsy.

Sub-inspector Naimul Mostaq said they arrested Nurtaj with cannabis around 8:30pm on Wednesday from Bhelanagar area and took her to the office of the detective branch.

“Later in the night, she was admitted to the hospital. She died of a heart attack in the morning,” he said, adding, they filed a drug case against her.

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