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## EU passes law to hold brands accountable

Companies can be fined for rights violations in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Parliament yesterday passed a law that holds large companies and brands responsible for human rights violations or environmental abuses in their global supply chains.

With the European Union being one of Bangladesh's top destinations for readymade garments, this law will indirectly impact Bangladeshi manufacturers.

Once the law is enforced, a European or a foreign clothing brand can be held legally liable for labour rights violations by a readymade garment factory or environmental damage by it.

It will be able to slap hefty fines on the brands once the law gets implemented in phases from 2027.

However, the law still awaits a formal endorsement by the ministers of the European Union's member states, which is required for its full enactment.



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EU'S NEW SUPPLY CHAIN LAW TO IMPROVE LABOUR CONDITIONS IN BANGLADESH - B1

“The European Parliament's vote sends a strong message that the EU should no longer let large corporations get away with human rights and environmental abuses.”

ARUNA KASHYAP, associate director at HRW



Guardians of child patients in the capital's National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases are using whatever is at their disposal -- from hand fans to medical folders -- to provide some relief to their little ones from the searing heat. The hospital fans are proving to be inadequate to tackle the extreme heat. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## UPAZILA POLLS Defiant MPs to face music

Says Quader about the ones who ignored AL chief's directive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Action will be taken against Awami League ministers and lawmakers whose close relatives did not withdraw their candidatures from the upazila parishad elections, party General Secretary Obaidul Quader said yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference in the AL president's political office in Dhanmondi, Quader said AL chief Sheikh Hasina instructed ministers and MPs to make sure their children and relatives do not take part in the upazila polls.

“The date for the candidacy withdrawal in the first phase of the election has expired...,” said Quader, adding that one can still quit the race.

Disciplinary action will be taken if the party

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## Rural areas bear the brunt of power outage

1,000MW load shed despite record generation

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Hundreds of thousands of people in the rural areas have been subjected to hours of power outage despite record setting generation of electricity over the last few days.

According to Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (REB), its subscribers in Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Kishoreganj, Netrakona, Cox's Bazar, Narsingdi, and Rangpur are suffering the longest outages as the country is seeing temperatures of over 42 degrees Celsius.

A majority of REB's 3.58 crore subscribers are seeing power cuts every day.

On April 22, Bangladesh Power Development Board (PDB) produced 16,233 megawatts around 9:00pm, breaking the previous record of 15,648MW on April 19, 2023. But people in Mymensingh's Muktagacha barely had electricity that night.

Hosne Ara Begum, a resident of Mankun area, said, “There was a two-hour outage from 7:30pm. Only 15 minutes after it was restored, there was another one-and-a-half-hour outage.

Throughout that night, we only had electricity in 10-15 minute at a go. The daytime situation was not different.”

Besides enduring the oppressive heat, Hosne Ara is also struggling to keep her fish farming business running.

“It usually takes a day to completely drain a pond. Due to the power cuts, the job takes three days, and we have to spend more on rental pumps,” she told The Daily Star.

PDB officials say during the week-long Eid holidays, power consumption was low because offices and factories were closed. As everything reopened and the sun began to beat down on the country from April 21, power consumption spiralled, leading to outages.

In the last four days, PDB generated over 15,500MW during evening peak hours. In the previous week, peak generation hovered around 13,000MW.

On April 22, despite the record generation of power, there was a shortage of 1,000MW at night, leading to the outages suffered mostly by the REB subscribers.

People in the rural areas bore the brunt

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As everything reopened after Eid holidays and the sun beats down on the country, electricity requirement spiralled, leading to outages.

## NBR halts export, import by Abdul Monem Group

Decision follows misuse of bond facility, non-payment of duty, fines worth Tk 674.35cr

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

The National Board of Revenue has suspended all imports and exports by Abdul Monem Group and all its subsidiaries, including Abdul Monem Sugar Refinery, over misuse of bond facilities and non-payment of applicable duty and fines worth Tk 674.35 crore.

In an order dated April 23, the regulator also asked three banks -- Dutch-Bangla Bank, Bank Asia and Jamuna Bank -- to freeze the company's accounts and report back to Dhaka (South) Customs Bond Commissionerate, which issued the order.

This means, the company will not be able to carry out any transactions through these banks.

The same order instructed all sea ports, land ports and airports of the country to withhold the release of any goods imported by the company.

A copy of the letter, signed by Bond Commissionerate (Dhaka South) Deputy Commissioner Dwaipayan Chakma, was also sent to the Export Promotion Bureau to make sure that the Group cannot undertake any export activities.

Additionally, bond officials at the sugar warehouses of the company have been asked to stop the production and

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## BUSINESS

### IMF calls for smaller budget

As Bangladesh continues to underperform in revenue collections, the visiting mission of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has suggested the government formulate a smaller-than-usual national budget to minimise the deficit.

The recommendation came as an eight-member delegation, led by Chris Papageorgiou, began the second review of the multilateral lender's \$4.7 billion loan programme yesterday.

The release of the third tranche of the credit support in June will rely on the positive outcome of the visit.

The mission will hold several meetings with key government institutions, including the finance division, the Bangladesh Bank, and the National Board of Revenue till June 8.

The finance division yesterday presented its projection on the upcoming budget and the revised budget for the current fiscal year before the IMF team.

STORY ON B1

## Thailand gives grand welcome to Hasina

She will hold talks with Thai premier tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

A red carpet was rolled out as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina reached Bangkok yesterday afternoon on a six-day official visit to Thailand at the invitation of her Thai counterpart Srettha Thavisin.

On her arrival at Don Mueang International Airport, the Bangladesh premier was received by Puangpet Chunlaiad, minister attached to the Thai Prime Minister's Office.

Earlier, Hasina left Dhaka by a flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines at 10:13am.

During her visit from April 24 to 29, Hasina will hold bilateral talks with the Thai prime minister and attend the 80th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Bangladesh and Thailand will sign a number of cooperation documents, including a letter of intent on negotiations for a free trade agreement.

The two countries are likely to ink an agreement on visa exemption

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is being received by Puangpet Chunlaiad, minister attached to the Thai Prime Minister's Office, at Don Mueang International Airport in Bangkok yesterday. Hasina is now on a six-day official visit to the Southeast Asian country.

PHOTO: PTD

## Nine workers killed as truck falls into ditch

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

At least nine construction workers were killed and several others injured after a truck fell into a roadside ditch in Udaipur border area in Rangamati's Sajek upazila yesterday evening.

The accident took place around 6:00pm.

Four of the dead were so far identified -- Abdul Mohon, 16, and Babu, 20, from Kishoreganj; and Sagor, 22, and Ali Ullah, 36, from Gazipur.

Debashish Roy, officer-in-charge of Sajek Police Station, said, “We have heard from locals that there was an accident in which people were killed. A police team has gone to the spot to investigate.”

Atulal Chakma, chairman of Sajek Union Parishad, said there were 17 workers on the truck. Some of them died on the spot, he said, adding that the others suffered injuries.

Shirin Akhter, upazila nirbahi officer in Sajek, said she also learned about the accident and the consequent death of nine workers.

The victims were involved in construction work for a road along the border, said Mir Abu Tawheed, superintendent of police in Rangamati.

They were taken to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

The residential medical officer there, Ripple Bappi

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