

## Ctg RMG factory fire toll 54, many still unaccounted for

Blaze followed boiler explosion; both main gates were shut: 2 KTS officials held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg  
The death toll in Thursday's worst-ever industrial fire here continued to rise yesterday, hitting 54 in the afternoon, with scores of workers still trapped, and feared dead, inside the charred four-storey factory building.

Over 150 employees were badly burnt in the inferno that engulfed KTS Composite Textile Mill of Arina Group at about 7:10 Thursday evening, when some 600 workers, mostly women, were working inside, sources said.

Of the injured, severely burnt 49 workers were undergoing treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) yesterday. Their condition is critical and many of them may not live through the injuries, feared CMCH sources.

Ten of the fire victims died on way to hospital and another during treatment at the CMCH at about 3:00am yesterday. Until filing of this report at 7:00pm yesterday, rescue workers had retrieved 43 charred bodies from the ashes.

Witnesses and firemen said the fatal blaze caused by a boiler explosion on the first floor quickly spread and seized the entire building. The ground and first floors of the building were used for garment production, and the second and third for textile.

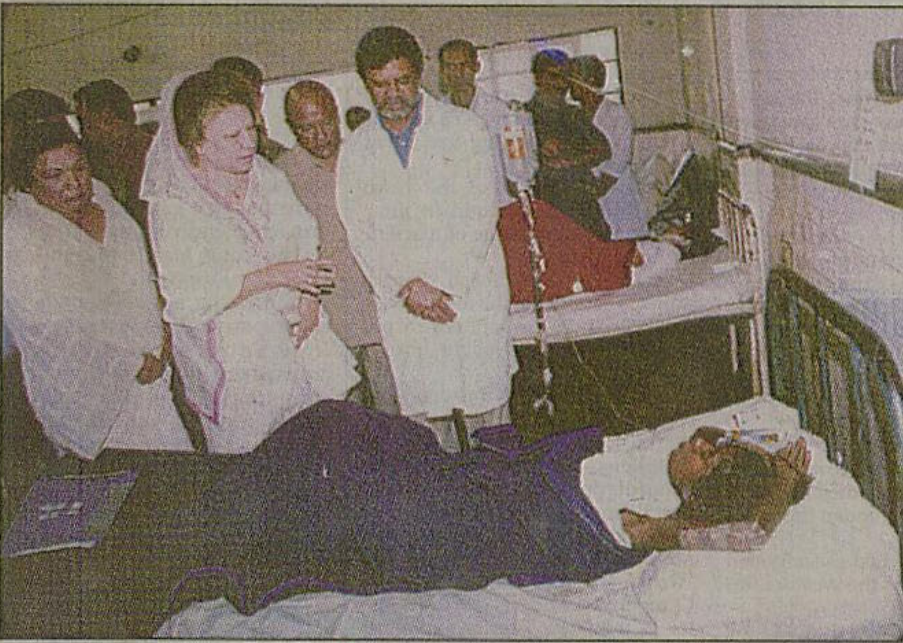
## Most parts of capital plunge into darkness

Three major power plants trip

REAZ AHMAD  
Most parts of the capital plunged into darkness last night as big power plants tripped one after another at Meghnaghat, Siddhirganj and Ghorashal due to what the authorities attributed to technical faults in the East-West Interconnector Line.

ongoing pre-summer spell with the Power Development Board (PDB) being able to generate a record low of 2,200 megawatt (MW) electricity against a demand of 3,850 MW.

Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) control room sources told The Daily Star that as against yesterday's demand of 1,300 MW power in Dhaka and its peripheries, Desa got barely 750 MW electricity, forcing it to go for drastic load-shedding.



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visits the injured workers of KTS Textile Mills at Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) yesterday, left, a fire victim's relative breaks down at the CMCH morgue.

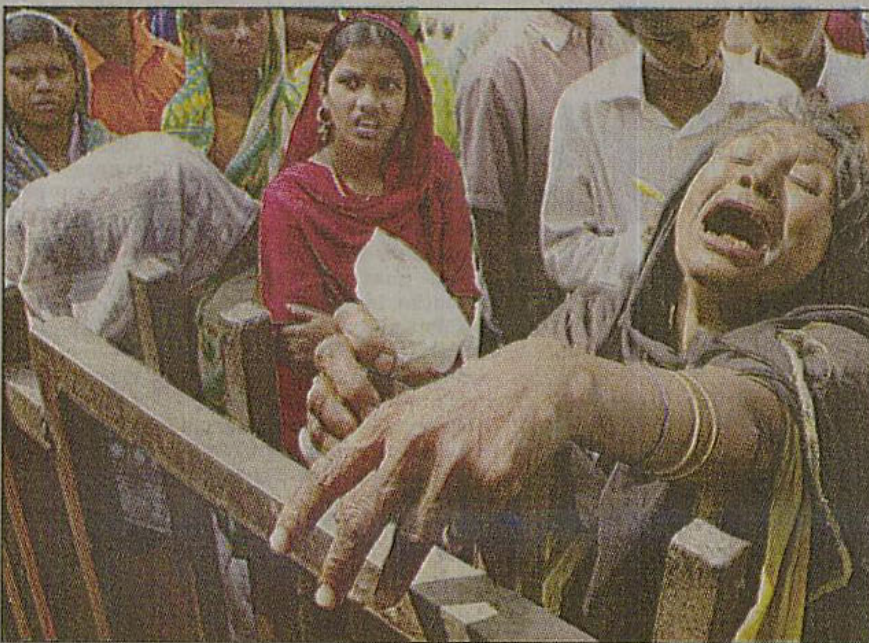


PHOTO: PINDSTAR

## Corrupts feed on MPO funds

INAM AHMED  
It's not much of a school in Ishwardi -- a two-room concrete structure and a tin-shed partitioned with hardboards. The students draped in green Kamiz and red pyjama move around the small playground -- it's early January and their classes are yet to start.

Teachers of at least 10 schools from Ishwardi to Kurigram narrated their first-hand experiences of corruption -- how they have to pay hefty sums to get a job or to get entitled to the MPO.

pay Tk 10,000 to the district education officer. Then to put his job under the MPO, he had to pay another Tk 25,000 at the Shikha Bhaban (Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education).

## PM's directive for safety standards in factories

BSS, Chittagong  
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia ordered compliance with the safety standards at all industrial units as the death toll in the country's worst ever factory fire at the outskirts of Chittagong City reached 54 yesterday.

## Fire-related incidents in garment units kill over 350 since '90

SHARIFUL ISLAM  
Over 350 garment workers have died and some 1,500 been injured in fire-related incidents since 1990 including Thursday night's devastating fire in Chittagong.

A quick exit even during an emergency. A top official of Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) said almost all the factories do not comply with the safety rules.

## Victims' relatives crowd CMCH

SHAHIDUL ISLAM and DWAIPIYAN BARUA  
It was a heart shattering sight at Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) when the workers with severe burn injuries from the fire in KTS textile mill, and the dead bodies of the not so fortunate ones were being brought there since 9:40pm on Thursday.

## Fresh barricade for urea, govt still sees no crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
Fertilizer-hungry farmers have been continuing their demonstrations demanding steady supply of fertilizers amid the government's repeated claim of 'no fertilizer crisis' in the country.

assured them of adequate fertilizer supply. Sathkhira district Awami League president expressing solidarity with the demand of the farmers went to the barricade and announced that the deputy commissioner's (DC) office will be surrounded tomorrow in demand for supply of fertilizer, fuel and electricity.

League president Bishawjit Sadu and also chased the upazila agriculture officer Sattya Ranjan Sarkar. MYMENSINGH The police arrested four persons including a local fertilizer dealer and a truck driver from Dhanikhola village in Trishal Upazila at 8:00pm Thursday while they were smuggling 120 sacks of urea allotted from Trishal for Jamalpur district.

## Final one-dayer at Ctg today

SPORTS REPORTER  
When Bangladesh meet Sri Lanka today in the series deciding third and final one-day international in Chittagong, it would not be an attempt for the Tigers to play just for pride rather to make history.

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