

Another Ctg fire victim dies

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Another worker, injured in Thursday's fire at KTS Textile and Garment Industry, died at Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) on Tuesday night, raising the death toll in the worst-ever factory fire to 56.

The dead, identified as Md. Hanan, 20, son of Munirul Islam in the city's Rahattarpur area, died at the intensive care unit of the hospital at 10:30pm.

With this, two of the 13 critically injured worker of the factory died. Of the remaining 11, six were shifted to Dhaka for better treatment, while the others are

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

CTG FACTORY FIRE

Rescue operation wrapped up with many still 'missing'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

While the number of missing persons in the country's worst-ever industrial fire at KTS Composite Textile Mill at Kalurghat BSCIC Industrial Area on last Thursday remains uncertain, their relatives are still searching for them everyday

in the hospital, police station, factory site and at other places.

Some of the factory workers, who narrowly survived the inferno, however, said the total number of workers on that night would be around 500 to 550. And if their versions are taken into account, there still could be some missing

persons, though it is very hard to ascertain the exact number.

Fire Service and the police however dismissed any possibility of persons missing at this point. Fire department sources said they have wended up officially the rescue operation on Friday.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

'DICTATING' GOVT DFID official denies blame on donors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DFID Country Representative David Wood has categorically denied the allegation that donors dictate the government in policymaking matters while providing assistance for Bangladesh.

"I live among donors and have never seen anyone of them dictating the government in any matter,"

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Deferred import bills behind dollar dearth

Says BB, expects pressure on forex market to ease soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The central bank yesterday blamed the obligations to pay up deferred import bills of petroleum and capital machinery for the ongoing price hike in US dollar.

The price of the greenback has been rising everyday for the last one month, hitting Tk 71.65 yesterday for import, which is Tk 0.20 higher than Tuesday's rate.

"The pressure on liquidity in the inter-bank foreign exchange market despite surplus in the Current Account originates from payment obligations against past-deferred payment [for] imports of petroleum and capital machinery," reads the Bangladesh Bank (BB) press release.

It then forecast that the pressure on forex market is expected to ease soon, "as current inflows [of foreign currency] are well in excess of new import liabilities that are being incurred."

But, the banking sources have a different view. They do not see any

indication of an immediate let-up in the current forex scarcity.

For instance, they pointed out that Janata Bank alone will have to meet \$150 million deferred payments in this month for imported petroleum products. The situation is more or less similar for a number of other banks due to obligations to pay up deferred bills for other imports, they added.

The BB release said in the first half of the current fiscal year (FY) the current account balance was \$153 million, compared to the negative balance of \$85 million in the same period of FY05. The improved balance situation was mainly due to a strong growth in workers' remittances and export, which grew by 14.84 percent and 22.62 percent over the July-December period. The import over the same period registered an increase of 11.97 percent.

Over the six months, imports of capital machinery rose by 36.38 percent, iron and steel by 56.31

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

JP won't join BNP or AL camp in polls: Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said his party will not join the ruling BNP-led four party coalition or the main opposition Awami League (AL)-led 14-party opposition combine in the upcoming elections.

"If I form coalition with either the BNP or the Awami League, I have to take responsibility of their failures as both the parties have failed to run the country properly," Ershad said at a party rally in the Paltan Maidan in the capital.

Neither the BNP-led coalition nor the AL-led coalition responded to his 12-point proposal regarding joining any of them, the former president said.

People have greatly responded to their proposals, he said.

Ershad observed that the country is heading towards confrontation, as the AL has remained stuck to their no election stance until their proposed reforms are carried out while the BNP-led alliance government declared that they would not meet the opposition's demand.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

CPB calls 8hr hartal for today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) enforces an eight-hour hartal across the country today to protest against power and fuel crises across the country and demand punishment to those responsible for deaths of garment workers in Chittagong and Dhaka.

The 6:00am to 2:00pm hartal is also called to condemn 'miserable tenure of the ruling alliance', which, as CPB leaders described, is marked by price spiral of essentials, rise of militancy and unabated corruption.

Hospitals, fire brigade, medicine shops, fertiliser-carrying vehicles, emergency power, newspaper vehicles and ambulances will be outside the purview of hartal, a CPB press release said yesterday.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6



PHOTO: STAR

A bird's eye view of the opposition 14-party combine's 'grand' rally in Chittagong yesterday. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, inset, addresses the rally.

Outlaw killed in 'crossfire'

UNB, Khulna

A leader of an underground outfit was killed during a shootout between his cohorts and members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Gunari village in Dumuria upazila of the district early yesterday.

He was identified as Ashabur

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Thousands of Muslims protest Bush's India visit

AGENCIES, New Delhi

Around 50,000 slogan-shouting Muslims staged a rally in the Indian capital yesterday against the visit of US President George W. Bush, who was due here by evening after a short trip to Afghanistan.

The protestors gathered at the Ram Lila grounds near New Delhi's main commercial area for the protest organised by the Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, a Muslim religious organisation.

Police put the number of protestors at around 50,000 but organisers claimed some 300,000 people had turned up.

A smaller protest was held at the historic 17th century Jama Masjid mosque in Old Delhi, witnesses said.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Lanka's lower middle order spoils early Tiger initiative

BISHWAJIT ROY, from Chittagong

Seasoned middle-order batsman Thilan Samaraweera kept his cool as Sri Lanka took the initiative away from Bangladesh on the second day of the first Test at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium yesterday.

The visitors finished the day on 313-6, only six runs behind the Bangladesh total, but not before receiving a jolt from the Tigers as at one stage they were struggling at 178 for five.

A 117-run sixth wicket partnership between Samaraweera and Farveez Maharroof, who not only made his maiden Test half-century

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Prayer Timing		
March 2		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-07	6-11
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation