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Garments fire: 100 killed in last 10 yrs

Star Report

At least 100 people have been killed and several hundred others injured in fire related incidents in garment factories in the city since 1990, officials of the Fire Service and Civil Defence quoting newspaper reports said yesterday.

The figure includes the 12 victims at Globe Knitting Ltd. at Banani in the city yesterday.

The highest number of casualties, 25, was reported in one single incident at Saraka Garments at Mirpur on December 27, 1990. Among those killed were 16 female workers of the factory.

Nine teenagers girls died in a stampede resulting from false fire alarm in the Lusaka Garment Factory at Ibrahimpur on August 5, 1995. Five female

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Ctg killings: Imon confesses his involvement

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: Abul Quaiyum Chowdhury alias Imon, one of the main suspects in the Bahaddarhat carnage, was taken on a seven-day remand today.

Police yesterday arrested Imon from Pomura, a remote village in Rangunia upazila.

With this, 24 people have been arrested in connection with the July 12 incident in which eight people including six BCL activists were killed.

Though Imon's name was not in the FIR, he confessed his involvement in the killings.

Imon told police that he was in the micro-bus used in the killing but he did not get down when Sajjad and Solaiman sprayed bullets on the victims.

Imon, a close associate of late Shibir cadre Khukumoni, told police that he was once a student of civil engineering at Swedish Polytechnical Institute and was planning to go to Delhi for study.

Dengue: 29 more hospitalised

Staff Correspondent

Twenty-nine more people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics in the city yesterday.

Sources said Dhaka Medical College Hospital admitted eight patients fever while Mitford hospital three.

Dhaka Shishu Hospital reported admitting one fresh case, BIRDEM two, Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital six, Bangladesh Medical College Hospital three, Central Hospital at Green Road two and Samarita Hospital one. Suhrawardy Hospital, Al Razi Hospital and Ibne Sinha Hospital reported admitting one each.

Meanwhile, forty-six people have so far died of Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) and Dengue Shock Syndrome (DSS) since July 20.

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August	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 28		6:20 pm
Aug 29	5:39am	

Prayer Timings		
August 28		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
4:30	4:30	5:05
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:40	6:45
Esha	8:00	8:30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Relatives and friends of the victims of yesterday's garments factory fire at Banani in the city consoling each other (left). Bodies of the victims being carried by their relatives (right). — Star photo

No fire escape: Narrow staircases

Fire at garments unit in city: Suffocation kills 12

Star Report

Twelve people, ten of them female, died of suffocation while another was severely injured when a fire broke out at a garment factory in the city's Banani area in the early hours of yesterday.

The incident took place after about 150 night shift workers of the Globe Knitting Ltd. went to bed sleep after work at about 2:30 a.m. yesterday.

Police and hospital sources identified the victims as Piara, 35, Rezia, 40, Shila, 20, Sayera, 30, Hasna, 35, Nurjahan, 20, Monwara, 40, Johura, 23, Shanta, 16, Anwara, 35, Abdul Aziz, 25, and Golam Kibria, 31. Kafil, the injured, was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The bodies were sent to DMCH for autopsy. No case was filed till the filing of this report late last night.

Most of the dead bodies were recovered from the spinning and inspection section on the third floor while the rest from the narrow staircase, connecting the second and third floor, which is used only for carrying materials from the godown to different floors of the factory.

Globe Knitting Ltd., which has no emergency exit, is housed on the first four floors and the sixth floor of the seven-storey Haji Sahabuddin Maision on the New Airport Road.

Three other smaller garment factories are also housed in the same building, which has a narrow staircase, but none of those was operating during that time.

The fire believed to have originated from an electric short circuit in the godown swallowed a huge stockpile of yarn that resulted in thick smoke.

The billowing smoke soon made its way to other floors through the staircase used only for carrying yarn and other materials to different sections of the factory. The sleeping workers at different floors were awakened by thick smoke at around 3:30 a.m.

According to a number of staff of other factories, the collapsible doors at the main entrance of each floor were under lock and key during the incident. However, the knitting in-charge of Globe Knitting claimed that the supervisor had the keys to all the entrances which he had unlocked after the trapped workers cried out for help.

Ten units of fire fighters from four city stations rushed to the spot at about 4:30 a.m. and fought for about three

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2 engrs, 9 workers killed in Ctg as newly built roof collapses

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 27: Eleven people including two engineers and 25 injured when the under-construction roof of a cement factory silo here collapsed from a height of 86 feet.

Workers and many others were on the roof and on the ground when the tragic incident took place at 11:30 am at the second unit of Diamond Cement Factory at Shikabara South Ichhanagar on the south bank of Karnaphuli river.

Four persons are trapped in rubbles. Rescue operation is going on and the death toll may rise, Fire Brigade said.

Police have cordoned the area.

The injured have been admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where condition of six is critical, hospital sources said.

The dead so far identified are engineers SM Borhan and Md Iqbal and workers Mamun, Salam, Sultan Ahmed, Saber Ahmed, Jalal Uddin and Quayum. The other bodies are yet to be identified.

Two of them died while being taken to the hospital.

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Felling of trees, poaching threaten wildlife in Rangamati

By Special Correspondent

Rampant felling of trees, Jhum cultivation and poaching in the reserve forest in Pablabhali and surrounding areas of Rangamati have led to disappearance of 37 species of birds including the rare White Winged Duck and some other wild life probably for good, a leading wild life expert has said.

The last reported but unconfirmed sighting of the duck was two years ago. But during my recent field trip, I could not see or confirm its presence any more," Dr Mohammad Ali Reza Khan said yesterday while giving a talk on wildlife in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The talk was arranged by the Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB). Dr Khan presented the findings during the trip to the reserve forest which once comprised 42,000 hectares, some 60 km north-east of Rangamati and near the border with Mizoram state of India. He visited the area from August 15 to August 22.

Dr Khan, a former teacher of Zoology department at the Dhaka University and author of several books on wild life, current works in the UAE as head of Dubai Zoo.

The forest was home to the White Winged Duck, locally known as Bhadi Hans. Only about 2,000 ducks of this species are now surviving in the world, mostly in Assam in north-eastern India, Myanmar and Thailand.

The massive Civet trees -- about 150 feet in height -- along with wild mango tree Uria, Sundul and Garjan trees provided nest to the duck that weighs up to two and a half kg. But the forest was being gradually destroyed as people from the plains were settled there after it was declared a sanctuary in 1983. Some 10,000 hectares of the forest were lost due to the settlements.

There were 80 species of birds in the forest in 1980. But now only 43 species including owls and common mynas were found. Fish population in the wetlands has also declined.

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Army Promotion Board meets Aug 30

Fate of many hangs in balance for lack of written criteria

By M Anwarul Haq

The Army Promotion Board will meet on August 30 and 31 to consider promotions to senior-ranking military officers, sources said.

Headed by Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Mustafizur Rahman, the Board will comprise all serving Major Generals. At present, there are 26 Major Generals in the active list of whom two are serving as ambassadors abroad.

During the two-day meeting, the Board will recommend promotions to the ranks of Lt. Colonel, full Colonel and Brigadier. Sources indicated that the Board is likely to recommend promotions for around 20 Lt. Colonels to the rank of full Colonels and 15 Colonels to the rank of Brigadier.

There have been some muted reactions in the Army over absence of any written criteria for promotions, the sources also said. The promotions to the rank of Lt. Colonel and above usually take place on the basis of the service record and career profile.

There are complaints that due to the absence of proper written criteria, many officers with commendable performance are passed over. Personal liking often takes precedence over professional competence, informed sources said.

The promotion of an officer is normally held up if any serving general raises an objection. Similarly, if all the generals in the promotion board agree to promote an officer, objection by the Chief of Army Staff, who is the chairman of the board, often overrules a case altogether.

Sources pointed out that the chairman of the previous promotion board overruled its recommendations for promotions of certain officers on the ground that he had "specific intelligence."

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Ershad files petition seeking time for surrender

By Staff Correspondent

Former president HM Ershad yesterday filed a petition with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court seeking time for his surrender, court sources said.

When contacted, Ershad's lawyer Advocate Khondaker Mahub Hossain told The Daily Star last night that the petition sought time until reopening of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court.

The petition will be placed before the vacation judge of the Appellate Division this morning, Advocate Mahub said, adding the judge will then pass appropriate order in the regard.

Ershad has been accused in 22 cases, including killing, corruption and abuse of power since he was toppled from power through a mass movement on December 6, 1990.

Of the total, 18 cases have been under the court proceedings while the process of the remaining cases are yet to begin. All the cases were filed during the previous BNP government headed by Khaleda Zia.

In the aforesaid 18 cases, Ershad was handed 13 years' jail term in three and acquitted of charges in one. So there are 14 running cases in the court against him.

The lower courts found Ershad guilty and awarded seven years' jail term in the Janata Tower Case, three years for misappropriation of money and another three years in Japanese Boat Buying Case.

The Anti-corruption Bureau filed a corruption case pertaining to Janata Tower against Ershad and 19 others, including his wife Roushan Ershad, former RAJUK Chairman M Rahmatullah and ex-minister Abdus Sattar with Motijheel thana on April 14 in 1991.

Ershad appealed at the High Court after the Additional District and Sessions Judge of Dhaka in a verdict on June 7, 1993 handed down seven years' jail sentence in the Janata Tower Case. Another 18 co-accused in the case, including Roushan, were also awarded seven years' jail term by the same court.

Since then, the hearing on the Janata Tower Case continued in a division bench of the High Court, which on Thursday awarded Ershad five years' jail sentence reducing two years from a seven-year jail term and fined Tk 5 crore, in default another two years in jail. Other accused in the case were fined Tk 10,000 each, in default two years in jail.

Ershad was put behind the bars a few days after he was ousted from power in December 6, 1990 and was released on bail on January 9 in 1997.

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PDB workers to go on three-day mass holiday from Sept 5

By Staff Correspondent

The Power Development Board (PDB) workers will go on a three-day mass holiday from September 5 to press their 14-point demands including job security.

Kazi Abdul Hamid and Md Zafrul Hassan, President and

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Work for welfare of electorate to win polls, Hasina asks partymen

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said next general election is very important for the nation and asked her partymen to make more sacrifice for people's cause and win their trust for a bigger victory, reports UNB.

"If you continue your work for the welfare of the electorate, the image of the party will get a boost and we will have a landslide victory in the upcoming general election," she told a meeting with Mymensingh District Awami League and its front organisations at Ganobhaban yesterday.

Hasina said Awami League wants to use the state power for economic well-being of the common people, unlike previous regimes that amassed personal wealth and fortune cashing in on the state power without caring about people's interests.

The Prime Minister said although BNP MPs had declared to resign from parliament long ago, they failed to do so. Because, it is not possible for them to sacrifice any privilege

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Tk 1.16 lakh snatched from autorickshaw passenger in city

By Staff Correspondent

Muggers snatched Tk 1.16 lakh from an autorickshaw passenger in front of Baitul Mukarram north gate in the city yesterday.

The incident occurred when Kamrul Hasan Liton, 32, was returning to his Elephant Road residence at about 5 pm after exchanging US dollar 2000 at Motijheel.

Three miscreants intercepted his autorickshaw and got into the vehicle when he reached in front of north gate of Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

The miscreants ordered Kamrul to hand over his valuables. As he refused to oblige they stabbed him and took away Tk 1.16 lakh in cash.

Kamrul was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Motijheel police said they were not aware of such incident and no case was filed in this connection.

Jail Killing Case Hearing adjourned till Sept 10

By Court Correspondent

The Metropolitan Sessions Judges Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed September 10 for next hearing on charge-framing in the Jail Killing Case.

Judge Ahmed Jamil Mostafa adjourned the proceedings of the case after hearing on charge-framing against two accused, Shah Moazzem Hossain and Major (Retd) Bazul Huda.

A F M Mahbubur Rahman, lawyer for Bazul Huda, submitted that his client is not an FIR-named accused in the case and the charges brought against him under Section 302 and 109 of the Penal Code have not proved.

He further said the on-duty officers and the then DIG (Prison) are shown as prosecution witnesses, not as accused in the case.

Mahub Hossain, lawyer for Shah Moazzem Hossain, said his client's name is not in the FIR and the charges brought against him have not been proved. He also said it is a political case.

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