

**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 teenaged 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 Qualyum 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 Pormura, 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.

Mon 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.

Mon, 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 Ibh Sinha Hospital reported admitting one each.

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

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By Kuldip Nayar

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

Prayer Timings

August 28

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

Source: Islamic Foundation

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 Piala, 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 of yarn that resulted in thick smoke.

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 work-

Mansion 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.

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ers at different floors were awoken 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 hours.

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Felling of trees, poaching threaten wildlife in Rangamati

By Special Correspondent

Rampant felling of trees, Jhump cultivation and poaching in the reserve forest in Pablaikhali 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 Jour-

nalists of Bangladesh (FEJB).

Dhaka 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, currently 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 only about 43 species including owls and common mynas were found. Fish population in the wetlands has also declined.

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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 rec-

ommend 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. Per-

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

Mahbub 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

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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

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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 Mahbub 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 Mahbub 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 the Janata Tower Case.

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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In this life of uncertainty
you can bank on us...



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, reported 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

Thieves 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 them 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.