

Restaurant fire kills 4 waiters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four waiters, three of them relatives, were burnt to death when a fire broke out at a restaurant at Pallabi early Thursday.

The waiters, two only 12 years, were trapped inside the small kitchen of Hotel Sheba and Restaurant at Section 7 on Road No. 3 during the fire as they could not open the steel door they had locked from inside.

Pallabi police recovered the charred bodies of Babul Hossain, 30, his cousin Mohammad Sumon, 12, Sumon's nephew Ismail Hossain, 12 and 16-year-old Mohammad Elias and sent them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Hailing from Balarampur village of Muliadi thana of Barisal, all of them worked in the hotel as waiters.

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A cargo train runs out of order at Maghbazar Rail Crossing yesterday, blocking the busy road for about one and a half hours.

Tagore's Nobel medal goes missing

PTI, Kolkata

In a daring burglary at the Uttarayan complex of Visva Bharati University in Shantiniketan, the Nobel Prize medal, a watch, a bangle and important citations belonging to Rabindranath Tagore were stolen from the museum Wednesday night.

West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharjee ordered a CID inquiry into the theft.

Describing the incident as 'dangerous', Bhattacharjee told reporters at the state secretariat here today that the theft was detected this morning when the University re-opened after a day's break.

The burglars sneaked into the museum breaking open the window railings, state IGP (Law and Order) Chayan Mukherjee here said adding that some people including the guards were detained in

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Blair, Gaddafi pledge to fight al-Qaeda

REUTERS, Tripoli

"It is a very, very important signal for the whole of the Arab world."

On the first visit to Libya by a British leader since 1943, Blair was whisked to a ceremonial tent outside Tripoli to meet the Libyan leader once condemned by former US President Ronald Reagan as the "mad dog of the Middle East".

The pair symbolically shook hands for the cameras before vowing to work together to oppose militant Islamic groups. "You are looking good, you are still young," Gaddafi told Blair, speaking in English.

Blair said Gaddafi recognised a common cause with us in the fight against al-Qaeda, extremism and terrorism, which threatens not just the western world but the Arab world also".

Blair promised not to forget "the pain of past actions" after the 1988 Lockerbie bombing which killed 270 people but said Libya should be welcomed back into the international fold.

"In reaching out the hand of partnership today, we do not forget the past," he said. "But we do try in the light of the genuine changes happening to move beyond it."

Gains to British business from the diplomatic thaw were being notched up even before Blair arrived. An official on the premier's plane to Tripoli said oil giant Royal Dutch/Shell had won a \$200 million gas exploration deal with Libya.

Blair announced that defence contractor BAE Systems would also

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Govt may delay EPZ TUs by 2yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is thinking of delaying introduction of trade union (TU) rights in the exclusive industrial zones by two years following requests from the foreign investors, according to sources.

The foreign investors, particularly the South Koreans, however, have been demanding a delay of three years before the law on limited trade union rights at the export processing zones (EPZs) comes into force.

But the government considers two years' time enough for them. "We think two years' time for them will not be unreasonable, though investors are demanding three

years," said Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday, emerging from a review meeting on the draft law.

"The review committee will sit again on Sunday to decide on the timeframe," he said.

Country director of the World Bank Christina I Wallich, US Ambassador Harry K Thomas, Chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) Zakir Hossain, Group Chairman of Youngone Ki Huk Sung and representatives from the Ministry of Law and Parliamentary Affairs were present at the meeting.

He did a t h e

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Suharto tops world graft rankings

BBC ONLINE

Former President Suharto of Indonesia tops the all-time corruption league table, an anti-graft group says.

Transparency International (TI), in its Global Corruption Report, uses the list to show how political corruption and private bribery hurt development.

Suharto's alleged haul of \$15-\$35bn in 31 years of rule, TI said, demonstrated how abuse of power "undermines the hopes... of developing countries".

Close behind is Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko, who allegedly looted \$5bn.

His haul, said TI, was particu-

Outlaws slay five in Chuadanga

UNB, Chuadanga

Extremists killed five people in three separate incidents in sadar upazila Wednesday night.

Locals said outlaws picked up Muazzin of a mosque, Motiar Rahman, 40, of Sambunagar and Abdul Bakkar, 35, of Mohammadjuma at gunpoint at 8:00pm.

They took them to a pond at Boalia village and stabbed them to death.

In another incident, outlaws slew Abdur Rahman, 55, of Boalia Eastpara and Ashraful Haque, 40, of Sambunagar at the same time in an adjoining field.



Muktijuddha Jodhgar in Dhaka holds a candlelight vigil in memory of the martyrs of March 25, 1971.

MUKTIJODDHA AWARD

Is this the country we fought for?

Women freedom fighters ask

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a gesture of special recognition to women's contribution in liberat-

ing the country, Proshika, a non-governmental organisation, presented 'Muktijoddha' awards to 12 female liberation war veterans yesterday.

On receiving the honour, Jahanara Begum Alo, who, then a Dhaka University student, fought in Pirojpur area in 1971, said, "I never thought the flag we were fighting for would some day be snatched away by the collaborators."

"Is this the country we fought

for?"

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