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26 killed in factory fire

100 injured; reason behind blaze at Ha-Meem unit not confirmed

KAILASH SARKAR and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

At least 26 people were killed and 100 more injured when a fire swept through Ha-Meem Group's sportswear factory at Narsinghapur in Ashulia yesterday.

Of the deceased, three suffocated while the rest died falling from the 11-storey factory trying to escape the inferno.

The identities of those killed could not be confirmed as of filing this report at 2:15am.

The fire started in the finishing section on the ninth floor around 1:00pm. Most of around 5,000 workers of the factory were out for lunch at that time, Lt Col (retired) Delwar Hossain, deputy general manager of Ha-Meem Group, told The Daily Star.

After efforts for over seven hours, firefighters doused the flames around 8:30pm, said Brig Gen Abu Nayeem Mohammed Shahidullah, director general of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

It took time to put out the fire because of fabrics inside the factory, he added.

Police, Rapid Action Battalion and army personnel helped the firefighters bring the situation under control.

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Plumes of black smoke coming out of That's It Sports Wear Ltd at Narsinghapur of Ashulia yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Trapped in smoke

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA and IQRAMUL HASAN

Ha-Meem Group garment workers could not reach fire-fighting equipment to douse the blaze, as choking smoke clouded their vision.

A number of injured workers said this to reporters at different city hospitals and clinics where they were under treatment.

Mokbul, a 32-year-old worker from Bogra, said they tried to come out of the building but could not see the stairs due to the coiling smoke.

"There was smoke on the ninth floor where the fire originated, and the tenth floor where the canteen is located,"

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Good Morning, Chittagong

From today, The Daily Star will also be published from the port city. Wake up with the newspaper



PHOTO: STAR

Schoolchildren queue in front of the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial to pay homage to the heroes of the soil.

Justice, how far?

Question in the air as nation mourns martyred intellectuals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the call to speed up the war crimes trial, the nation yesterday mourned for intellectuals and professionals massacred by the Pakistan army and their local collaborators on the eve of the country's independence.

Thousands of people, including teachers, students, freedom fighters, political activists, professionals and family members of the martyred intellectuals, visited the Martyred Intellectuals' Memorial at Mirpur and Rayerbazar Mausoleum in the morning

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MORE PHOTOS AND STORIES INSIDE

India plotted intellectuals' murder

Hoodwinks Jamaat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami, the party widely condemned for opposing the country's independence and collaborating with Pakistani occupation force during the Liberation War, is now accusing India of planning the murders of intellectuals on December 14, 1971.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BANGABANDHU MEDICAL UNIVERSITY 236 doctors hired illegally, says HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared illegal appointment of 236 medical officers at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The bench of Justice Mohammad Montazuddin Ahmed and Justice Gobinda Chandra Tagore passed the order on a writ

petition challenging the legality of the appointments, which were given in December 2005.

The court said the notification of the appointments by the then BSMMU registrar was issued without lawful authority.

It said the posts had not been approved by the university authorities at the time of the recruitment. They were given retrospective

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Khaleda siding with war criminals: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday alleged that BNP chief Khaleda Zia has sided with the war criminals and their collaborators through extending support for the December 26 hartal.

Hasina, also the Awami League president, said the hartal has been called to obstruct the war crimes trial

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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