



Rickshaw pullers and roadside vendors warm themselves in a fire on the footpath in the city's Tejgaon Industrial Area yesterday in the face of a sudden cold snap. (Story on Page 1)

PHOTO: STAR

STOVE BLAST AT RMG FACTORY 20 hurt in stampede

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 20 garment workers were injured when panicked workers were hurrying out of their factories after a kerosene stove exploded in a building at Joar Sahara of the capital yesterday.

The explosion occurred around 10:18am when a generator operator was cooking food in a stove on the ground floor of the building on Kuril-Biswa Road, said fire brigade officials. Getting panicked, workers of James Design Factory on the second floor and Euro Zone Factory on the third and fourth floors started rushing out of the building, in which some of them sustained

injuries, sources said.

The injured includes seven from James Design and 11 from Euro Zone factories.

Among them, four workers with severe injuries were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while the rest received treatment at local hospitals.

Injured sewing operator Poppy of James Design said many sustained injuries while getting down the stairs and a few from jumping out the floors.

"A person told us that a fire broke out and asked us to leave the building," she said.

Production remained suspended for over two hours at the factories, said Badda police.

Two die as boat capsizes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two, including the boatman, drowned when a boat capsized in the Buriganga river yesterday.

Fire officials and locals said a Showarighat-bound boat from Zinjira with five passengers on board sank in the river when a Sadarghat-bound trawler carrying sand from Kamrangirchar rammed it at about 11:00am.

Four passengers swam ashore while the rest could not make it. Local boatmen dived into the river and, after a frantic effort, recovered the body of Md Jasim, 37, the boatman, of Kamrangirchar around 1:00pm.

About five and half hours later, the divers found the body of Ramzan Ali, 32, a farmer of Keraniganj.

M Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Keraniganj, said the accident might have occurred due to dense fog.

PM's three-nation tour this month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will undertake a three-nation tour this month to strengthen diplomatic ties with UAE, UK and Canada.

Foreign ministry sources said the premier will pay a four-day state visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from January 16 to 19.

Staying home for a week, she will go to the UK on January 25 on a five-day visit. From there, Hasina is scheduled to visit Canada from January 30 to February 5.

Last year she visited India, China, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the US, the UK, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Belgium, Bhutan and Malaysia. Officials are working out details of the PM's visits and the foreign ministry will soon announce the purpose of the visit.

They said officials of Middle Eastern, Europe and America are already in those countries to chalk out the itinerary. Besides, the foreign ministry is in constant touch with Bangladesh missions in the UAE, UK and Canada.

Meanwhile, the government has completed preparations to welcome the Bhutanese premier Lyonchen Jigme Yoser Thinley on his arrival on January 10. He is scheduled to hold talks with Sheikh Hasina on January 11. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on manpower export between the two countries is expected to be signed after the talks.

Sources said Bhutan is interested to recruit doctors and diploma engineers from Bangladesh, as the country is currently implementing various development projects.

Besides, the two existing MoUs on cultural exchange and air services will be renewed. The Bhutanese leader will also call on President Zillur Rahman and the ministers for finance, commerce and foreign affairs on January 11. On the same day, Thinley will visit Dhaka University and deliver a lecture on "Gross National Happiness". On January 12, he will fly to the Sundarbans. Visiting the Chittagong Port and Cox's Bazar sea beach on the next day, he will return home on January 14.

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