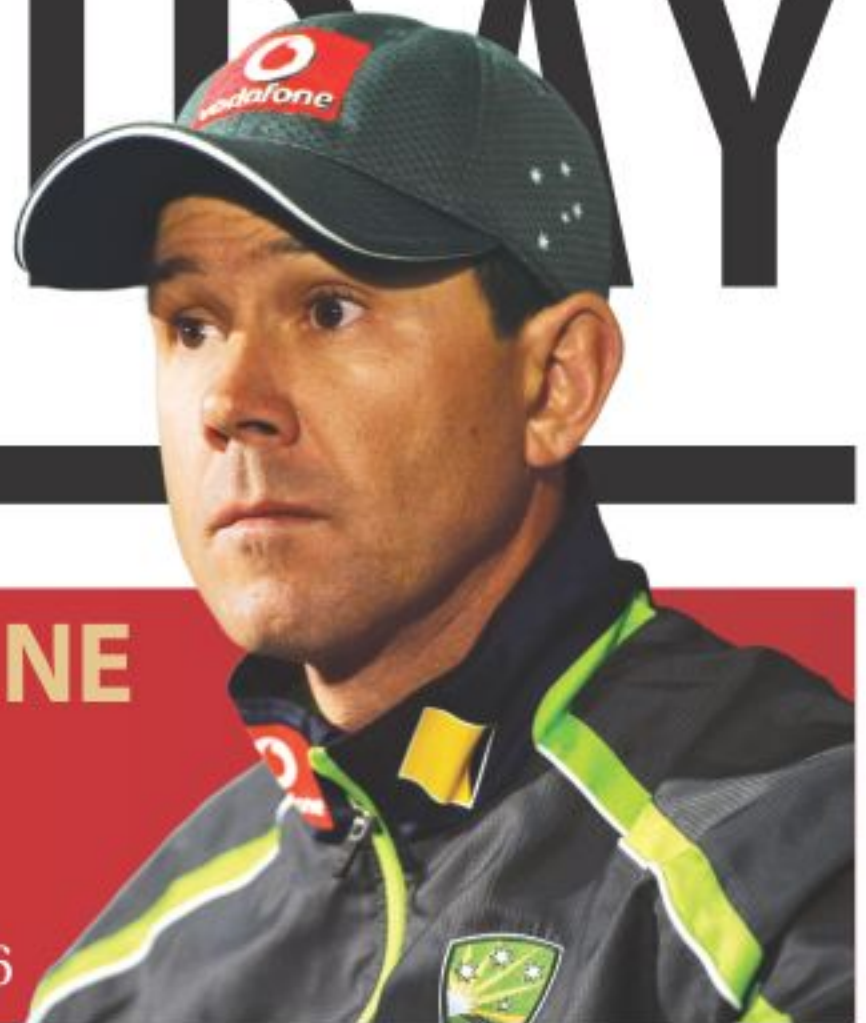


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LESSON LEARNT

BGMEA to ask all factory owners to upgrade their fire safety measures

PAGE B1

EGYPT RUSHES OUT CHARTER

The assembly votes to keep Islamic principles in the constitution

PAGE 7

PONTING DRAWS THE LINE

The Australian cricketing great will retire after the Perth Test

PAGE 16

RMG fire safety largely ignored

Fire service teams begin countrywide inspection to find out ill-equipped factories

KAILASH SARKAR

The government yesterday launched a nationwide drive to identify readymade garment factories with dismal safety systems, five days into the nation's deadliest industrial blaze in Ashulia.

Fifteen teams from the fire service inspected 73 garment factories in Ashulia and found that one-third of the factories did not have sufficient fire safety measures and security for workers.

The issue of workers' safety in factories has come up strongly following the devastating fire that killed at least 111 workers at Tazreen Fashions in Ashulia on November 24.

It was found that the factory neither had any emergency exit nor adequate fire safety measures. And fire-fighting equipment on its different floors had not been used during the incident.

Moreover, the eight-storey factory had permission to have only three floors.

The teams comprising 70 officials would inspect as many factories as possible between November 29 and December 2, said M Abdus Salam, director of Fire Service and Civil Defence (administration and finance), who led the drive with the help of police.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4



Five days into the Tazreen Fashions disaster, Noorjahan Begum is yet to give up hope of finding her missing brother Sabuj, a worker of the garment factory. She waits at the gate of the burnt-down building, demanding that her brother be brought back to her. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Too young to understand the shock

TAWFIQUE ALI

Mizan and Masum are cousins: too young to understand what took away their mothers late Saturday night.

Mizan, 11 months old, and Masum, 18 months old, are now too exhausted to cry for their mothers. They were leaning against their fathers' shoulders like statues.

Both depended on mother's milk.

Almost a week had gone by since their mothers went to work at Tazreen Fashions factory in Ashulia and did not return.

Mizan's mother Mitu's body was lined up among other bodies at Nishchintapur Primary School ground Sunday morning while Masum's mother Mahfuza is missing.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

FIRE PANIC 100 hurt in another stampede

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the country has been reeling from the shock of Saturday's Ashulia fire, around 100 panic-stricken workers were injured in a stampede following a rumour of fire in two factories at Savar yesterday.

The rumour brewed when a fluorescent light sparked at the factory of Vision Apparels Ltd at Purba Rajeshwar area around 2:30pm.

Gripped by panic, workers on the first floor rushed downstairs

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INJURED IN FACTORY FIRE

Caught in a loan trap

SOHEL PARVEZ and TAWFIQUE ALI

On Monday, Bablu sold the cow he had bought six months ago with all the savings he and his wife had. The decision was tough but he had no choice.

Money is what Babul now badly needs to save his wife, Amela. A worker at Tazreen Fashions, Amela has had her right leg and some of her ribs crushed into pieces. It happened when she jumped from the second floor of the factory building to escape Saturday's fire.

Bablu first thought Amela was dead. So he searched for her body among the 111 bodies, some 60 of them burned to coal.

But two days after the incident he came to know from a friend that his wife was being treated at a clinic in Uttara.

Having borrowed Tk 2,400 from a neighbour at Nishchintapur in Ashulia, he rushed at once to the clinic and asked his parents (who live in Rangpur) to sell the cow. On Tuesday came Tk 12,000 from the sale.

Himself a furniture painter, Bablu got his wife released from the clinic

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7



Amela in hospital bed.

The last call

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Knowing that he would die, Polash Mian called his mother to say a final goodbye.

Moyna Begum choked with emotion yesterday as she tried to recollect what her son had told her for the last time. Polash came from Latippur village that lost 11 of its residents to the deadly fire at Tazreen Fashions Ltd in Ashulia on November 24.

"Ma, I am going to die. You will find me in a toilet," Moyna quoted him as saying.

Polash would not let him go unidentified. He told his mother that he had tied a black shirt around his waist so that she could identify him even if his face changed beyond recognition.

After the fatal fire, Moyna said, she came to Dhaka along with other

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

It's for saving war criminals

PM plays Khaleda for Dec 9 road blockade; says no question of declaring emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday launched a blistering attack on Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia for her remarks that the government may declare a state of emergency to cling to power.

Khaleda, also BNP chief, on Wednesday at a rally of the BNP-led 18 party alliance, said the government was desperate to remain in power at any cost. Citing rumours, she claimed that emergency would be promulgated to ensure another term.

"Why will we promulgate the state of emergency? The

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3



First ODI against WI today

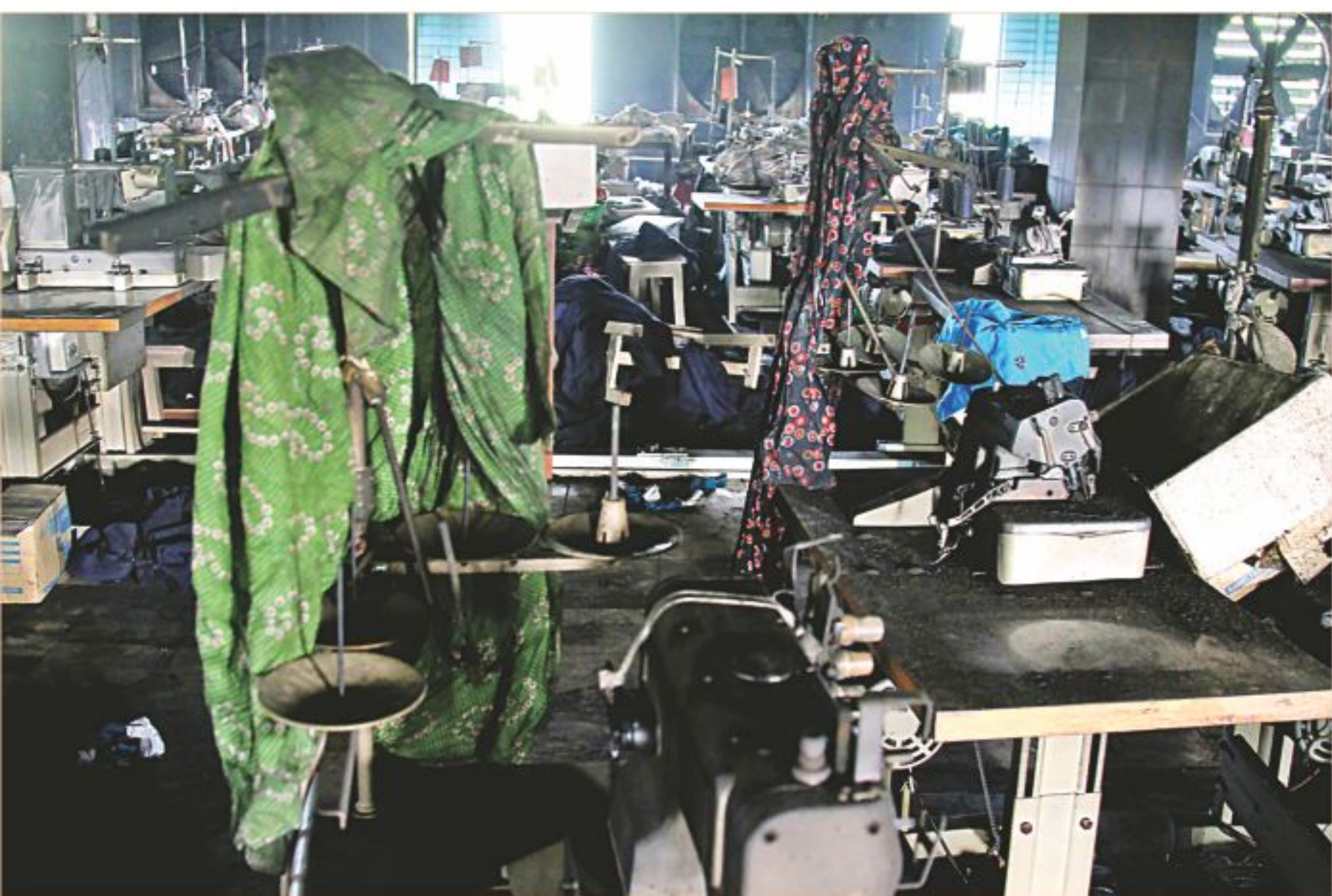
SAKEB SUBHAN from Khulna

As many as four players -- bowlers Shohag Gazi and Abul Hasan and batsmen Anamul Haque and Mominul Haque -- could be given Bangladesh debut when the five-ODI series against the West Indies gets underway at the Sheikh Abu Naser Stadium here today.

Of the four, Shohag, Mominul and Anamul are all set to take the field this morning while Hasan may replace fellow paceman Rubel Hossain.

The match starts at 9:00am and satellite

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The clothes of workers who jumped off the building to escape the flames on Saturday night were still there on the fourth floor of Tazreen Fashions Ltd yesterday. At least 11 of them fell to their deaths; many others suffered injuries.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Garment makers bash media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garment factory owners yesterday came down hard on the media for "exaggerating" the November 24 Ashulia fire incident and thus denting their good name.

Participating in an Extraordinary General Meeting of the BGMEA at its auditorium in the capital, the apparel makers

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BGMEA WAKES UP--PAGE B1

4 extortionists beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A mob beat four outlaws to death while they were fleeing after their failed attempt to collect illegal toll from a villager at Kaliani Beell area of Faridpur upazila in Pabna yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Khalil, 25, a leader of Janajuddha faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party, Liton Hossain, 22, and Akkas Ali, 26, its activists.

The identity of the other deceased could not be confirmed.

A gang of 10 to 12 led by Khalil went to the residence of Md Abul Kalam at Kaliani village at 8:00am to extort

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