



KILLS 111 BUT AFFECTS OVER 1,000

JUST over a week ago a devastating fire at Tazreen Fashions garment factory in Ashulia claimed the lives of 111 people. Nearly half the bodies were charred beyond recognition in what was clearly the worst industrial fire in the country. The unidentified bodies were buried at Jurain graveyard in the capital and will be in that state until their identification is made possible through DNA tests. Many children lost one of their parents in the blaze, others their wives, husbands, sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. Scores of men and women are yet searching, as we write, for their loved ones in the hope that they are yet alive. Those who were injured face difficulties of an acute kind, that of a shortage of money to help them out of their problems. As many as 25 to 30 children, all below the age of five, have lost either their fathers or mothers in the blaze. What future for them?

The future, for now, is bleak. For the present, though, there is this brazen truth: workers of Tazreen Fashions, who were expected to receive their wages yesterday, came all the way to collect them, but went back home empty-handed. The reason? The management simply did not pay them. That is an instance of the depths of degradation the poor can be pushed into.

As mourning gradually comes to an end, with of course the scars remaining for long, the families of the victims realize that they face more hardship ahead in the absence of those who will never come back to life. It was on these dead that they relied on for financial security or, at the very least, a decent life. And that is tragedy on an unmitigated scale.

Photo: SK. ENAMUL HAQ, ANISUR RAHMAN & RASHED SHUMON

