

# Where's the end of such man-made tragedies?



The fire in the garment factory took place when Bangladesh has been trying to change its image in the global market of readymade garments. Frequent incidents of fire would cause a negative impact on RMG exports in the near future. It's a matter of concern for our leading export sector.

Now the factory owners should start thinking seriously of how they can recover their images! I am sure they will do it. But do they know that Bangladesh's garment workers are the hardest working women and men in the world? These poor people are the most exploited and lowest paid in the world.

Poor workers have always been the victims because no guilty rich factory owners have so far been punished for their negligence towards the lives of the poor working people. Factory owners belong to the ruling class and always get the support and sympathy of powerful groups.

Over 100 people were burned to ashes in a moment! This is murder. Don't their lives have any value? Where is the end of these man-made brutal tragedies? Exemplary punishment of the guilty rich owners is the only way to make them sensitive towards the lives and livelihood of the poor workers.

**Yeasir Arafat Nadim**  
MSS, Department of Economics  
University of Dhaka

## Anti-global warming misinformation campaign

Among climate scientists, there is no longer any doubt about the reality and seriousness of global warming. Nevertheless, the fossil-fuel industry, composed of multinational coal and oil companies, runs a huge misinformation campaign by sowing public doubt in global warming, and is quick to strike back at climate scientists, according to a recent article by Zeeshan Hasan published in this daily.

It is really surprising that the fossil-fuel industry is funding think-tanks and websites and propagating reports by economists and meteorologists who know little about climate change. Even the anti-climate science campaign commits criminal acts of hacking the research data of the climate scientists. For instance, in 2009, unknown hackers stole thousands of e-mail messages from the Climate Research Unit of the University of East Anglia in the UK. Interestingly, climate change deniers repeatedly use the misinterpretation of a hacked e-mail as evidence in favour of them, which was sent by a climate scientist to scientist Michael Mann.

However, it is said by many that President Barack Obama's attempts at regulating carbon emissions rejected by the Congress is a consequence of the fog of public doubt created over global warming. It resulted in the failure in the Copenhagen summit on global warming in December 2009 to produce any significant international agreement to prevent global warming. We hope the climate change campaigners would win over the climate change deniers soon. Otherwise, this failure will leave the planet in continued peril of global warming.

**Mobarak Ali**  
RK Mission Road  
Gopibagh, Dhaka

# Poor affluent America



Drawn by aggressive discounts and earlier-than-ever opening hours, shoppers opened their wallets on Black Friday weekend in record numbers and handed retailers a promising start to the holiday season. Merchants raked in an estimated \$59.1 billion in sales from Thanksgiving Day through Sunday, up from \$52.4 billion a year earlier, as millions flocked to stores and browsed online, according to the National Retail Federation. Spending per shopper jumped 6% to \$423.

The true purpose behind having a holiday called "Thanksgiving" is being totally obliterated by a tsunami of greed. Meanwhile, more Americans than ever are living in poverty this year and very few people even seem to notice. However, perhaps we should all take time this week to remember the tens of millions of Americans that are going to be deeply suffering this winter. They keep telling us that "the recession is over" and yet poverty continues to spread like an out of control plague. But for most Americans life is still relatively "normal", and so the horrible suffering going on out there doesn't really affect them.

**Ted Rudow III, MA**  
Encina Ave  
Palo Alto, CA

## Bring errant garment owners to justice

People of Bangladesh have seen hundreds of fire incidents in garment factories. They have not yet seen any of the garment factory owners being arrested and punished for their crime. Inadequate fire safety measures and carelessness of the authorities could be cited as the main reasons for all the fire incidents in the garment factories. These owners are so powerful and influential that they are hardly held accountable for any of their misdeeds or carelessness. To them, each piece of machinery is more valuable than the lives of the poor workers. Hope the government will punish them, which will be a lesson for others and will make them act to prevent such incidents in their factories.

**Kaif Hassan**  
Dhaka

## Accept demand for caretaker govt.

December, the auspicious month is here; the month in which the valiant sons of this soil liberated the country after nine months of fierce fighting. The month of December is observed befittingly throughout the country; people from all walks of life pay respect to the martyrs laying wreaths at the National Mausoleum.

But that is all. The country which the freedom fighters presented us has been shattered; people are besieged with all sorts of problems; there is no respite for them. People are suffering due to the political unrest. The government's stand on the caretaker government is the main cause of this unrest and people think it as a most unjustified posture of the government.

Without delay the government must accept the demand of the opposition. And it is not only the opposition's demand; it is also the demand of the people as a whole.

So, to show true respect to the martyrs, we should reform

## Any insurance claim made against

### Tazreen Fashions fire?

More than a week has passed since Bangladesh's worst garment industry tragedy killed 113, injured hundreds and displaced thousands from home, hearth and livelihood. We have seen photos and films of wailing widows, heard the cries of orphans and the silent grief of parents. This is a normal phenomenon in our country and will soon fizzle out. The usual blame game among owners, government, firemen, police, buyers and know-alls is going on at full pitch while the bankers, investors and multi-lateral giants wait in the wings to join the fray.

I am, however, surprised that I could not find one word written on a subject, which should have had first page prominence by now. How much insurance coverage was held by Tazreen? Which companies insured the risk? Did these insurance companies investigate whether the factory premises were compliant as to fire safety prior to taking on the risk (the usual procedure)? Has any insurance claim/FIR been lodged? If so, for how much? What was the value of goods, machinery, etc., destroyed? Were the workers insured? Once these types of information are made public, we will have a clearer picture if there is any conspiracy, sabotage or complicity with fire, banks and insurance authorities. This has the entire 'Hallmarks' of being our latest multi-crore scam!

**Sikander Ahmed**  
Niketon, Gulshan-1  
Dhaka

ourselves, create a congenial atmosphere in the country, and take the country forward to have a respectful place in the world. It would be a real homage to those brave sons who shed their blood to liberate our country.

**Nur Jahan**  
Chittagong

## Will safety measures be taken in RMG factories?

On March 25th, 1911, a terrible fire broke out in Triangle Shirt-waist, a garments factory in New York. One hundred and forty six people died, most of them young women.

The fire started as the workday was ending, from a cigarette butt that was thrown into a garbage bin. The workers became aware of the fire as soon as they noticed smoke coming from the eighth floor. They rushed towards the stairwell. However, the doors and exits typically remained locked by the managers to prevent theft. Some managed to get to the roof, a few others made to the ground safely by using an elevator. Sixty two workers jumped to their deaths as the heat of the flames became unbearable. Fire engulfed the remaining ones. The two owners of the factory were taken to court but were later acquitted of the charges. But maybe, here is where the similarity ends with the latest garment factory fire at Ashulia. After the New York fire, there was a huge outcry from the public. The government introduced a series of tough safety laws and owners were held accountable for any violations. For American factory workers, a safe work environment has been a right ever since.

Will the latest Ashulia fire bring in a positive change to the safety of the very workers who contribute to 80% of the country's export earnings? Or will this end as the other fires with no accountability and a few speeches and visits by dignitaries?

**Reza Islam, Ph.D.**  
California, USA

# Ensure safety at workplace



More than 111 people were burnt alive in Ashulia fire. Accidents like this often take place but the authorities do not take any measures to prevent it.

In Bangladesh, almost everything's price is soaring high. But only the human lives are losing its value. People go to work to earn their living. If their workplaces can not ensure them proper safety, then where will they go?

**Cantara Wali**  
On e-mail

\*\*\*\*\*

I am very shocked to learn about the death of 111 people in the worst garment factory fire in the country. What a loss! I am worried about the notoriously poor working conditions and little or no enforcement of safety laws in these factories. I request all concerned to take initiatives to solve this problem.

**Sk. Kamal Hossain**  
Hatil, Khulna



Readers' instant comments on The Daily Star online reports. Log on to thedailystar.net to leave your comments.

## Gloom again over Padma

WB, ACC talk fails to reach consensus on action against Abul; anti-graft body to reinvestigate corruption allegation; expert team departs (December 6, 2012)

### Truth Teller

ACC does not want to sue Abul, and the World Bank does not want to fund the Padma Bridge project if Abul is not sued. We hope that the Awami League government will understand this.

### Nasim Hasan

Are those people out of the reach of law?

### Rubo

Looks like the Padma bridge is being sacrificed to save the corrupt.

### Robin

The message is simple. Bangladesh government pro-

TECTS corrupt people. Thieves and the corrupt have safe haven in Bangladesh!

### Himukala

One day truth will come out.

### N. Rahim

The people of Bangladesh should stop paying taxes as the government cannot prove how and where they are using the money.

### Nasirullah Mridha

After 37 years of Sheikh Mujib's killing we executed the killers. War criminals are appearing in the dock for their misdeeds in '71. How can Abul and the ACC chief

be sure that they will not be tried for their acts after a span of some time and by another government?

### Mohammad Zaman

Do not expect that Hossain and Hasan will face a trial during the lifetime of the current administration.

### Translucent

Abul is a firewall. He must be protected in order to save the rest.

### MAS Molla

I think ACC is not corrupt but it is under the executive's slavery. So ACC can't sue Abul.

### Amin

Is individual interest more important than national development?

### A Bangalee Patriot

Nobody in Bangladesh has the power to sue a patriot. So there will be no case against Abul.

### Hasan

Can't the ACC chairman stand up against all the

pressure for the wellbeing of his own country? If he can do it, he will be remembered by the people of Bangladesh with honour and reverence.

### Anonymous

The equation is A>B, where A = interest of Mr. Abul, and B = interest of the nation. May Allah protect us.

### Jumana Sarwar

The ACC is turning itself into an association of the corrupt and criminals.

### Optimist

I think the ACC chairman has lost his credibility. It is best for him to resign before things get more complicated.

### Barkat

The Awami League man whom the PM even called a patriot is greater than the entire nation. Protecting the party men at the expense of national interest will be a historical blunder by the AL. Let's see what the people of Bangladesh have kept in reply for these corrupt lead-