



Fire blazes at Gazipur RMG factory for more than 10 hours

16 fire fighting units try to douse flame; no casualty

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A devastating fire ripped through five floors of a ready-made garment factory, Dignity Textiles Mills Ltd, at Sreepur upazila in Gazipur yesterday.

No causality was reported but the flames were sweeping up to the top floor of the seven-storey steel building till filing of this report at 12:00midnight.

Officials said 16 fire fighting units, tackling the fire, were facing difficulties as they could not go near the building due to excessive heat and the boundary wall was too strong to be bulldozed.

A huge amount of thread, cotton, cloth and equipment was gutted, said Akteruzzaman Liton, deputy assistant director of Gazipur's fire office.

There were flammable products on all floors, and the building is still risky, said Director General of Bangladesh Fire Service and Civil Defence Brig Gen Ali Ahmed Khan.

Administrative Manager of the factory Nazmunnahar Kemi said the fire originated in the warehouse on the third floor around 2:15pm when all workers were outside the building on lunch break. The floor was completely destroyed, she added.

Fire officials suspect that the fire originated from an electric short circuit.

Around 3,000 people work at different knitting, dyeing, cutting, finishing and other sections of the composite factory, owned by Deel Hue, a national of Mauritius.

Smoke rises from a garment factory, Dignity Textile Mills Ltd, in Sreepur upazila of Gazipur after a fire erupted around 2:15pm yesterday. No casualty was reported.

PHOTO: STAR

Child trafficking in SA alarming

Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi tells seminar in Dhaka

STAR REPORT

Indian rights activist and Nobel winner Kailash Satyarthi yesterday expressed deep concern at child trafficking within and across the border of South Asian countries, particularly in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal.

Some girls are deceived and some kidnapped by the trafficking gangs, he told a seminar in Dhaka. "They know how to operate... They then sell these girls to other middlemen, to the brothel," he added. "These girls were sold very cheap."

Satyarthi, who dedicated his life for establishment of child rights at a young age and shared the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize with teenage Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai, also talked of the attitude of the region's people to child labour.

South Asians are very proud of the diversity of their cultures and religions, he said. "But it is unfortunate that sometimes we feel very happy of having a domestic child at our house. It's a shame that our children are not

going to school."

The activist said people did not feel ashamed that they tortured a child domestic help. "They can endure a dog's entry into their rooms but not a girl or boy's [who is a domestic help]. We have a double standard in our life."

Mentioning that people blame poverty for these children working as domestic helps, Satyarthi asked, "Who is responsible for their poverty?"

He also referred to child marriage as a crime. To fight the vice, he called for help of religious leaders, teachers, and civil society members.

Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum organised the seminar at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Separately, the activist who gave up his engineering career for freeing children from bonded labour shared how he was disturbed by inequality, especially against



children and how they were forced to work under harsh conditions, reported BSS.

When he was 25 or 26, he started a journal called "The Struggle Shall Continue". One day while he was sitting in his office, a frail old man came knocking at his door saying, "Babuji help me. Help me free my daughter."

His daughter Sabbo was sold to a brothel and Satyarthi went to free her. He could not do so and got beaten up. But he thanked Sabbo because she ignited a fire within him, which drove him to free over 84,000 children from labour and start a worldwide movement against child slavery.

He shared the story during his lecture, "Education for Sustainable Development", at Dhaka University, hosted by the social sciences faculty.

Highlighting the role of education in

development, Satyarthi said development could sustain only if education was ensured for all.

He urged youths to follow the 3D rules -- Dream, Discover and Do.

He said he would soon be launching a programme under which 100 million youths would be gathered together to free and rehabilitate 100 million children enslaved around the world. One youth will be responsible for bringing change in one child's life, he added.

Addressing a separate conference on "Right to Education" in the LGED auditorium, the Nobel winner described financing as a major challenge in the education sector in developing countries where millions of children drop out of school, BSS reported.

He also saw fundamentalism as a big challenge in some Asian and African countries, particularly for female education.

Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) jointly organised the conference.

HC summons Bhairab UNO for expelling 2 school students for not paying picnic fee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday summoned the upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Bhairab to appear on June 15 for expelling two students from Biam Laboratory School for not paying picnic fees.

UNO Jasmin Aktar, also the principal of the school, has to appear before the HC bench of Justice Quazi Reza-Ul Hoque and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman by 10:30am on June 15 to explain about the incident, Deputy Attorney General Tapas Kumar Biswas told The Daily Star.

The HC also stayed the UNO's decision and also issued a rule upon the government to explain in two weeks why the principal's action should not be declared illegal.

Petitioner's lawyer Nasim Islam Raju told The Daily Star that the UNO on May 6 expelled two students Fahmida Islam and Tahsina Mehzabin for not paying the picnic fees.

Later, Touhidul Islam, father of two students, filed the writ petition.



Rotary Club of Ramna has given the "Professional Excellence Award to Women" to 10 individuals -- Zobera Rahman Linu for contribution in sports, Syeda Rizwana Hasan for protecting the environment, Kona Reza for promoting traditional food as innovative entrepreneur, Sara Zaker as leading cultural personality, Tasmima Hossain for upholding women's issue through "Anannya" Magazine, Prof Parveen Fatima for introducing infertility treatment in Bangladesh, Prof Farzana Islam for being the first woman vice-chancellor, Salma Khan for contribution to development of women, Professor Emeritus Sultana S Zaman for her lifelong service to people with disability, and Rotarian DG Safina Rahman for being the first woman rotary district governor in Bangladesh. Rotarian Taleya Rehman, president of the club, chaired the ceremony at Gulshan Club, Dhaka on Tuesday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Road crashes kill 5, injure 7

CITY DESK

Five people were killed and seven others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday.

In Jessore, two motor-bike riders were killed and another was injured when their motorcycle hit a roadside tree at Aladipur in Bagharpara upazila.

In Rangpur, Md Nurunnabi, 30, of Rangpur city was killed and six people were injured when a bus hit a roadside tree as the driver lost control over the steering on Rangpur-Dhaka highway in Baro Dargah area of Pirganj upazila.

In Barisal, two people were killed when a truck hit their motorcycle on Barisal-Dhaka highway in Rahamatpur area under Airport Police Station.

Woman hacked by husband for dowry

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A woman was beaten and hacked allegedly by her husband for dowry in Kandigaon village under Joynetapur upazila of Sylhet on Thursday.

The victim Suhada Begum, 22, is undergoing treatment at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Suhada's father said Nazrul Islam, 34, used to torture his daughter since their marriage.

On Thursday night, Nazrul with his family beat her up and hacked as she refused to bring Tk 1 lakh which he demanded.

A case was filed.

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Stop plans to let foreigners explore

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and oil blocks and extracting petroleum, he said, adding that foreign companies would establish full control on the country's gas resources if the blocks were opened up to them.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member secretary of the National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Power and Ports, said lobbyists were helping foreign companies

attain petroleum resources which would put Bangladesh's energy security in jeopardy.

Foreign companies take away a large portion of the discoveries, resulting in huge losses for the country. "Bapex and Petrobangla must be modernised so they can perform better," he said.

Professors MM Akash, Robaet Ferdous, Shamsul Alam, Shafiquzzaman, Akmal Hossain and Azizur Rahman also spoke.

Health, social costs outweigh tax revenue

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emphasised on enforcing it. MANAS organised the discussion marking World No Tobacco Day in the capital's Bangladesh National Museum.

Noted academician and essayist Dr Anisuzzaman said quitting tobacco was difficult once a person became addicted.

MANAS founding chairman Dr Arup Ratan Choudhury said Bangladesh was among the top 10 countries with the highest number of smokers.

"Our annual expenditure for battling tobacco related diseases is about Tk 5,000 crore which is more than twice of what the tobacco companies give as revenue," he said.

Urging the authorities to curb tobacco farming, he cited the Department of Agriculture Extension's data, saying tobacco was cultivated in about 1.08 lakh hectares of farmland last year, a significant rise from 70,000 hectares in 2013.

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