

7th anniversary of Tazreen tragedy today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 7th anniversary of Tazreen Fashions tragedy in which at least 113 workers were killed and 172 were injured as fire wrecked the garments factory in November 2012.

To pay homage to the deceased and demanding workers' safety, four national federations of the garments sector will bring out a rally in front of the National Press Club in Dhaka in the morning.

Amirul Haque Amin, president of National Garment Workers' Federation, said, "Though lots of safety measures have been taken in the garments sector after the incident, we need to keep strengthening those."

He also demanded quick verdict in the cases filed against the owner of the garments who was held responsible for the tragedy.

On November 24, 2012, fire broke out at Tazreen Fashions Limited, a garments factory in Ashulia, some 35km from Dhaka city.

When the workers attempted to leave the building, the management locked it from the outside. Some 113 workers were killed in the fire. Many jumped through the windows of the building to save their lives.

Two cases were filed with Ashulia Police Station against the factory owner and others. Police submitted charge sheets in both the cases against 13 people on September 2015.

After the incident, the retailers and brands working in association with the factory paid victims compensation under pressure from the International Labour Organisation.

Neighbours

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information, Ashraf went to the spot and tried to prevent Afzal and his men from cultivating on his land.

Afzal and his men then started beating Ashraf who later died on the spot, the case statement added. The accused managed to flee.

On information, police went to the spot, rescued the body and sent it to Pabna Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

The victim's son Hossain Pramanik said, "My father was a teacher. He used to teach students to good citizens. And this is the fate he had to meet! I demand exemplary punishment of the culprits."

Meanwhile, police detained Afzal's wife for quizzing, said the OC, adding that they were investigating the case.

Protesting the killing and demanding justice, agitated locals demonstrated in the area.

JU closure

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He also held the government responsible, saying that it should probe into the allegation of corruption and take action as per the probe report.

"Chittagong League president and general secretary were removed on corruption allegations, but the VC remains in office despite she was accused of the same charges," Anu said.

This is because corruption and tender rigging have become normal in our country, he added.

"The government is conducting an anti-corruption drive. We know the loopholes of the drive. Had there been any transparency in the drive, the government would have congratulated the Jahangirnagar University students and teachers who have been protesting against corruption."

Instead of doing so, he said, the government has paved the way for harassing the protesters.

Jamal Uddin, professor of the university's environmental sciences department, said the VC had lost her moral rights to be in the post and that they would continue their protest to free the university from maladministration.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolon, said the university vice-chancellors were abusing the powers they were given.

The protesters placed three-point demands at the rally. The demands include removal of Farzana Islam and proper trial for the perpetrators who carried out the November 5 attacks, cancellation of the decision of vacating the halls, and proper investigation into graft allegations and public disclosure of the probe findings.

JU students have been demonstrating on the campus since August 23, demanding the relocation of three male students' dormitories, which the authorities had planned to construct near the Rabindranath Hall.

The protesters also demanded a judicial probe into the allegations of corruption and irregularities that took place before the approval of these construction projects.

The JU authorities on November 5 shut down the university for an indefinite period after a group of BCL men swooped on teachers and students who had kept the VC confined to her residence demanding her resignation.



Explosives and rocket-propelled grenades found in Satchhara forest in Chunarughat upazila of Habiganj yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Myanmar should be more generous

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freedom of movement, health services and government jobs, since then.

Over the last four decades, waves of violence in Rakhine led hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas to flee to Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and other countries.

Following a military crackdown, about 750,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh since August 2017, what was termed by UN a "classic example of ethnic cleansing".

Despite two attempts of repatriation under a bilateral deal between Bangladesh and Myanmar, no Rohingya returned home, arguing that the conditions in Rakhine were not conducive to their safe return. They also want guarantee of citizenship.

GLOBAL CHALLENGES
The former UN secretary-general yesterday highly commended Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's "strong commitment" in dealing with all global challenges, including

climate change, implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and empowering women and youths.

Ban said a global solution was needed to address all those major global challenges.

He, through Foreign Minister Momen, invited the premier to attend the Climate Adaptation Summit, to be hosted by the Netherlands in October next year.

Ban said the Global Commission on Adaptation, under the leadership of the Dutch government, is going to convene the summit.

He said Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries when it comes to climate change.

The former UN secretary-general said he has been saying across the world about the very successful story of Bangladesh in climate adaptation. "Bangladesh is doing excellent."

Appreciating the country's efforts to deal with recent cyclones, he said even one death would be very tragic.

Talking to reporters, Momen said

he and Ban discussed issues related to climate change, Climate Adaptation Summit, birth centenary celebrations of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Rahman, Rohingya crisis, SDGs and poverty reduction. The former UN chief arrived in Dhaka on Friday night on a brief visit, his second tour of Bangladesh this year, after leaving the United Nations.

Another 125

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deported workers were victims of illegal "free visa" trade.

"The recruiting agencies allure the workers saying they would be able to work on their own and earn more money with this so-called 'free-visa,'" said Shariful.

He informed that this issue would be raised in a joint technical committee meeting between the two countries in Saudi capital Riyadh this week.

He urged authorities to take swift action against such illegal visa trade.

The place on Earth

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Nature Ecology & Evolution.

"After analysing many more samples than in previous works, with adequate controls so as not to contaminate them and a well-calibrated methodology, we have verified that there's no microbial life in these salty, hot and hyperacid pools or in the adjacent magnesium-rich brine lakes," said Purificación López García, study author and biologist at the French National Centre for Scientific Research.

However, outside of the ponds, it's a different story.

"What does exist is a great

diversity of halophilic archaea (a type of primitive salt-loving microorganisms) in the desert and the saline canyons around the hydrothermal site, but neither in the hyperacid and hypersaline pools themselves, nor in the so-called Black and Yellow lakes of Dallol, where magnesium abounds," said López García. "And all this despite the fact that microbial dispersion in this area, due to the wind and to human visitors, is intense."

The researchers performed mass sequencing of genetic markers meant to find and classify any microorganisms that may be present,

as well as cultures to find microbes, cytometry for detecting individual cells, brine chemical analysis and electron microscopy combined with X-ray spectroscopy.

At first glance, minerals rich in silica may mimic microbial cells, the researchers said. But their analysis revealed the difference.

"In other studies, apart from the possible contamination of samples with archaea from adjacent lands, these mineral particles may have been interpreted as fossilized cells, when in reality they form spontaneously in the brines, even though there is no life," López García said.

'Frankly, I want a trial'

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that showed how angered and unsettled he has been by an impeachment inquiry that threatens his presidency.

Multiple witnesses, in often damning testimony under oath, buttressed charges the president conditioned much-needed military aid and a coveted White House meeting on Ukraine investigating his political rivals.

But with many Republicans seemingly unmoved, Trump bashed the testimony as "total nonsense" and said he relished the chance to defend himself.

"Frankly, I want a trial," Trump told morning show Fox and Friends.

The House Intelligence Committee has not formally concluded its role in the inquiry, possibly waiting for a court ruling on Monday that could empower members to force senior Trump aides to testify.

But Democrats appear determined to hold an impeachment vote in the House of Representatives by the end of the year, which could see Trump go on trial in the Senate in January.

Removing him from office would require conviction by a two-thirds majority in the Republican-controlled upper chamber.

The increasing prospect of becoming

only the third US president formally impeached, after Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton, has riled the brash New York billionaire, and he fired off multiple attacks against rivals leading the effort.

His main Democratic nemesis in Congress, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, is "crazy as a bedbug" for pressing a "scam" impeachment, he fumed.

House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, who has presided over the public phase of the inquiry, responded, "A 'nutjob' and a 'sick puppy' who should be sued for having 'lied' about the president's 'flawless' Ukraine call," Trump added.

Trump was quick to say he "hardly" knows several of the witnesses, including his own ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sonnen, who said Trump sought a quid pro quo from Ukraine.

But he rushed to the defense of his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, who has emerged in many accounts as having orchestrated the shadow policy to pressure Ukraine.

"Rudy is a great crime fighter," Trump said, giving an unqualified endorsement to one of the most controversial figures in the Ukraine saga.

"He is a friend of mine. He is a

great person, an iconic figure in this country," he said of the former New York major.

Trump also repeated the conspiracy theory that Ukraine, not Russia, interfered in the 2016 US election -- just a day after a former National Security Council expert, Fiona Hill, denounced that in testimony as a "fictional narrative" advanced by Russia to harm the United States.

"They have the server from the DNC -- Democratic National Committee," Trump said of Ukraine, claiming that Democrats gave the computer to a company owned by a very wealthy Ukrainian."

The claim appeared to alarm Fox hosts, including Steve Doocy.

"Are you sure they gave it to Ukraine?" a skeptical Doocy asked Trump.

"That's what the word is, and that's what I asked actually in my phone call," Trump responded, referring to his July 25 conversation with Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky at the heart of the impeachment inquiry.

Trump mentioned his political rival Joe Biden to Zelensky and pressed the new president to investigate a Ukrainian firm where Biden's son worked while his father was vice president.

Myanmar may have 'state policy'

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bring justice to victims and affected communities, and count on the full support and cooperation of States Parties, civil society, and other partners."

On July 4, the prosecutor sought authorisation to investigate the situation in Bangladesh/Myanmar in the period since October 9, 2016.

The office of the prosecutor of the ICC conducts independent and impartial preliminary examinations,

investigations and prosecutions of the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

Since 2003, the Office has been conducting investigations in multiple situations within the ICC's jurisdiction in Uganda, Congo, Sudan, Central African Republic (two distinct situations); Kenya, Libya, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Georgia and Burundi.

The Office is also currently conducting preliminary examinations

relating to the situations in Colombia, Guinea, Iraq, Palestine, the Philippines, Nigeria, Ukraine, and Venezuela.

Bangladesh is hosting over 1.1 million forcefully displaced Rohingyas in Cox's Bazar district and most of them arrived there since August 25, 2017 after a military crackdown by Myanmar, which the UN called a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing" and "genocide" by other rights groups.

Landslides kill 29 in Kenya

AFP, Nairobi

At least 29 people were killed in Kenya when their homes were swept away in landslides during ferocious overnight rainstorms, the government said yesterday.

Their homes were hit in the early hours of yesterday amid torrential rains in the Pokot region, 350 kilometres (220 miles) northwest of the capital Nairobi.

"We are saddened to confirm that 12 people from Tapach and Parua in Pokot South, and 17 from Tamkai in Pokot Central lost their lives," Interior Minister Fred Matiang'i said in a statement.

"Our profound sympathies go to the families and friends of those who have been affected."

Army and police helicopters have been sent, Matiang'i said, with rescue efforts delayed because roads have been cut and bridges closed after streams turned into raging torrents.

"Massive landslides reported in

various areas of West Pokot County following heavy downpour," Kenya Red Cross said in a message, adding its emergency response teams had deployed to help.

West Pokot County Commissioner Apollo Okello said that two children were pulled out alive from the smashed wreckage of their mud-covered homes.

"They have been rushed to hospital," he said.

Rescue efforts to dig bodies out of the dirt continued.

"The challenge we are facing is the heavy rains, but we are trying our best," he added.

It is not only Kenya that is affected. The landslides come amid weeks of destructive rains and flooding across East Africa.

Violent downpours have displaced tens of thousands in Somalia, submerged whole towns in South Sudan and killed dozens in flash floods and landslides in Ethiopia and Tanzania too.

Corbyn to remain 'neutral' in another Brexit referendum

AFP, London

he added. "That will be the choice that we put before the British public within six months."

Some Labour MPs have said they will vote against their own party's deal and in favour of staying in the EU.

It is the first time that Corbyn, a veteran eurosceptic who has not revealed how he would vote in another referendum, has stated how he will campaign.

The Brexit issue is threatening to hurt Labour in its traditional working class heartlands, which mostly voted to leave the EU.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is hoping to pick up stray Labour leave voters, but suffered a difficult night in front of an unforgiving crowd.

96 'robbers, arms dealers'

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said Sirajuddoullah, ringleader of Siraj Bahini.

After Siraj, Nurul Amin said he was once a robber and surrendered at a programme earlier in October last year, along with 42 other robbers.

"I am now dreaming of leading a life like others in the society. I want to start a business of my own," he added.

The robbers were given Tk 50,000 each as donation as part of the government's initiative to bring them back to normal life.

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