

7 YRS OF TAZREEN FIRE

The pain still resonates

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

For most of the last seven years, Shobita Rani has been unemployed.

She was hired a couple of times by garment factories in Savar over the years, but the mother of three has been unable to sit or stand for long due to a crippling back pain she has had since jumping through the first-floor window of Tazreen Fashions.

Like her, many survivors of the deadly fire at the garment factory have not been able to resume a normal life yet.

But a resolute Shobita refused to give up. Last year, she and nine other injured workers set up a factory in Buripara area of Ashulia on October 1.

"When factory authorities started denying us appointments and as we were unable to work full time, I decided to set up a mini-factory with the help of others," she told this correspondent. "But I could not maintain it due to fund crisis," she lamented.

At least 113 workers were killed and 172 injured on November 24, 2012, in the fire at Tazreen, some 35km south of Dhaka.

When the fire broke out, the workers attempted to leave the building through the front gate, but the management had locked it from outside. Most of the survivors left the building by jumping from the upper storey windows.

Shilpi Akter, 30, another survivor, said she was a sewing machine operator of the factory. She jumped



RMG workers at a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club demand justice for victims of the Tazreen blaze, that claimed 113 lives.

PHOTO: STAR

off the second floor of the building and got injured.

"I'm still not fit to work," she said. "The government has not done enough for victims like us. We demand proper compensation."

7TH ANNIV OF THE TRAGEDY

Marking the seventh anniversary of the tragedy, survivors and family members of the deceased yesterday demanded capital punishment for those responsible.

They also demanded compensation for the survivors and victim families, rehabilitation and establishing a security fund for factory workers.

Marking the day, human chains rallies and processions were held in Savar and the capital where participants also urged the government to acquire the factory land and build a hospital and dormitory to rehabilitate the affected workers.

Four national federations of the garments sector held a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club. In the morning, labour leaders and activists joined a rally in front of the factory and paid homage to the deceased.

Khairul Mamun Mintu, organising secretary of Garments Sramik Trade SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Students demand justice for death of HSTU student

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Students of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University (HSTU) in Dinajpur formed a human chain yesterday, demanding justice for a fellow student who was found dead in Mymensingh on November 17.

Hundreds of students joined the human chain in front of the campus on Dinajpur-Rangpur highway, blocking road communication for an hour.

Khandakar Shihabul Shishir (22), a second-year student of HSTU, was found dead in a ditch at the Muktagachha upazila's Majhipara area. Students at the human chain claimed that he was murdered.

Saiful Islam, a student of the university's business studies faculty, urged police to catch the criminals at the earliest.

Sumona, a student of fisheries, urged university authorities to put pressure on police to properly investigate the incident.

Shriroopi Shikdar, acting registrar of HSTU, said they have already contacted police of Muktagachha after Shishir's death.

Contacted, Zahangir Alam, inspector (investigation) of Muktagachha Police Station, said Shishir's father had filed a murder case, accusing four persons.

Police will start investigating after getting the autopsy report, he added.

Auto-rickshaw driver's body found in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Police recovered the body of an auto-rickshaw driver from Kheyaghat area under Fatullah Police Station in Narayanganj on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Harun Mia (27). He used to live with his wife Sharmin Begum in Shasangaon area.

Locals spotted Harun's body lying in the auto-rickshaw around 11pm. Police recovered the body and sent it to Narayanganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy around 1am, said Aslam Hossain, officer-in-charge of Fatullah Model Police station.

Quoting family members, the OC said Harun left the house around 8:30pm. "There was an injury mark from a sharp knife on Harun's chest. The exact cause of death will be known after autopsy. The death is being investigated," the OC added.

War crimes evidence against three AL men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday said it has found evidence against three Awami League men over their alleged involvement in crimes during the country's Liberation War.

They were "involved" in abduction, confinement, torture and killing at Kola village in Haldighati union of Jhenidah during the war, the investigation agency's coordinator Abdul Hannan Khan and coordinator Sanaul Huq said at a press conference at the capital's Dhamondi.

Two of the three -- Md Rashid Mia (66) and Shaheb Ali Malitha (68) from Jhenidah Sadar -- were arrested on October 22 and are now in jail. Investigators did not mention the name of the other accused.

They were involved with Jamaat-e-Islami and joined Rajakar Bahini in 1971. They later joined AL, the investigators said.

Rashid is now the president of Haldighati Union AL and also chairman of the union.

The investigators will hand over the probe report and other relevant documents to the Chief Prosecutor's Office of the tribunal today, said Abdur Razzak Khan, investigation officer of the war crimes case.

After receiving the report and other documents, the Chief Prosecutor's Office will prepare formal charge if those documents are found satisfactory.

The office will then submit it before the tribunal for initiating trial.

FR TOWER ILLEGAL EXTENSION CASE

Court directs ACC to submit probe report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to submit by February 4 the probe report of the two cases filed against 23 people for their alleged involvement in illegally extending the construction of FR Tower in Banani.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Dhaka Senior Special Judge's Court passed the order after ACC failed to submit the report yesterday.

Former Rajuk chairman KM Harun; former inspectors Mehed Uzzaman and Aurangzeb Siddique Nannu; former directors (estate) Shamsul Alam and Md Moamzzeem Hossain; former coordinator Mofazzel Hossain; deputy director Shawkat Ali; assistant director Shah Md Sadru Alam; FR Tower land owner SMHI Faruque; building co-owner Tasvirul Islam; Rupayan Group chairman Liakat Ali Khan alias Mukul, and landowner Syed Hossain Imam Faruque are of the 23 accused in the cases.

Bullet-hit body of 'robber' recovered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Police recovered the bullet-hit body of an alleged robber from Mirsarai upazila of Chattogram yesterday morning.

The deceased is Md Fazal Haque (37). He was accused in three robbery cases and was on the run, said police.

Officer-in-Charge Jahedul Kabir of Mirsarai Police Station said locals spotted the body at Kolghar area in the morning.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Chattogram Medical College Hospital for autopsy, he said.

A case was filed.

Why not set up exam halls at all districts, upazilas: HC to govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday asked the government to explain in four weeks why it should not be ordered to establish exam halls in all district and upazila headquarters across the country for holding the public and recruitment examinations. Assistant Attorney General M Saiful Islam represented the state.

The court sought the explanation by issuing a rule upon the authorities concerned of the government.

The bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahsan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader came up with the rule following a writ petition recently filed by Advocate Sarder Zakir Hossain, seeking necessary order on the matter.

Citing the petition, Zakir told The Daily Star that different public examinations including PEC, JSC, SSC, HSC, degree tests and recruitment exams are held at schools and colleges in district and upazila levels and therefore, classes of the institutions remain closed for a long period, and students' studies are hampered.

Info office of Manipal Hospitals opens in Bangladesh

CITY DESK

Manipal Hospitals India has inaugurated its information and care office on the capital's Gulshan Link Road yesterday, said a press release.

The multi-specialty healthcare provider caters to both Indian and international patients.

Officials from Global BD Bangladesh and Manipal Hospitals were present at the inauguration ceremony.

Jewel Khan, director of Global BD, and Ram Gopal Bardhan, corporate regional head of Saarc Countries, Manipal Hospitals spoke at the event.

M'singh road crash kills teen

Three others dead, 23 injured in accidents

STAR REPORT

A teenager was killed and three were injured after the truck carrying them fell into a roadside ditch at Gajohorpur in Tarakanda of Mymensingh around 11:30am yesterday.

The deceased is Hridoy Mia (13), son of Abdul Kashem.

Quoting locals, Officer-in-Charge Mizanur Rahman of Tarakanda Police Station said Hridoy and his father were travelling on the back of a truck. At one point, the driver lost control and the vehicle fell into the ditch, killing Hridoy on the spot, and injuring his father, among others.

Locals rescued the injured and rushed them to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH). On information, police recovered Hridoy's body and sent it to MMCH morgue for autopsy.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee. A case was lodged.

Meanwhile in Manikganj, two people

were killed and 20 injured after a collision between a bus and truck at Falsatia village under Shibalaya upazila around 1am yesterday.

The deceased are truck driver Saiful Morol (30) and bus passenger Masud Sheikh (25), said police.

The injured were admitted to different hospitals. A case was filed with Shibalaya Police Station, reports BSS.

In Barishal city, college student Abhoy Das (17) was killed after a truck crashed into his motorcycle in Nathullabab area around 11:30pm on Saturday.

Abhoy was a first-year student of Infra Polytechnic Institute and son of Sajal Das, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the accident left Abhoy critically injured. He was taken to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

Meanwhile in Manikganj, two people

Tazreen owner appeals to get back passport

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Delwar Hossain, managing director of Tazreen Fashions and the main accused of the case related to the 2012 deadly factory fire, has applied to the lower court for his passport.

Delwar along with his wife Mahmuda Akter, chairperson of Tazreen, applied for their passports to the Additional Sessions Judge Court-1 in Dhaka on November 7 to visit their daughter studying abroad, sources at the public prosecutor's (PP) office told The Daily Star.

Asked, Delwar said his passport was confiscated on April 12, 2013 by immigration officials, when he tried to travel to India for a business meeting.

Eight months later, police pressed homicide charges against him, his wife and 11 other people, in the case.

Sources at the PP's office said, the court asked the applicants to submit a number of documents along with passports of their two children who reside in the country, and ID of the educational institute where the daughter, living abroad, studies.

The court asked for these documents to ensure that he cannot leave the country with his whole family, the source added, confirming Delwar has not submitted all the documents asked by the court yet. Once the court receives all the documents, it will decide if the passports can be returned.

Talking to the Daily Star yesterday, Delwar said he first applied for the passports about seven to eight months back but the application was rejected.

"My wife needed to go abroad for treatment and my daughter was going abroad for studies," he said, adding that his elder daughter studies in the USA.

He confirmed that the court has attached some conditions to return his and Mahmuda's passports, but they have not been able to submit all the necessary documents yet.

He hopes that he may get a decision in this regard on the next hearing date of the case on January 30, 2020.

"This case is not one where I would be given punishments like life sentence or death penalty; then why would I try to escape from the country?" he said, adding "Besides, at my age, I will not even get any job in a foreign country."

Delwar said the case is being delayed because of absence of witnesses.

He also said he has been trying to come back to the business again with catering work orders under subcontracting basis.

However, he has been facing challenges in reviving his business, as banks are not assisting him after the fire incident. "Moreover, I could not withdraw Tk 18.26 crore from the insurance company yet," Delwar claimed.

Delwar has also been trying to sell his property and building floors to pay back loans of more than Tk 108 crore.

Army chief to visit Myanmar next month

Work of barbed wire fence along Rohingya camps begins

UNB, Cox's Bazar

Mentioning that barbed-wire fences will be erected around Kutupalong and Nayapara Rohingya camps, Army Chief General Aziz Ahmed yesterday said initial work on installing the boundary pillars has started.

"Next month, I'll go to Myanmar where we will discuss issues relating to improving the relationship between the two countries. Many issues will come up and we may talk about the Rohingya issue but whatever happens, it will be in the interest of Bangladesh," he said.

The army chief was talking to reporters after six units were provided with regimental colours at a ceremony held at Ramu Cantonment.

General Aziz Ahmed provided the regimental colours to 6, 9 and 27 Regiment Artillery under Ramu Cantonment, 6 Engineer Battalion, and 13 and 14 Bangladesh Infantry Regiment.

GOC 10th Infantry Division Major General MD Main Ullah Chowdhury, five former army chiefs and other former officers were present on the occasion.



Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at a key hand-over ceremony at BRTC depot in Kamalapur in Dhaka yesterday. The minister handed over nine new buses to eight educational institutions, as promised by the prime minister.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

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