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CMCH staff brave all odds to help victims

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

With limited capacity, doctors and medical staffers at Chattogram Medical College Hospital are doing their best to treat the victims of BM Container Depot fire.

Samanta Lal Sen, coordinator of Sheikh Hasina National Institute of National Burn and Plastic Surgery, visited the hospital yesterday and requested outsiders not to enter the CMCH burn unit as burn patients could be exposed to infections.

"Doctors and medical staffers of the hospital are capable of fighting the battle ... but the logistics are limited," he told reporters.

A few patients suffered inhalation injuries, but some others are unable to open their eyes, Samanta Lal said, adding that some patients will be released soon.

The doctor said he came
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Water being sprayed on shipping containers at BM Container Depot in Sitakunda, Chattogram, around 11:00am yesterday. Firefighters were still working to douse the blaze that started Saturday night.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

Ctg depot fire yet to be mopped up

Four new containers with chemicals found; death count revised down to 41

STAR REPORT

Firefighters were progressing with caution at the BM Depot in Chattogram yesterday after four containers were found to be filled with hydrogen peroxide, the chemical that could have caused the series of explosions since the fire broke out on Saturday night.

Fire was still burning in some containers and four fire engines were working as of 10:00pm yesterday.

Meanwhile, the authorities have revised the death toll from the fire to 41 from 49.

Lt Col Ariful Islam, commander of Brigade-18 of Bangladesh Army's 24 Infantry Division which is helping with the search and rescue, during a press conference at noon said they found four containers of hydrogen peroxide inside the depot.

"If we can remove the chemical-laden containers, we will be able to finish the operation quickly," he said.

In addition to the Fire Service and Civil Defence, more than 500 members of the Bangladesh Army, Navy, police and Rab continued efforts to deal with the disaster.

Members of the fire service and army said they were facing trouble dousing the fire as they were not certain about the exact location of chemical products inside the depot.

"Identity of 22 deceased were confirmed and the bodies were handed over to families ... 19 were still unidentified as of 2:30pm."

At least 40 containers at the depot exploded at different times after the fire broke out.

According to officials of Chattogram Customs House, hydrogen peroxide was in at least 33 of those containers. The chemical-laden containers belonged to Al Razi Chemical Complex Limited, a company owned by BM Container Depot.

Shahadat Hossain, upazila nirbahi officer of Sitakunda, told The Daily Star that a special fire service team from Dhaka was working with seven other firefighting units.

Visiting the spot that resembled a war zone yesterday morning, The Daily Star found many exploded containers, burnt clothes, food products, charred lorries and trucks and plastic products lying scattered across the yard.

Inside the depot, a 650-metre-long shed had also collapsed.

Flames could be seen inside at least 10 containers at different parts of the depot until yesterday afternoon.

The air was thick with strong fumes and black smoke from burnt clothes and containers.

The depot is located on a 23-acre site around half a kilometre from the Dhaka-Chattogram highway.

Sitakunda Circle Additional Superintendent of Police Ashraful Karim said firefighters were facing problems in putting out the fire as no water was left in the six ponds near the depot. The fire service was trying to bring water from ponds farther away, he said.

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Companies to be allowed to import rice

Says food minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private companies would be allowed to import rice to keep the price of the staple stable amid the soaring rice price in the market in the peak boro season.

The prime minister will take the final call on this, Food Minister Sadhan Chandra Majumder told journalists following a meeting yesterday of the food planning and monitoring committee, where the preliminary decision was taken.

"We will ensure farmers and other concerned are not affected by the decision."

Rice import will begin as soon as possible and the window for import would be short to save farmers from losses in the coming season.

There is no shortage in rice production but hoarders and unethical businessmen are creating an artificial scarcity, according to Majumder.

The drives against illegal hoarding of rice will continue.

"Already the consumers are getting the benefit of drives. The market will become stable through import,

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Taka sees steepest fall in 16 years

Experts suggest withdrawing interest rate cap on lending

AKM ZAMIR UDDIN

The local currency saw a big dip in its value over the last two days after Bangladesh Bank floated exchange rates of the taka against the US dollar on June 2.

The taka fell by Tk 2.05 to Tk 91.95 per dollar, reflecting the shortage of the greenback in the country's foreign exchange market.

According to BB data, the local currency depreciated by Tk 1.60 against the dollar on Sunday, the biggest fall in a day since 2006. It again lost value by another Tk 0.45 yesterday, the 10th depreciation this year.

The central bank yesterday injected \$130 million into the market to help banks settle their import bills. But the supply could hardly ease the dollar crunch.

The BB has so far injected \$6.33 billion into market this fiscal year.

Experts say the central bank should immediately withdraw the interest rate cap on lending as it would help slow down the pace of depreciation of the taka against the dollar.

The BB imposed an interest rate cap of 9 percent on lending in April 2020. All banks have been following the ceiling to disburse loans since then.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh, said the decision to float the exchange rates was a good move, but it's not enough to restore stability in the foreign exchange market.

If the interest rate cap is withdrawn, interest rate on all loans will

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Johnson survives

Wins confidence vote among Tory MPs



REUTERS, London

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson survived a confidence vote yesterday but a rebellion by 148 of his 359 Conservative Party lawmakers dealt a serious blow to his authority.

A majority of the Conservatives' lawmakers - at least 180 - would have had to vote against

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A murder they washed their hands of

Teen dies after going under the knife in hospital shut down by authorities

MOUDUD AHMED SUJAN and AZIBOR RAHMAN

It can be called a collective act of murder at an unlicensed hospital in Magura. But nobody has taken responsibility.

A 13-year-old girl died on Sunday, hours after she underwent a surgery to have her appendix removed at Al-Hera Clinic and Hospital in Shalikhra upazila.

The victim, Nirjala Khatun, a sixth-grader of a madrasa, was the daughter of Nazmul Hossain of Pukuria village in the upazila.

This happened just eight days after the district health authorities shut down the healthcare facility for not having authorisation as part of the health directorate's ongoing countrywide crackdown on illegal private healthcare organisations.

Its owner, Bachchu Mia, went into hiding. Police arrested his wife Karimon Nesa from the hospital.

Health officials later said Karimon, who had introduced herself to police as a staffer of the clinic, is a nurse at Magura Sadar Hospital.

"If anyone runs the hospital ignoring our ban, what can we do?" said Magura Civil Surgeon Shahidullah Dewan.

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THE FALLEN 9



ALAUDDIN



AMRAN



MITHU DEWAN



MONIRUZZAMAN



NIPON



RAMJANUL



RANA



SALAUDDIN



SHAKIL

THE MISSING 3



FARIDUZZAMAN



RABIUL



SHAFIUL

Their sense of duty prevailed over all else

STAR REPORT

For many young people facing unemployment, becoming a firefighter is a dream.

Despite the backbreaking labour and the risks associated, the stability of the job and benefits like monthly rations make it a lucrative deal for those from the lower income brackets. Add to that, heroism is a part of the job.

To bring some solvency to his family is precisely why 22-year-old Rana Miah, from Manikganj, became a firefighter with Sitakunda fire station in November 2020. His family boards with his maternal uncle.

"His father runs a small shop that is not enough to live on. Rana used to earn 16,000 per month and would send most of the sum back home," said his uncle Yusuf Ali.

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