



Toxic blaze at warehouse, RMG unit claims 16 lives

Fire began with explosion at unauthorised chemical storage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 16 people were killed and several others injured after a devastating fire broke out at a chemical warehouse and an adjacent garment factory unit in the capital's Mirpur yesterday.

The victims might have died after inhaling toxic gas following a chemical explosion, said Lt Col Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations and maintenance) of the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

"The exact cause [of the fire] will be known after investigation," he told reporters at the site.

The bodies were found scattered across the first and second floors of the four-storey RMG unit in the Shialbari area. The tin-roofed chemical warehouse was next to the RMG unit.

"Their faces are completely unrecognisable due to the extreme heat. Identification will only be possible through DNA testing," Lt Col Tajul said. All bodies were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The fire started around 11:40am and spread rapidly, said witnesses.

By 4:15pm, nine bodies had been recovered. Later, around 7:15pm, the fire service updated the death toll to 16. Officials fear the number of casualties may rise further.

In the afternoon, firefighters were spraying water in a frantic effort to control the blaze. CID's crime scene and chemical lab experts were deployed to collect evidence.

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus directed the authorities to investigate the incident and provide assistance to the victims and their families.

"This loss of innocent lives in such a tragic



A woman shows the photo of her missing relative.

accident is deeply painful and heartbreaking. We stand beside the affected families in this time of grief," he said in a message.

In a statement, the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) said the RMG factory in question was a washing unit, not an affiliate of the association.

Witnesses said they first heard a loud bang from the warehouse. The first fire service team reached the site at 11:56am, said Talha Bin Jasim, an officer at the fire service media cell.

"There was white smoke all around. Windowpanes were shattered, and we could not see anything," said Abdul Hannan, a worker from a nearby factory.

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'We're trapped, we can't get out'

Woman tells her father over phone before going silent

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

When the fire broke out at the Arian Fashion factory yesterday morning, 18-year-old Marzia Sultana Alo's father called her.

"The factory is on fire. We're trapped, we can't get out," she said. Her voice was trembling.

Her father, Md Sultan, tried to calm her, saying, "Don't panic. Follow the others and find a way out."

He did not hear her voice again. Her phone was reachable for nearly 10 more minutes before calls stopped going through.

Alo and her husband Joy, 22, who worked in the same RMG unit, remains missing.

Their families fear the worst.

Joy and Alo, from Netrakona's Madan upazila, joined the RMG unit on October 1. The couple lived in a small tin-roofed room in Mujibur's

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Final version of July Charter sent to all parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission yesterday sent the final version of the July Charter to political parties, seeking their firm commitment to its full implementation.

The charter also calls for assurances that parties will not challenge its legality or necessity in court, and that they will uphold legal and constitutional safeguards throughout every stage of its execution.

The charter did not include any implementation roadmap.

The commission will submit its recommendations on implementing the July Charter after its signing on October 17, commission sources said yesterday.

"The July National Charter has been sent to all parties. It does not have any significant changes [from the final draft]," commission Vice-President Prof Ali Riaz told The Daily Star.

The July National Charter represents a rare moment of political junction, offering a roadmap for institutional reform grounded in dialogue and shared commitment.

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'Jamaat shadow over EC's polls plan'

Say BNP policymakers; party to meet CA, CEC to warn them

The leaders said during past elections, the Awami League did not rig votes through politicians but "used government officials on election duty". The party fears a repeat of such tactics.

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

The BNP has alleged that a section of officials in the administration and the Election Commission are linked to the Jamaat-e-Islami.

It fears that these officials may attempt to influence the upcoming national election in favour of the Jamaat.

Expressing doubt over the neutrality of the current government and parts of the EC, the BNP has decided to separately meet Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) AMM Nasir Uddin to raise its concerns and seek "urgent corrective measures" ahead of the polls.

"A BNP delegation will meet Chief Adviser Yunus and the CEC soon to discuss these issues," said a BNP Standing Committee member, seeking anonymity.

The party discussed these issues at a Standing Committee meeting on Monday night at the chairperson's Gulshan office, several members of the committee told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity. Acting chairman Tarique Rahman joined the meeting virtually from London.

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Some advisers trying to turn admin partisan

Says Jamaat Nayeb-e-Ameer Taher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several advisers to the interim government are conspiring to turn the administration partisan, claimed Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Syed Abdullah Mohammad Taher yesterday.

"We have the names of the advisers who are involved in conspiracies. We have their voice recordings. We know what they say in meetings. We are not revealing this to the public now because we want to give them a chance."

Taher's comment came at a human chain joined by Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Andolan Bangladesh and five other like-minded parties yesterday at the Matsya Bhaban intersection in the capital.

The leaders formed a human chain stretching from Jatrabari to Gabtoli in the capital demanding a referendum before the polls and the proportional representation system along with four other demands.

"The situation in the administration and the ongoing conspiracies must stop."

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Cucusu polls return today after 35yrs

MD ABBAS and SM MAHFUJ AHMED

The Chittagong University Central Students' Union (Cucusu) and hall union elections are set to take place today after a gap of 35 years, becoming the third public university to hold such polls after the political changeover in August last year.

A total of 908 candidates are vying for 40 posts: 415 are contesting for 26 Cucusu posts and 493 for 14 hall union posts. The total number of voters is 27,521.

Polling will begin from 9:00am and end at 4:00pm at the 15 centres set up in five faculty buildings.

There will be 700 polling booths in total. Each student will receive five ballot papers. Four of them will list the Cucusu candidates and the fifth will list the hall union candidates.

Students will have a maximum of ten minutes to cast their votes, meaning they will need to cast about one vote every 20 seconds.

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Some critical antibiotics now show 79-97% resistance

Finds WHO study; experts warn of severe health consequences

CAUSE	ADVERSE EFFECT
Over-prescribing and overuse of antibiotics	Longer illnesses
Non-completion of antibiotic courses	Prolonged hospital stays
Antibiotics overuse in livestock and fish farming	Increased treatment failures
Poor infection control in hospitals	Greater surgical and medical risks
Lack of hygiene and poor sanitation	Higher mortality
	Drive-up treatment costs

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Several widely used antibiotics in Bangladesh are losing their effectiveness at alarming rates, with resistance ranging from 79 to 97 percent, a WHO report says, highlighting the country's worsening antimicrobial resistance crisis.

Resistance levels of some of

these drugs are among the highest in South-East Asian countries, including India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, according to the Global Antibiotic Resistance Surveillance Report 2025, released on Monday.

For example, Acinetobacter spp., the Gram-negative bacteria that can cause bloodstream infections, showed an estimated resistance rate of 97 percent to

imipenem, a powerful antibiotic typically applied as a second last-resort treatment for blood infections.

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial medicines, infections become difficult or impossible to treat,

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