

Mental hospital robbery

MPs to get Nam flats |³ die in road mishaps

not furnished

A 21-bed hospital with modern facilities will also be set up at two blocks of the MP Hostel area and the rest of the MP Hostel buildings will be allocated for use by the parliament secretariat.

"The committee agreed to accept the flats in their current condition because the ministry failed to decorate the flats due to fund crisis," Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, chairman of the committee, told newspersons emerging from the meeting held at the Sangsad Bhaban.

committee members and officials "But the ministry assured again concerned attending. that a letter had already been sent to the finance ministry seeking funds to purchase furniture. If the PM urges finance ministry grants money they will do the furnishing," the FROM PAGE 12 chairman added.

man are in the process. According to the rules, Tk 600 is payable for an 1800sft and Tk 400 everywhere in the world, particufor a 1200sft accommodation in larly in Bangladesh, position, skill service charges by the members of and even honesty of the judges are parliament. "A sub-committee headed by

According to the project, the gov-ernment will bankroll 60 percent of

the project cost and mobilise the

rest in loan or grant from foreign

Officials said the government

which has been trying to find foreign lenders for the project, is

ready to fund the rest in case of

non-availability of any foreign

The government has also asked

the authorities to take effective

steps for quick implementation of

this project to cut down on envi-ronmental pollution in the capital

where the industries have thrived

firm to relocate the industries to

Officials said the government is

Hazaribagh tanneries spew nearly 21,600 square metres of waste into the Buriganga river on

The tannery industry manufac-

tures 7 million square metres of

over the last 50 years.

FROM PAGE 1

sources.

sources

thetown

average

investment

ment committee meeting.

being called into question. "So it is the responsibility Khandakar Delwar Hossain will mainly of the judges to give a befit-ting answer to this question so that receive the flats within a week." Shajahan Khan, a member of the such question never arises," the house committee and an Awami chiefjustice told the judges.

Tannery town land

centre.

League lawmaker, told The Daily

The flats will be allocated to

A member of the committee

lawmakers of different political

said at the meeting that lawmakers

of India received residential facili-

ties without paying for anything. The same system should be intro-

The remuneration and privi-

Khandakar Delwar Hossain

resided over the meeting, with

Chief Justice KM Hasan said

acquisition of more land for the

ties and institutions including a

establishment of the Asian

University for Women at Jalalabad in Chittagong, 1.50 acres for the

Youth Training Centre at

Narayanganj, two acres for an orphanage at Rupganj in

operatives Limited at Savar.

rayanganj, 1.63 acres for Ansar-

eges of the lawmakers were hugely

duced in Bangladesh, too, he felt.

iked only in July last.

parties, once they are received.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed in as many road accidents in the city in a span of 11 hours ending at 7:30am yester-

Mohammad Badal, 45, susained serious injuries when a vehicle hit him near Farmgate overbridge early in the morning as he was crossing the road.

A passer-by took Badal to Orthopaedic hospital at Agargaon where he succumbed to his injuries at about 8:45am.

Later in the afternoon, Babul Shikder, 25, a truck driver, died on the spot when his vehicle rammed a stone-laden truck parked in front of Matuail Madrashah.

In the other incident, Rafiqul Islam, 18, died instantly when a truck crushed him and his bicycle in front of Haji Kudrat Ali Market at Pallabi at about 8:30pm on Friday night.

4 top criminals nabbed, arms recovered **STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Police arrested four listed top criminals of Mohammadpur Police Station from Savar Friday night and recovered three firearms and some ammunition.

Of the four, Sohel Riaz alias construction of government facili-Pappu, ringleader of Pappu group women's university, Ansars-VDP in Mohammadpur and his aide barracks and a youth training Lallu Uddin alias Lallu are accused in 20 cases of those, 10 for murders The committee approved acquisition of 208.1997 acres in total, including 2.38 acres for the - filed with different police sta-

tions in the city. Pappu and Lallu are accused in the killings of Imon, Milon, Mintu, Mizan, Roby, Ashraf, Mottakin, Noor-e-Alam, Sagir and Niaz, Mohammadpur police said.

Ashraful Islam and Jasim Uddin, other arrestees, are Pappu's operatives, police said.

Following their statement,

police raided an abandoned house

near the Mohammadpur Housing

VDP barracks in Barisal and 10.175 acres for Gulbagh Housing Acting on a tip off, a team of Mohammadpur police raided Abu The land minister at the meetthe land minister at the meet-ing stressed proper utilisation of the land, saying: "We must ensure that not a single inch of land remains unutilised." Taher's house at Kaundia Madhyapara at around 11:00pm and arrested the four with a nine mm pistol.

Three killed

road mishap

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

The accident occurred at about

in Comilla

from opposite direction.

identity could not be known.

New crackdown

Eight outlawed organisations

operating in the region are Purbo

Banglar Communist Party (PBCP--

M-L), PBCP (Janajuddho), Biplobi

Communist Party, Ganobahini,

Sarbahara Party, Gano Mukti Fouz

Their operatives possess huge

illegal arms and ammunition and

are widely believed to be har-boured by political godfathers.

4 troops killed

fired at the Bulgarian base hit a

nearby university instead, injuring

Iraqi witnesses said a water truck

contained one of the bombs, and

that coalition soldiers sprayed it

with gunfire as it drove toward a

military base beside the university

and exploded. Casualties were

removed in stretchers, and soldiers

fired in the air to disperse the

Poles were killed, he said.

bomb at the university.

FROM PAGE 1

some people.

crowds

casualties.

1991.

and Banglar Communist Party.

Miah, 20.

FROM PAGE 12

claimed.

Non-govt school FROM PAGE 12

Estate the following morning and increased house rent, pension, service rules and reinstatement of recovered two revolvers and nine sacked teachers and employees. bullets.

leather a year that fetch Bangladesh Tk 1,500 crore to Tk 1,600 crores. The National Front of Teachers Officials said the relocation of the tanneries could boost the and Employees in a press release yesterday urged all non-governindustry and help it attract foreign ental teachers and employees to make today's strike programme a Legislator LK Siddiqi, Land Secretary Azad Ruhul Amin, success.

The front also urged the teach-Housing and Public Works ers to stage demonstrations at district headquarters on January 8 Secretary Aminur Rahman and high officials attended the allotand bring out torch processions in all districts and upazilas on January The committee also approved

Shanto's parents numb in loss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parents of Hasibul Islam Shanto, who went missing since Wednesday afternoon only to be found dead in an abandoned house in Goran Friday afternoon, were numbed at the loss of yet

another offspring. Tania Begum and Mojibur Rahman, parents of six-year-old call at 5:00pm on Friday, police recovered Shanto's dumped body and Mojibur identified his son Shanto, are yet to recover from the loss of their elder son Rajibul Haq Azim nearly two years ago, sat motionless at their East Goran residence after Shanto's burial at a local graveyard yesterday.

After suffering from prolonged illness, Azim died in hospital on January 19, 2001 at 8.

shocked and they are not in a posi-tion to provide any information to Shanto, a student of Golden Heaven Kindergarten School, was the third among two brothers and us right now," said Arman Ali, officer-in-charge of Khilgaon Police two sisters. Station. "We'll get leads to the murder

Hugging his surviving daugh-ters Sima, 8, and Babuni, 4, Mojibur said, "I could never imagonce the parents give us some information," he added. ine my innocent son would be killed." **Criminal Iqbal**

Meanwhile, Shanto's uncle Khandakar Monir Hossain received the body from Dhaka Medical College Hospital after

The killing of their second son shook the parents to their core and they only went to lodge a case with Khilgaon Police Station on Saturday night, more than 24 hours after the body was found.

report), Mojibur said unknpwn criminals murdered his son, sources said.

while returning home from his father's workplace, hardly 150 yards away from their house. Mojibur works as an assistant at the office of Ward Commissioner ABM Enamul Haq Quiyum.

quizzed, police added. A case was lodged with Pahartoli Police Station.

based on facts," he added.

Citing the caretaker govern-

Tariqul also said the newspa-

freedom in a negative way. "If you

take any newspaper, you will find them flooded with negative and frustrating news items," he said

posing a question about whether

newspapers should make people feel frustrated instead of optimis-

Criticising the trend of adver-

tisement culture in the press, the

information minister said the

publishers are compelling the

alone," said the aggrieved father.

alone if I knew this could be a fatal

day out for him," Mojibur said

trying to check his tears.

ears, head and face.

evening.

"I would have never left him

Receiving an unanimous phone

later. The body bore bruises in the

any headway in the killing till the writing of this report at 7:30 last

nabbed in Ctg

Police vesterday nabbed an alleged

leader of a criminal gang with his four alleged operatives at Panirkal

Raiding a house on information, police held Mohammad Iqbal, alleged chief of Raozan-based

criminal gang Iqbal Bahini, and four others at about 6:30pm, police said.

However, police could not name the four other arrestees immedi-

Iqbal, accused in over 100 cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

in Pahartoli.

ately.

However, police could not make

"The victim's parents are

Newspapers lack proper policy, says Latifur

BSS, Dhaka

guided by a proper policy," he said while inaugurating the two-day biennial conference of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) at the National Press Club in the city.

Information Minister Tariqul Islam spoke on the occasion as the special guest, said many newspapers are making money but are reluctant to give better wages to journalists

"We have discussed the forma-

CHT delegation submits memo demanding peace, safety

Having been busy in office, l **STAFF CORRESPONDENT** bought peanuts and an egg for Shanto and told him to go home

A 14-member delegation from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) yesterday submitted a memorandum to the parliamentary standing committee on the CHT affairs plac-ing 18 demands, including ensuring safety and security of the CHT peo ple.

The delegation also warned that if the demands were not met by January 16, 2004, a tougher action programme would be undertaken to drive their demands home.

The Parbatya Gana Parishad (PGP), a platform of the Banglaspeaking settlers in the three hill districts, met the standing committee in context of the recent rise in retaliatory abductions by the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghat Samity (PCJSS) and the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

drugs and money were carried away on board the vehicle, they In last week alone, nine activists of the pro-peace accord PCJSS and eight others of the anti-accord UPDF were allegedly abducted by rival operatives in Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

Led by Jalal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury and Moniruzzaman Monir, president and secretary of the PGP, the team also included Obin Chandra Chakma, president of Khagrachhari chapter of Hindu Bouddha Khristan Oikya Parishad and Monilal Tripura, a leader of the indigenous people of Matiranga. The meeting was held in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"We are feeling insecure. Both the groups demand toll from us. If we refuse to pay, we are tortured by them," Jalal Uddin told the parlia-mentarecommittee. The DCD tends mentary committee. The PGP team requested the parliamentary body to take immediate actions to dis arm both the groups.

including of murder, abduction and extortion, and the others were being Thrown out

FROM PAGE 12 Mirpur and Mohammadpur, and in Kamrangirchar, Savar and Paikpara. But a large number of them are still staying there hoping for a High Court injunction on the

eviction. "The ward commissioner's mer threatened that we will be driven away by any means," said Manashi, a 50-year-old widow from Nilphamari. Her only son, a rickshawpuller, deserted her as the eviction started.

Ain O Salish Kendra, the Coalition for Urban Poor, two nongovern-mental organisations, and two residents of the bustee filed a writ with the High Court on December 24 couries December 24, saying the eviction was carried out without lawful authority.

A High Court vacation bench of Justice Mahmud Hossain beard the writ yesterday and fixed today for further hearing. Dr Kamal Hossain and Advocate Ramzan Ali Shikder represented the petitioners.

The eviction started at a time when rehabilitation of 3,000 slum dwellers at Sreepur in Gazipur awaits a final approval of the land ministry, some victims said.

In 1994, the HBRI attempted to evict the slum people without any prior notice and Modhumala, a arment worker living in Section

Insider connection suspected Hospital Director Dr AKM Abdus Samad Mia said Zillur took

the ambulance to Tangail for

personal use without permission

from any authorised staff. He said they are probing the matter.

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

The doctors and staff of Pabna Mental Hospital have termed the mysterious robbery at the store a case of pilferage by a section of staff.

Sources said a hospital ambu-

the alleged robbery. The stolen

Zillur is an accused in several murder, abduction and medicines Locals and most of the doctors robbery cases and was freed on and staff alleged that some doctors and staff are involved in Thursday bail. He illegally enjoyed all gov-ernment facilities while on bail for night's incident, in which robbers the last one year. cash said to be worth about Tk 31 lakh. allegedly took away medicines and Samad, however, said they

knew nothing about him. Police arrested storekeeper A hospital source said the rob-Zillur Rahman and cashier Abdul

bery was stage-managed to avert in inspection of the auditors from the health ministry to probe pilferage from the store. lance was used without permission from the authorities at the time of

The doctors and staff demanded of the district administration and health ministry to run an investigation in to the matter. although the authorities are yet to form a probe committee.

to contact GSO-1, Military Operation Directorate and Army

Head-quarters. The contact phone

numbers are 011807073, 0171395419, 8829186, 9870011-20

In recent past, four army per-sonnel were killed in two road

accidents in Sierra Leone -- a cor-

poral died in one accident in

March killed three non-

commissioned officers. "The death

toll in Sierra Leone stood at eight

until the plane crash," said Lt Col

Bangladesh, which has the

second largest number of UN peacekeepers, now has about 4,500

roops deployed in nine missions

The army has sent a total of

Musharraf stunned Vajpayee by

30,091 troops to 28 missions since

in Africa, Asia and Europe.

in Islamabad.

Nazrul.

ebruary last year and another in

with extensions 2046 and 2056.

Benin plane crash

FROM PAGE 1

Gafar.

added.

arrive in Dhaka today. This is the biggest casualty for Bangladeshi peacekeepers overseas. Accidents and mine explosions have killed 24 other army personnel since 1992.

The news of their death reached he army headquarters in Dhaka Friday night. A Bangladeshi peacekeeping team deployed in Sierra Leone has already left for Benin to identify the dead. Their bodies were being recovered till yesterday.

Operated by Union des Fransports Africains (UTA), the Boeing with 151 passengers and 10 crew botched its takeoff and skidded down the runway, smashing into a building before tumbling nose down into the Gulf of Guinea. Aviation officials suggested the plane was overloaded or unbalanced.

Lebanese army divers recov-ered the final piece of fuselage from the Boeing Friday. Till yesterday, Vajpayee FROM PAGE 12 the death toll was estimated at 119 most of them Lebanese expatriates Riaz Khokhar told a news briefing neading home for the holidays. Twenty-two people were injured.

The president, prime minister crossing the podium to shake hands with the Indian leader at the and chief of army staff expressed condolences at the death and deep last Saarc summit in Kathmandu, sympathy for the bereaved famiin January 2002.

Saarc groups Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, The ISPR requests family members and relatives of the deceased Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Iran quake

has admitted Iran cannot cope on its own. The official IRNA news agency quoted Iran's Interior Ministry as saying assistance would be welcome from every

corner of the globe other than Israel.

the government said two planes of Russian aid arrived late Friday. The United States also promised aid, and Alavi, the governor of the city of Kerman, said Iran would accept

The only smiles in Bam were on the faces of a movie poster on the vali of a cinema. The cinema was ruined. A large part of the ancient citadel was destroyed, Kerman prov-ince governor Mohammad Ali Karimi said. Dating back 2,000 years, it had sprawling fortifica-tions, towers, stables and a mosque. It was the city's main tourist attraction. Houses in the date-growing area are traditionally made from mud-brick, making them vulnerable to earthquakes.

Former chief of the caretaker ment's role in ensuring press freedom in 1991, he said former government Justice Latifur Rahman has said the newspapers chief adviser of the caretaker administration Justice in the country cannot contribute up to the expectations since they lack a proper policy. Shahabuddin Ahmed had paved ways by repealing articles 15, 16 and 17 of the Special Powers Act. "The press in Bangladesh is absolutely free. But they are not pers have been using the press

Three people were killed and seven others injured in a road accident near Palki Cinema Hall at Chandina on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the early hours yesterday.

The schoolboy went missing

In the FIR (first information

autopsy at about 2:00pm.

DHAKA TODAY

Children's film festival

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in collaboration with the Russian Cultural Centre, will screen three children's films titled 'The Merry Musketeers', 'The Daring Dozen' and 'The Arrows of Robin Hood'. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Dhanmondi. Time: 11.00am, 2.00pm and 4.00pm

Art competition

An art competition for the children on Bird, organised by a voluntary organisation BANDHU, will be held. Venue: BANDHU office premises, Madhubagh, Moghbazar. Time: 10.00am.

British film

Under its annual film event, British Council will screen two recent British films titled 'Happy Now?' and 'Emperor's New Clothes'. Venue: British Council Auditorium, Fuller Road. Time: 3.00pm and 6.00pm

Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a feature film titled 'Eat Drink Man Woman'. Venue: Society auditorium. 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Recitation

Muldhara, a centre for writers, journalists and artists, organises a session of poetry recitation by the poets of Bangladesh and West Bengal. Venue: Zakia Alam auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 5.00pm

Talk

A talk on 'Global peace and security: Recent events in perspective' organised by Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA), will be held with Irene Z Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International, as guest speaker. Venue: BILIA auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 2.00pm.

Seminar

A seminar on 'Identifying issue of advocacy regarding child labour', organised by Social and Economic Enhancement Programme, will be held with Dr Hamidul Haque, chairman of Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, as chief guest. Venue: WVA auditorium, Dhanmondi. Time: 10.00am

Trade seminar

A seminar on 'World Trade Organisation and Trade Liberalisation Impact on Bangladesh Agriculture and Food Security', organised by Eastern University, will be held. Venue

University premises, Dhanmondi. Time: 4.00pm

Dialogue

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) organises a seminar on Investing in Bangladesh: How enabling is the business environment' with Pro Rehman Sobhan in the chair. Venue:

Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 4.00pm. Discussion Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Unnayan Forum will hold a discussion to mark the

Victory Day with State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hague Milon as chief guest. Venue: Bhasani auditorium, Nava Paltan, Time: 4.00nm

Closing ceremony

The closing ceremony of REHAB Housing Fair 2003 will be held with Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury as chief guest. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 6.30pm.

DHAKA TOMORROW

Art exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of the annual art exhibition of the Institute of Fine Arts of Dhaka University marking the 89th birth anniversary of Shilpacharjya Zainul Abedin will be held with Health and Family Welfare Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain as chief guest. Venue: Institute premises. Time:

9.00am. The exhibition will remain open till January 4 from 10.00am to 7.00nm dailv

Children's film festival

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in collaboration with the Russian Cultural Centre, will screen three children's films titled 'The Little Mermaid', 'The Princess and the Pea' and 'Father Frost'. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi.

Time: 11.00am, 1.00pm and 3.00pm. Film show

Academy Film Society will screen a French film titled 'Delicatessen'. Venue: Society auditorium. 21/C, Jigatola. Time: 6.30pm.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations, in association with the High Commission of India, organises a buyer-seller meet. Venue: Hotel Sarina, Banani. Time: 10.00am

Meet

2:30am when a Chittagong-bound night coach from Dhaka collided tion of the 6th wage board for the journalists, but some of the ownerhead on with a microbus coming editors did not respond positively. Three passengers of the microbus died on the spot and He, however, said negotiations were underway to give newspersons a new wage strucseven others injured. The dead are micro-bus driver Shahin, 28, ture.

Roushan Begum, 60, and Raju BFUJ President Gias Kamal Chowdhury presided over it. The injured were admitted to Chandina Health Complex. Their

Latifur said the newspersons, despite many odds, have been playing a key role in society to educate people and mould their opinion on national and international issues.

He, however, said there are some who have been practising "Steps are underway to take stern action against outlaws having links to policemen and political leadvellow journalism, but the number is not big. "I humbly request all the newspersons to prepare reports a senior police official

publish. A newspaper, he said, is bought surely not to see the pages riddled with commercial advertisements, which occupy even the front and back pages. Referring to the propaganda by

a major political party and a few journalists abroad, the minister said such false and fabricated campaign would not yield anything. The alliance government is not rootless, he said in an oblique reference to the main opposition Awami League.

The BFUJ leaders demanded immediate formation of the sixth wage board, 60 percent dearness allowance and a national policy for newspaper industry.

for developing ceramic industry.

The products of these industries

can stand global competition," he

said adding, "In the gas sector,

chemical engineers have made

have also made their mark in other

significant contributions and they

Chemical engineers

Communist Party, New Biplobi FROM PAGE 12

form for our professional graduates to exchange ideas, experiences and research findings in different areas of this branch of knowledge,' he said.

The department and Chemical Engineering Alumni Association jointly organised the function. The conference will be a unique opportunity for both industrialists and academics from home and abroad to discuss issues and prospects of a new generation of chemical and process industries in developing countries.

"Two-thirds of our graduates are working in fertiliser, gas, petroleum, pharmaceuticals, paper and pulp, cement, basic chemical. sugar and food and allied industries in the country. Presently, onethird of the graduates are employed abroad," Dr Mahmud told The Daily Star.

Stasinski said a logistics base During the 1950s and '60s peowhere soldiers of different nationple did not understand the need for alities serve was also targeted. No chemical engineers in running an industry. Traditionally, applied Thai soldiers also operate in the chemistry and mechanical engiarea, but Jakrapob Penkair, a govneering were the first choices for ernment spokesman in Bangkok, such industries then. Later on, said there were no reports of Thai chemical engineers were able to demonstrate their skills in planning and installation of the chemi-Witnesses said smoke and fire cal industries. rose from the mayor's office after a

mortar attack. They reported a car Currently the transition from the largely state-funded enter-Karbala is a holy Shia city south of prises to units built on private initiatives has presented new areas Baghdad. Ousted Iraqi leader of opportunities as well as chal-Saddam Hussein, who was captured lenges for the chemical engineers, by US forces on Dec. 13, conducted a he added. bloody crackdown on residents of Karbala and other Shiite areas in

"In the private sector, chemical engineers have taken the initiative of the slum for 15 years, filed a writ with the High Court. The court prohibited forced eviction without prior notice and proper rehabilitation of the slum dwellers

Laid-off factories FROM PAGE 12

Privatisation Rules, prospective buyers will not be liable for any debt of the privatised factories and the government will resolve or waive debts through negotiation with banks or other parties concerned.

percent for any buyer who would pay the whole price of a factory in one instalment and an additional five percent if in foreign currency.

committee was formed headed by the Privatisation Commission chairman to formulate the draft rules.

There are presently over two dozen laid-off mills and factories while the government plans to privatise another 75 state-owned enterprises within the next three vears

Hajj

areas like construction industries, FROM PAGE 1 equipment fabrications and pollution control," Dr Mahmud said.

"In the private sector fertiliser plants like Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company Limited, chemical engineers have now been able to achieve production target at 120 percent of the 'name plate' capacity," he said.

In the global pharmaceutical and ceramic products competition, they have made progress in production and met international standards, Dr Mahmud said. "We have had a linkage programme with five distinguished universities in the USA, the UK and Canada and through this exchange we have built new laboratory equipment undertaking joint research projects," he said.

With only five students, the department was launched in 1952 and only one student joined in 1954. Now more than 50 students graduate every year from the department. During the confer-ence, more than 60 technical papers will be presented. Of these, 15 have been authored by foreign contributors and 19 by non-resident Bangla-deshis Distinguished persons from fertiliser, petroleum, natural gas, ceramic and pharmaceutical industries will present papers on the current status and future direction of these industries.

It also offers a rebate up to 35

In September last, a six-member

Although not mandatory, the discount is important for market competition, travel agents said.

Some 1,200 of 1,700 travel agencies in Bangladesh are Atab members. Of them, 600 agencies are presently active. Haab members number 157.

Waiting in tears FROM PAGE 1

mother asked his younger son NazmulArefin.

The shock of the loss stole the voice of his wife, who sat numbed in a corner.

"We first received the unofficial news from relatives in the morning, said Nazmul, fighting back tears.

"At 9:30am, the army headquarters sent a messenger saying the Benin crash killed all 15 Bangladeshi army personnel on board."

The family's doubt over not getting his body added to its woes.

"As the Boeing plunged into the Atlantic Ocean, we are doubtful about the recovery of the body," said Nazmul.

He referred to an unofficial information that the bodies were retrieved from the ocean, but looked in a fog of disparate information tricklingin.

The army could not confirm the report, saying the operation was still

Swiss rescuers with sn were the first foreign team to start hunting for trapped survivors, Iranian television said.

Reuters witnesses said the city's graveyards were crammed to overflowing with fully-clothed corpses and a stench of death was beginning to pervade the streets.

The International Red Crescent has advised people to wear gloves and facemasks because of fears of an epidemic.

Fatemeh, 35, was burying her two children. "I am burying myself in this grave," she said.

Taher, 50, was inconsolable, sobbing "wake up, wake up" to the corpse of his teenage son Farzad.

About 70 per cent of Bam, a popular tourist spot some 1,000 km (600 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran with an historic citadel and other centuries-old buildings, was leveled.

Exhausted, dust-covered rescue worker Omid Alipour said his team had dug out only three injured people during the night.

"We don't have anything, just our bare hands," he said.

Many nations, including Australia, China, Japan and Russia, promised to send assistance and

Ijtema begins

FROM PAGE 1

The huge canopy on the 160-acre ground on the eastern bank of Turag was brimming with devotees. Many listened to the speeches squatting on the open space or on the adjacent roadsides.

aged about 35 died at Tongi Station Thousands of others are still Road crossing after being knocked converging at the Ijtema ground down by a speeding bus. from different districts of the country and abroad in all modes of cal leader of Tongi, died soon after transports including trains. Large he returned home after saying Esha numbers of delegates from India, prayers at the Ijtema ground on Pakistan, Myanmar, Thailand, The Friday. Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait, Iran, Some 14 devotees also fell sick from food poisoning. They were Iraq, Oman and Qatar are participating. A significant number of rushed to the local hospitals. Three devotees also came from Europe of them were later transferred to and the Americas. Dhaka Medical College Hospital as

The day's deliberations were their condition deteriorated. translated simultaneously into a number of languages including suffering from diarrhea, gastroin-English, Arabic, Hindi and French testinal disorder and chest disease for the foreign delegates. were also referred to various hospi-

Meanwhile, three more people tals in the capital. died yesterday on the way to or Police arrested 86 suspected after arriving at the Ijtema ground, pickpockets from the Ijtema according to sources. ground and the adjacent areas. A large number of plainclothes men

Shohrab Hossain, 55, from Mymensingh died at Tongi Rail have been deployed to curb crimes.

Bam is on the old Silk Road route between China and Europe used by merchants and travelers for centuries. It is noted for its inns, a theological school and bazaars.

The country's sharply divided press was united in grief across the conservative and reformist spectrum.

The reformist Sharq newspaper called for builders to observe widely flouted construction laws.

Earthquakes are a regular occurrence in Iran, an oil-producing country crossed by

major faultlines. Some 35,000 people were killed

in 1990 when earthquakes of up to 7.7 on the Richter scale hit the northwest of Iran.

Station yesterday morning follow-

ing a heart attack. The body of

Hossain, an employee of Alhaj Jute

Mills at Sharishabari, was sent to

Another unidentified woman

Abul Kashem, 65, a local politi-

Eight other serious patients

his village home.