The Daily Star

NEWS

After the Berlin talks. Chinese

Deputy Foreign Minister Dai Bingguo

said there had "been enough turmoil in

the Middle East. We do not want to see

new turmoil being introduced to the

official told reporters en route to Paris

that the question of military action did

not come up at the Berlin meeting, but

we have not taken any option off the

table," the official said, declining to be

Rice said the world must keep up

She urged the other permanent

pressure on Iran to suspend enrich-

council members and Germany to

take into account Iran's calls for Israel

to be "wiped off the map," as well as its

support for Syria and Hizbollah in

Iran's decision to resume enrich-

ment in January led Britain. France

and Germany to halt 2-1/2 years of

talks with Tehran and to back referring

The EU trio has offered to resume

Nixon became the first president

The Judiciary Committee will

The Senate has censured a

oresident. which amounts to a

15 hurt as JCD

Of the injured, Mahibul Akhter,

Hospital (CMCH) while others given

Sources said 15 rooms of the

being approved.

it to the Security Council

ment and return to negotiations.

"We are on a diplomatic track but

hinted it could be raised someday.

A senior US State Department

region."

named.

_ebanon.

India's training of Iranian Cotton farming military may dampen nuke deal: US lawmaker

AFP, Washington

India's alleged training of Iranian troops could dampen vital US Congress support for a bilateral landmark civilian nuclear deal, a ranking Democrat warned Thursday.

Tom Lantos, the top Democrat on the House of Representatives' powerful international relations committee scrutinizing the nuclear deal. expressed concern to visiting Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran over New Delhi's training of the Iranian navy, the lawmaker's spokeswoman Lynne Weil told AFP.

"Congressman Lantos pointed out that episodes of conflict in relations between US and India, such as India's early wavering in its commitment to refer Iran to the UN Security Council and more recent concerns raised about Iranian troops receiving training from India will only undermine Congressional support for the deal," she said.

Reacting to the concerns, the Indian government said two Iranian naval ships with about 200 personnel were on a six-day "informal" visit to the southern Indian naval base in Kochi in March while on an annual sea training sortie in the Arabian Sea.

The port call was essentially "diplomatic-goodwill" and not part of any training package, said Venu Rajamony, spokesman for the Indian embassy in Washington.

He said the Iranian ships "interacted" with the Indian Navy as part of the visit, adding that activities included courtesy calls on Indian naval officers, navigational simula-

tion and recreational activities such as vachting.

Lantos and Saran discussed the US-Indian nuclear agreement in the larger context of bilateral relations "which they agreed are blossoming in many respects," Weil said.

But Lantos noted that "at a time when gestures from allies are significant -- not symbolic gestures alone but substantive gestures -the Indian government should look for opportunities to make gestures that underscore the strength of the bilateral friendship," she said. The India-US nuclear deal gives

energy-starved India access to long-denied civilian nuclear technology in return for placing a majority of its nuclear reactors under ternational inspection. For it to be effective, the US

Congress has to amend the US Atomic Energy Act, which currently prohibits nuclear sales to countries that are not signatories of the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

US lawmakers are reportedly sceptical about giving their mandatory approval to the deal as India has refused to sign the NPT and has developed nuclear weapons on its own. Washington meanwhile is trying

to rein in Iran's uranium enrichment activities amid suspicion that Tehran could be pursuing covert development of nuclear weapons. On Wednesday, the UN Security Council in New York unanimously voted to give Iran 30 days to fall into

line with long-running calls to abandon uranium enrichment. India is treading a tightrope as it tries to firm up the civilian nuclear

deal with the United States and maintain its traditionally strong ties

with neighbour Iran. In February, India voted with 26 other nations to refer Iran to the UN Security Council amid charges by communists within the ruling Indian

coalition that New Delhi's foreign policy was being dictated by Washington. Saran warned Thursday of a setback in US-India ties if Congress refused to ratify the

nuclear deal. clinched on March 2 by US President George W. Bush and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "If this particular agreement

does not go through, there is no doubt there will be, in terms of the expectation that has been created, n terms of the enthusiasm that has been created, there will be some falling back," Saran said when fielding questions on the deal at a Washington forum.

Saran, the top civil servant in the Indian foreign ministry, said inevitably the public focus of the envisioned strategic partnership between the two nations had been on the nuclear deal even though bilateral relations covered many key areas

"If this does not go through, it does not mean that everything else will fall by the wayside but at the same time we should also recognise that for good reason or bad, there is intense focus on this particular agreement," he said.

"Therefore whether we like it or not, this has become very symbolic of what we want to do with India-US relations." he said.

FROM PAGE 1 climate and soil in the country are not

in favour of cotton cultivation. CDB officials, however, said it is possible to increase cotton production greatly by introducing high-yielding and even genetically modified (GM) varieties as is being done in some affluent countries like the USA and Australia, and even in India.

If cotton is produced locally, its prices will be at least 15 to 20 percent ess and will cut the RMG production cost significantly, BKMEA leaders

market costs on average about 70 cents and the textile industry has to spend over \$400 million a year to import more than 20 lakh bales of

CDB Executive Director Abdul Baten said the ministry of establishment is considering a CDB proposal to appoint researchers to conduct researches on how to cut the production cost, duration and pestilence of cotton farming.

The government in 2001 had undertaken a project with financial support from the European Union and technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) that trained about 4,000 farmers, who later spread the knowledge and skills to others.

was completed in October 2004, there has not been any impact of it on the

has initiated a programme of increas-ing the production of major crops, inčluding cotton, by 25 per cent. Under this programme, extending cotton cultivation to the char lands in Pabna. Natore, Manikganj and Sirajganj and he high vast lands in Dinajpur,

BNP proposes

FROM PAGE 1

tomorrow [Saturday]," he told reporters.

Jalil sent his March 22 letter in response to a letter from Mannan Bhuiyan on March 20 inviting the main opposition party to join a committee to discuss its reform demands. In his letter, the 14-party coordinator asked for some clarifications on composition of the committee--whether it would be a parliamentary or a political one--and on its tenure.

Opposition Leader Sheikh Hasina in a speech in parliament on February 12 put forward the demands for reforms in the caretaker government and electoral systems. She also threatened not to participate in the next general elections if the reforms are not

In her valedictory speech on February 28 in the last session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad, Leader of the House and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia promised to commission a committee to discuss the opposition's reform demands.

In yesterday's letter, the BNP secretary general avoided fixing the tenure of the proposed committee and said the committee should define its time-frame and modus operandi on its own.

"I expect the opposition would soon send the nominations. We'll also announce the names of our leaders who will be on the committee. The

Ainjibi Parishad FROM PAGE 16 Barrister M Amir-ul Islam was

elected president while advocate AMAminuddin general secretary. Lalmonirhat could see some success Barrister Amirul Islam received The US and the EU countries 840 votes while his nearest rival

Advocate Habibul Islam Bhuivan of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Panel received 500 votes. Advocate AM Aminuddin bagged

737 votes and his nearest rival Barrister Abdullah Al Mamun of Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Oikya Panel got 601 votes.

The other elected candidates are: Vice-presidents Advocate Abdul Mannan Khan and Advocate ATM Mizanur Rahman, Treasurer Mohammad Akram Hossain Maniu Assistant Secretaries Md Abdul Mannan Mohan and Md Moteher Hossain Saju and seven Executive Members Arabindu Kumar Rov (Ananda), Farid Ahmed, Jannatu Ferdousi (Rupa), Md Mojammel Haque Rana, Purabi Rani Sharma Sheikh Akhterul Islam and SM

Fazlul Haque. Some 1,465 out of 1,622 voters cast their votes in the two-day election.

JMB chief FROM PAGE 1 branch, Sylhet, for allowing money

transactions with JMB. Sub-inspector Waliullah of

Sylhet Kotwali Police Station filed two cases -- one under the explofood grains is more important here and sives act and the other under the producing various types of high-quality arms act -- after the surrender of cotton might not be possible in the Abdur Rahman.

Our Mymensing correspondent adds: A Mymensingh court yesterday granted a five-day remand for Fahima Akhter, wife of JMB's second in command Siddigul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, for interrogation in an arms case.

First Class Magistrate Rokshana Tarannum granted the remand as Detective Branch of Police produced Fahima before the court with a five-day remand prayer. Rapid Action Battalion lodged

the case with Muktagachha Police Station just after Bangla Bhai's arrest on March 6.

Credible polls FROM PAGE 1

It will have full authority to appoint Bhuyain and the prime minister over the returning officers, presiding offithe reforms. cers and the law enforcement agen-

"Our demand for reforms will have to be realised under this government, and not under a caretaker one. They are planning to control the caretaker government after handover of power, it's their deeprooted ploy," Saber said.

Regarding militancy, Saber told the US deputy assistant secretary of state that they think mere arrests of Bangla Bhai and Shaekh Abdur Rahman are not enough to curb militancy.

"If the government investigates all the bomb attacks including the August 21 grenade attack on an opposition rally, and the killings of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and the judges, then we would think that they are sincere about curbing militancy," Saber said

Gastright was accompanied by the US Charge d' Affaires in Dhaka Judith A Chammas and senior US

Pay heed to UN call FROM PAGE 16

Lavrov said neither Moscow nor politicians and scientists Beijing would tolerate force and any Straw added that if Iran backed plans to resolve the row "by compuldown and complied, "then all sorts of sion and force are extremely countergood things, not bad things, will follow." Both Steinmeier and US Secretary productive."

of State Condoleezza Rice dodged questions about sanctions. "Now a 30-day period is running and it is Iran's move," the German

foreign minister said. A German official familiar with Thursday's talks said on condition of anonymity that Germany, one of the biggest exporters of goods to Iran, was ultimately prepared to support economic sanctions if Iran remained defiant.

Russia and China oppose any sanctions, let alone force, against Tehran and insisted on deleting portions of the UN statement that they feared could lead down that path.

Iran said its decision to pursue enrichment was irreversible and suggested the West was manipulating the Security Council.

"We will not, definitely, suspend again the enrichment," Iran's IAEA ambassador, Aliasghar Soltaniyeh, told Reuters. Oil climbed further above \$66 a

barrel toward its \$70 record after Iran rejected the UN admonition. The UN statement came after three

weeks of haggling among the council's five veto-wielding members -- Britain. France, China, Russia and the United States Germany and the five big powers

had agreed on January 31 to report talks with Iran on condition that it re-Iran to the Security Council over its suspend all enrichment-related nuclear activities. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei activities

Senate panel

Harkin of Iowa and Barbara Boxer of FROM PAGE 16 international telephone calls and e-California, have co-sponsored his mails involving Americans when resolution one party is suspected of links with terrorism violates the law because to resign from office in August 1974 it is conducted without court warafter a congressional impeachment rants. investigation aided by Dean, who

Committee Chairman Arlen had earlier been his White House Specter, a Pennsylvania counsel. Republican, contends there are no grounds for censure, but has agreed decide whether to send the censure to hold the hearing to debate the resolution against Bush to the matter Republican-led Senate where it seems to have virtually no chance of

"I think that there's absolutely no merit in it, and that the hearing will expose it because of the president's broad (constitutional) authority, Specter said

formal rebuke, only once before and Feingold's censure resolution that was Andrew Jackson in 1834 in has rallied the support of a number a banking dispute. of liberal groups, but it has also Dean was one of five witnesses galvanized conservatives in support called to testify before the Judiciary of the embattled war-time president. Committee -- two by Democrats three by Republicans

Republicans have dismissed the resolution as a political stunt, while many Democrats have distanced themselves from it as they jockey for position for the November congressional elections.

So far, just two of Feingold's 43 FROM PAGE 1 At one stage, the Chhatra Dal and fellow Senate Democrats. Tom Shibir activists locked in a clash

leaving 15 injured from both sides. 27 shanties Saiful Islam, Mashiur Rahman, gutted in Ctg Abdul Momen and JCD leader Abdul Matin were admitted to STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg Chittagong Medical College and

At least 27 shanties were gutted in a fire at Bakalia in the port city early vesterdav.

hostel were ransacked and a motor-Fire Brigade sources said the fire bike belonging to a Shibir leader broke out at a slum in Hafez Nagar was set ablaze during the clash that Residential Area at around 5:55am continued for an hour. and soon engulfed the adjoining On information, Panchlaish shanties, reducing 27 of them to police rushed to the spot and ashes brought the situation under control Four fire fighting units rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze at about 2:30am. The CMC authorities formed a at about 6:30am. The origin of the fire could not be four-member committee, headed by known. The loss of property in the Professor Badrul Alam of the Paediatric Department, to probe the

first aid.

Remittances exceed said. Outside the region, Canada, the imposing taxes will discourage work-United States, Britain, France, Saudi ers from sending funds through the Arabia and the Gulf States are the main source of foreign workers' remit-

It noted that levies charged by remittance service providers "are very An increasing number of remithigh", with fees for small transfers tance-senders are women, it noted. reaching as high as 10-15 percent. Bomb hurled at

in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Unidentified criminals yesterday

hurled a bomb, targeting the office

"There is no doubt that more can be done to increase the volume of home remittances and to enable the recipi-NGO office ents to use them more effectively," UN-ESCAP said. "Additional measures should be

taken to increase the access of poor migrant workers and their families to formal financial institutions."

UN-ESCAP urged banks in the worker's home countries to establish branches in host nations and allow micro credit institutions and credit unions to transfer funds to rural house-

of ADAMS, a non- governmental organisation (NGO), at Maheshwar where he managed to flee with the Pasha under Daulatpur Police Station of Khulna city. help of other students. The bomb exploded with a b bang on the compound of the NGO office at about 7:30pm. No one was **AFC Challenge** injured and no damage done. FROM PAGE 16 Sources said six officials of the Cambodia and Palestine face NGO were inside the office when Guam in the opening day's two e bomb attack was launched matches in Dhaka while India meet On information, police and Rab Afghanistan and Chinese Taipei rushed to the spot and cordoned off India renews transit treaty with Nepal the emerging nations of the conti-AFP, New Delhi nent

JCD leader FROM PAGE 16 He said, "They forcibly took me to a room of Shaheed Dr Milan Hostel of he medical college and beat up me

"At one stage of the torture, agreed to give them the amount and asked them to come to my under construction house on Thursday." He along with his wife on March

29 informed the Rab, who in the guise of day labourers took position around the house and arrested the four.

Rab and police sources said there are several allegations of crime against Maruf and his men.

Kotwali police sources said Maruf and his accomplices on March 28 abducted Zafar Iqbal alias Simu and snatched his motorcycle, cellphone and Tk 1,500. He was confined in the same hostel, from

"If we can do it successfully, we could also profit from more production." he said. The government also provides no said. subsidy for cotton cultivation, though A pound of cotton on the global most of the cotton-exporting countries subsidise the crop highly. "Subsidy could also encourage the farmers to

grow more cotton," he noted. cotton, they added. subsidy to farmers between August 1999 and July 2003, while its share in world cotton exports increased from 17 percent in 1998-99 to 42 percent in

2002-03

But, despite the fact that the project

total cotton production. The government, however, also

country. countries like India and China are also not so competitive, though they provide huge incentives in different forms at different stages from production to Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and their end use

The EU countries also pay cotton farmers \$1.07 billion a year in subsidy, says a Wall Street Journal report. Last year GM cotton accounted for

its entire staff

of its funds

power

CDB sources hoped.

continuously conduct researches and

develop high-yielding varieties of

cotton to reduce costs of pesticide and

production, a CDB official said, adding

control of pestilence reduces the

production cost by at least 40 percent.

The USA provided \$12.47 billion

28 percent of all cotton lands globally and one-ninth of the world's total area of GM crops. according to the World Bank BTMA President MAAwal however expressed a different view on local cotton production, saying growing

He said the cotton-producing

During the election period, the

The EC will enjoy full financia

government will arrange for adequate

independence and the finance minis-

try will have no control over the release

cies to ensure security during the

elections, and the government will be

bound to take necessary actions as

per the EC demands. The law enforce-

ment agencies will be under the EC

announcing election schedule and

cancel elections for violation of elec-

toral laws or rules, to issue arrest

orders and punish the violators. During

the election period, it will have judicial

maintaining complete transparency.

The voter list preparation and issu-

ance of voter identity (ID) cards will

have to be computerised and elec-

serial numbers will have to be

arranged. Vote counting will be made

in presence of all and the signed copy

of the results will have to be given to

Transparent ballot boxes with

tronic voting has to be introduced.

The voter list will be prepared

The EC will be fully independent in

The EC will be able to postpone or

during the election period.

preparing election rules.

manpower as required by the EC.

holds.

FROM PAGE 16

banking system, it added.

The agency said governments should give the right information about job opportunities to prevent situations in which families borrow huge sums to send a worker abroad, only to discover that the earnings are not enough to recover the cost.

In the Asia Pacific region, Australia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Singapore are major sources of remittances for developing countries.

For Laos and Myanmar, neighbouring Thailand is a key source of workers' remittances, UN-ESCAP

Dr Kamal FROM PAGE 1

towards their problems.

Addressing a series of farmers' meetings organised by Jatiya Oikkvo Moncho and Gono Forum at Badergani in Rangpur, the eminent lawyer denounced BNP and Jamaat leaders for 'plundering people's money' in the name of ruling the country and for making it a 'bottomless basket'

He said, "The farmers who are the backbone of economy of the country are now in a miserable condition but the government is making a mockery of their predicaments.'

"Power is now an urgent need of the farmers during the irrigation season. But they have been deprived of it for at least two hours at a stretch daily," he added.

He said while the farmers are suffering from the power crisis the BNP-Jamaat leaders are leading luxurious lives at air-conditioned offices and houses

As the ministers and MPs do not suffer from the power crisis they cannot realise the problems of the farmers, he said.

He also said a vicious circle has long been deceiving the people for the last 35 years in the name of ruling the country. But their days are numbered as the patriotic people have united to oust them forever and to form a pro-people secular government for which the martyrs had sacrificed their lives in 1971.

Senior Joint Secretary of Bikolpodhara Firoz M Hassan Organising Secretary of Gono Forum Mostafa Mohshin Montu. Gono Forum leader Advocate Zohurul Islam, and Altaf Hossain also spoke at the meetings.

India has renewed a transit treaty with landlocked neighbour Nepal which will allow the Himalayan country to export its goods through Indian ports, the Indian foreign ministry said yesterday.

"Following the completion of the review process... the Treaty of Transit between India and Nepal which was in force up to January 5 2006 has been renewed ... for a further period of seven years," the ministry said in a statement. According to the ministry, the

port facilities at the eastern Indian citv of Kolkata. t also specifies 15 transit routes for the transport of Nepalese goods

between the India-Nepal border and Kolkata. "In addition. Nepalese trade

traffic to Bangladesh also transits through India," the ministry's website says.

according to Indian figures.

Cellphones

FROM PAGE 1

As members of the police and Armed Police Battalion noticed the incident and rushed to the spot the workers and security men ran away.

The law enforcers captured Habibur and later handed him over to Airport police.

In another customs recovery on March 26, officials seized cellphones along with battery packs worth around Tk 1.66 crore at ZIA.

Declaring it sewing machines, the smugglers attempted to make of cartons inside a wooden box.

play Philippines at the Chittagong MAAziz Stadium. State-run BTV will telecast all four matches live through its terrestrial and satellite channels. The tournament is organised by

the AFC, which is spending 2.5 million US dollars for promotion of

out" and died instantly.

making bombs.

FROM PAGE 1

Jamaat man in it.

reforms.

process, he feared.

mittee, why can't we?"

were recovered from the scene.

The press release further said

Rab sources said the outlaw

who lodged FIR against him with

Jamaat question

Alamdanga Police Station.

that the outlaw was involved in arms

smuggling, extortion, rape and

Outlaw killed FROM PAGE 1 arrest his cohorts. At Jugirhuda, Kalu's accompli-

transit treaty provides Nepal with

India accounts for nearly two-thirds of Nepal's foreign trade,

a customs official. Some workers of the loading section and security men were assisting him, he added.

with 4,000 cellphones, packed in 12

discussion on reforms will kick-start as soon as the committee is set up," Bhuiyan told the press at his residence last afternoon.

Asked whether the committee would also draw from the leaders of the BNP's coalition partners, he said

On what took his party so long to reply, Bhuiyan said it was because when he received Jalil's letter the prime minister was away in India and then again she was preoccupied with some important programmes for a few days after returning home. While Jalil remarked that it would

look better had the BNP sent the letter before Thursday's sit-in programme around the Secretariat. Mannan DETAILS ON PAGE 12 Bhuiyan reasoned, "As she [Khaleda Zial was very busy, there were some delays in holding our own discussions on the issue, which put off replying to your letter."

Now that the BNP has agreed to widen the committee's representation by allowing opposition leaders outside ces opened fire on the law enforcparliament to be part of it, a positive ers, forcing them to retaliate. Kalu response from the opposition should received bullets during the "shootlet the committee be formed and function, political analysts remarked. REFORMAGENDAON One shutter gun and two bullets

CARETAKER GOVT

The opposition's five-point proposal to reform the caretaker government system includes the following:

The president in consultation with all political parties will appoint acceptable and trusted persons as the chief used to threaten those with death adviser and advisers of the caretaker government.

During the tenure of the caretaker government, the president will act on all matters relating to state on advice of the chief adviser, taking the parliamentary democracy into consideration.

During its term, the caretaker alliance leaders in the proposed government will run the defence committee, the left-leaning leaders within the AL-led 14-party combine

And, jurisdiction of the caretaker warned against inclusion of any government will be confined to conducting the day-to-day work and On representation from BNP's assisting the Election Commission alliance partners, Bhuiyan told (EC) in holding the general elections. **EC REFORMS** reporters, "If the 14-party opposition can have their leaders in the com-

The reform proposals regarding the EC include the appointment of the Gono Forum General Secretary chief election commissioner (CEC) Saifuddin Ahmed Manik told The and other election commissioners in Daily Star last night. "I think the consultation with political parties. The government already knows about number of election commissioners will also be determined through consultaour reservation about Jamaat. We tion. In case of any difference in opincannot sit with Jamaat to discuss ion, the decision on the EC will follow Dilip Barua, chairman of the majority view.

Being a permanent constitutional Bangladesh Samyabadi Dal, body, the EC has to have the ability another partner of the 14-party and status to conduct elections neualliance, strongly opposed the idea trally. It will have an independent of including any Jamaat man in the secretariat free of control of the execucommittee, which, if happens, tive. The EC will also expand its would mar the whole discussion organisational framework down to upazila level and appoint and control

every candidate or his nominee and designated observer. The returning officer will send the consolidated statement of the election results to the EC secretariat and only the EC will

announce the results. The election tribunals will dispose of any case of election results within two months and any appeal will have to be disposed of by the Appellate

Division of the Supreme Court within three month REFORMS IN ELECTORAL LAWS The proposals for reforms in the

electoral rules and regulations say in order to protect the electoral process from the impact of black money, the candidates must make public their assets and dependants.

An election officer will monitor electoral expenses of the candidates in every constituency and send reports to the EC secretariat.

All candidates must submit statements of their election expenses within a month of the polls. All candidates have to provide the

EC with personal information, including their academic qualifications source of income, and description of assets and liabilities It will also be compulsory for all

political parties to submit their financial reports to the EC

Owners of black money, loan defaulters and relatives of loan defaulters, and persons who opposed the Liberation War and were war criminals will be ineligible to contest the elections. No political party will nominate any criminal and owner of black money to contest the elections.

The proposals include imposing ban on 'religion-based politics' and using religion for seeking vote. The opposition camp also wants a ban on

electioneering at religious places like mosques, temples and churches. The political parties have to strictly control their expenses for rallies and

processions, after declaration of the election schedule. The lists of presiding officers, assistant presiding officers and polling officers will have to be delivered to the candidates while the lists of polling centres will have to be made public at least 15 days ahead of

the polls Apart from the above, the reform agenda also proposes to increase the number of women's reserved seats in parliament and direct election to them.

Iran test-fires FROM PAGE 16

Israel and US bases in the Middle East within reach

Thousands of Iranian troops are beginning wargames in the Gulf to prepare the country's armed forces for warding off "threats" amid increasing tensions with the West over Tehran's nuclear programme.

embassv officials

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and former ambassador Ziauddin were also present at the meeting.

Quake in Iran FROM PAGE 1

faults in the earth's crust, and is prone to frequent earthquakes many of them devastating.

Media reported that the weather was now sunny, but that inhabitants of Dorud and Borujerd, terrified by the successive tremors, spent much of the night in parks in cool temperatures.

Some local reporters said that people in the area were not fully satisfied with the rescue operations

The tremor registering 6.0 on the Richter scale struck at 4:47 am (0117 GMT) following two others measuring 4.7 and 5.1, Iranian television quoted the national seismological institute as saying.

The Strasbourg observatory in eastern France announced an earthquake measuring 5.5 on the Richter scale in western Iran at 0116 GMT. It situated the epicentre at 32.86 degrees north and 48.30 degrees east.

Iranian television said the quake caused an electricity blackout in Dorud where the inhabitants rushed out into the streets in panic.

The tremor was felt as far away as Hamedan in the province of the same name to the north.

The worst temblor in recent times hit Bam in the south of the country in December 2003, killing 31,000 people, about a quarter of the city's population, and destroying the city's ancient mud-built citadel

The most recent quake measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale shook a sparsely-populated region of south Iran on March 25, killing one person in a landslide and damaging houses in the mountainous Kouhshab region

In November last year, 10 people were killed in a 6.0 quake on the Gulf island of Qeshm that was felt across the water in the United Arab Emirates.

The deadliest and most powerful quake to hit the country was in June 1990 in the northwestern provinces of Ghilan and Zandian when about people were 37,000 killed and more than 100,000 injured. The quake had a magnitude of 7.7 and devastated hundreds of towns and villages

fire was estimated at Tk 6 lakh, the sources said.

they called a file photo of the al-

Dana, which appeared to be 60 to

70 feet long with two decks.

the accident," Ben Dayna said.

Al-Hassan said an investigation

was under way. The boat's owners

said overloading could have caused

the boat to capsize, according to

be a mix of Bahrainis, nationals of

other Gulf Arab nations and

Westerners. Health Minister Nada

Haffadh told al-Arabiya television

that survivors who arrived at hospi-

tals included nationals of India,

South Africa, Singapore and Britain.

Abul-Ghafar, interviewed on al-

Arabiya television, said the passen-

gers included 25 Britons, 20

Filipinos, 10 South Africans and 10

hospitalised and that other survivors

had been released upon arrival on

shore. Television footage showed

survivors, appearing to be in shock

and their hair still wet, squatting on

the floor of a hospital. Many of them

covered themselves with blankets.

One male survivor was shown being

Haffadh said 24 people were

Information Minister Mohammed

The passengers were thought to

FROM PAGE 16

accident

Bahrain television.

Egyptians.

Bahrain cruise boat

incident.

treated for cuts to the head

and hospital workers hurried them Survivors, some with blood to waiting ambulances. Scores of streaming down their faces, hugged officials and relatives waited on the each other. Several wept uncontroldock watching small rescue boats lably as friends and relatives tried to with flashing blue lights bring more calm them. Some survivors needed bodies and survivors. assistance as they disembarked Television stations showed what

from a rescue boat that brought them to shore. Interior Minister Sheik Al Kahlifa said most of the passengers were

There was no indication of what employees of a Bahrain-based caused the vessel to overturn in what appeared to be ideal weather company. Coast guard chief Youssef alconditions. The government dismissed terrorism as a cause, and Katem said there were 150 guests the news agency quoted Interior at a dinner party aboard. The Ministry spokesman Maj. quests, he said, ate dinner while the

Mohammed Ben Dayna calling it an vessel was still docked and that up to 20 of them disembarked before it "It's too early to say what caused sailed Cmdr. Jeff Breslau, a spokes-

man for the US Navy, told The Associated Press that the US military aided the rescue effort. The Navy has had a presence in Bahrain for more than 50 years.

"We're sending divers, small boats and a helicopter," Breslau

A pair of helicopters could be

seen from the shore flying low over

the site of the incident. Rescue

teams on small boats could also be

seen using flashlights to help them

about two months after an Egyptian

ferry sank in the Red Sea, killing

about 1,000 people. The vessel was

en route from the Saudi port of

Dubah to the Egyptian port of

Safaga when it went down before

dawn about 60 miles off the

refining archipelago of 688,000 off

Bahrain is an oil-exporting and

The capsizing of the ship came

search for survivors.

Egyptian coast

the coast of Saudi Arabia