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Four workers killed in Ctg landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Four workers were killed in a landslide near Bamerchhara Eco Park in Banskhalia upazila of Chittagong early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Abul Hossain (Mou), 30, Nurul Haque, 20, Rabiul Alam, 17, and Belal Uddin, 19. They all hail from West Chhambal of the same upazila, police said.

Sources and police said the landslide occurred around 6:00am yesterday as they were working inside a brick kiln near the hill burying the three alive on the spot.

Belal succumbed to his injuries on his way to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH). Police sent the bodies to CMCH morgue for autopsy.

Fire again at Tongi factory 7 injured

UNB, Gazipur

A devastating fire gutted Akiz Printing and Packaging Factory in Tongi Industrial area at midnight on Friday.

Fire Brigade sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at the godown on the top floor of the three-storied factory building and soon engulfed the entire building, burning down a huge quantity of packaging papers, cartons and chemicals.

Seven people, including a firefighter, were injured while trying to extinguish the blaze.

On information, 13 fire fighting units from Dhaka, Tongi, Kurmitola and Baridhara rushed to the spot and put out the fire at about 5:00am.

Fire fighters estimated the extent of damage at over Tk one crore. But director of the factory said it is not possible at present to estimate the extent of damage.

There were no workers in the factory during the incident. Local MP Zahid Ahsan Russell visited the spot yesterday morning.

Brazil plane crash kills 19

AFP, Rio de Janeiro

A Brazilian twin-engine passenger plane has crashed north of this city, killing all 19 people on board, the Team airline announced yesterday.

The Brazilian Civil Aviation Administration said the plane took off from Macae at about 20:20 GMT Friday and headed toward Rio de Janeiro but disappeared from radar screens 20 minutes later.

Its wreckage was discovered by a rescue team about 200 km (124 miles) north of Rio de Janeiro early Saturday, airline spokesman Davi Farias said.

There were no survivors. The Czech-made Lat 410 aircraft had 17 passengers and two crew on board.



Wasa bleeds for power crisis

Picks Tk 10 lakh bill a day for diesel purchase, seeks police protection to avert public wrath

REAZ AHMAD

Persisting power crisis in the city has forced Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) bear a huge financial burden of Tk 10 lakh a day to pay for diesel needed to operate 297 generators to draw groundwater.

Besides, the worsening power supply situation has made Wasa to seek police protection of their 420 groundwater-lifting installations and over 1,250 pump operators from growing public wrath, official sources said.

"Every day power supply remains disrupted for 9-10 hours in most of the city areas. We have 420

pump stations to draw groundwater for piped supply. Now, we have to operate diesel-run generators for at least 4-5 hours a day in most of these pump stations to lift water," said an executive engineer, who is in charge of one of the six Wasa zones.

"We require 22 litres of diesel per hour to operate a generator. It is very expensive for us as we are not supposed to bear fat diesel bills every day. But shortage of power supply and low voltage have pushed us into such a situation," he explained, seeking anonymity.

"We're already paying up to Tk 1.5 lakh as electricity bill per month against each of our pump stations,

and now we've to bear huge additional expenses for diesel."

When contacted, Wasa Managing Director Kazi Ali Azam said, "We've got 267 generators installed at the pump stations. Besides, we've 30 mobile generators. And this summer, when groundwater table has declined further and aquifer is not being recharged as there has been almost no rainfall for long, we're facing serious difficulties in meeting the city's water requirement."

Meanwhile, police have already been deployed at all the power substations in the city to prevent attacks by agitated people at the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

FOREIGN ISLAMIC ORGANISATIONS Delegates funded militants while on tour here

Investigators suspect

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Investigators suspect that some delegates of foreign Islamic organisations while visiting Bangladesh at different times in the past provided Islamist militants with financial and logistic supports without any government body monitoring their activities.

Alarmed by the discovery of some of these delegates' link with the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) during interrogation of its militants, the investigators now plan to observe these

people's activities and role to find out the militants' foreign connections.

An investigator said the aim behind the foreign assistance to the Bangladeshi militants is to initiate jihad for establishing Islamic rule.

According to the investigators, most of these Islamic delegates were from Pakistan, India, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Myanmar, Sudan, Yemen, Bahrain and a few other Muslim-dominated countries.

While investigating the seditious role of the militants, the investigators found that the

Islamist radicals in Bangladesh on different occasions received financial and logistic support as well as training from these foreign connections.

The government, however, was not serious at all about watching their movement in the country in the past. Although the demand for finding the foreign connections was raised strongly by different quarters, the government still keeps claiming it found no foreign links to the militants.

Meanwhile, the government has

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

McKinion for unity of Khaleda, Hasina on polls reforms

UNB, London

Commonwealth Secretary General Don McKinion urged Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and opposition leader Sheikh Hasina to reach a consensus on certain national issues including reform of the electoral system.

"I think what I want to see in Bangladesh is a recognition by two party leaders that working together

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

ELECTORAL REFORMS

14-party may shun talks if Jamaat on committee

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The 14-party opposition combine is likely to shun the BNP-proposed government-opposition dialogue on reforms to the caretaker government and electoral systems if the government half of its proposed 10-member discussion committee includes any Jamaat-e-Islami or other anti-liberation politician.

In a meeting yesterday key leaders of the Awami League-led opposition line-up discussed the proposal sent by BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a letter on Friday to his AL counterpart Abdul Jalil.

The left-leaning components of the opposition camp as well as many AL leaders were fast opposed to talking reforms with any Jamaat

man, a meeting source said. The meeting however did not take any final decision yesterday. "We need to study the proposal in more details. We'll meet again tomorrow [Sunday] for further discussions," the source said.

But, a senior opposition leader preferring anonymity told The Daily Star they would nominate

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Trade deficit with India up by 13pc

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Bangladesh's trade deficit with India inched up by 13.23 percent in the first half of the current fiscal year from that of July to December in FY2004-05.

However, according to official statistics, the country's export to India in the first half of FY06 posted an encouraging 42 percent rise from the corresponding period of FY05, compared to a 14.85 percent rise in import from the next-door

neighbour. Bangladesh's export to India in July-December 2005 was \$105 million compared to \$74 million in the first half of FY05. On the other hand, its import from India in July-December FY06 was \$1.18 billion, or about \$170 million higher than the \$1.01 billion import in July-December FY05.

So, the country's trade deficit with India in the first half of FY06 was \$1.07 billion, which was \$945

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Foster son kills parents, child by setting them on fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Set on fire by their foster son, the parents and an infant of the son died at Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogra yesterday.

Shafiqul, 28, and his accomplice Jahurul set fire to his foster parents Saider Ali, 55, and Dilara Begum, 35, and Shafiqul's son Shagor, 3, when they were sleeping at their Fulbari house in the town on Friday night.

Childless Saider Ali, a trader,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



FIFA President Sepp Blatter hands over the FIFA plaque to Bangladesh Captain Arif Khan Joy before the Bangladesh-Cambodia AFC Challenge Cup match at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

Booters make winning start in Asian carnival

SPORTS REPORTER

The biggest football tournament the country has ever staged, the AFC Challenge Cup, got underway at the Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday amidst fanfare and with the graceful presence of none other than the FIFA president Sepp Blatter.

On a rare day of football hogging the spotlight in a country where cricket is the most popular sport, Blatter declared the 16-nation meet open after Palestine had already set the tone with an 11-0 demolition of Guam in the tournament opener.

The home side also had their share of joy on the first day as Bangladesh came out winners with a hard fought 2-1 victory against

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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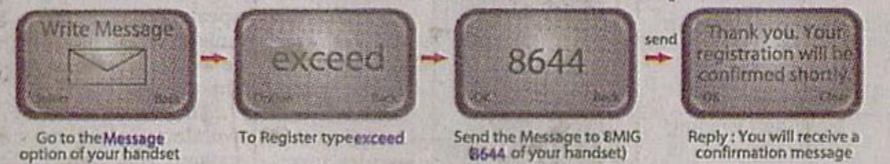
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