Jamuna Fertilizer Factory fire

Was it due to negligence?

Star Report

Was the July 4 fire at the compressor house of the underconstruction Jamuna fertilizer factory an outcome of negligence?

Experts have started asking this question, since there was no adequate fire fighting equipment in the compressor house at the time of the accident, it was reliably learnt.

Fire broke out when some electrical equipment were being cleansed with light fuel oil which is highly flammable. At that time some technicians were doing welding work in the same house, sources said.

Cables, valves and switch boxes in the compressor house were gutted in the fire. Experts said a full-fledged inquiry into the incident by a neutral body was needed to determine whether other costly equipment had suffered serious damage or not.

The Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) has appointed a technical committee to look into the cause of the accident. The Taka 1223 crore Jamuna Fertilizer Factory is an enterprise of BCIC.

Informed sources said, the fire had exposed the costly natural gas compressor, the synthetic gas compressor and their connecting pipes made of alloyed iron to 800 to 900 degrees centigrade of heat. And since alloyed iron changes composition at such high temperature, the machinery are feared to have suffered dam-

A BCIC source said the foreign construction firm engaged to install the factory had brought in experts from abroad to determine the extent of damage. Outwardly, the damage does not seem very heavy. he added.

It was, however, gathered that instead of checking the machinery and equipment that were exposed to fire, the con-

'First secretary

of Tokyo mission

not expelled'

ealled back MA Awal, First

Bangladesh Embassy in Tokyo.

pelled from the Japanese capi-

tal nor declared persona non-

grata, said an official Sunday

taken for administrative rea-

Returnees

From Page 1 Col. 4

Earlier initiating the dis-

efforts in securing

1115.95 crore during the

cussion Monirul Hug

Chowdhury called for con-

reemployment of the repatri-

ated Bangladeshis and recov-

Whip of the Opposition. AL

member Azizur Rahman, JP

MPs Moqsud Ibne Aziz Lama,

Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury

and Abu Lais Md Mobin

Chowdhury, Jamaat MP

Enamul Huq and BNP MPs

Mahbubul Alam, ATM Alamgir,

and Fatima Chowdhury also

Mohammad Nasim, Chief

same period this year.

ery of their assets.

contradicting press reports.

He has neither been ex-

"The step (callback) was

said the Foreign

Secretary (Press)

reports UNB.

Ministry official.

Authorities concerned have

tractors were putting fresh paint coatings on these. Use of damaged equipment, if any. will shorten the life of the factory. Possibility of accidents also cannot be rules out.

Accident at the Ghorasal Urea Fertilizer Factory in the third week of June has subjected BCIC to a loss of Taka 250 to 300 crore, according to

BCIC sources said that they believed the contractors would not take such a risk, because they have to put the Jamuna factory into operation before handing it over to BCIC in December next. They said the equipment in the compressor house had to withstand high pressure of gas and contractors would have to replace any machinery or equipment that failed at the trial stage.

Informed sources said the construction firm installing the factory had removed its safety officer some time before the accident. The safety officer had complained against technicians of a sub-contractor for not obeying safety rules while working in the compressor

They also said that when fire broke out from a spark at about 1 pm, people at the compressor room could not decide what to do, because they did not have adequate fire fighting equipment. It took about thirty minutes to use hose pipes from some other places in the construction site to spray water. It took another 30 minutes to extinguish the fire, they said.

Experts observed, the construction firm installing the factory should be penalised if the alleged negligence is

Construction of the Jamuna Fertilizer Factory began in 1989, when completed the factory is expected to produce 5.6 lakh tonnes of urea fertilizer a year.

BCCI depositors



JEDDAH: US Secretary of State James Baker (L) is received by Saudi King Fahd (R) after his arrival Saturday. -AFP photo

Baker wins Hussein's approval for ME peace move

JERUSALEM, July 21: US Secretary of State James Baker won approval from King Hussein of Jordan for his peace initiative on Sunday then took his quest to Israel.

In Amman, Hussein said Jordan will attend a proposed Arab-Israeli peace conference and approves the lifting of the 40-year-old Arab boycott of Israel in exchange for a ban on Jewish settlements in occupied territories.

Mixed reports of Israeli response to the latest overtures added an air of anticipation to Baker's scheduled meetings in Israel.

US President Bush, touring Turkey, said he is hopeful that Israel will accept a Saudi offer to lift its boycott against the Jewish state if Israel will freeze housing settlements in the occupied territories.

"When the process is there. when the conference is there. Jordan will be the first to attend," Hussein told a crush of reporters at the royal palace."

Earlier report said: Secretary of State James Baker, taking his quest for a peace conference to three Mideast countries in one day, said Sunday he is "very hopeful" of success,

reports AP. Mixed reports of Israeli response to the latest overtures added an air of anticipation to Baker's scheduled meetings in

President Bush, touring Turkey, said he is hopeful that Israel will accept a Saudi offer to lift its boycott against the Jewish state if Israel will freeze housing settlements in the occupied territories.

Responding to a question about what he expects from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Bush said to a reporter: "You don't know what he has made clear to me and what he hasn't. What I am saving is that I am hopeful he will accept it."

Bush's remarks came as Baker was preparing to leave Jordan for a meeting with

Shamir in neighbouring Israel. Baker arrived in Amman for lunch with King Hussain after a flight from Saudi Arabia, where officials set the condition on

lifting the 40-year-old boycott. Some Israeli leaders. meanwhile dismissed the Saudi-offer.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon was quoted by the Israel radio as telling Jewish fund-raisers on Sunday that Israel would continue settlement-building 'for hundreds of years to come."

"Cancelling a boycott that is against international law has nothing to do with the rights of Jews to their land," Sharon reportedly added.

Meanwhile, Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens welcomed a report of Syrian President Hafez Assad's willingness to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir at the outset of a peace conference if it can be set up.

DUCSU polls deferred

From Page 1 Col. 5

The Minister gave them a patient hearing and assured them that an announcement to this effect would be made within two to three days, a Depositors' Association press

The State Minister said that the Prime Minster would be informed about the plight of the depositors arising out of the sudden closure of the

pointed return their money in consultation with the government.

deposited money. They called it

their deposited money.

4 pm, leaving July 30 for with-

From Page 1 Col. 7

of the teachers' representatives in the Syndicate, all Deans, Provosts, Proctor, election advisory council and representatives of various associations of other officials and employees of the university.

The meeting elaborately discussed the election boycot by different student organisations their memorandum submitted to the VC stating in ability to participate in the elections.

The Vice-Chancellor informed the Syndicate meeting of the discussion made in the joint meeting held at 4.30 pm. The Chhatra League (S-A)

leaders met Awami League Chief and Leaders of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Sheikh Hasina at her resi dence soon after the Syndicate decision was announced.

The meeting rejected the syndicate decision saying it was taken "by-passing" the major demands of the boycotting student bodies.

When contacted over telephone last night, BCL(S-A) **Publicity Secretary Nurul Amin** told the Daily Star, "We demanded postponement of the polls and holding of an open discussion of the DU authorities with the student leaders But the Syndicate took the 'one-sided decision' which will push the campus situation towards deterioration and uncertainty.

"We are ready to do anything needed to force the aurealise our demands," Nurul Amin commented

"The Vice-Chancellor must take all the responsibilities of the situation that might take place in near future." he warned. Leaders of other polls boycotting organisations later met the BCL(S-A) leaders at the Bangabandhu Bhaban, it was gathered.

According to the fresh election schedule, nomination papers will be available from today (July 22) to July 24 from 10 am to 4 pm and on July 25, from 10 am to 3 pm. The nominations will be accepted by the returning officers on July

25 from 10 am to 4 pm. The nomination papers will be scrutinised on July 25 from 5 pm. at the administration building conference room and list of the candidates will be announced on July 26 at 4 pm.

The nomination papers submitted earlier will be deemed valid and those whose candidatures were rejected earlier will be able to collect nomination papers as per fresh schedule. Those, whose nominations were suspended on

July 21, will be given the chance to fulfil the relevant conditions by July 29 at 4 pm. Final list of the candidates will be published on July 31 at

student community by participating in the election with the communal and anti-liberation forces. The rally pledged to Voters have been asked to

> BKSAK-backed Jatiya Chhatra League (JCL) held a rally in Madhu's canteen premises which was addressed by Wahiduzzaman Chan and Iqbalur Rahim. They said the present campus situation was not suitable for holding a peaceful election.

held a rally in front of the Arts Building, which was addressed by Nazmul Huq Pradhan and Shafi Ahmed, President and General Secretary respectively of the organisation. They said, without creating a congenial atmosphere on the campus the DUCSU election should not be

Meanwhile, the primary list of the candidates in the forthcoming DUCSU election was announced. According to the list, 183 nomination papers were submitted for the 20 seats of DUCSU.

list, the posts of Vice President and General Secretary will be contested by 11 and 14 candidates respec-

CPB for DUCSU leadership from regular students

Communist Party o Bangladesh (CPB) has expressed concern over the situation on the Dhaka University campus arising out of post ponement of the DUCSU elec-

CPB General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik in a statement Sunday said that the situation deteriorated as some major student organisations

Most of the major student bodies, except the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Islami Chhatra Shibir, failed to put their senior student leaders in the DUCSU polls race due to DU Syndicate's earlier decision barring the irregular students from contesting the polls.

They, including the CPBbacked Chhatra Union, demanded facility for participation of irregular students in

Mantk said the demand was "unreasonable" and that the student leaders should be elected from among the regu-

Irregularities of the autocratic regime should not be continued under a democratic government, he observed

Joint rally today

Some newspapers accept demand for enhanced salary, allowances

A joint rally of journalists, press workers and general employees of all newspapers and news agencies will be held today at 11 am in the National Press Club premises to press home their various demands including enhancement of salary, reports BSS.

The rally has been organised by the three federations of the newspaper industry against the "conspiracy of the owners" and for realisation of their demands for enhancement of

A three hour token strike from 11 am to 2 pm will be observed today in all newspapers and news agencies in support of the demands.

Meanwhile, a number of owners of newspapers and news agencies has accepted the demand for enhanced salary of the journalists and workers of their respective establishments. The names of those organisation will be formally announced in today's raily, a federation press re- 1 lease said. Besides, owners of more newspapers and news agencies have been holding negotiations with the union leaders for solving the issue.

An indefinite strike will begin from 6 am on July 24 in those organisations which will fail to come to a settlement over the demands of the unions by July 23, the press release added.

Mugger killed

From Page 1 Col. 5

hend anyone coming to see the dead. After sometime, one Monowar Hossain Mona (20) came to see the body and police arrested him from the spot. Police recovered Taka 3.000 from him.

After interrogation, confessed involvement of the gang in snatching the money on Saturday last and the subsequent killing of Manik by Khairul over the sharing of robbed money.

Ershad's case

From Page 1 Col. 8

Attorney General Aminul Haq said since the accused was under bereavement. "We have no objection to granting a day's adjournment." He said "Our law is blended with mercy" and added that the adjournment may be granted.

Judge Mohammad Ali Khan granted the adjournment and ordered that the court will resume Monday.

Talpatty

From Page 1 Col. 8 survey to settle the cross-claim

on the island. In 1982, a Secretary-level meeting of the two countries decided to conduct an on-the-

spot "joint verification". India, on the other hand, proposed for exchange of data and information between the two countries about the island before the joint verification

The Talpatty issue was raised again during the visit of the Indian External Affairs Minister to Bangladesh in February 1990.

It was decided at the time that Bangladesh would fix place and date for the exchange of data and information about the island and communicate that to India, the Foreign Minister said, adding steps are being taken in this regard.

Ambassadors

From Page 1 Col. 8 cadre and the rest from army.

In reply to another question from Tabibur Rahman of AL, he said the present government has no plan to set up any new mission abroad. A proposal for reducing the

number of personnel in foreign missions is under active consideration of the government as per its austerity programmes, he said replying to a supplementary.

The Foreign Minister told Mozahar Hossain of CPB that the government had not yet decided to open its embassy in Afghanistan. He told another questioner.

Abdul Matin Khasru of AL, that Tk 43 crore 27 lakh 56 thousand had been spent during fiscal 1990-91 for officials and employees working in Bangladesh missions abroad.

Law and order

From Page 1 Col. 8 Earlier Abdus Samad Azad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition raised the demand for fixing a date for the proposed general discussion on the law and order situation.

AL MP Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, and Jamaat leader Matiur Rahman Nizami also spoke in support of the de-

The Midnight File

Saddam pardons political prisoners

BAGHDAD, July 21: President Saddam Hussein pardoned all political prisoners and exiles except military officers today, the official Iraqi news agency INA said. The ruling Revolution Command Council (RCC), in a statement signed by Saddam, said it was declaring the amnesty because Iraq was moving towards a new phase "based on popular participation in government and political pluralism," the agency reported. says Reuter.

Afghan guerillas seize Badakshan province

PESHAWAR, July 21: Muslim guerillas said they captured a strategic town on the Afghan-Soviet border Sunday, their second major battle field victory in less than a week. A spokesman for the guerilla commanders' Supervisory Council said the town of Ishkashim in northeastern Badakshan Province fell Sunday after five days of fighting, reports AP.

Schwarzkopf back in Gulf

MANAMA (Bahrain), July 21: Gen H Norman Schwarzkopf on Sunday was back in the Gulf, the theater for the 42-day Gulf war and the 700,000 allied forces he commanded to and Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait. Schwarzkopf arrived in Saudi Arabia after a two-day stopover in Egypt for a meeting with President Hosni Mubarak, one of the leading Arab members of the 33-nation alliance, reports AP.

Hartal observed in upazilas

closed.

went unheeded in all seven

upazilas. Upazila Chairman's

chambers, however, remained

Rangpur, the home-district of

deposed President Ershad

whose regime introduced

upazila, were under a six-hour

shutdown protesting the move

Plashbari from Rangpur town

three motorcycles and some

bicycles were also damaged

Correspondent adds: A half-day

hartal called by the Upazila

Chairman Samity was observed

throughout the Port City on

Saifur

From Page 1 Col. 7

realistic system of tax for mo-

bilising domestic resources

which is badly needed for the

development of the country.

He said "Our neighbour

Thailand introduced the VAT

the Finance Minister said a

committee was working on the

issue and on the basis of its

findings and recommendations

measures would be taken so

The Finance Minister criti-

that interest of the customers

cised the Bank of England for

taking unilateral action on the

BCCI Bank without consulting

the other countries where the

Saifur held meetings with the

Governor of the Bank of

England and British Minister

On his way back home.

bank was in operation.

was preserved.

Turning to the BCCI affairs,

system only the other day".

A BRTC bus on its way to

Another public service bus,

Our Chittagong Staff

to undo the system.

was partially damaged.

during the hartal.

Sunday.

All eight upazilas in

A six-hour hartal called by the Upazila Chairman Samity was observed in some upazilas across the country Sunday protesting a reported move against the local body, reports

There were reports of violence during the half-day hartal from some upazilas. In Netrakona, hartal was

observed in most upazilas barring a few. There was no shutdown in Kendua and Sadar upazilas. A complete hartal was ob-

served in Aatpara, Madan, Mohanganj. Kalmakanda and Durgapur, while it was a partial success in Kaliajuri, Barhatta and Purbadhala upazilas. Police arrested Shahid

Iqbal, Chhatra League President of Mohanganj upazila unit, during a clash. He was allegedly beaten up severely. Later at meetings in

Mohanganj and Barhatta upazilas, the speakers accused the BNP government of conspiring to dissolve the post of Upazila Chairman because, the speakers said, the ruling party has no grassroot base.

UNB Feni correspondent reported a half-day hartal was observed peacefully in five upazilas of the district. Buses on the Chittagong- Dhaka highway were off.

A report from Habigani said hartal was not observed in the district. But Chairman of eight upazilas of the district brought out a procession and held a rally in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office to protest what they said government decision to abolish the upazila system.

Road communication on the Aricha-Dhaka highway was halted for an hour by supporters of Shibalaya Upazila Chairman, Manikganj district blocking the road with trees.

Hundreds of coaches, 80 trucks and over thousand passengers were stranded between 10 am and 11 am Sunday Police later removed the

barricade with the help of local In Jhenidah, the hartal call Governor of the Bank of Rahman apprised the Governor of the Bank of England about the difficulties faced by the Bangladeshis in England whose savings with

In Faridpur flood waters

remained static but erosion of the Padma has made over 500 families homeless in Sadarpur

fected upazilas are Sadar. Charvadrashan, Sadarpur and Bhanga. No relief materials reached the district as yet. Gaibandha, the

Brahmaputra receded slightly but the flood situation remained unchanged. About 1.5 lakh people in 17 unions of Faridpur Sadar, Shaghata, Fulchhari and Sundargani were affected.

tion remained static although the Jamuna waters dropped by

Road communication from Sirajganj to Bogra, Tarash and other places remained

Flood situation remained unchanged in Pabna where Sujanagar, Kagmari, Faridpur, Bhanga, Pabna Sadar and Ishardi upazilas were affected. About 60 thousand people are marooned in the worst hit

route were suspended Sunday until further notice due to inclement weather whipping torrents in the overflowing

the BCCI had been frozen.

sible and hazardous. Ferries and launches in the route have been asked to follow authorities' instructions. About 4,000 passengers and

BIWIC sources said waves

surging up to 50-60 feet high

were lashing the mighty river

making ferry crossing impos-

more than 400 trucks remained stranded here following the resignal from 4 pm.

Flood situation improved in Sherpur district excepting Jhinaigati upazila which experienced fresh flood with the rise of rivers Someswari and Moharashi due to heavy rain-

About 40 to 50 per cent low lying areas of the three unions in Jhinaigati were flooded due to heavy rainfall and by waters rushing down from the Garo Hills across the border in last 24 hours, Upazila Chairman Jamshed Ali told UNB this

However, according to district administration sources, the situation improved slightly in Nakla, Sreebordi and Sadar upazilas where flood waters started receding slowly.

district, the sources said.

remained cut off from rest of the country for the last ten days as road communication snapped following inundation of the highway between Puradokan and Fainttoal. Boat is now the only means of transport in the district.

Amendment bill From Page of Col. 4 had adopted evasive tactics in secret ballot and that the giving its consent about nar-

conduct the election. the induction of non-MPs in the cabinet, was accepted by the Awami League in principle but the ratio of the non-MPs in the parliament should be lim-

ited to within 10 per cent, according to Committee sources. The Select Committee sources further said another new point had been raised by the Awami League that in case of any request by the Prime Minister to the President to dissolve parliament, the Prime Minister should take concurrence of the parliament mem-

But the amendment bill proposed by the BNP stated that the President could dissolve parliament only after a written request by the Prime Minister.

bers.

Meanwhile, BNP sources said that the Awamt League

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release said.

Bank's operations. The depositors will again meet on Wednesday at the BCCI head office premises at 10 a m to review the latest sit-

In the memorandum to the Minister, the depositors out that the Bangladesh Bank Governor had assured them on July 14 that a preliminary audit would be completed in a week's time and steps would be taken to

The depositors expressed their deep concern that even after the expiry of the scheduled time, the authorities did not spell out any concrete decisions on the return of the

highly unfortunate. In the memorandum to the Minister, the depositors put forward some suggestions for phase-wise withdrawals of

took part in the discussion.

Election Commission should rowing down the differences on different issues. However the third point, on The proponents of parliamentary democracy within the

> stances regarding passage of They have taken a decision that unless there was a unanimity in the Select Committee they would bring the bill to the House unilater-

BNP also sat in a meeting to

discuss the prevailing circum-

ally by next week. Meanwhile, the Awami League sources said that therewould be no basic differences. One of them said, "Objective of both the BNP and the Awami League is the same. Melting of

differences is a time factor." Select Committee sources said that the members of different parties may give their notes of dissent during the scrutiny. But the Committee would submit its report within

the stipulated time.

Editor : S. M. Ali

Votes will be held on August 5 from 8 am to 2 pm at 14 residential halls. A supplementary voters' list will be announced on August 4 at 4 pm.

August 4. Those who would not be admitted to the university by July 30 would not be allowed to cast votes. An earlier report by DU correspondent said: The lead ers of now defunct Central Students Action Committee (CSAC), who have boycotted the election, called on Vice-

collect their identity card from

their respective hall offices by

Chancellor Prof Maniruzzaman Miah Sunday morning and demanded an immediate announcement shifting the election date. They warned, if the DUCSU election date was not shifted. the authorities would be responsible for any consequence.

Meanwhile, two Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) workers were beaten Saturday night and three others were chased Sunday by the rival student groups over the election issue. The two students were beaten at Shahidullah Hall and Jagannath Hall. Campus

sources said three activists of

JCD were attacked by Awami

League-backed Chhatra League

(S-A) workers in the science annex building premises. One of them managed to escape but two others were beaten up. Meanwhile, the components of now defunct Central Students Action Committee (CSAC) separately held demonstrations on the campus demanding postponement of the DUCSU election while JCD

stressed on holding the

DUCSU polls on schedule at its The JCD rally held in front of the DUCSU building was addressed by DUCSU Assistant General Secretary Nazimuddin Alam, JCD Joint Convenor Fazlul Huq Milon and Maniruzzaman Manir. They said those who had boycotted the DUCSU election had no intention to maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the campus. They alleged that they wanted to foil the election by creating anarchy. JCD is determined to resist them, the

The BCL (S-A) rally, addressed by Golam Mostafa Suzan and Quamruzzaman Ansari, President and General Secretary respectively of its Dhaka University unit, called Vice-Chancellor Prof Maniruzzaman Miah a collaborator of the government and said the Vice-Chancellor introduced the new election system according to a blueprint of the government in order to reduce the importance of DUCSU.

speakers said.

They said JCD had betrayed the 10-point demand of the resist the election 'at any

JSD (Inu)-backed BCL (N-S)

According to the primary

By Staff Correspondent

boycotted the election.

the polls. lar students.

The Treasury Bench on July 4'. agreed to the Opposition demand for a general discussion on the subject.

of the Treasury Mrs. Gillian Shephard and Minister for Overseas Development Administration Lynda Chalker. He also met the Deputy

England.

Flood situation

From Page 1 Col. 4 two thousand families home-

and Bhanga upazilas. About 1.35 lakh people have been affected in flood. The af-

In Strajganj, the flood situa-6 cm.

snapped while the Nagarbari-Bogra highway was threatened.

Bera upazila. Crops of over seven thousand acres of land were damaged in the flood. Relief operation was going on but with scarce supplies. UNB adds: Ferry services in the Aricha-Daulatdia river

afternoon.

Some two lakh people still remained marooned in the The district headquarters