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The Daily Star

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Thousand feared killed in Egyptian quake

CAIRO, Oct 13: At least 450 people were killed in Monday's earthquake in Egypt, the worst in the country's modern history, a Cairo evening newspaper said today, reports Reuter.

The semi-official newspaper Al-Ahram-Massa'i said "preliminary indicators show that 450 citizens died, including about 200 school children". It said more than 200 buildings and schools collapsed, injuring 3,000 people, mainly in the greater Cairo area.

The Interior Ministry could not confirm the figure. The latest official figure for the death toll, valid at midnight local time (2200 GMT Monday), is 368 people.

Late on Monday night Prime Minister Atef Sedki told Reuters 340 people had died and 4,000 were injured in the earthquake, which measured 5.3 on the Richter scale.

Atef Sedki said today a report from Geneva that 1,000 people had died or were missing in the Cairo earthquake was 'completely inaccurate'.

Sedki, speaking to Reuters as he waited for President Hosni Mubarak to arrive at Cairo Airport after cutting short a visit to China, said the death toll was around 390.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said 1,000 people were dead or missing and 10,000 had been injured.

Egyptian Interior Ministry sources said their latest reports indicated 402 people had been killed across the country, most in Cairo.

The Secretary-General of the Egyptian Red Crescent, Mamdouh Gabr, told Reuters he believed the figure issued in Geneva was a mistake.

AP says, the high death toll from a relatively moderate earthquake in Cairo can be blamed on the capital's plethora of weak, old buildings and poorly constructed new ones, an official said Tuesday.

The statement from Dr. Joseph S. Mikhail, director of the National Research Institute for Astronomy and Geophysics, came as rescuers continued to search through the rubble of some of the nearly 200 buildings that collapsed.

At least 370 people died in the quake - most of them in Cairo and Giza - and 3,369 were injured, the government said.

Hundreds of after-shocks raced through the area, startling the already traumatized residents of this city of 14 million.

"Now I know what hell is like," said Nadia Ezzeddin, a housewife in central Cairo's residential Zamalek Island.

The quake measured 5.9 on the open-ended Richter scale, a medium-strength quake.

"The large number of casualties was due to the fact that there are many rickety old buildings as well as shoddily constructed newer ones," said.

But many of the deaths were not from buildings collapsing, but from people being trampled in panicked stampedes. More than 100 children died in the Cairo area as they rushed from swaying schools, said Maj. Gen. Rida Abdel-Aziz, an assistant interior minister.

The quake was centered about 32 kilometers (20 miles) southwest of Cairo, a few kilometers (miles) from the pyramids and the Sphinx on the Giza Plateau.



A young boy looks at debris from a house that collapsed after a powerful earthquake, measuring up to 5.8 degrees on the Richter Scale hit Cairo on Monday. — AFP photo

Khaleda, Hasina shocked

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed her deep sorrow at the loss of valuable lives and property caused by the devastating earthquake in Cairo and the surrounding areas, reports BSS.

In a condolence message to President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, the Prime Minister said she was deeply grieved at the disaster and added that the people of Bangladesh joined her in conveying deep sympathy to the government and people of Egypt.

Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday also expressed her deep shock and heart-felt sympathy at the loss of innumerable lives in a earth quake in Cairo recently. In a condolence message to President Hosni Mubarak, she prayed for the peace of the departed souls.

Bid to stall repatriation 15 hurt as rowdy Rohingya attack returnees

By A Staff Correspondent

Several thousand Rohingya refugees, some of them armed with meat cleavers, Tuesday attacked a truck that was carrying about 100 refugees to a transit camp for repatriation to their home in Arakan, police said.

At least 10 refugees and five policemen were injured in the attack that occurred at Ukha's Balukhali camp in Cox's Bazar district, police reached by telephone said.

The injured refugees earlier opted to return home under the government's voluntary repatriation that began last month, a police official said.

The trouble began as police were about to take the 100 refugees from 20 families on board a truck from their 'Balukhali-2 camp to Rangkhali transit camp that houses Rohingyas willing to be repatriated.

The refugees protesting the move attacked the truck, erected barricades on the highway and stoned the police. After the protesters overpowered the escorting policemen, the camp authorities sent a SOS to the Ukha police station from where about 100 policemen were rushed to the scene.

Police said they brought situation under control without resorting to firing or baton.

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PM leaves for Rome

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia left for Rome Tuesday midnight on a four-day visit to Italy, reports UNB.

She was seen off at the Zia International Airport by senior Minister Mirza Golam Haifz, other members of her cabinet, high civil and military officials and heads of diplomatic missions.

Begum Zia is due to deliver the key-note address on 'Food and Nutrition: A Basic Right' at the FAO headquarters there.

During her stay in the Italian capital, Begum Zia will hold wide-ranging talks with the Italian leaders covering the entire gamut of bilateral matters, regional and in.

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Speaker asks Govt, Opposition to implement accord on Azam

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday asked leading members of the Treasury bench and the Opposition to 'sit across the table' for implementing the agreement signed by both sides to end the impasse created by the Golam Azam issue in Parliament last June.

The issue of non-implementation of the agreement was raised in the Jatiya Sangsad, on a point of order, by opposition Chief Whip Muhammad Nasim.

The agreement was signed

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Tornado, storm lash 2 dists: 30 hurt

At least 30 people were injured and some 1300 houses damaged as tornado and storm lashed two districts yesterday, reports UNB.

A tornado amidst heavy downpour lashed Sherpur municipal area and adjoining villages yesterday afternoon, injuring at least 20 people and battering nearly 1,000 houses.

Three of the injured were admitted to local hospitals in critical condition. They were named Shefa Begum (60), Hafizur Rahman (10) and Rafiqul Islam (22).

Local people said the violent storm hit at 5 pm and lasted about 10 minutes. Rainfall, however, continued about two hours submerging low-lying areas of the town.

A Sirajganj report says, a violent storm lashed four thanas of the district yesterday injuring 10 people and damaging some 300 houses.

Witnesses said the storm that began at 4.30 pm also uprooted hundreds of trees and damaged standing crops on a vast tract of land in Kazipur, Royganj, Kamarkhand and Sadar thanas.

Most power lines in the town were reported snapped by the storm.

Meanwhile, three people were reported missing after a mechanised boat capsized during the storm in the mid-stream of Jamuna, 3 km off the town.

Witnesses said the Sirajganj-bound boat with 21 passengers set out from Bhuapur and was overturned at about 4.45 pm.

Other passengers, however, swam ashore.

General discussion on push in Oct 19

By Staff Correspondent

Parliament will take up Indian operation push back for general discussion on October 19.

It was decided unanimously by the Business Advisory Committee of Parliament Monday.

Sheikh Razzak Ali, Speaker of Parliament, announced the decision of the committee in the House last night.

Earlier, a total of 29 opposition MPs demanded adjournment of the normal proceedings of the House to discuss the issue on the opening day of the autumn session.

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Becker wins Nobel Economics Prize

STOCKHOLM, Oct 13: Gary S. Becker of the University of Chicago won the 1992 Nobel Economics Prize, the Swedish Academy of Sciences announced today, reports Reuter.

Becker, born in 1930, was awarded the 6.5 million crown (1.2 million dollar) prize for extending economic analysis to a wide range of human behaviour, the academy said in

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Bodos blow up speeding train: 21 killed

GUWAHATI, India, Oct 13: At least 21 people were killed today when two powerful bombs exploded within 10 minutes of each other in a speeding train in the far-eastern Indian State of Assam, railway officials here said, reports AFP.

Some 40 others were injured, many of them seriously, when the explosions wrecked two cars of the Arunachal Express between two small villages in Barpeta district some 230 kilometers (143 miles) from this Assam city.

The Press Trust of India (PTI) said some of the bodies were mutilated beyond recognition "and lacerated limbs were strewn at the site."

No one claimed responsibility, but police sources blamed the Bodo Security Force (BSF), a militant group which is seeking a separate state called Bodoland for Bodo tribes people in Assam.

The dead included 15 men, four women and children. Most were villagers returning from a weekly village market in Barpeta in the oil-rich state which borders Bangladesh.

It was the worst bomb attack blamed on the BSF since the Bodoland campaign began in 1989 and came hours after Bodo militants threatened to intensify their struggle.

GK Khare, a senior railway official here said the first explosion took place at 10.35 a.m. (0505 GMT) and the second 10 minutes later after the train came to a halt. He did not say how many people were in the two cars.

The injured were rushed to a nearby government hospital, Khare said, adding the train was on its way from neighbouring West Bengal State to Ranpura city in Assam.



By Sabir Mustafa

Article 71 of the Rules of Procedure is a weapon the members love to use, because it allows them to raise any matter of public importance to attract the relevant minister's attention.

Like Munirul Haq Chowdhury of the Jatiya Party did yesterday. He referred to the death of Zainal Abedin, a labour leader of Rangpur, who died

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National University Bill passed

A bill providing for establishment of the National University was passed in parliament last night after lengthy debate, reports UNB.

The National University Bill 1992 said the university will look after and supervise and control academic and administrative functions all the colleges numbering 547 now under Dhaka, Rajshahi and Chittagong universities.

The bill was, however, bogged down at the final stage of the passage when Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali pointed to Article 47 which read "The syndicate will formulate university ordinance in accordance with the recommendations of the academic council".

"The word 'ordinance' may misconstrued and create confusion for the syndicate cannot formulate or promulgate ordinance... you cannot confer upon the syndicate the authority of promulgating ordinance," the Speaker told Education Minister Zamiruddin Sircar who piloted the bill.

He invited opinions of legal experts including Abdus Salam Talukdar, Nazmul Huda, Aminul Haq, Sudangshu Shekhar Haldar, Khandokar Delwar Hossain, Ebadur

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Victims of yesterday's fire at Shaheednagar in city that caused widespread damage to the residents. — Star photo

Two children burned alive in city fire

By Staff Correspondent

Two children were charred to death another five people including two firemen received burn injuries and at least 40 thatched houses were gutted as a devastating fire engulfed the Shaheednagar slum at Lalbagh in the capital Tuesday morning.

The fire, originating from a kitchen of the slum at around 8:30 am, immediately broke out in the area and continued burning for nearly two hours.

A nine-year-old boy Anisuddin and an eight-year-old girl Shawon were burnt

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Nirmul body grand rally today

By Staff Correspondent

Ghatak-Dalal Nirmul Committee will hold a grand rally this afternoon in the Engineers' Institution premises.

Scheduled to be held at 3pm the rally will be preceded by a cultural function by Sammilita Sangskritik Jote.

The committee has organized the rally in support of its demand for the implementation of the March 26 'people's court trial verdict' on Jamaat-e-Islami leader Golam Azam.

The rally will be presided over by committee convener Jahanara Imam. Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League President

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Liberate Pak-held Kashmir, BJP asks Delhi

JAMMU, Oct 13: India's main opposition party today pressed the government to 'liberate' Pakistani-held Kashmir, saying it was time New Delhi hit back at Islamabad for aiding Muslim militants in the border state, reports AFP.

The right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said it would organise public meetings in Kashmir to coincide with a threatened border crossing by the rebels from Pakistan into India.

"Kashmir is, and will be an integral part of India," BJP Vice-President KK Sharma told a news conference here.

The POK (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) is also a part of our country and there will be nothing wrong if we liberate it.

He added that the only way to end the bloody Muslim separatist campaign in the Indian state of Kashmir was to "get back" Pakistani controlled Kashmir, which he said was under Pakistan's 'illegal control'.

Sharma called on Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao's government to take 'effective steps to liberate Pakistan-occupied Kashmir' and give 'a befitting reply to the evil and nefarious designs of Pakistan'.

Kashmir's ownership is disputed by India and Pakistan, which have fought two wars over the picturesque state.

Pakistan controls Kashmir's northern third, which it calls 'Azad (free) Kashmir,' and from where Muslim rebels have threatened to cross into Indian Kashmir on United Nations Day, October 24.

A similar crossing in February and March by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) led Pakistani troops to gun down 16 Kashmiris.

Sharma, a Hindu, described the situation in the Indian Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, as 'very grave'.

He blamed the central government for the escalating guerrilla violence, which has caused thousands of deaths since 1990, and accused Pakistan of waging a proxy war in Kashmir.

India accuses Pakistan of arming the guerrillas, Islamabad denies the charge, saying it only extends moral and diplomatic support to the separatist campaign, which it calls a struggle for self-determination.

The Daily Star
OFFICE SHIFTED

The Daily Star announces the shifting of its editorial, news and commercial offices to Road 3, House 11, Dhanmandi Residential Area, Dhaka with effect from Saturday, October 10, 1992.

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