DOWN TO EARTH

Fire Hazards in City

By AS M Nurunnabi

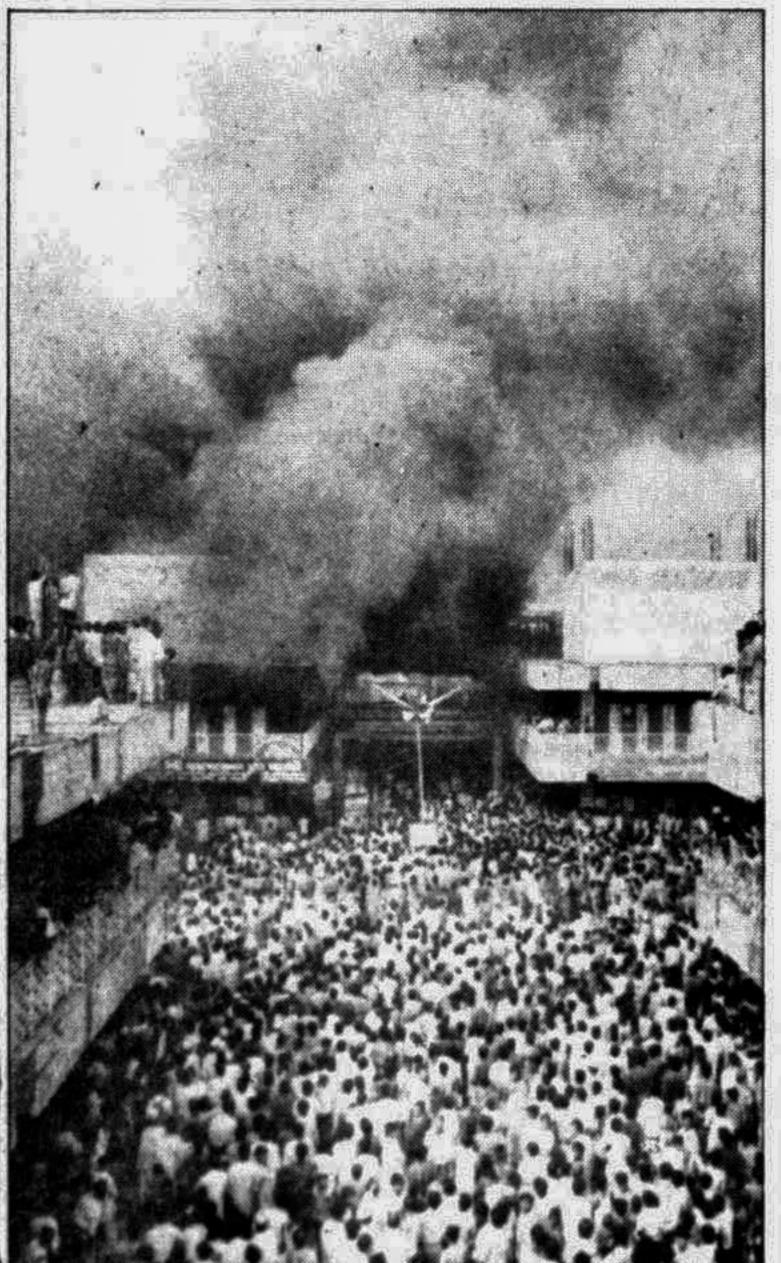
In the process of rapid expansion of the Dhaka city, little care seems to have been taken by the authorities at the planning stage for adopting appropriate measures against fire hazards. We see the consequence in a number of recent cases. Last March, in one of the most devastating fires of recent times, 1000 slum houses and small factories were gutted on a kilometrelong area along the Buriganga river in the old part of the city. Almost the same locality witnessed an equally devastating fire in 1992 and there is no deal with the situation. reason to rule out the possibility of recurrence of such kind of fire in future because of apparent lack of planning in the construction of the city's phys-

The total number of fire stations in the city is 12 including one river fire station at Sadarghat. According to

ical infrastructure.

sources in the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department, the existing number of fire stations in the city is not considered adequate to provide reasonable cover for fire protection and security. Yet it has been given to understand that in the personnel, fire-fighting vehicles and other equipment, the existing fire stations do not suffer from any serious handicap. In case of inadequacy of one fire station to deal with a fire in a particular area, calls for help are sent out to adjacent fire stations which pitch in to

During the last three years, the total number of fire incidents in the city from various causes is as follows: 1990-3786, 1991—4605, and 1992-5391. A rising trend is noticeable. This may perhaps be explained by the growth of the city including the uncontrolled expansion of slums.



PM: Tree plantation

who constitute the majority of

the population, in the planta-

tion drive in phases would

help generate income for the

poverty-stricken masses and

also contribute to the expan-

sion of the country's forest

statistics, the country's forest

area is now less than one third

the requirement for a proper

meantime, decided in princi-

ple to promote afforestation

programmes at private initia

tive and efforts by the Non-

Governmental Organisations

(NOOs) in this field would be

welcomed, officials informed

Prime Minister, in separate

messages, called upon the

people to make the nationwide

tree plantation drive a success.

Sugandha office last night.

Speaking on the occasion.

Begum Zia asked the members

of the Jattyatabadt Chhatra Dal

[JCD], student wing of the

BNP, to work unitedly to cre-

ate a healthy and fair trend in

maintain congenial academic

atmosphere and rid the cam-

tary Advocate Mujibur Rahman,

DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman.

Shahjahan Howlader Sujan also

BNP student affairs secre-

puses of terrorists.

the country's student politics.

The President and the

The government has,

ecological balance.

The Daily Star.

According to government

From Page 1 Col 8 planting trees along the country's coastal belts and on the newly emerged chars with a view to protecting the areas from natural disasters.

The President and the Prime Minister have given separate messages on the oc-

The government has also instructed all ministers to inaugurate the programme by planting saplings at their respective district headquarters and the Members of Parliament (MPs) in the thanas of their constituencies on the opening day of the nationwide programme today.

The government has decided to involve the poor and landless people of the rural areas in the plantation drive as part of its poverty alleviation programme.

It has targeted over one lakh villagers who, officials in the Environment and Forest Ministry said, would benefit from the monsoon tree plantation programme.

The target group of people will be asked to plant and nurture trees on khas lands under government supervision officials said, adding that the villagers would be offered considerable share of the profits from the sale of the trees

after a certain period. Policy-planners expect that involving the poor villagers,

JU senate approves Tk 11.62 cr budget

meeting yesterday approved a Tk 11 erore and 62 lakh budget for 1993-94

The 12th annual general meeting of the JU senate was adjourned on June 27 and resumed at 10 am yesterday.

MP, JCD president Fazlul Huq Milon, JCD general secretary Nazim Uddin Alam, convenor of JCD Dhaka University unit conference preparatory committee Shahiduddin Chow dhury Anny and JCD leaders Kamruzzaman Ratan and

Editor: S. M. Ali Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Summer is normally the season when fire incidence rises sharply. The problem of fire-fighting in the city is complicated in most cases by absence of source of water in many areas. Once the city was dotted with ponds, canals, lakes and other sources of water. In the process of growth of the city, most of such sources of water have been

lost. This creates a big hurdle

in fire fighting. Most of the congested areas in the city, particularly the sprawling growth hutments and slums are fire-prone. In old Dhaka and also in some ar eas in the other part of the city there are lanes and bye-lanes which are so narrow that in case of fire access of fire engines with their water tenders becomes impossible. In this context, the highly congested areas along the Buriganga river and also the Kamrangir Char are mostly vulnerable.

In new Dhaka we are at present confronted with an other kind of problem in the matter of fire fighting. There is a growing trend of construction of highrise buildings. In such buildings, adequate provisions for fire security and protection are a must. We are fortunate that there is not yet any serious outbreak of fire in any high-rise building in the city. Reportedly our equipment for fighting fires at high altitudes are not yet quite adequate, as in such modern cities like Hong Kong and Singapore. In such a situation, fire consciousness and periodical fire drills among residents of such buildings go a long way in promoting fire security. It seems obligatory for RAJUK to ensure that no plan for highrise buildings gets approved without due provision for fire security, as vetted by the Fire Service Department, where necessary. Even in residential areas with projected houses of low heights, the RAJUK may also keep in view the aspect of easy access of fire engines in cases of fire.

According to the United Nations, one-third of the population of Dhaka city live in subhuman conditions. The everincreasing growth of slums is linked to the perennial threat of fire accidents. From this angle, the question of low-cost housing in place of the growing slums forces its way before the policy-makers and economic planners. In this context, one observer commented: "If the house of the underprivileged is on fire, the castle cannot save itself from the

Govt involved in corruption, AL alleges

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League executive committee, in a meeting Thursday, said that the farmers of the country were in dire straits because prices of agriculture inputs were being enhanced repeatedly.

The farmers were being deprived of fair prices and the government was not buying rice from them, said Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and AL chief Sheikh Hasina who chaired the meeting.

The meeting also alleged that the BNP government was extensively involved in corruption. Recently, the State Minister for Establishment had been sacked for corruption, it said, and added that similar complaints had been lodged against different ministries in Parliament

Jamuna tenders Involve women From Page 1 Col 5 countries like India and

From page 1 col 7 unit conference preparatory Bhutan, against an estimated committee also called on the cost of Tk 916.5 crore. The other companies which Prime Minister at her

participated in the bid were the Anglo-Japanese Consortfum of UK and the STFA Person International JV of Turkey — for Contract-1 — and Boskalis Westminster Dredging BV of the Netherlands, the Jamuna Marine Company of Japan and the Belgio-Bangla Jamuna JV of Belgium - for

Contract-2. The lowest bid for the river training work, received earlier in February this year, was much higher than the estimated cost, forcing the JMBA to call for a fresh tender. The lowest bid then was Tk 1421

Meanwhile, being advised by the World Bank, the government has recently decided to lift restrictions on use of the country's river routes by the contractors of the Jamuna Bridge Project and to open special accounts in any foreign bank located in Dhaka for pay ing the bills.

The government has also assured the contractors of steady supply of boulders and stones from the neighbouring countries for the project.

Ashura

From Page 1 Col 8.

mourning processions in the city to observe the holy Ashura. The main "Tazia" procession, which began from the Hossaini Dalan, ended at the Azimpur graveyard. Such processions are being held in the city since the Mughal period.

A week-long fair, a traditional Muharram event, also began at Azimpur from Wednesday. Various socio-cultural and

religious organisations held Quran khwani, milad mahfils, seminars and symposia to mark the day.

The day was a public holiday. Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television aired special programmes highlighting the significance of the day.

The Bangladesh Madrassah Chhatra Dal held a seminar at the Islamic Foundation auditorium where speakers stressed the need for upholding truth and justice in all spheres of the society.

The Bangladesh Secrat Mission, Haqqani Anjuman. Dewanbagh Darbar Sharif, Islamic Foundation, Bangladesh Ahley Sunnat Wal Jamaat, Kamalla Darbar Sharif, Darbar-c-Shah Khwaja Sharfuddin Chisty, Biswa Muslim Nirjatan Protirodh Committee. ¹Islamic Oikkya Andolon, Jatiya Sunni Gana Andolon and Jatiya Imam Samity, among other organisations, observed the



A 'Tazia' procession in the city on Thursday on the occasion of 10th of Muharram.

FBCCI for consensus to ensure industrial peace

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has called for a national consensus to ensure industrial peace and harmony for increasing production, reports UNB.

FBCCI president Mahbubur Rahman said at the annual general meeting of the federation in Dhaka Wednesday that harmonious relationship between the management and workers was essential to run the country's industries well.

He said, alongwith the freemarket policy a healthy labour policy and proper wage-fixation based on productivity should be framed and this calls for unity of all, irrespective of party affiliation or opinion.

The FBCCI president emphasised the increased role of the private sector for economic development, the pace of which in the past two decades has been slow due to frequent changes in policies and programmes.

The present government has been bringing various changes in economic policies and many reform measures have been undertaken but their implementation at the micro- level has continued to be slow, he observed. Rahman called for removing

the existing bottlenecks for economic rejuvenation through exchange of views with the private sector on a routine ba-

Noting the promising features of the government's industrial policy, which he felt were comparable to those of other Asian countries, the FBCCI chief remarked that an ideal policy was not enough, only its constant review and appraisal and correct implementation could bring about the desired results.

Speaking on industria sickness, he requested the government to constitute a

From Page 1 Col 4

ments from Japan, the

Netherlands and a consortium

of international financial insti-

trade insurance for the project

while the Exim Bank of Japan

is investing 225 million dol-

lars, the Overseas Economic

Cooperation Fund of Japan 18

million dollars while two pri

vate companies, Chiyoda and

Marubeni, are investing nine

In separate interviews with

this correspondent, both

Sawaki and Katagiri, who also

attended the joint committee

meeting in Dhaka as an ob-

server, talked about the prob-

lems faced by foreign investors

in Bangladesh and the future

The two officials laid equal

emphasis on improving the

overall infrastructure in

ditional incentives to foreign

investors in line with what

other Asian countries are offer-

"The Bangladesh govern-

ment has to provide better or

at least equal incentives for

foreign investors compared to

Vietnam and China," the MIT

official said. There should be

some reason why Japanese

businessmen are going to

Vietnam, perhaps its image is

better compared to South

foreign investors with a more

effective tax holiday, making it

easter for them to repatriate

profits and a reduction of tariff

He suggested providing

Bangladesh and providing ad

million dollars each.

prospects.

The MITI is providing the

"Board of Industrial and Financial Restructuring" with the necessary mandate and powers to solve the problem.

He said although the government has recently allowed private investment in the telephones and power sectors, necessary amendments of the concerned laws and procedures are yet to be finalised.

Rahman pointed out that the liberal import policy with a lower tartff had created problems for the local industry and was also impeding the expansion of new investment. Liberalisation of trade should be done in phases, he felt.

He said adequate financial support to the farmers has to be ensured to rejuvenate the agriculture sector which contributes 40 per cent of the

Among those who addressed the AGM were SM Alauddin, Abul Ahsan, Alauddin Wahed, Nurul Islam, Mirza Aboo Mansur, Syed Kamaluddin, Lutfar Rahman Khan, Manzoor Ahmed, Md Nasiruddin, S K L Shaidullah, Matlab Ahmed and Asaduzzaman Selim.

Two boys die in wall collapse

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, July 2: Two minor boys were killed on the spot when a wall of a school house in the city collapsed Thursday, police said. They were identified as Faruk, 11. and Shahadat, 8.

The two ill-fated boys were trapped and killed under the debris of the broken wall of Lalkhan Bazar Primary School while they were standing there during rainfall in the afternoon, police added.

The bodies were later recovered by police and, after post mortem, handed over to their parents.

on imported machinery parts

and raw materials. "Look at

doing and take necessary mea-

of adequate infrastructure,

even in the export processing

zones, needs to be tackled

"I have heard many com

plaints from Japanese busi-

nessmen who have invested in

facilities cannot be compared

with other countries of the re-

gion and even shipment of

goods is a problem since it has

to be trans-shipped through

Singapore, Hong Kong and

Japanese businessmen cannot

reach Bangladesh in one day

and termed it as a "natural

government proposal to con-

into an international one is

still awaiting a reply from the

official also laid special empha-

sis in improving the living

conditions for foreign in-

vestors in Bangladesh and in

providing adequate flood and

disaster protection to the in-

larly Japanese restaurants, and

improved rest and recreation

facilities have to be provided to

attract Japanese businessmen,

Katagiri pointed out.

More eating places, particu-

We are expecting the

Both Sawaki and the MITI

Bangladesh government.

vert the Chittagong airport

He added that a Japanese

He pointed out that a

*Transportation and hotel

sures," he advised.

Bangladesh," he said.

mmediately.

even Calcutta."

disadvantage".

what other governments are

Sawaki also noted that lack

Cambodia may back Bangladesh The Cambodian government

reports BSS.

The indication of Phnom Penh's "willingness" was communicated by Prince Norodom Sihanouk, the Cambodian head of state, in a letter sent to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia early this week, sources here said.

Bangladesh is generally held in high esteem among the Cambodians in view of the "excellent services" provided by military and police forces of Bangladesh working for the UNTAC (United Nations Transition Authority in Cambodia). The services of A Karim, a Bangladeshi, as chief political adviser for UNTAC, is also regarded as most commendable by the Cambodians, the sources added.

Meanwhile, Dr A Moyeen Khan MP who went to Phnom Penh as a consultant on invitation from the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, Washington, returned home after holding several rounds of a meeting with newly-elected parliamentarians for the formation of an interim government

Obituary

He left behind his wife, one son and three daughters.

FAO DG election:

The sources said

which has been installed today

Dr Taherul Islam, Professor of the Department o Economics, Dhaka University died of cancer at a clinic here last night, family sources said He was 57, reports BSS.

His namaz-e-janaza will be

held today at the Dhaka University mosque after Zohr

Bangladesh government to

recognise such needs, to make

it an easier place for Japanese

However, he acknowledge

that there is also a need on the

part of the Japanese govern

ment to convince local busi

nessmens to invest in

Bangladesh while the overseas

development assistance can be

used to improve the infrastruc

and political importance of the

region and we recognise that

Bangladesh's expectation from

Japan is very high," Katagiri

in Japan is needed to attract

businessmen to invest in

Bangladesh, the MITI official

noted that there is ample

scope for setting up manufac-

turing bases in the country to

export goods to Europe, the

United States, Japan and even

Sawaki, who made three

visits to Bangladesh during the

past three years, echoed the

concerns of Japanese investors

for the lack of adequate flood

protection for their industries

factories in the Chittagong

Export Processing Zone were

damaged during the cyclone in

"After the cyclone we pro

posed that some money is

spent for protection of the

CEPZ but the scheme under

taken is not progressing very

well," he regretted.

He noted that a number of

to the newly independent cen

tral Asian states.

Saying that a publicity drive

"We know the economic

businessmen to live in.

is expected to support Bangladesh's candidacy for the post of Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) based in Rome,

Japanese investors still smarting

Steel Mills

1992-93 while the import duty on finished billet was reduced to 15 per cent and VAT and other taxes reduced to 17.25 per cent during the same period.

outstanding liability of Tk 333.21 crore including bank crore to resume its operation, manage from the banks in its present situation. Another official of the CSM

said the machinery of the factory, set up in 1965, were af feeted seriously by the devas tating eyelone that hit the coastal belt on April 29, 1991 The saline water which inundated the mills area during the tidal surge corroded some of the machines. He mentioned that no measures had been taken to repair the machinery, nor efforts made to modernise the plant

The seven manufacturing units of the CSM are: the melting shop, the blooming mill, the bar mill, the sheet and plate mill, the heavy plate mill, the galvanizing shop and the

The Midnight File

Brawl in Bihar Muslim religious procession: Three killed

NEW DELHI, July 2: Police shot two people dead and crowds beat a police driver to death when a Muslim religious procession degenerated into a brawl in India's eastern state of Bihar today, local news agencies reported. They said rival groups of marchers started fighting over who should lead the procession at Katra in Nalanda district, reports Reuter.

PLO may reject US document

AMMAN, July 2: The PLO will probably reject a US document designed to bridge the gap between Israelis and Palestinians on self-government in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said today. The executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is meeting Palestinian negotiators in Tunis to take a stand on the document, which the negotiators received in Washington on Wednesday, they said, reports Reuter.

Haiti to reinstate Aristide

NEW YORK, July 2: Haitian military leaders announced today that they have accepted a plan to reinstate ousted President Jean Bertrand Aristide on October 30. A spokesman for General Raoul Cedras said that the plan proposed Thursday by international mediator Deante Caputo was acceptable except for "some details that need to be ironed out," reports AFP.

Over 100 drown in Philippines

BOCAUE (Philippines), July 2: More than 100 people drowned when three overloaded boats sank during a religious procession on a river outside Manila, Philippine officials said tonight. Dozens of people, including many children, were reported missing after a 30-foot (10 metre) high pagoda carried by the boats, lashed together and packed with over 300 people crashed into the Murky river on Friday evening, reports

Ukraine claims ownership of ex-Soviet N-arms

KIEV, July 2: Ukraine's Parliament today proclaimed ownership rights over former Soviet nuclear weapons deployed on its territory, reports

Deputies approved by 226 votes to 15 a foreign policy doctrine which declared Ukraine 'owns nuclear weapons on its territory.' But the

Maglaj town cut off from rest of Bosnia VITEZ (Bosnia), July 2: Serb

and Croat forces have surrounded the town of Maglaj after more than a week of heavy fighting, apparently creating a new Muslim enclave in central Bosnia, UN officials said today, reports Reuter.

They said the Maglaj finger, a salient of territory surrounded by Serb-conquered areas in the central Bosnian heartland, was now effectively cut off from the rest of Bosnia.

Somali gunmen kill 3 Italian UN soldiers

MOGADISHU, July 2: Three Italian UN soldiers were killed and at least 14 Italians and eight Somalis were wounded during an attempted arms sweep in Mogadishu today, hospital sources said, reports

Sources at a US hospital in the UN compound in Mogadishu said they had received the body of one Italian soldier, the first of Italy's 2,200-strong contingent to be killed in the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM). Other hospital sources said

at least 14 Italian troops were admitted, apparently hit by Somali gunmen.

From page 1 col 7

At present, the CSM has an loan of Tk 200.14 crore. The factory needs another Tk 190 which it was not being able to

The Chittagong Steel Mills Limited, which was set up with Japanese financial and technical assistance, started its commercial operation in August, 1967 with an investment of then Rs 300 crore.

casting and forging shop.

The factory has an annual capacity of manufacturing 1.46,000 metric tennes of MS billet, 72,000 mt MS plate, 60,000 MS sheet and 10,000 tonnes of other steel products.

document said Ukraine had no intention of using or threatening to use them.

The doctrine also said the former Soviet republic 'stresses its intention to become a non-nuclear state in the future.

Ukraine's Parliament is embroiled in a lengthy debate on approving the Start-1 and nonproliferation treaties under which it is to give up the 176 former Soviet intercontinental missiles still on its territory.

The former Soviet republic pledged last year to back both pacts, but an increasing number of deputies, including Prime Minister Leonid Kuchma, say Ukraine should keep some of the weapons at least temporarily

President Leonid Kravchuk has promised Ukraine will honour its international obligations but shared deputies concerns that Kiev needs security guarantees and compensation of some dollar 2 billion US dollar in exchange for giving up the weapons.

4 electrocuted in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Four persons including three members of a family were electrocuted in the city Friday afternoon.

Sathi (8), her father Abdul Haque (40), and her grandmother Pari Banu (60) were killed and her mother Kohinoor Begum (30) was injured when the came in contact of a electrified wire set for hanging clothes at 46/1, Abdul Aziz Lane at Lalbag in the city at about 3:30 pm yesterday.

Kohinoor Begum was released from Mitford Hospital after first aid. The bodies were sent to the Mitford Hospital Morgue.

BSS adds from Savar: Nazrul Islam (18), a hotel boy died on the spot and Abdur Rab (40) was seriously injured after being electrocuted at the Dairy Farm Gate yesterday.

The victims were trying to hang wet clothes on a live wire, it was reported. The body of the deceased was sent to DMCH for autopsy

Sharif

From Page 1 Col 5 Sharif sought the parlia-

ment's mandate after the President, who has been locked in a power struggle with him since early this year, refused to sack Punjab Governor Chaudury Altaf The Governor had dissolved

the Provincial Assembly twice in a month and vowed to 'restst' Sharti's move to take control of the politically crucial province. Soon after the resolution, the hostile Punjab government

of Chief Minister Manzoor Watto deployed police around vital installations, saying the federal government had ordered paramilitary Rangers into action. Describing the Punjab gov-

ernment as Ishaq Khan's

proxy. Mushahid told foreign journalists that it wanted a clash' with the federal government. But, he said, "We are going

to follow the legal path as we have been doing in the past, and denied the Rangers had been ordered to take control of administrative and political offices in Punjab.

By JU Correspondent The Jahangirnagar Univer sity senate, at its adjourned