81 killed in Chinese toy factory fire

BEIJING, Nov 20: A fire that swept through a toy factory killed 81 workers and injured 36 others, most of them women who couldn't flee because doors and windows were locked, an official newspaper said Saturday, reports AP.

The fire Friday raced through the first two floors of the three-story Zhili Handicraft Factory in Kuiyong, an industrial zone in the southern boomtown of Shenzhen near the border with Hong Kong.

The Shenzhen government said the factory was a joint venture with Hong Kong, but refused to identify the Hong Kong partner.

"Because of the factory's sealed way of operating, corridors were narrow and the doors were locked, the workers couldn't evacuate in time.' China's Communist Party newspaper, the People's Daily (Renmin Ribao), said in a threeinch-long fourth-page article.

Most of the casualties were burned, suffocated or crushed to death in the hallways and stairwells as they fled the blaze, according to the Ta Kong Pao, a Hong Kong newspaper funded by China

It said more than 10 people jumped from windows of an adjoining building to escape.

The Wen Wei Po, another Hong Kong newspaper funded by China, said the factory managers had locked windows and

covered them with steel bars to guard against theft. It said fire authorities sent the factory a

of the first-floor generator room. It said several workers tried to put it out with fire extinguishers but the blaze quickly engulfed boxes of dolls and raw materials, including cotton

Wei Wei Po said 79 of the 81 workers who died were women. Most were from elsewhere in China, part of the new army of rural workers who have flocked to coastal regions in search of higher incomes.

Students damage vehicles in city

By Staff Correspondent Students damaged at least a dozen vehicles yesterday at Mirpur while protesting the arrest of one of their mates.

Scores of crackers were exploded during the rampage which began at 10 am and con tinued for three hours. Riot police brought the situation under control by resorting to baton-charge.

The roads adjacent to Mirpur section-10 were blocked to traffic for three hours.

The Japanese side has

Tokyo also agreed to carry

agreed to seriously consider the

out a study on the left side of

the river Karnaphuli to set up

an industrial estate for foreign

Probe body on

Naniarchar

incident

The government has formed

a one-member commission with

Justice Mohammad Habibur

Rahman of the High Court

Division of the Supreme Court

to inquire into the incident of

Naniarchar in the hill district of

Rangamati, an official handout

its report along with recommen-

Atiqul Alam joins

Morning Sun

country's best-known journal-

ists, took over on Saturday as

the Chief Editor of The Morn-

ing Sun, reports BSS.

France and Germany.

until June last.

Atiqui Alam, one of the

Alam, a reporter for over-

seas media, brings in a wealth

of experience in this profes-

sion gathered at home and

large array of newspapers and

radio across the world, partic-

ularly in the USA, Britain,

He has contributed to a very

He founded the Reuters bu-

reau in Dhaka in 1982 and had

been its chief correspondent

in Bangladesh for 11 years

He still retains active inter-

est in the Voice of America

and Deutsche Welle, the two

powerful radio stations in the

The commission will submit

said last night, reports BSS.

dations within 30 days.

proposals, he maintained.

Saifur's press confce

Rahman said.

From Page 1 Col 7 many issues with Japan and highlighted the importance of Tokyo in our bilateral relations.

Rahman observed. "The issue of resettlement has now turn out to be the decisive issue for Japan," Rahman said. "The Japanese government wants to see if the evicted people from the proposed bridge site were properly and ade-

quately compensated." "We told the Japanese counterpart that our compensation amount has been increased from 16 million US dollars to 46 million dollars which is more than adequate," the minister

told the newsmen. "We also told them that if need be, we will further increase the amount, but the project cannot stall because of this issue." The project should go on alongside the rehabilitation programme, he commented.

The JMBP will evict 11000 families from 5000 acres of land

in the project area. Talking about other areas of discussions during his five-day visit to Japan, Rahman said a Japanese team would arrive here in early December to study the feasibility for development of two gas fields at Bakhrabad and Feni.

"This has become imperative because there would be an acute gas shortage for operation of the KAFCO and Rauzan power plants," he said. "The pressure of gas in the line has

already dropped." Both the Japanese government and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry had shown interest in setting up industries here. Rahman said. "But they want to be assured of a sufficient flow of power supply," he added.

"We also sought Japanese assistance in building a number of bridges-the Bhairab bridge, the Dhaleswari bridge and the Kushiara bridge."

PM at Chatkhil From Page 1 Col 4

gramme should be strengthened to ensure development.

She said the government has reduced the prices of agricultural inputs which had yielded a positive impact on the agriculture production. "We can now plan for exporting foodgrains instead of importing

Hasina wishes prosperity of armed forces

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday wished continued progress and prosperity of Army. Navy and Air Forces on the occasion of the Armed Forces

Day, reports UNB. In a message, Hasina described the armed forces as unique symbol of national glory and paid glowing tributes to those members of the armed forces who had sacrificed their lives during the country's Liberation War in 1971. She expressed her sympathy for the members of the bereaved fami-

The Awami League president congratulated members of the armed forces for joining the Liberation War as well as building defence forces in independent Bangladesh.

regime had repressed the opposition activists on the same day in 1987. six years ago, Hasina recalled.

She demanded that the AL activists arrested on that day be immediately released and the charges filed against them under the Anti-Terrorism Act be

In this connection Hasina termed the Anti-Terrorism Act the 'blackest law' made to repress the opposition's activists and demanded its immediate

to China, Hasina claimed that whereas the Chinese leadership had tremendously developed their nation in every respect. the governments of Bangladesh since 1975 had done nothing

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The Tribal Welfare Association brought out a colourful rally in observance of the World Indigenous Year in Mymensingh town yesterday. - Star photo

Indo-Bangla border confce begins tomorrow

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 20: A four-day long conference between the BDR and the BSF will begin here Monday. According to BDR sources, a 12-member team of the BSF led by IG of the South Bengal Frontier Balkar Singh will represent the Indian side while a nine-member BDR team led by the DDG BDR Brigadier Iftekharul Bashar, PSC will represent Bangladesh in the conference.

The other members of the Indian team are the IG of North Bengal BSF R M Bhattacharia, IPS and the sector Commanders of Calcutta, Krishnanagar, Shuligury, Maldhaha. Kuchbihar and Kishtangang and four other officers.

The members of the Bangladesh side are the Sector Commander of Khulna Col. Mushtaq Ahmed PSC, Col. Mafizur Rahman of the Dinajpur sector, Col. Lenin Kamal, PSC of the Rangpur sector, Lt. Col. Mahbubur Rahman, PSC of the Kushtia sector, Lt. Col. Ashfaq Ahmed Choudhury, PSC of the Rajshahi sector and three other officers.

The conference will be held on Monday and Tuesday at a local hotel and on Wednesday and Thursday in Dhaka.

The agenda of the conference includes border disputes, and arrangement of routine talks. However, the push-in problem is not on the agenda, the BDR sources said. But if both the side agree, it may also be dis-

cussed, sources added. CHT talks

From Page 1 Col 6 keeping with the conditions put forth by the Shantibahini to facilitate their attendance at the talks, highly placed sources

The government last week sent a letter to the leaders of the tribal rebels proposing a sixth round of dialogue on November 24. A reply to the letter was received yesterday through the convenor of the Liaison Committee Hongshadoz Chakma.

The fifth round of peace talks between the special parliamentary committee headed by Communications Minister Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed and the Shantibahini team was held on September 18 at the Khagrachhari circuit house.

"It is unfortunate that the

government is still bagging

around the world and boasting

for collecting higher amounts of

foreign aid and grants". Hasina

said, adding that a change of

the people's lot under the BNP

government was impossible.

The government is busy

changing the lot of the ruling

party leaders and activists in

the name of its politics of de-

velopment, the AL chief

AL was committed to the poli-

tics of economic advancement

and curbing terrorism from the

society, adding that her party's

economic programmes would

make the nation a self-reliant

Yesterday's rally was ad-

dressed, among others, by the

party's presidium member Ab-

dul Mannan, General Secretary

MP, Tofael Ahmed MP, Mo-

hammad Nasim MP, Abdul Jalil

Abul Mannan, while addre-

ssing the rally, observed that -

the Prime Minister should re-

sign for her comment against

Parliament and announce fresh

and Amir Hossain Amu.

Zillur Rahman, Abur Razzak

However, she said that the

charged.

Hasina attacks govt

From Page 1 Col 8

was democracy Referring to the police excesses against her party activists on November 10 last, the AL chief said that the government resorted to repression against its political opponents the same way the Ershad

Noor Hossain, a crusader for democracy, was killed by the Ershad regime on November 10.

In this connection she observed that if the government had decided it would stay in power through such repressive measures, then it has been living in a fool's paradise.

withdrawn.

Referring to her recent visit

elections immediately. Tofael Ahmed accused the government of corrupt practices and once again said that he would resign if he failed to prove his allegations of corruption against he Irrigation and Flood Control Ministry and the minister concerned.

Mohammad Nasim accused most of the cabinet members, ruling party MPs and a few relatives of the Prime Minister of corruption.

PM goes to Nepal tomorrow

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia leaves Dhaka tomorrow(Monday) for Kathmandu on a three-day official visit to the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal, reports UNB.

The visit is taking place at the invitation of Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

Begum Zia's 25-member entourage will include Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman, Selina Shaheed MP. Principal Secretary to the PM, KM Rabbani. Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, Chief of Protocol Masum Ahmed Chowdhury and Director General (South Asia) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury.

During the visit, Begum Zia will have wide-ranging talks with her Nepalese counterpart covering bilateral matters and regional and international issues of common concern.

Expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation and transit facilities for the landlocked Himalayan kingdom are expected to figure prominently in her talks with the Nepalese leaders.

The issue of sharing of the water of the Ganges, an international river flowing through Nepal, India and Bangladesh, is also likely to come up for dis

Bangladesh has repeatedly stressed on the need for a tripartite arrangement to reach a durable solution to the outstanding problem of sharing of the Ganges water

Begum Zia, who is the current chairperson of the SAARC. will also discuss with Koirala matters relating to the sevennation South Asian forum.

She will also call on King Birendra, the monarch of the Kingdom.

Leader of the opposition of Nepalese Parliament Mana mohan Adhikari and President of the Nepali Congress former Prime Minister Krishnaprasad Bhatta Ray will call on the Bangladesh leader during her

In Kathmandu, Begum Zia is scheduled to address the concluding session of the SAARC Ministerial Meeting on Women and Family Health, being held in the Nepalese capital. She will also visit the SAARC secretariat.

Besides, she will address members of the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

President of the Nepalese Women Organisation Mrs Mongo Devi Singh will call on the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

Armed Forces Day today

From Page 1 Col 5 Muhamad Noor Uddin Khan. Chief of the Naval Staff Rear Admiral Mohammad Mohaiminul Islam and Chief of the Air Staff Air Vice Marshall Altaf Hossain Chowdhury will also offer wreaths at the Shikha

Anirban. President Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Zia issued separate messages on the occasion, stressing the need for further strengthening and consolidating national independence and sovereignty through a firm unity and combined efforts of the people and the Armed

Forces. A reception to the next of kin of the soldiers who received gallantry awards "Bir Shrestha" will be held at the Prime Minister's office, Armed Forces Division, at the Dhaka Cantonment.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will meet the nearest ones of Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Zahangir, Bir Shrestha, Shaheed Sepoy Mostafa Kamal, Bir Shrestha, and Shaheed Sepoy Syed Hamidur Rahman, Bir Shrestha, Shaheed Ruhul Amin, ERA-1, Bir Shrestha, Shaheed Flight Lt M Matiur Rahman, Bir Shrestha, Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rauf, Bir Shrestha, and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad, Bir Shrestha.

Chiefs of Staff of the three services will also attend the reception.

Similar receptions will also be hosted by the Chiefs of Staff of the three services in their respective headquarters.

The three Chiefs will make a courtesy call on the President at Bangabhaban. They will also pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister at the PM's office. Armed Forces Division, at the Dhaka Cantonment.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas will inaugurate a grand display of military hardware at the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar (northwestern part of the old airport

The exhibition will remain open to public from 8 am to 5 pm through Monday to Thursday.

Equipment, arms, ammunition, vehicles, tanks, aircraft and vessels used by Army, Navy and Air Force will be on display A replica of the BNS Ali Haider a frigate of the Bangladesh Navy, will also be erected.

Documentary filmshows on the War of Liberation will also be arranged.

A number BN ships will also be dressed overall and kept open for visitors at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Narayangani, Khulna, Barisal and Mongla. In the evening, Prime Minister and Defence Minister

Begum Khaleda Zia will host a reception at the Sena Kunja, the multipurpose auditorium and civic complex at the Dhaka Cantonment. Receptions will also be held

in Chittagong, Khulna, Jessore, Bogra, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Comilla and Sylhet. Programmes have also been organised in all other Army garrisons, naval ships and establishments and Airforce bases throughout the country. These include special

'Darbar' highlighting the significance of the day in all units, 'preeti bhoj' to be attended by officers and JCOs, soldiers sailors, airmen and members of their families, improved diet in all military hospitals and cinema for the soldiers, sailors airmen and members of their

Besides, a special programme titled "Tomar Apon Pataka" will be telecast at 8:30 pm today.

families.

body recovered

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, Nov 20: The body of a 50-year-old woman

recorded at five, including two women and two children when an overcrowded passenger boat capsized after being hit by a fishing trawler Friday morning near Mooring No 5 in the Kharnaphuli river.

Meanwhile, the sunken boat was retrieved by the Chittagong Port Authority's salvage vessels this afternoon after several at-

Port officials said the salvage operation was delayed due to the strong current in the river.

A case was filed with the Port thana today against the driver of the engine boat. But police could not yet trace the fishing trawler

UNEP-Habitat chief due today

The Under-Secretary-Genral for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat) Ms Elizabeth Dowdeswell arrives in Dhaka this morning for a two-day visit at the invitation of the Bangla desh government.

Ms Dowdeswell will meet Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and other ministers and discuss matters of mutual in-

During her meeting with the Prime Minister this afternoon. Habitat's assistance programme as well as the UNEP's disaster mitigating efforts in Bangladesh will come up for discussion.

JS session

From Page 1 Col 8 representatives refused to accept the proposal, sources in the committee said

A treasury bench member of the committee said that they did not want the discussion because it would only further deteriorate the relationship between the treasury and Opposition benches.

ment function more effectively. Not convinced, the opposi-

tion members insisted on incorporating the issue into the agenda for discussion. The advisory committee, however, did not take any decision on the is-

sentative told The Daily Star that they would demand a discussion on the Prime Minister's comments everyday in the House until the Speaker allowed a debate on the issue.

However, the advisory body decided that the present session would last ten days. The body would, of course, meet again to evaluate an extension of the session in case of any emer-

bers could attend the ceremo-Forces Day.

wings yesterday evening to decide their respective strategies during the session. The AL Parliamentary Party meeting was adjourned yester-

Hasina presided meeting was held with Prime Minister and leader of the House Begum Khaleda Zia in

the chair.

Earlier, the death figure was

tempts since last night.

By Staff Correspondent

They also argued that the Prime Minister made her observations outside the House and had already clarified her position by saying her comments were intended to help Parlia-

An Awami League (AL) repre-

For the opening day of the session, the advisory committee decided to adjourn the House just after the question-answer hour so that Parliament memnial function of today's Arms

Meanwhile, both the ruling BNP and opposition AL held meetings of their parliamentary

day to resume again at 3 this afternoon. Party chief Sheikh The BNP Parliamentary Party

The leaders of the parliamentary party, while addressing the meeting, told the MPs that they were well prepared to face any allegations brought by the Op-



French gendarmes and rescue teams inspecting the overturned carriages of a passenger train which derailed yesterday causing injuries to 15 people in the north of Montpellier in southern France. - AFP photo

Shevardnadze extends emergency

TBILISI, Nov 20: Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze extended emergency rule in his troubled former Soviet republic on Saturday and asked increasingly disenchanted lawmakers to ratify his decision on Sunday. The state of emergency, introduced two months ago to combat lawlessness and an insurrection in western Georgia, had been scheduled to expire Saturday. But Shevardnadze issued a decree extending it until January

Baltic states form jt military force

TALLINN, Nov 20: Chief commanders from the three former Soviet Baltic republics announced the creation of a joint Baltic battalion Saturday and said they would move toward further military cooperation.

"We are all in total agreement about closer cooperation." said Aleksander Einseln, a retired American colonel who heads Estonia's military.

Clinton asks China to improve human rights

SEATTLE (Washington), Nov 20: President Bill Clinton issued a strong call to China to improve its human rights record here Friday in the first US-China summit since the Tiananmen Square massacre in

989, reports AFP. The meeting with President Jiang Zemin followed a shift in US policy towards Beijing to one

of 'constructive engagement' Clinton has sought since taking office in January to pressure China into improving its human rights record by such means as linking human rights to renewal of China's privileged trading status. But six months down the

road US officials are saying that progress to date has not been sufficient to warrant a renewal. and Washington has taken a different tack towards this major trading partner and needed ally in the problem of North Korea's nuclear programme. "Anybody should be reluc-

tant to isolate a country as big as China," Clinton said after Friday's meeting. "I don't think you ever lose

anything by talking with some-"I was forthright about our

differences," Clinton said, and "We agreed on the need to work on improving our relationship."

Clinton stressed the need for "early concrete progress on aspects of China policy," in three key areas: Human rights, trade

and non-proliferation "I told President Jiang that welcome our dialogue on human rights and I hope we can make significant progress on these issues very soon," Clinton

Prokrichi, BCS start 2-hr strike

Prokrichi (engineers, agriculturists, doctors) and BCS Central Action Council yesterday began a stx-day programme of two-hour work stoppage everyday to press for restructuring the administrative system.

reports UNB. The Council held railies at government offices, institutions and corporations in the capital and different districts during the countrywide token strike

yesterday, said a press release. Speakers at the rallies urged the government to meet their 17-point demand for establishing a democratic administrative

common interests and our clear system accountable Doubts over Biman's

From Page 1 Col 5

18,1992 with a starting capital of 100,000 dollar derived from the 100,000 savings of an affiliated company. It has only one officer, who is himself the president. There are no other employees The line of business, as

stated in the New York Cor-

porate and Business Registration, is: Exports - Condiments Aluminium. To date the company has been selling wheat, sugar, soyabean oil etc. The company claims it has a 780 sq feet office in New York.

Biman officials, when asked confirmed the details of Concorde's offer but declined to comment.

Experts in the aviation trade

feel that the bid offer made by

Concorde should not even have been considered, not to mention being included in the short list. One expert pointed out that when all international credit is tied to purchase of commodity or its use specifically detailed in any financial package, the highly exaggerated offer of 200 million dollar by Concorde to Biman to procure two Airbuses

100 million "looks too good to ADB-govt accord

From Page 1 Col 6 cent of its passengers in the last

which would not cost more than

ten years. BR statistics show, the annual losses rose to a high of Tk 154 crore in 1987-88. This dropped to Tk 90 crore in 1992-

The ADB has suggested that the number of employees be reduced to 46,000 from 56,000 by '93-94 beginning from '91. The BR has already achieved that target at a cost of Tk 240 crore, of which the Ministry of Finance has given Tk 160 crore until now under the 'golden handshake programme.

Meanwhile, the government has introduced a public service obligation (PSO)' system in accordance with another suggestion of the ADB. Under the system, the government will fund some of the loss- making routes of the BR through budgetary

the agreement in June-July last, being already satisfied with the BR's performance, but it didn't because it was not happy regarding the progress of implementation of some of its conditions by the Ministries of Agriculture and Industries, the sources said. They explained that the ADB had tied the BR loan to two other credits for those two ministries.

However, the Agriculture and Industries ministries have of late been able to satisfy some of the bank's preconditions, the sources added. The Bangladesh government has, in the meantime, already

years ago.

function. spent crores of Taka for the RRP after being assured by the ADB of the 80 million-dollar loan two

be taken on face value." The lack of authenticity of the financing arrangement offered by this particular bidder raises doubts about the transparency and accountability of the entire selection process fol-

lowed by Biman, experts feel. Sources said, these facts, as revealed, raise serious doubts about the rigour with which Biman followed its own procurement process, suggesting that perhaps the highest authorities need to look into the affair before the national flag carrier falls into deep financial crisis by going ahead with the

purchase of the planes.

From Page 1 Col 5 because of the NGOs who made a big fuss over the issue," the minister said adding : "The NGOs are doing these without

considering the effects." The Japanese government has now become very sensitive over such social and environmental issues because of NGOs' criticisms regarding some pro-

jects in India and Indonesia.

Naniarchar From Page 1 Col 4 lence, clamped Section 144 at Khagrachhari from today for sevén days and have stepped up police patrol there.

The planned rally and demonstrations by the supporters of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hilly Students' Council) at Khagrachhari in protest against the Naniarchar incidents, reportedly prompted the authorities to take such se-

curity measures, sources said. As a result, today's programme of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad, could not be held. However, the leaders of the parishad submitted a memorandum today to the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachhari demanding justice regarding the

Nanjarchar incidents. Magistracies

From Page 1 Col 3 maintain magistrate's court in their respective thanas for the interest of the people. The matter also came up for discussion at a cabinet meeting in July The ADB would have signed where the Law Ministry was advised to formulate a policy in this regard.

> was against reversing the decision of shifting all the thana magistracies and took a rigid stand on it. However, the ministry later agreed with the recommendations made at the inter-ministerial meeting. A source in the Ministry of Law said that the demands for maintaining courts in other,

thanas will be discouraged and

no more requests from any

quarter will be entertained. But,

the chowki courts located in the

Initially the Law Ministry

distant areas will continue to Courts at the thana level, both civil and criminal, were set up by the Ershad regime with

effect from 20 April 1983.

named Sura Khatun was recovnotice in March ordering it to ered today from the Karnaphuli make changes... river, raising the known death Ta Kung Pao said about 240 toll in Friday's boat capsize workers were in the factory here to six, police and port offiwhen the fire broke out at about ctals said. 1:40 pm (0540 gmt) in the area 20, reports AP.