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75 killed in Argentine plane crash

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina, Oct 11: An Argentine airliner crashed and exploded in neighbouring Uruguay, killing all 75 people aboard, authorities said today. The jet had changed course to try to avoid a fierce rainstorm, reports AP.

The Austral airlines jet, a DC-9, crashed about 11 pm Friday (0200 GMT Saturday) near Nuevo Berlin, a town in the department of Rio Negro on the banks of the Uruguay River, which separates the two countries.

There were no survivors, Brig Juan Manuel Vazquez, secretary-general of the Argentine air force, said. "The plane hit the ground with a heavy impact and is scattered over a very wide area."

Details of those aboard was not available.

Argentine and Uruguayan rescue teams rushed to the crash site on a large farm in an area dotted with marshes and hills, about 280 miles (450 kilometers) north of Buenos Aires. There were no reports of casualties on the ground.

A witness, Gonzalo Vastos, told Uruguay's Cablevision Noticias that he saw a ball of fire fall behind a hill and then a huge explosion.

Ingrid Bidegain de Bastos,

who lives on a nearby farm,

said she went out to watch the lightning and flooding of the

storm when she suddenly saw a

red ball that fell and exploded

on hitting the ground.

Seventy passengers, including three infants, and five crew members were aboard the flight from the northern Argentine city of Posadas to Buenos Aires, said Santiago Garcia, commercial manager of Austral, a subsidiary of Aerolineas Argentinas.

The plane had last made contact with Buenos Aires municipal airport about 40 minutes before the crash and reported it was changing its course to avoid heavy rain and hail near the capital, air force official Jorge Carnevali said.

In Uruguay, an air force official told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity that the plane entered an area of heavy turbulence. Other planes in the area also had reported severe conditions at the time, he said.

This morning, more than 100 relatives of the passengers and crew gathered at Buenos Aires' metropolitan airport, hugging each other in grief. A priest walked among them, trying to comfort them.

Customs officials call off planned strike

Customs officials have called off their planned work stoppage following steps taken by the authorities, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the Custom House Commissionerate Committee of Dhaka-Rajshahi Customs Excise and VAT Executive Officers Association on Friday, says a press release.

The association had announced the abstention programme to press for withdrawal of the suspension of three officers of the Preventive Unit and 'irregular' transfer of a female Baggage Officer of the Zia International Airport customs.

Association general secretary M Abdur Rahman said the authorities had already withdrawn the suspension orders and taken effective steps towards rescinding the transfer and fulfilling other demands of the customs officers.

Young man beaten to death at Bogra

BOGRA, Oct 11: A young man was killed and two others were seriously wounded in a mob beating at a residential hotel here early today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Prakash Chandra, 22.

Police said a gang of 7-8 drunken youths entered the hotel on Bogra bypass at about 2 am for having meal. They demanded toll of Tk 20,000 when the manager asked for payment.

The gang locked in an altercation with the hotel workers who at one stage shut the gate confining three of the gang in the hotel. Others fled away by motor cycles.

Local people rushed to the hotel hearing the shout and beat up the youths mercilessly. Police later took them to hospital.

Of them, Prakash succumbed to his injuries at Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital at about 6.30 am.

Injured Ahad was sent to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital in a critical condition while Liton admitted to Mohammad Ali Hospital.

The meeting is expected sometime next month.

PCJSS congress

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hiprovo Larma agreed upon during September 14-17 meeting with the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCTC).

Larma had told reporters before leaving Dhaka for his hideout that the draft would be placed before his colleagues for ratification.

An agreement would be signed at the next meeting with the NCTC.

The meeting is expected sometime next month.

Barricade: Sramik League

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sacked the mill at Nandalpur in Fatullah on October 2.

Polash was arrested after Prime Minister and AL chief Sheikh Hasina issued directives on October 8 for bringing the culprits to book and taking steps for resumption of production in the mills.

"Disciplinary action will be taken against those found responsible for the attacks," he said adding, the probe body is expected to submit its report to-night.

Those who do not have enough political strength form alliance with others, he said while talking to newsmen at the airport Friday night before leaving for the United States.

said a JP press release.

Ershad said his party is in favour of allowing the Awami League government to complete its five-year tenure. "If it fails, they will face the consequences in people's votes," he said.

He said he does not have any house either at home or abroad. "The house at Gulshan is owned by my wife," he said.

Ershad said he is going to USA on a personal trip, but he would like to meet some Senators and Congressmen as well as JP leaders and workers.

JP leaders including Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Nazirul Islam Manju and party MPs were present at the airport to see him off.

Meanwhile, another press release said Ershad arrived in Brussels en route to USA. He will stay in the Belgian capital for a few days before proceeding to Washington.

Durga Puja

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Ahmed and Begum Shahabuddin exchanged greetings with the members of the Hindu community at Bangabhaban.

Principal of the Ramakrishna Mission Swami Akharananda, Adviser of the Bangladesh Puja Uddyan Parishad Major General (retd) C R Datta and political leaders, academics, senior officials, advocates, doctors, journalists, artists, cultural personalities and business leaders belonging to the community were present.

State Minister for Religious Affairs Maulana Mohammad Nazrul Islam attended the function.

2.5 lakh rickshaws

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increasing number of rickshaws and autorickshaws were creating enormous problems in traffic movement. "A good percentage of the rickshaws are illegally plying on the city roads and their number is increasing everyday," said a traffic department official. He pointed out that DCC was the sole authority to take a move to crack down on illegal rickshaws.

"In the past, we accompanied the DCC team and caught illegal rickshaws on the roads but the initiative must come from the DCC," he said.

On the city roads, thousands of rickshaws ply with number plates issued by Mahanagar Rickshaw Chalak Samity, Jahanbari, Rickshaw Chalak Samity, Kakhin Khan Rickshaw Chalak Samity, Rickshaw Chalak Okiya Parishad and Sultanganj Union Parishad. DCC officials estimated that nearly one lakh rickshaws were plying under their banners.

Police officials said that the

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PHILIPS

Hillary not quite ready to hit 50

WASHINGTON, Oct 11: US first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton has pronounced herself not quite ready to hit the half-century mark and not quite resigned to having her only child living away from home, reports AP.

Turning 50 doesn't bother me, she said, looking to her October 26 birthday. "Realizing that I'm a half-century old, that's different."

All the to-do over how to celebrate her birthday — she's heard Sunday with President Clinton for a week-long visit to Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina.

She brushed aside questions about whether she's where she wanted to be by this point in her life. Her future, she said, has always been "totally unpredictable."

Mrs Clinton owned up to missing daughter Chelsea, who left for college last month, but said her heavy travel schedule is helping her adjust to the "empty nest."

You can't know it's empty if you're not there, she said with a laugh.

Despite grueling schedules that can require many flights and multiple stops in multiple cities in a single day, Mrs Clinton said her visits with people around the world leave her more energized than exhausted.

She recalled a woman she met in a tiny village on the edge of Panama's rain forest, who showed the first lady how she raises poinsettias in her back yard to earn extra money.

"I just loved her face, and I loved seeing her husband so proud of her," Mrs Clinton recalled. "I love seeing what happens to people who are motivated and given a little bit of help and what they can do with it."

You guys think this is all glamour, she added. "It's screw worms, it's brucellosis."

Mrs Clinton said she has lots of ideas but no specific plans for what she'll be doing after the White House.

But the first lady did set out one goal to accomplish before they leave the White House — to explore the rest of their home. She said there are rooms they've never been into.

HR court to be set up

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The leaders also call for the universal abolition of the death penalty and insist on the maintenance, in the meantime of existing moratoria on executions in Europe," he said.

President Vaclav Havel of the Czech Republic said new member countries such as his which had rid themselves of communist rule, mostly see the Council of Europe as an important landmark on their journey ... and an anchor of values — unique and irreplaceable — that is closely linked with the broader European integration process.

"We must not pass on to the future generations an egoistic Europe, deaf and blind to the needs of others," he said.

President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, whose country many fear has not lived up to Council standards, attempted to distance himself from his Balkan neighbours, saying Croatian borders on the Balkans, he said, but is not a part of it.

While aspiring to a gradual and full integration into Euro-

pean economic and security systems, Croatia at the same time cannot accept any type of integration within any Balkan and southeastern framework," he said. "It seeks integration only with those Western and Central European countries to which it belongs geographically and culturally."

From the edges of the continent, the newly democratic nations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Bosnia all appealed to join the Council.

Council of Europe calls for ban on death penalty

STRASBOURG, Oct 11: The Council of Europe today called for a worldwide ban on the death penalty, reports AFP.

In the final declaration winding up a 40-nation summit on human rights, it said it would insist on the maintenance of existing moratoria on executions in member states which have retained capital punishment such as Russia and Ukraine.

In a preliminary paper it had condemned the death penalty as a violation of human rights.

The council "believes the death penalty can no longer be regarded as an acceptable form of punishment from a human rights perspective," it said.

The council's European Convention on Human Rights abolishes the death penalty in peace time, though not all Council of Europe members have abolished it in legislation or ratified the relevant protocol.

Among the measures envisaged was an offer of assistance to member states where the penalty remains in force through educational and awareness-raising activities.

Some member states have retained it for exceptional circumstances such as wartime crimes.

In Britain the death penalty remains on the statutes for treason, piracy and mutiny.

In Russia, which has declared a moratorium on executions, around 200 prisoners are believed to be on death row in. A similar situation exists in Ukraine.

Many countries around the world retain and use the death penalty, including China and several states in the United States.

According to Amnesty International, five countries have been known to execute prisoners under 18 since 1990: Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United States and Yemen.

Over half the countries in the world have now abolished the death penalty in law or in practice, the rights body said.

BNP's call

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public health issues in light of the AIDS crisis as well as organising awareness and sexual health education for young people.

The Health Minister said AIDS has appeared as an obstacle on way to Health for All by the year 2000.

There has not been discovered any vaccine or medicine in the treatment and prevention of the disease. Only social awareness and preventive measure can reduce the risk of the disease," he told the function.

He said members of parliament could play an important role in implementing the AIDS policy effectively.

Special JS group

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pourashava, district and city levels to drum up support for its demands.

Bhuiyan in his statement urged the countrymen to intensify the movement against undemocratic activities of the government.

Meanwhile, just released

Gulshan thana Shechchhashebhal Dal Khanhader Imran Hossain Manik and Sabujbhag thana Juba Dal leaders called on the BNP secretary general at 29 Minto Road official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

BNP leaders Tariqul Islam, Shamsul Islam, Sabujbhag Qader Chowdhury, Alamgir Kabir, Anwar Zahir, Sadek Hossain Khoka, Aktheruzzaman and Jamilur Nayan were present on the occasion.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina listening to the problems of people from all walks of life at the Awami League central office in the city yesterday.

—PID photo

Govt to review HBFC loan system

Post and Telecommunications and Housing and Works Minister Mohammad Nasim said in the city yesterday that the government would constitute a committee to review the existing loan system of Bangladesh House Building Finance Corporation, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing a seminar as the chief guest organised by Bangladesh Griha Nirman Rin Grohita Kalyan Samity at the Institute of Engineers.

The seminar on "Housing problem in Bangladesh and its complices with credits: A way out" was presided over by Samity's President Barrister Rabeyn Bhuiyan, MP, Lawyer Gazi Shamsur Rahman, Prof Nazrul Islam, and Prof M Mainuddin Khan of Dhaka University, Lailunnahar Iqram, Managing Director of Engineers and Consultant Bangladesh Limited and Md Farzul Haque, General Secretary of the Samity also spoke.

Mohammad Nasim said housing is the vital sector of the country as people from all classes hereditarily intended to build at least a house for his or her secure life and the next generations. But the desire does not come to the reality almost for the majority of the middle and lower class people due to their extreme savings for building a house, he said. The compound

8 fall from rooftop of bus, one dies

SIRAJGANJ, Oct 11: Eight passengers fell from rooftop of a bus and one of them died today on the Uttarbanga highway at Ullapara, police said, reports BSS.

The accident occurred as a type of the Nagarbari-bound bus coming from Bogra burst and deflated at about 11.40 am.