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#### Down to Earth Fire fright in garments industry

By A S M Nurunnabi

From the incidence of repeated fire outbreaks in city's garments factories, knowledgeable quarters have identified some specific causative factors. To recall the origin of the industry, it may be noted that the industry started from the early part of the eighties. Thereafter, the industry witnessed a fast growth. The contribution of foreign investors in this field has also been significant. It is said that 60 per cent of export factories. earnings of the country comes from this sector. It has opened up new opportunities for employment of a large number of persons, predominantly women who constitute 85 per cent of the

The main factors cited as responsible for fire incidents in the industry include defective electric equipment an wiring. locked main gates of the factories, suffocating atmosphere in the factories, inadequate firefighting management and inefficiency in fire control. The major part of responsibility for this poor state of affairs may be laid at the door of the factory owners and concerned agencies for their default in enforcing relevant rules and regulations and the overall attitude of indifference in ensuring fire secu-

workforce in this industry.

The Factory Act of 1965 contains clear and specific provisions for ensuring the security of the garments workers. There are also other related rules and instructions, along with labour law. Inspite of all this, it has been observed that, by and large, such regulatory enact ments are being violated with impunity by factory owners

As it is proceeding with

other exploratory works in the

three blocks, Occidental has

submitted revised budgets for

both the PSCs. The revised bud-

get for Magurchhara is under

budget for Moulvibazar-1 in-

cludes Occidental's post disaster

expenses - drilling of the relief

well, mobilisation or rig. social

rehabilitation, etc. — in

severely damaged inter-district

rail and road links, forestry

and ecology in about five square

kilometre disaster area and

some areas of adjacent tea gar-

dens. Besides, the explosion and

uncontrolled flow of gas

through innumerable sub-soil

leakages have polluted the air

From Page 1

take its decision on the pro-

posed direct bus service under a

Motor Vehicle Agreement be-

tween the two countries within

officials concerned of the min-

istries of communications, for-

eign affairs, finance, home af-

fairs, defence and the internal

resource division will meet

with the Principal Secretary to

the Prime Minister's office in

the chair to finalise the issue.

day meeting between officials of

Bangladesh and India was held

in Dhaka for finalising an

agreement on proposed Dhaka-

Ajmeer direct bus service. Dur-

ing that meeting the Indian side

sought modification of some

Earlier in September, a two-

Prior to the joint meeting,

a fortnight.

the sources added.

Bus service

The government is likely to

The Magurchhara disaster

Magurchhara under Block 14.

Sources said that the revised

Block 14.

these budgets.

For examples, buildings which are not meant for garments factories are being used as such. Even the approval of the competent authority necessary for establishment of a garments factory is not sought and obtained. Other mandatory requirements such as provision of fire-fighting equipments, fire alarm, alternative exit/escape routes in case of fire or other emergencies are not met in many garments

According to the sources in the Fire Service and Civil Defence Department, 13 fire incidents occurred in 11 garments factories during the period from January, 1997 to October 15. As a result of these fire incidents. 42 garments workers lost their lives and hundreds were in-

One of the sad aspects is that the fear syndrome about fires sometimes becomes more potent and it is mainly the cause for increasing the number of casualties during the fire incidents. Due to absence of adequate facilities for quick escape, the fear or fright syndrome tends to operate constantly in the minds of the garments workers. In this situ-

ation, a fire alarm even for a small fire incident or a false alarm sends the workers to run in panic for escape through the narrow exit routes that leads to stampede. In most cases, it was noted by observers that the casualties are more due to stampede rather than the actual

It has been observed that one of the main causative factor for fires in the factory is electric

Magurchhara gas well

short-circuit and defective machines. Since all these machines are run by electricity, it is very important that such machines are checked for repairs or servicing at stipulated intervals. But such exercises in most case are hardly undertaken. leading ultimately to fire hazards.

Another complicating factor is that since most of the garments factories are housed in unsuitable and risk-prone buildings on narrow streets, the fire-tenders of the Fire Service

is that some of the factory owners have lately become more conscious of their responsibilities in this regard. It is reported that they have already adopted realistic measures for the prevention of fires. With this objective, the workers are being given suitable training for dealing with such situations. On each floor of the factory, firefighting equipment has been installed and the workers have been given training how to handle such equipment. On each floor, emergency telephone numbers have been inscribed and alternative staircase for quick escape and firesuppressing materials like sand and thick coverlets have been

The bottom line is that fear syndrome about possible outbreaks of fire in garments factories is more damaging in its psychological effects on the workers and as such adequate practical measures need be taken to dispel such fears, apart from adoption of adequate firefighting mechanisms.

Ctg int'l Trade

Fair '97 begins

## Bangladesh Theatre brought out a colourful procession in

the city yesterday to mark its eleventh founding anniversary. Star photo

#### US aircraft carrier

"The crisis is serious.

France wants a way out of the

crisis, but its all in the hands of

the Iraqis", Foreign Ministry

spokeswoman Anne Gazeau-Se-

cret said. There is only one way

out. There is only one: that Iraq

comply with the Security Coun-

tude, well, there will be serious

consequences, and they are

grave consequences," said the

spectors, expelled from Iraq,

arrived in the Jordanian capi-

tal of Amman today as their

colleagues from other nations

voluntarily withdrew from

panied by one Australian and a

Briton drove into the hilly city

about 9 am (0700 GMT) in three

cars with US diplomatic license

weapons inspectors of different

nationalities left their head-

quarters after being withdrawn

Bus strike in

Patuakhali from

today

From Staff Correspondent

akhali Bus Owners Association

and workers union will go on

strike from tomorrow demand-

ing withdrawal of a case lodged

by executive engineer of the

today decided that bus service

will remain suspended at the

Patuakhali district headquar-

The owners and the workers

Public Works Department.

ters from tomorrow.

BARISAL, Nov 14: Patu-

in protest against fraq's expul-

sion of the Americans.

In Baghdad, about 60 UN

The six Americans accom-

American UN weapons in-

spokeswoman.

Baghdad in protest.

plates

"If they persist in their atti-

From Page 1 tive is to lift the sanctions, he has undermined that objective", Clinton said. "The sanctions will never be lifted as long as he does not comply"

with the UN resolutions Meanwhile, the US embassy in Kuwait has asked American citizens to keep their passports ready and remain in touch with the embassy in view of the esca-

lating tensions over Iraq We are monitoring the situation with Iraq closely," said a statement issued by a US embassy official. A copy of the Nov 10 statement was obtained to-

day by The Associated Press. In view of current tensions we reiterate our standing advice to all American citizens to keep required documentation available and to maintain contact with the embassy," the state-

France today used unusually harsh diplomatic language to press Saddam Hussein to back down in his standoff with the United Nations over weapons inspections, but stopped short of explicitly calling for use of force against Iraq.

#### **BGMEA**

From Page 1

Charles Drayer, and Shabnam Hug took part in the discussion. BGMEA leaders Benazir Ahmed, Mohammad Uzaer Afzal, Hanif Chowdhury, Lutfur Rahman and Zinnat Ali were

The WB delegation expressed the desire to provide financial help for a projects for diversification and improvement of the products and expansion of the markets.

. They proposed creation of a fund by BGMEA and WB for un dertaking training programmes for increasing export, expanding market, improving of the products and developing human resources.

The fund could be used in international market research and for training of personnel organising workshops and conducting survey for overall development of the garments industry, they noted.

Quddus informed the WB team of the difficulties they had been facing in increasing export and expanding the market. He sought cooperation from WB and other international financial organisations in this regard.

He stressed the need for removal of different barriers to expansion of export and for a 'quota-free' international market.

#### Service marks

From Page 1

that the service mark will be eligible for registration by this Act as trade mark.

Enhancement of penalty for various types of infringement of trade mark has also been proposed.

The LC took up the review of the Trade Marks Act and the Merchandise Marks Act on representations made by various bar associations.

#### Albright

From Page 1 leave the following afternoon. On arrival, she will be received by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and will be taken to Sonargaon Hotel, where she will be staying.

The following morning, Abdus Samad Azad will call on her at the hotel suite and hold official talks on matters of bilateral interest.

The Secretary of State will have a working breakfast meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Ganabhaban, beginning at 8:30 am. Foreign Ministry officials

said the talks will focus on strengthening bilateral relations and expanding commercial ties with particular reference to the energy sector. Dhaka last year exported to the US goods worth 1.3 billion

dollars, 65 per cent of which

comprised garments. It im-

ported items worth around 300

million dollars, mainly comprising machinery and industrial products. Asbright will also call on President Shahabuddin Ahmed and meet Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Be-

gum Khaleda Zia. The Secretary of State will also visit a city school for child garments workers run by the

Bangladesh garments industry. Meanwhile, extensive security measures are being taken for the visit of the Secretary of State. An advance US security team is due to arrive in the city shortly, which will coordinate security matters with local officials and agencies.

#### Aricha ferry service disrupted for 5 hours

MANIKGANJ, Nov 14: Aricha-Natakhola ferry service was disrupted for five hours today due to thick fog, reports

Four big ferries — Shahjalal, Amanat Shah, Bir Shreshta Jahangir and Keramat Ali with hundreds of passengers and vehicles were stranded on the river Jamuna from 3 am to 8 am today, BIWTC officials

Besides, 1,800 vehicles were stranded at the Aricha. Natakhola and Daulatdia ferry ghats till this afternoon due to the dislocation of ferry service.

#### PM: Tungipara

From Page 1 also create problems during the UP elections.

She called upon the people to remain alert against any trouble, saying the polls might be disturbed by "those who do not want peace and can kill people

and police without reason. People's voting rights have been established in the country after a long struggle. Hasina said urging all to remain vigilant so that none can snatch the right again and disturb the electoral process.

"The people will have to remain alert so that none can snatch away their rights of franchise which they have established at a huge cost," she added.

The Tungipara Thana Health Complex having a 31bed modern hospital has been built at a cost of Tk 8.82 crore with financial assistance from the World Bank.

#### Clash over Urs: One stabbed to death in Sylhet From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Nov 14: A young man was stabbed to death while five others were injured in a clash over Urs at a shrine at village Tetli last night.

One Shahabuddin sustained serious wounds along with others and succumbed to injuries at the Sylhet Osmani Medical College Hospital today.

#### Khaleda: AL has no right

From Page 1

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in the Jatiya Sangsad was addressing a big public meeting at the NS Government College ground here today. The meeting was organised by the district unit of BNP to protest the killing of BNP leader Zahid Hossain Mukul who was also the chairman of Bipro Belgharia Union Parishad in Sadar thana.

Mukul was killed by unidentified assailants on October 28 while he was returning home after election campaign.

The BNP chief blamed Awami League terrorists for the killing and termed the present government as "terrorist". She said, the ruling party

has failed to provide security to lives and property of the people. The BNP chief also condemned "all other acts of terrorism by AL and police" and demanded trial of those respon-

sible for the killing of Zahid. Turning to the CHT issue. Begum Zia said, "We will foil the conspiracy against CHT the

same way we fought for inde-

#### Cabin crew From Page 1

different items. The customs officials made a seizure list at that time. But the Biman management came to know about the incident after about a week. Sources concerned said, the Biman Authority, in the showcause notice had warned the crew of stern action if he failed to give satisfactory reply to the management within three days from the date of issuance of the notice.

A Deputy General Manager of Biman's Administration Wing issued the showcause notice on November 11.

#### Dhalpur

From Page 1 court granted three-day remand for further interrogation.

A police official informed The Daily Star last night that Shajahan, Saiful and Marium were brothers and sister. They, along with some other people hired a house at Dhalpur and were involved in illegal dealing of fire arms. The gang rented the first floor of the threestorey building about two months ago.

Demra police arrested the five during a raid on the house at about 11:30 am on Thursday.

pendence in 1971." She said. "the agreement

with the terrorists will go against the country and its interest... if it is signed, the Kaptai hydro-electric and Raozan thermal power plants and Chittagong seaport will be threat-

Let's make

things better.

**PHILIPS** 

Referring to the accusation of obstructing peace, the BNP chief said, "We obviously want peace, but not by selling out the country.

Chaired by the district unit convenor Advocate Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar, the meeting was also addressed by Aminul Haq. Akbar Hossain, Shahajahan Shiraj, Quazi Golam Morshed MP, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP. RCC Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu, Nadim Mostafa MP. Alamgir Kabir MP and Shirajul Islam Shiraj.

After the meeting. Begum Zia addressed a workers meeting at Natore circuit house in the evening. She will address public meeting at Joypurhat tomorrow



out a torch procession in the city yesterday in support of their strike on November 30

- Star photo

## विदमदभ



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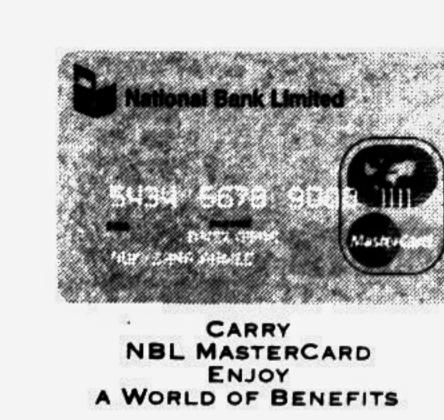
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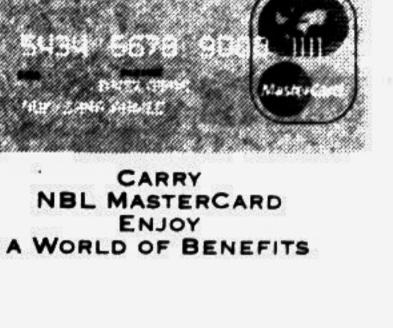
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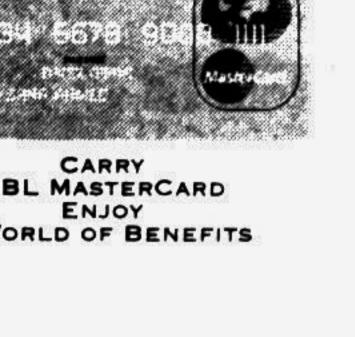
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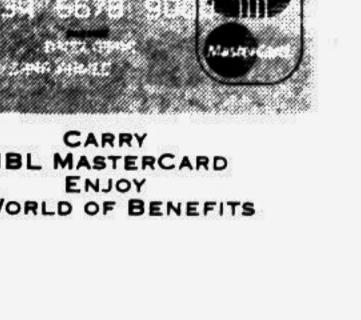
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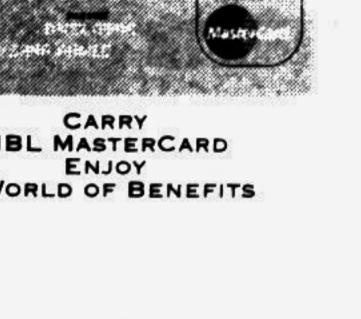


















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## CHITTAGONG, Nov 14: An eleven-day Chittagong Interna-

The Energy Minister could not be contacted over telephone despite repeated attempts on Thursday and Friday for his comment on the Probe Commit-

Now, Occidental is sealing

the root of the exploded well by

sinking a relief well.

vised budget. drilling in that spot on June 2. This is the first drilling by this

in the Surma valley under a Production Sharing Contract (PSC) signed on January 11, According to experts, the explosion took place due to high

design. We could have handled this well and avoided an explosion." said a geologist working with Petrobangla, "BAPEX had faced similar situation in Shah-

## seized at ZIA

recovered gold ornaments worth about Tk 5 lakh from a

Customs sources said on suspicion, the team searched the luggage of the passenger and found the gold ornaments. He came from Dubai by a Biman flight which landed at ZIA at 10.30 am.

provisions of the draft agreement. They had said that the proposed route would pass through five Indian states for which permission would be required from the respective state governments.

#### DUCSU expenditure

From Page 1 1,120,252 was drawn in the name of the General Secretary (GS) till 1996-97 but accounts were submitted for only Tk 3,76,605. The DUCSU GS Khairul Kabir Khokon, who is no more a student of the univer-

according to sources. The amount drawn in the name of the Literary Secretary was Tk 9,78,310 but accounts were submitted for Tk 7,31,240. The Literary Secretary, Niamat Elahi, is now a teacher of the Dhaka University.

sity, is now engaged in business,

A total of Tk 3,59,000 was drawn in the name of Transportation Secretary in the last seven years. But accounts showing expenditure of Tk 30,000 were submitted. Transportation Secretary Khondkar Jahangir Alam, who was admitted to the university in M Com in 1986-87 session, is no more a student of the university.

A total of Tk 3,36,164 was drawn in the name of DUCSU Common Room Secretary but accounts for Tk 2,38,206 were submitted. Common Room Secretary Monir Hossain is now a

The Common Room Secregathered.

2,90,866 were submitted. Habibur Rahman Habib, who no more a student of the university. He is engaged in business.

Sports Secretary, Sayed Hos-sain Kanan, a noted football player of the country, is no more a student of the univer-The only exception is the Secretary for Social Entertainment who submitted accounts for the whole amount of

Sports Secretary. Accounts for

Tk 21,400 were submitted. The

tee report and Occidental's re-Chittagong City Mayor Alhaj A

Occidental had begun the US company which is operating

pressure which could be avoided if it was properly monitored. Besides, the well was weak in

bazpur in 1994 and was able to control it."

#### Gold ornaments worth Tk 5 lakh

By Staff Correspondent A customs surveillance team Biman passenger at Zia International Airport (ZIA) yester-

Customs officials recovered 919 grams of gold ornaments. The passenger is reportedly a resident of Hathazari in Chit-

tagong. A departmental case

contractor. tary for female students had drawn Tk 2,13,401 but accounts were submitted for Tk 1.81,724. Jahanara Begum Josna, the Common Room Secretary, is now residing in the USA, it was

A total of Tk 3,97,160 was drawn in the name of Common Room Secretary for Science students. Accounts for Tk held the post of the secretary, is An amount of Tk 4,41,840 was drawn in the name of the

Tk 3.01,000 he had drawn. The secretary, Milan Mehdi is no more a student of the univerfail to reach the spot. The only redeeming feature

provided.

tional Trade Fair 97 under the auspices of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) began here today, reports Communications Minister Anwar Hossain inaugurated the fair as the chief guest while

B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury attended the function as special guest. The function chaired by chamber president Jafrul Islam Chowdhury MP, was addressed. among others, by Vice Mayor of Zibo Municipality under Shandong province. China, Zu Zheshan, representative of German Confederation of Small Business and Skilled Crafts (ZDH). Engineer M A Rahman, and se-

#### Standing bodies

nior vice-president Kamaluddin

From Page 1 "If the government takes these steps, we are eager to hold dialogue and join the proceed-

ings of the Jatiya Sangsad, said the BNP Secretary General. When contacted, Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim told The Daily Star that according to the Home Ministry report none of the cases against BNP lawmakers, leaders and workers were of

"political nature." "Still, we told them (BNP) that names of BNP lawmakers. except three, could be dropped from the cases. Besides, we will consider 14 other cases lodged with various thanas in the city. But, cases for crimes like murder, possession of arms and

corruption cases can not be considered. At ten last night, Nasim, however, said that he was yet to get any communication from BNP through a messenger, as

claimed by Mannan Bhuiyan. Nasim told this correspondent that parliamentary standing committees on ministries would be formed tomorrow keeping posts vacant for BNP lawmakers. "Names of AL. Jatiya Party and Jamaat-e-Islami lawmakers will be incorporated. Posts will be left vacant so that BNP lawmakers can join at a later stage, if not

now," he added. The 7th Jatiya Sangsad went into its maiden session on July 14 last year. Article 246 of the JS Rules of Procedure reads. "Parliament shall, as soon as may be, after the inauguration of each new parliament, appoint the standing committee on each ministry."

From Page 1 measure. Out of six, one is stationed at Aricha ghat, one at Natakhola ghat, three at Daulatdia and one near a 'single route channel' some three km south of Aricha ghat. Ferry service in the routes

was disrupted thrice in 15 days

last month due to 'low draft.'

Several ferries ran aground in

the channels, affecting move-

2 more dredgers

ment of other ferries. The authorities concerned were blamed for failure to keep the routes navigable.