

# Airline accidents fall, deaths grow

AFP, Geneva

The number of airline accidents worldwide fell by nearly a fifth last year but the death toll grew because of a few high-casualty crashes, the top airline association said Thursday.

Some 685 people were killed in 90 accidents, compared to 109 accidents that claimed the lives of 502 people the previous year, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said.

They included the Air France flight which plunged into the Atlantic Ocean last June, killing all 228 people on board, as well as the 189 people who died when a Yemenia Airways jet came down off the Comoro Islands a few weeks later.

"There were three or four large accidents with huge numbers of fatalities in 2009," IATA spokesman Anthony ConcoltoldAFP.

The global accident rate dropped to the equivalent of one accident for every 1.4 million flights in 2009, some 36 percent less than the rate recorded in 2000.

"Last year, 2.3 billion people flew safely. But every fatality is a human tragedy that reminds us of the ultimate goal of zero accidents and zero fatalities," said IATA Director General

Giovanni Bisignani.

However, the accident rate is based on losses of Western-built jet aircraft, excluding smaller turboprops or Russian-built planes, a measure IATA said was consistent in the industry.

"At some point in the future we'll see if that's relevant or not, when some of the newer aircraft made by firms such as Sukhoi will be sold in greater volumes," Concolt explained.

Old Soviet-era passenger aircraft were notoriously unreliable and crash prone.

Nineteen of the accidents last year involved Western-built jet aircraft compared to 22 in 2008.

Asia-Pacific's accident rate worsened, while Africa saw its already world-leading accident rate worsen sharply, according to IATA.

The association pinpointed "runway excursions" -- largely problems during take off and landing -- as a continuing challenge that accounted for more than a quarter of all accidents, despite a decline.

IATA represents about 230 airlines comprising 93 percent of scheduled international air traffic.

## BCL, Shibir

FROM PAGE 1  
of college unit Shibir general secretary was announced for delivering speech at the annual sports function on the college playground.

At one stage they swooped on the Shibir men there. Members of both the student organisations got involved in chase and counter chase on the playground for about an hour.

The BCL men later chased the Shibir men to a nearby student dormitory, where Shibir activists pelted them with bricks from the roof.

The BCL activists drove the Shibir men out of the dormitory. They vandalised 25 rooms of the Shibir men and set those on fire.

The annual sports function was suspended following the incident.

Fire service officials said valuables worth about Tk 2 lakh were gutted in the flame.

Of the injured, college unit Shibir president Yasin Khan and general secretary Nazrul Islam were admitted to a private hospital.

Policemen had been deployed on the campus to avert any untoward incident.

# Funds for recruitment of cops allocated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The finance ministry yesterday allocated fund for recruiting a total of 13,191 police personnel.

After the allocation, the finance ministry asked the home ministry to start the fresh recruitment process immediately, sources at the home ministry said.

Earlier the home ministry sent a proposal to the finance ministry requesting an allocation for recruiting 17,000 new members of the police force.

# US seeks climate progress

AFP, Washington

The United States yesterday saluted UN climate chief Yvo de Boer after his sudden resignation, with a top senator vowing to press forward with the contested Copenhagen accord.

Todd Stern, the US special envoy on climate change, described the dry-witted Dutchman as "enormously dedicated leader" and said he has "made a major contribution" in the fight against global warming.

"We appreciate his commitment, his wisdom and his determination to move the world in the right direction," Stern said in a statement.

Senator John Kerry, the chief architect of US legislation to curb carbon emissions, credited de Boer with bringing the world's top emitters -- including developing powers China and India -- to the same table.

WDB Director Sharafat Hossain Khan maintained that the repairs would be completed by March.

The Bangladesh Environment Lawyers' Association (Bela) and Brac, who have long demanded that repairs be made, hosted the meeting at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

A spokesperson from Bela said that 400 kilometres of embankment require repairs.

Bela Director Syeda Rizwana Hasan said salt water from the rivers is entering the agricultural land via the damaged embankments, posing a serious threat to crop production in many parts of Khulna and Satkhira.

The food minister said once the embankments are repaired, the government, with assistance from Japan, will provide

"It was a planned police attack on our peaceful procession," he said.

Others present at the briefing included Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Faroque, Mahbubuddin Khokon and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

**KHALEDA'S PROTEST**  
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia last night condemned the police attack on her party's procession and demanded immediate release of the detained activists.

In a statement, she also asked the authorities to ensure proper treatment for the injured party men.

"The Awami League government has not taken lesson from the past. It attacked our rallies and processions across the country," read the statement signed by Ruhul Kabir Rizvi, joint secretary general of the party.

Khaleda, also leader of the opposition in parliament, said it [government] has no respect for the opposition.

# Indo-Bangla

power connectivity in Bheramara, sources said.

The discussion will continue today for signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Bangladesh's Power Development Board (PDB) and India's National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) for a joint venture to set up two coal-fired power plants in Khulna and Chittagong.

Bangladesh suggested that the NTPC, a large state-owned power company that has several big coal-based power projects, should help the PDB in conducting a feasibility study in this regard.

Dhaka also suggested that the NTPC should provide consultancy service on exchange of power between the two countries. This service would be required to oversee several technical and financial issues including wheeling charge and tariff.

The MoU between the PDB and NTPC would also cover other aspects of cooperation including human resource development and improvement of efficiency.

Besides, the Power Grid Company of India is likely to sign a MoU with the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh.

# Jamuna mall

FROM PAGE 16

interior fittings sensing the knock down inevitable.

Rajuk first served Jamuna Builders a notice in 2002 against unauthorised construction of the floors violating the original design. In response, Jamuna initiated a legal battle against Rajuk action, said Rokon Ud-Doula.

Rajuk served the final notice on January 13 asking Jamuna Builders to knock down the floors within seven days.

On January 17, Jamuna Builders filed a writ petition with the HC challenging legality of the notice. The HC summarily rejected the petition on February 3.

The next day Rajuk embarked on destroying the exterior glass panels of the floors leaving all the other parts unharmed.

The drive halted as Jamuna Builders filed a petition with the SC against the HC order. The SC dismissed the petition on February 11 upholding the HC order.

Explaining why Rajuk's Nagar Unnayan Committee accepted Jamuna Group's appeal petition after the SC decision, Rajuk Director (development control) Sheikh Abdul Mannan said, "It was just a courtesy."

Each displaced family with two bundles of corrugated iron sheets and around Tk 15,000 to rebuild their homes.

Despite the promises, Aila victims burst into tears while describing their deplorable living conditions.

Murshida Begum said, "I used to survive on my vegetable crops and I sent my two children to school. Now I have no home and I can't afford to send my kids to school. What shall I do?"

She and other victims protested that contrary to the minister's assurance, they had not received Tk 5,000 from the government following the cyclone.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan said Bangladesh has disaster management response protocols, but they are not legally binding.

A disaster management law to ensure the rights of disaster victims is currently being framed.

Cyclone Aila killed over 300 people when it struck Bangladesh's southern coastal area in May 2009.

Faustina Pereira and Babar Kabir of Brac also spoke during the meeting.

who also expressed dissatisfaction over the ongoing "unplanned effort" to dredge the Burigangariver.

He said unplanned construction of roads also pushed the rivers of the country to their present sorry state.

"We have to expand our thinking. We must have plans for reclaiming all our rivers across the country," said Prof Shaheda Rahman who presided over the seminar held in Dhaka University Senate Hall.

Manish Chakraborti, an architect from Kolkata, Prof Dr Abu Sayed M Ahmed, Prof Syed Mahmudul Hasan, and Dr Najma Khan Majlis also presented papers on different issues relating to the environment, paintings, architecture, and antiquities of Dhaka City.

# Dhaka in peril

FROM PAGE 1

Dr Iqbal said ancient capitals situated in Wari Bateshwar dating back between 600 BC and 100 BC, Sonargaon, and Bikrampur met their sad demise mainly due to river erosion.

He said in the mid 19th century when people of this land began to put obstacles on flowing rivers with the advent of railway, the rivers started to dry up. He also said flood is not a problem for Bangladesh, rather water logging caused by different barrages is the real problem.

"The entire environment of this area has been disrupted over the years due to unplanned development. Planning should be environmentally honest," said Prof A Mumin Chowdhury

hour. At times, it endangers patients' lives, he added.

Contacted, Md Khalid Hasan, general manager (operation) of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, said the holiday staggering system has achieved little success.

"We could save 20 to 30 mmmcf of gas, and this could hardly reduce the crisis in the city," he said.

Khalid noted that gas crisis in Dhaka could be solved if a compressor was installed at Ashuganj but it may take around two-and-a-half years to complete the process if everything goes smoothly.

To reduce wastage of gas, prepaid meter system is going to be introduced, he said. "We will install 5,000 meters soon, and then another 8,600 meter with Asian Development Bank funding."

The Titas official went on, "There are around 15 lakh domestic gas connections in the country, of which 10 lakh are in Dhaka. We have plans to bring all these connections under the new meter system gradually."

Mentioning that domestic gas user waste gas, he said wastage of gas or misuse of gas would reduce drastically once the prepaid meters are installed.

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# Good sale

FROM PAGE 16

Sellers said the sale of books of poems have been high as readers of all ages especially young people are interested to read poems.

A seller of Bibash publication said the book, Nirbachita 100 Kobita, of Nirmalendu Goon is witnessing a good sale since it came out on February 16.

Afroza Soma, a young female poet, said her new book of poems, Andha Ghori arrived at the fair last week and it topped the list of best selling books at the stall.

She also said young poets are becoming optimistic after receiving such good responses from the readers.

Poet Prof Muhammad Samad said, "A new trend in Bangla poetry has flourished since the historic 1951 language movement. It is really good that poets are getting good responses from readers."

Meanwhile, a total of 114 new titles in a wide range of genres including poetry, novel, stories, research, autobiography, drama arrived in the fair yesterday. These included Naline Babu B.Sc by Humayun Ahmed, Ayna Kemon Acho by Imdadul Haque Milon, Badur O Brandi by Shahnaz Munny, Chhoto Galpo Samogro 1971 by Harun Habib.

The fair is expected to have a huge crowd today, the first day of the two-day weekly holidays. The fair will be reserved today for women and children from 10:30am to 1:00pm. Women and children will be allowed to enter the premises with a single man of their family during the time.

Rid Pharma Director Abdul Goni and two pharmacists Mahbulul Islam and Enamul Haque have been on the run since the case was filed against them on charge of manufacturing toxic paracetamol syrup that had claimed lives of at least 28 children.

Earlier, the same court asked the OC to submit report on execution of the arrest warrants against the three on seven consecutive dates.

But he did not pay heed to this.

The two other accused in the case are Rid Managing Director Mizanur Rahman and his wife Sheuly Rahman.

Sheuly, also a director of the company, was earlier granted bail from the High Court while Mizanur Rahman was sent to jail on his surrender to the Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka.

The Drug Court issued the arrest warrants for the five after Directorate of Drug Administration Superintendent Shafiqul Islam had filed the case with the court on August 11 last year.

The 28 kids died of renal failure across the country caused by intake of Rid's syrup and suspension from June to August last year.

A total of four cases were filed outside Dhaka including one in Brahmanbaria in this connection.

**BNP plans**  
FROM PAGE 1  
"Our chairperson Khaleda Zia will announce fresh agitation programmes from the grand rally," he said.

The rally was organised to protest the government decision of renaming Zia International Airport and "conspiratorial attempt to kill chairperson Khaleda Zia".

The party's month-long programme will start on February 23 through demonstrations at thanas and upazilas across the country. BNP will also hold rallies at all divisional headquarters.

Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka presided over the rally. BNP leaders Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdul Moeen Khan and Mirza Abbas, among others, spoke.

Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain said the government wanted to remove Zia's name because they fear it. But people will not accept that.

"Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established one-party rule while Ziaur Rahman introduced multiparty democracy in the country. That is why Awami League fears Zia."

Moudud Ahmed said it's time to go for a tougher movement against the government as it failed completely in the last one year.

Khoka said the government is forcing the opposition to take to the street.

The panelists reckoned the

2007-08 food price surge and food crisis as a 'wake-up' call for the world leaders who, they think, must move fast now to help the smallholding farms grow faster to ensure food security of the world.

Sir Gordon Conway emphasised the need for increasing the global food output to feed an increasing population that may surpass well over nine billion by 2050. He called for exploring the potentials of genetic modifications of crops alongside the current conventional breeding.

Mizengo Peter Pinda said, "Why our leaders (political leadership in developing and under-developed countries) need a wake-up call? Don't they know it for sure that they lead populations, significant numbers of which are malnourished and suffer from hunger? All our means have to be directed towards developing agriculture."

He along with Italian President Giorgio Napolitano had inaugurated the 33rd IFAD Governing Council meeting on Wednesday.

"In many developing countries, particularly low-income countries, decreased investment was accompanied by a policy vacuum. Governments dismantled older, costly instruments that had supported agriculture, but did not replace them with new, more effective ones," says an IFAD literature distributed at the meeting.

He added it is expected that the work may be completed within three months. It would take at least six months to appoint consultant only if a fresh tender would have to be floated, he said.

As per the plan of the communications ministry, the four-lane Dhaka Elevated Expressway (Gazipur Narayanjan) would be 32.1 kilometres in length and would cost Tk 8,617 crore or \$1.24 billion.

**JOYDEVPUR-MYMENSINGH EXPRESSWAY**  
The cabinet committee also gave its nod to the proposal of constructing Joydevpur-Mymensingh Expressway with government financing of approximately Tk 800 crore.

Earlier, the government decided to construct the expressway on PPP basis. But the communications ministry put up a proposal to the committee for implementing the project with public financing, as PPP initiative would have taken much more time.

Muhith said the condition of Joydevpur-Mymensingh road is in a very bad shape. So, quick implementation of the expressway has become urgent.

The finance minister said no road has yet been constructed under PPP initiative, though power projects have been implemented under it. He said for constructing roads under PPP initiative, a guideline for collecting toll from the road users has to be prepared.

Once the guideline is formulated, the roads can be constructed with PPP initiative.

The industries ministry yesterday placed the draft industrial policy at the cabinet committee meeting, but it was not passed.

A committee led by Board of Investment (BoI) Executive Chairman Dr SA Samad has been formed to further scrutinise the draft policy.

The committee has been asked to place the revised policy in next 15 days.

# Padma bridge

FROM PAGE 1

The communications ministry would decide about when and how the tender would be floated. The finance minister said it was one of the major electoral pledges of the Awami League-led grand alliance and the prime minister has directed to implement the project quickly.

The communications ministry yesterday sought approval from the Committee to start tender process for appointment of investors to construct the bridge on Build-Own-Transfer (BOT) or public-private partnership (PPP) basis.

The ministry also sought waiver from the obligations of following Bangladesh Private Sector Infrastructure Guidelines.

As per a survey by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), cost for construction of the second Padma bridge at Paturia-Gualundo point has been estimated at Tk 13,121 crore or \$1.9 billion, according to the communications ministry proposal.

The ministry proposal also said if the government had to depend on development partners for building the bridge, it would have taken much more time. So the government opted for private initiative.

Besides, the estimated cost for construction of ongoing first Padma Bridge at Mawa point is \$2.4 billion, of which donors made commitment for providing \$2.21 billion as assistance.

**DHAKA ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY**  
The cabinet committee also okayed a proposal of the communications ministry to appoint consultant for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway without tender.

The ministry made the proposal to award the consultancy work to the consultant of the Padma Multipurpose Bridge -- Maunsell-AECOM -- at a cost of Tk 3.1 crore.

Muhith said the proposal was made to award the consultancy for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway to the same consultant to save time.

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# 2 schoolgirls

FROM PAGE 16  
Government Primary School, died when a bus on Dinajpur-Panchagarh highway hit her, our Dinajpur correspondent reports.

Police quoting villagers said one of two buses, evidently racing each other, hit Sharmin killing her on the spot. She was walking by the road to her school.

Protesting the incident, villagers barricaded the highway for an hour. Police of Birganj and Kaharol police stations removed the barricade later.

Five-year-old Saleha died when an overloaded truck laden with soil hit her as she was crossing the road to get to school yesterday morning at Dhaldal in Sharsha upazila.

Witnesses said the truck hit her from behind, our Jessore correspondent reports.

Locals captured the truck and handed it over to Sharsha police but the driver managed to flee.

ment is normally 15 to 20 patients per day.

"We are currently taking between 30 and 40 patients," the assistant registrar also said that the primary care department has 700 patients, which is twice as many as usual.

Private hospitals are also struggling to manage the influx of patients from upper middle classes who are seeking treatment.

Rajib Hossain said, "As the condition of my nephew worsened at around 3:00am yesterday, we were desperately trying to get him to a private hospital nearby."

"But we were turned away from the Central Hospital, Nibedita Hospital and Pedihope clinic, as there were no beds."

His nephew was eventually admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital after a long delay.

Asked whether Japan has any resentment since although it provides the largest amount of bilateral assistance, contracts for most of the development projects go to Chinese companies, the finance minister said, "They might