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 highcasualty 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)

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

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

Concil told AFP. 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

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 Dhalda 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 Giovanni Bisignani.

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

Funds for

allocated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The finance ministry yester-

day allocated fund for recruit-

ing a total of 13,191 police

finance ministry asked the

home ministry to start the

fresh recruitment process

immediately, sources at the

sent a proposal to the finance

ministry requesting an alloca-

tion for recruiting 17,000 new

The United States yesterday

saluted UN climate chiefYvo de

Boer after his sudden resigna-

tion, with a top senator vowing

to press forward with the con-

envoy on climate change,

described the dry-witted

Dutchman as "enormously

dedicated leader" and said he

has "made a major contribu-

tion" in the fight against global

mitment, his wisdom and his

determination to move the

world in the right direction,'

chief architect of US legisla-

tion to curb carbon emissions,

credited de Boer with bringing

the world's top emitters --

including developing powers

China and India -- to the same

Stone-throwing demonstra-

tors damaged several vehicles

and tried to set three more

including a police van on fire

roads in front of BNP's Nava

Paltan headquarters and

adjacent areas remained

Later, BNP held a press

Party's Senior Joint

briefing at its headquarters

and demanded a judicial

Secretary General Mirza

Fakhrul Islam Alamgii

claimed at least 100 of their

attack on our peaceful proces-

ing included Opposition Chief

Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque,

Mahbubuddin Khokon and

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia

last night condemned the

police attack on her party's

procession and demanded

immediate release of the

In a statement, she also

"The Awami League gov-

asked the authorities to

ensure proper treatment for

ernment has not taken lesson

from the past. It attacked our

rallies and processions across

the country," read the state-

ment signed by Ruhul Kabir

Rizvi, joint secretary general of

opposition in parliament, said

it [government] has no respect

Khaleda, also leader of the

"It was a planned police

Others present at the brief-

workers had been injured.

sion," he said.

Ruhul Kabir Rizvi.

detained activists.

the injured party men.

the party.

FROM PAGE 1

Chittagong.

KHALEDA'S PROTEST

inquiry into the incident.

suspended for over an hour.

Vehicular movement on

BNP men

FROM PAGE 1

in Paltan.

Stern said in a statement.

"We appreciate his com-

Senator John Kerry, the

Todd Stern, the US special

tested Copenhagen accord.

members of the police force.

US seeks

climate

progress

AFP, Washington

warming.

Earlier the home ministry

home ministry said.

of cops

personnel.

recruitment

"At some point in the future volumes," Concil explained.

Old Soviet-era passenger aircraft were notoriously unre-

Nineteen of the accidents last year involved Westernbuilt jet aircraft compared to 22 in 2008.

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

> "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.

airlines comprising 93 percent

BCL, Shibir

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 brickbats 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.

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.

Season change

FROM PAGE 16

Authorities are being forced to discharge patients prematurely in order to make room for new admissions. Three babies under the age

of three months, Bayajid, Shima and Mohim, were found lying in bed 13 of ward 12. The mothers of the three

from Shanir Akhra, said, "For

no better than at DMCH.

An assistant registrar told

The Daily Star, "The admission

rate in the pediatric depart-

patients are struggling to cope and they are also falling ill. Bayejid's mother Parveen,

the last week I haven't slept well because there is no arrangement for me. ened at around 3:00am yester-"I tried to sleep on the floor for a few hours but there are

patients there too.' nearby. Despite attempts to manage the extra patients with additional mattresses, the situation at Mitford Hospital is

Nibedita Hospital and Pedihope clinic, as there were no beds.

admitted to Dhaka Shishu Hospital after a long delay.

for the opposition. His nephew was eventually 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

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

NEWS

FROM PAGE 16 authorities. The Nagar Unnavan Committee currently functions as the Rajuk Appellate Authority.

Jamuna Builders filed the appeal on February 3 against a Rajuk notice issued to them on January 13.

The HC bench of justices Md Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed and Naima Haider passed the After the allocation, the order, as the SC Appellate Division earlier gave its decision on the issue.

Rajuk started its manual demolition around 10:00am with 45 labourers following dismissal of an appeal petition that Jamuna Builders Ltd filed with the Supreme Court on February 11.

The Rajuk demolition team, led by Executive Magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula, knocked down the partition walls of the highest floor of the 10-storey shopping complex sparing the pillars and roofs for the time being.

"We will knock down the pillars and roofs later with a joint team of experts," Rokon Ud-Doula said.

Almost all the false ceilings of the 10th floor were torn removed electric wiring and

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 down while the employees of (development control) Sheikh Jamuna Group allegedly Abdul Mannan said, "It was just a courtesy."

Govt may call

repairs by the end of the dry season, we shall call in the army, law enforcers and locals."

If repairs are not made by the time the wet season begins, the displaced people will be forced to wait another year. Razzaque likened it to a "war

situation" and said the area may be declared a critical zone. 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

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

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, " 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 She and other victims protested that contrary to the minister's assurance, they had

not received Tk 5,000 from the

government following the meeting at Cirdap auditorium 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.

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

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

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.

Gas crisis goes on

FROM PAGE 1 every month.

Amena Begum of Mohammadbagh in Rayerbagh area, said, "I have to start cooking at 4:00am and complete it by 8:30am when gas supply goes off every day."

Besides, CNG-run vehicles in many areas of the city are facing problems due to suspension of service at filling stations for six to 10 hours a day due to low pressure of gas in the supply line that started at the beginning of winter. Md Haidar Alamgir, sub-

assistant engineer at a filling station at South Jatrabari, said they have been keeping their operation suspended from 9:00am to 2:30pm and 7:00pm to 10:00pm every day except Friday and Saturday since the advent of winter. He said gas crisis is causing

them a loss of around Tk 10,000 a day. If this situation continues, the filling station will have to be shutdown. All the 13 filling stations

between Jatrabari bridge and Jurain level crossing remain shut for about 8-10 hours every day, he mentioned.

Iman Sheikh, ambulance driver of a private sector hospital, said yesterday he had to move from one filling station to

another for more than half an

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 mmcfd from staggering around

536 mmcfd 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, Hossain said the government prepaid metre 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 duced multiparty democracy "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." ernment as it failed com-Mentioning that domestic pletely in the last one year. gas user waste gas, he said wastage of gas or misuse of gas would reduce drastically once

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 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 Nalinee 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

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.

Court orders

FROM PAGE 16 SP to take necessary steps to submit report by March 22 on execution of the arrest war-

Rid Pharma Director Abdul Goni and two pharmacists Mahbubul Islam and Enamul Haque have been on the run since the case was filed against them on charge of manufacturing toxic paracetamo 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

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 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 Mosharraf Hossain, Moudud Ahmed, Nazrul Islam Khan, Abdul Moeen Khan and Mirza Abbas, among others, spoke. Khandaker Mosharraf

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 intro-

in the country. That is why Awami League fears Zia." Moudud Ahmed said it's time to go for a tougher movement against the gov-

Khoka said the government is forcing the opposithe prepaid meters are installed. tion to take to the street.

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 consul-

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.

tancy work to the consultant

He said the consultant could start the work in next 10 days.

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-Narayanganj) would be 32.1 kilometres in length and would cost Tk 8,617 crore or

JOYDEVPUR-MYMENSINGH EXPRESSWAY

\$1.24 billion.

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 guide-

line for collecting toll from the

road users has to be prepared.

Once the guideline is formulated, the roads can be constructed with PPP initia-The industries ministry

vesterday 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.

Thai diplomat dies

FROM PAGE 1

Islam, has been formed to investigate the incident. The committee is to submit its report in 24 hours, said Tangail Deputy Commissioner M Bazlul Karim Chowdhury.

Tangail Superintendent of

Police Mizanur Rahman said the vehicle carrying Pannee and a few others got detached from the motorcade as they stopped at a restaurant in "About an hour after the

motorcade had passed Charpara, we received the news of accident. Within minutes our force reached the spot and rushed Pannee to a local hospital," he said.

Police seized the pick-up van but the driver managed to flee, he added. Princess Maha Chakri

Sirindhorn was returning to

Dhaka with her entourage after a two-day visit at Gaibandha. The princess is visiting Bangladesh as a member of the research team of Bloomberg School of Public

Health of John Hopkins

University, USA. Since the inauguration of the Bangabandhu Multipurpose Bridge in 1998, some 1,500 people were killed and 3,000 others injured in around 1,200 road accidents on the stretch of narrow highway between Mirzapur and

the bridge. Foreign Minister Dipu Momi condoled the unfortunate death of Pannee Lickanajule. In condolences sent to the Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya, Dipu Moni expressed her deep

sorrow and shock over

Pannee's unexpected demise.

2007-08 food price surge and

World leaders

FROM PAGE 16

about attaining food security and move fast for the benefit of smallholding farmers. They noted that these farmers fed the world even during the turbulent period of 2007-08 that saw food price surging to an astounding level.

"Last 20 years we neglected agriculture because we were complacent. Now that complacency is over, we need to have 'good leadership', 'good policies that attract private investments' and also pump in fresh public investments in farm sector," said one of the panelists, Kevin Cleaver, an associate vice-president of Renowned CNN

anchorperson Jim Clancy moderated the special plenary attended by prime ministers, ministers, ambassadors and delegates from 165 countries. Panel members included

Tanzanian Prime Minister Mizengo Peter Pinda, expresident of the Rockefeller Foundation and renowned agriculture author Professor Sir Gordon Conway, Forbeslisted one of the most influential women in the world Dr Naher Mohammed Taher, who founded and heads the Gulf One Investment Bank, President of the International Federation for Agricultural Producers Ajay Vashee and Coordinator of the Federation of Women for Central American Integretion Haydee

Castilo.

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 breed-

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 develop-

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

ing agriculture."

countries, particularly lowincome 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 distrib-

The panelists reckoned the uted at the meeting.

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

liable and crash prone.

The association pinpointed

IATA represents about 230 of scheduled international air

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

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

ment is normally 15 to 20

Private hospitals are also struggling to manage the influx of patients from upper middle classes who are seeking treat-Rajib Hossain said, "As the condition of my nephew wors-

day, we were desperately trying to get him to a private hospital "But we were turned away from the Central Hospital,

Bangladesh worst Japanese fund. Asked whether Japan has any resentment since although it provides the largest amount of bilateral assistance, contracts lately Bangladesh has been for most of the development utilizing only six percent of projects go to Chinese compa-Japan's annual commitment of nies, the finance minister said, "They might have some resent-

> cases their quotations are high, Muhith elaborated. Japan did not get the contract for constructing Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge, but it still agreed to provide assistance for constructing Padma Bridge, he

ments, but they surely would

get work orders since in most

Japanese companies do not

Japan is one of the major

international donors who

agreed to finance the construc-

not express that to us."

Japan however told the Bangladesh government that pre-qualification criteria for selection of bidders for Padma Bridge construction should be competitive, so the situation does not turn out to be that only one company ends up bidding for the job, Muhith added.

International Cooperation Agency (Jica) Masataka Nakahara in the morning. The finance minister said

The issue was also discussed in the recently concluded Bangladesh Development Forum, Muhith said adding that it is a shame that the country is not being able to utilize the foreign assistance it is getting.

He said Japan is

Bangladesh's largest bilateral

donor, and the third largest

among both multilateral and

loans and grants.

bilateral donors right after the World Bank, and Asian Development Bank. He also said, "I like Japan a lot. When I was a government secretary back in 1981, even then Japan was our largest donor.'

Replying to journalists' queries Muhith said he will soon hold meetings with the ministries concerned about the projects financed by Japan, to ensure quick utilization of