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Tokyo hotel blaze kills 32, number injured unknown

United Press International
TOKYO — At least 32 people died today in Tokyo's worst hotel fire since World War II, with flames raging for more than six hours while trapped guests cried for help, plunged to their deaths or tried in vain to get fire hoses to work.

Fire officials said 32 people died and at least 20 others were injured in the fire that started on the ninth floor of the Hotel New Japan in a fashionable Tokyo area of nightclubs, offices and hotels at 3:39 a.m. (1:39 p.m. Sunday EST).

Officials revised the death toll several times as some bodies apparently were counted twice and at least six of the injured died in hospitals.

There were more than 300 guests

at the time of the fire, which was not brought under control until after 10 a.m. The 500-room hotel, opened in 1960, was popular among South Korean and Taiwanese tourists.

Survivors said they heard no fire alarms — firemen said they did not work. Officials said the upper floors of the hotel had no sprinklers.

Some guests jumped to their deaths. Some screamed for help from upper stories. Some crawled to safety down fireman ladders or emergency staircases.

The South Korean Embassy said Kim Tai Dong, a former communications minister and later health and social affairs minister under the late President Park Chung-hee, was among the dead.

Two survivors were American.

Hospital officials identified one as Sharon Paff, 33, wife of a U.S. Air Force officer stationed in Okinawa, Japan. She was treated for burns on the arm and back.

The other was identified as Malcolm Kravit, also 33, of San Francisco. A hospital official said he had burns but was being treated for smoke inhalation.

Paff reportedly jumped from a ninth floor window and landed on a roof at the fourth or fifth floor level, breaking her pelvis and both arms. She was listed in serious condition and Kravit's condition was not immediately known.

Fire officials said hotel employee Susumu Fukunaga told them he finished work at the front desk and went to the ninth floor to rest when he

heard a cry of "Help me, help me," from a nearby room.

The officials said Fukunaga opened the door with a pass key. The room was filled with smoke and flames but was chained from the inside.

Fukunaga said he got a fire hose and pushed the start button but no water came out.

The blaze quickly spread through the ninth and tenth floors, which had no fire doors to contain the blaze, fire officials said.

Most of those who perished apparently suffocated, a spokesman said.

At least two people jumped to their deaths, witnesses said. Others died in their rooms, at hospitals or first aid stations.

Poland

Haig speech to denounce Moscow

United Press International
MADRID, Spain — Secretary of State Alexander Haig, ignoring Moscow's objections, polished a speech today attacking the military government of Poland and accusing Moscow of a major role in the crackdown.

Haig warned on arriving Sunday from Washington for this week's conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe that martial law in Poland could kill the 1975 Helsinki accords on human rights and secure borders.

"This visit occurs against the backdrop of repression in Afghanistan and Poland," Haig said. "It is absolutely essential that the signatories to

the Helsinki Pact view the situation in Poland as a fundamental and perhaps fatal threat to the entire Helsinki process.

Haig prepared a major address today for the resumption of the conference Tuesday and planned to meet this evening with West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who does not want an attack on Warsaw and Moscow to rupture the conference.

Moscow said it will "resolutely oppose" any attempt by Haig to use the conference to attack the Polish government or the Kremlin for the crackdown in the Warsaw Pact nation.

The conference — a product of the Helsinki Final Act signed by the Soviet Union, Poland and 31 other European nations — must assess the implications of the repression in Poland for future East-West relations, Haig said.

The secretary of state said it was important "all the signatory states reaffirm their adherence to the spirit and letter of the Final Act of Helsinki."

A senior official on Haig's plane told reporters on the flight to Madrid that the West cannot permit Warsaw and Moscow to escape censure for the military crackdown in Poland on Dec. 13.

"It is the underpinning of detente, it is the fruit of detente, and it is the framework under which East-West relations must recede or progress," the official said. "This conference cannot be conducted as 'business as usual' when the bedrock of the whole process has been challenged."

The official said Western hopes that the Helsinki process would strengthen human and political rights in Europe were undermined by events in Afghanistan and Poland.

Haig planned to visit Portugal, Morocco and the Communist state of Romania before returning to Washington Saturday.



photo by Karen Kaley

My beautiful balloon

Meteorology students Deanna Ramirez, a senior, and Mark Rowlett, a graduate student, send up a weather balloon to test atmospheric conditions. The balloon was launched Saturday from the Research Annex on Highway 21.

Names, ages received in letter

Corps helps needy children

by Charlotte Boyd
Battalion Reporter

The Texas A&M Corps of Cadets is supporting five needy children this semester through the Christian Children's Fund, an international organization that works to improve the lives of children.

Each child will receive \$216 a year to be spent on clothing, day care, food and basic necessities.

Corps Chaplain Ken Hahn said, "We collected money last semester during dead week and when I came back from the Christmas holidays, the children's names were here.

"We didn't ask people outside the Corps to donate and (all donations

were) strictly voluntary."

The children are:

— Anthony Akins, 4, from Mississippi. Akin's father is employed as a laborer and his income is not sufficient to provide basic necessities.

— Kanyiva Makala, 13, from Kenya. Makala, also fatherless, is one of six children living in a small hut built of sticks and grass.

— Herlinda Monterroso, 7, from Guatemala. Her father died and her mother supports the five children by raising a small corn crop.

— Kalabhai Raval, 14, from India. Classified by the government as a backward family, the Raval's have no electricity or water in their house

made of mud.

— Tseng Wen-Shuei, 14, from Taiwan. His father was killed in a traffic accident and Wen-Shuei's mother cannot support the family alone.

Each sponsor receives the child's photograph, a letter from the child and the English translation of the letter, if necessary.

"We are in the process now of writing them letters, but it will probably be a month before we receive word from them," Hahn said. "Some write their own letters and those who aren't old enough, of course, have the letters written for them."

The goal of the Fund, one of the world's largest and oldest international

child care agencies, is to make each child a contributing member of his own society. Children participating in the program are selected on the basis of need only.

A field office staff supervises the children and program. They help plan and direct services offered to the children, and work with the government officials for better child welfare standards and services in the country.

The Fund supports programs in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Korea and Niger. Programs also are sponsored in the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Uganda and the United States.

Cancelled

Gen. Vernon A. Walters, ambassador-at-large, who was scheduled to speak tonight on silent diplomacy, has been called to Europe on a diplomatic mission.

The MSC Great Issues Committee will try to reschedule the general's speech for April, said Linda Chiou, committee vice president.

Walters, a former deputy director of the CIA, served as an army intelligence officer under five presidents. He is considered the foremost army intelligence expert in the United States, Chiou said.

The committee has three events scheduled in March.

On March 8, a debate on abortion between Joseph Witherspoon and Janice Friese will be held. On March 24, Dr. Elizabeth Lostus will speak about memory training, and Jeremy Rifkin will give a speech entitled "Entropy - A new world view," March 29.

Cotton production

United Press International
DALLAS — World cotton production is expected to soar to 70.8 million bales this year and finding a market for the booming supply will be a major topic of discussion at the 44th annual National Cotton Council meeting this week.

American housewives aren't buying as many dresses, towels and bedlinens lately, so cotton mills are not processing all the cotton available. That fact frustrates American cotton growers, whose years of fighting plant disease and infestation paid off with the largest crop in 28 years (15.7 million bales) last year.

The three-day convention, which began Sunday, is scheduled to draw Vice President George Bush, along with Congressional leaders, industry representatives and researchers as well as some 1,500 cotton farmers

and processors.

Producing cotton itself is not a major problem, according to council economist Dean Etheridge.

Weak domestic consumption against a booming crop in 1981 have worked to create a cotton textile trade deficit that plunged to 1.3 million bale equivalents, according to the council.

And the resulting world market oversupply has growers reporting their intentions to reduce the amount of cotton they plant this year by more than 2.5 million acres, or 18 percent less than last year.

The council said world cotton production is expected to soar 5.2 million bales to 70.8 million bales this year.

And although international demand for cotton next year is expected to increase, the growth in production will far outstrip increased needs, said Etheridge.

Area code change

by Denise S. Sechelski
Battalion Staff

The Bryan-College Station area code will change from 713 to 409 in March 1983 because Houston is running out of telephone numbers, a spokesman from General Telephone of the Southwest says.

Janet Perkins, a consumer affairs representative for GTE, said Southwestern Bell requested the area code change because a city is only allowed a certain amount of numbers and Houston is quickly running out of 713 exchanges.

Bryan, College Station, Snook, Tunis, Caldwell and Somerville will change to the 409 area code in 1983.

"GTE is trying to make the transition as easy as possible," Perkins said.

For three months after the change occurs, calls made with the 713 area code that should have been with the 409 area code will be

completed. After this time of adjustment, however, a recording will inform the caller of the new area code. The number will then have to be redialed.

Long distance calls will not be delayed because of the new area code, Perkins said.

Some of the company's equipment will have to be changed to accommodate the new area code, Perkins said. But, since the change was initiated by Southwestern Bell, there is no cost to GTE, she said.

Likewise, residents of the cities using the area code will not see a change in the rates they pay for telephone service, Perkins said.

"Any cost involved will not show up in the bills," she said.

GTE does not expect any problems in getting the bills to the customers on time, Perkins said.

"The transition should be a smooth one," she said.

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forecast

Today's forecast: Cloudly with occasional drizzle and a 30 percent chance of rain today and tonight; high in the mid-50s, low in the low 40s. Tuesday's forecast calls for cooler temperatures and a 20 percent chance of rain.