SEOUL: South Korean President Park Geun-hye on Tuesday pushed another political setback by announcing her nominee to become prime minister resigned over the government’s slow and ineffective response to last month’s ferry disaster that killed more than 300 people.

Park’s office last week asked Ahn, a former Supreme Court justice and a lawyer, to resign over the government’s slow and ineffective response to last month’s ferry disaster that killed more than 300 people. Park’s office last week asked Ahn, a former Supreme Court justice and a lawyer, to resign after reports surfaced that he had earned 16 billion won ($11.6 million) since entering private practice last year.

Park vowed last week to overhaul government structures and improve safety oversight to guard against any recurrence of preventable disaster. She also backed a prosecutor known for fighting corruption, the appointment of which was long awaited by pro-democracy activists who trust the man and named him as a prime minister candidate for causing concern.

Ahn has come under criticism after reports surfaced over his own room afterward and then quickly exited the hospital later, the police officer said.

Bound to the beds? The medical director of the hospital said one nurse on the hospital’s second floor at the time of the blaze, and Jangseong Fire Department officials said 20 of the patients and the nurse were killed,

mostly from suffocation. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of office rules. More than 270 firefighters put the fire out after about six minutes, officials said. The fire came as South Korea debates long-standing safety lapses in a country that rapidly rose from poverty and the destruction of the 1950-53 Korean War to become Asia’s fourth biggest economy. It is too early to say if safety issues were involved in this fire. But the recent ferry sinking has caused South Korea to wrestle over issues long neglected as the country rose from poverty, war and dictatorship to an Asian powerhouse. The tragedy exposed regulatory failures that appear to have allowed the ferry Sewol to set off with far more cargo than it could safely carry. A fire earlier this week at a bus terminal near Seoul killed eight people and injured 27.

A fire believed set by an 81-year-old dementia patient suspected of arson blazed through a hospital ward for the elderly yesterday and killed 21 people in southern South Korea, mostly from smoke inhalation, police officials said. The fire on the second floor of the Hyosanarang Hospital in Jangseong county also injured seven people and raised concerns about lax fire regulations at a time when the nation is undergoing soul-searching about public safety following last month’s ferry sinking that killed more than 300 people.

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