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Over 1 lakh to get Tk 200 each a month

PM launches Tk 25cr scheme for the physically challenged

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday launched an allowance programme for the insolvent physically challenged.

"The government has allocated Tk 25 crore for this programme under which over one lakh physically challenged people will get Tk 200 each per month," she said while launching the programme at a function organised by Social Services Directorate at Mohanagar Natya Mancha in the capital.

At the function, the prime minister distributed cheques for Tk 2,400 each among 160 insolvent physically challenged people for one year.

The government has a plan to

expand the programme in the future, she said, adding that sincere cooperation of all is needed to implement the programme.

Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid, Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed MP and Director General (DG) of Social Services Directorate Hafizul Islam Mia also spoke on the occasion.

Addressing the function, the prime minister urged all concerned in the private sector to take up various programmes for the welfare of the physically challenged alongside the government ones.

Listing a number of steps and decisions taken by her government

for the physically challenged, the prime minister told the function that she has directed the authorities concerned to keep 10 per cent quota reserved in government jobs for them.

Khaleda reminded that she has announced to keep aside one per cent of class I government jobs for the physically challenged, enabling them to play an efficient role in higher government posts.

The prime minister said she believes that the country's disabled people can contribute to art, literature and science if they get proper education, training and suitable environment.

She said the government has taken steps to set up six training

JS approves supplementary budget

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Sangsad yesterday approved a Tk 2,516 crore supplementary budget for the current fiscal, allocating most of it to the agriculture, defence, and home ministries.

Although the overall expenditure has been decreased in the revised budget for the current fiscal, there are additional allocations for some ministries due to rise in expenses in those ministries for a number of reasons.

The overall expenditure for FY05-FY06 has been downsized by 5.16 per cent or Tk 3325 crore bringing it down to Tk 61,058 crore.

The supplementary allocation has gone to 45 ministries and departments which have spent more than their original allocations in the current fiscal. The extra expenditure of the agriculture ministry is Tk 653 crore, while the



A mother cuddling her infant waits outside the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday as her husband was put behind bars in the wake of mass arrests by police before and during the June 11 Dhaka siege programme by the opposition.

Bulu gets bail in ex-wife torturing case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday granted an interim bail to MNH Bulu, a director of private satellite television Boishakhi, in connection with the case filed for torturing his ex-wife for dowry.

But he could not be released from jail as two more attempted murder cases were also filed against him with different police stations.

Judge Monwara Begum of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression granted him bail upon a bond of Tk 20,000 with two guarantors.

Earlier on June 4, the defence lawyers filed a criminal appeal to the tribunal seeking an interim bail, but the tribunal rejected it and fixed yesterday for hearing on it with the lower court record.

Bulu was arrested on May 31

Govt asked to reconstitute EC

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday urged the government to reconstitute the Election Commission (EC) with capable and non-partisan persons on the basis of a national consensus.

The demand came from an emergency general meeting of the association held at the Bar Hall.

Chaired by SCBA President Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam, the meeting said Chief Election Commissioner Justice MA Aziz and his two colleagues have lost their credibility for preparing the electoral roll, disparaging the High Court guidelines and directives.

The meeting strongly protested the "false remarks" by some ministers against the SCBA members and condemned the "evil design" of a vested quarter for trying to

Bush makes sudden trip to unquiet Iraq

32 more killed in violence

AFP, Kirkuk/ Baghdad

At least 32 people were killed yesterday in Iraq, including 18 in five car bomb attacks in the oil city of Kirkuk, after warnings by al-Qaeda of vengeance for the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi.

Security measures in Baghdad were being beefed up in anticipation of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's long awaited new security plan for the capital, almost a week after the killing of the al-Qaeda in Iraq leader in a US air strike.

US President George W. Bush arrived in Baghdad on Tuesday on a surprise five-hour visit in a bid to boost the new government of

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki in its fight against the raging insurgency.

A White House spokesman confirmed that Bush was in Baghdad. "I can confirm President Bush is in Iraq," Ken Lisaisi told AFP.

Bush met with Maliki as well as his new cabinet, specifically the key ministers of interior, defense and oil at the US embassy in Baghdad, an AFP photographer reported.

He was accompanied by senior aides National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, Chief of Staff Josh Bolten, White House counsellor Dan Bartlett, Deputy Chief of Staff Joe Hagan and White House

spokesman Tony Snow, according to a pool reporter travelling with him.

According to the defence ministry, the night curfew in the capital will begin two and a half hours earlier at 8:30 pm (1630 GMT) and cars will be banned from the streets on Friday afternoon during prayer time.

In addition, there will be massive deployments of US and Iraqi troops to troubled neighbourhoods in the capital, said General Abdel Aziz Mohammed, without specifying exactly when the measures would come into effect.

The attacks on Kirkuk came as

No plan for new banks, mergers on cards: Saifur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said the government does not have plans to give permission for opening any new banks, but it is considering merging two or more banks, which are in bad condition.

"It does not seem logical to open any new banks in the present financial market situation of the country," Saifur said during the question-answer hour in parliament.

"Rather the government is considering forming new bank companies by merging two or more banks as their financial indicators showed serious decline," he added.

Replying to another question, Saifur said 67.26 per cent of state owned Rupali Bank's share are under process of offloading to

MAGURCHHARA GAS FIELD No compensation 9yrs into blowout

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Today is the 9th anniversary of Magurchhara gas well explosion. On the night of June 14, 1997 a massive explosion took place at Magurchhara gas field located in

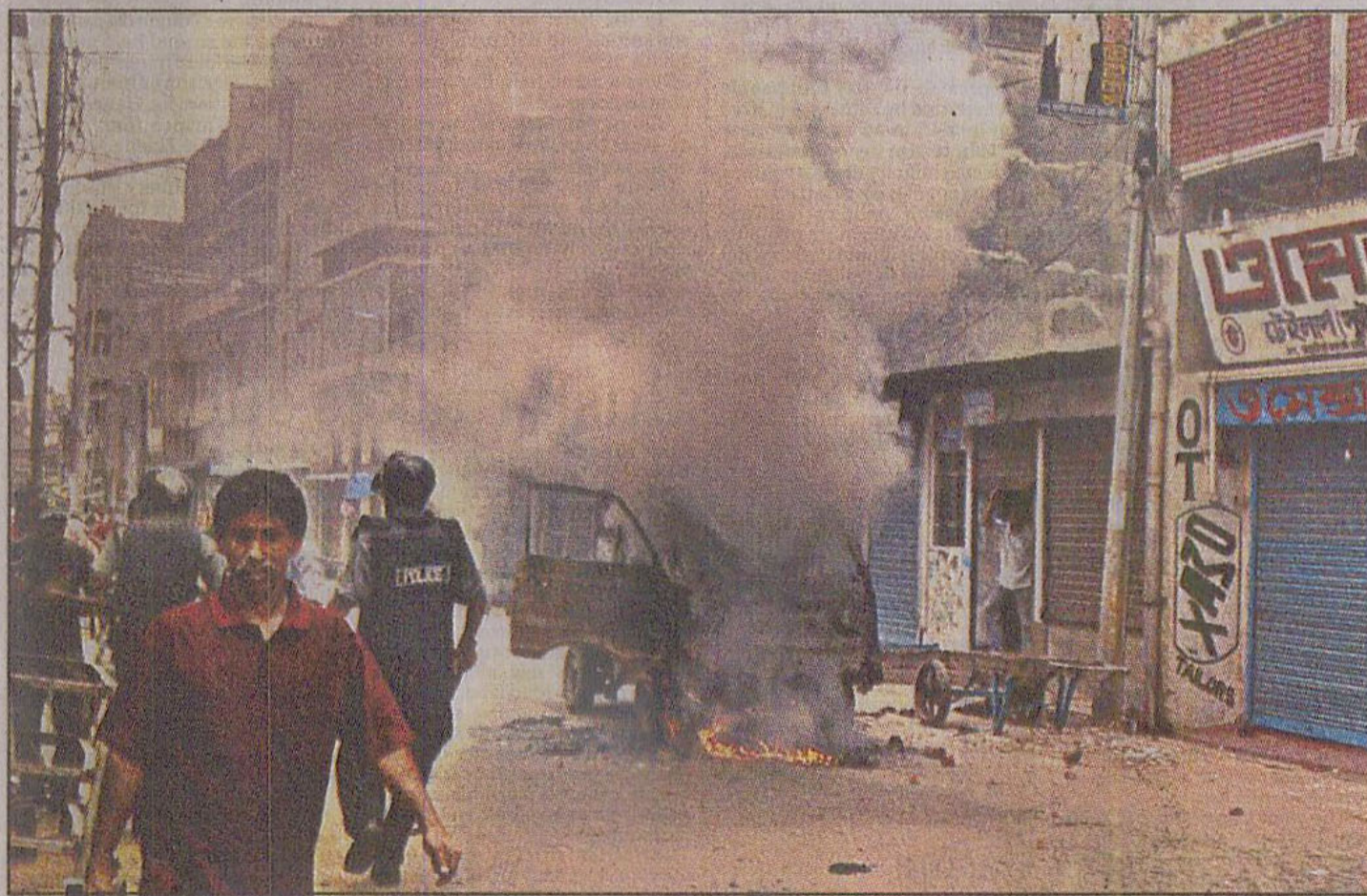
Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar district while a US energy company Occidental was drilling a well.

The explosion triggered a huge blaze that damaged property worth crores of taka. Occidental was widely blamed for the devastation,

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The photograph shows how fire burned depleting gas reserves after Magurchhara gas field explosion nine years ago.



A human hauler goes up in flames at Chawkbazar in the capital as 14-party demonstrators set it afire during the countrywide shutdown yesterday.

Carjacking case Hearing on Paban's bail tomorrow

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court shifted yesterday's scheduled hearing on the bail petition of Akter Hamid Paban, son of Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain, arrested on charge of carjacking, to tomorrow following the defence lawyers' plea.

Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas passed the order. The defence lawyers also did not take part in yesterday's hearing.

Earlier on June 12, Paban's close associate Zahirul Islam Robin confessed to a magistrate about their involvement with an organised carjackers' ring.

11 Palestinians killed in Israeli air strike

Abbas slams 'state terrorism'

AFP, Gaza City

Eleven people, including two children, were killed in the northern Gaza Strip yesterday in the deadliest air strike this year by the Israeli military in the territory.

Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas swiftly condemned the strike as "state terrorism" and called on the international community to intervene.

The casualties occurred when two rockets hit a car carrying three members of the Islamic Jihad militant group and travelling on

the main thoroughfare dissecting the coastal strip just north of Gaza city, Khaled al-Batch, a top official of the group, told AFP.

Two of the militants, Hammudeh al-Wadyeh, 25, and Shawqi al-Saiqali, also in his 20s, were killed as a result, al-Batch said. The third man was injured.

Nine civilians, including two children, were killed and 42 injured when a third rocket struck as onlookers gathered on the scene, witnesses and medical sources said.

The civilians included two

brothers, 4-year-old Hisham and 8-year-old Shaher al-Mugrabi, and their father Ashraf, said Jumaa al-Saqaa, a doctor at the al-Shifa hospital in Gaza treating the wounded.

An ambulance driver, Mussa Nasrallah, was also killed, he said.

The Israeli army told AFP that the military had carried out an operation against a vehicle that was transporting militants who were getting ready to fire rockets into Israel.

A spokeswoman said the car

3 missing as boat capsizes in Buriganga

UNB, Keraniganj

Three people went missing as a boat capsized in the river Buriganga yesterday.

Sources said a Kamranagar-char-bound boat from Thanarghat with two passengers on board sank in the river after a sand-laden trawler rammed it at about 5:30pm. The boatman and the passengers

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Eyes of BNP leader gouged out over toll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An angry mob gouged out both the eyes of a ruling BNP leader of Morrelganj upazila in Bagerhat on Monday night.

Police recovered Salm Shikder, 30, president of Nishanbaria unit of BNP, at midnight near his party office where the incident took

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5 boys rescued from traffickers

UNB, Benapole

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel yesterday rescued five boys while they were being trafficked to India through Banapole border.

They are Arif, Milon, Rajab Ali, Faisal, and Sabuj all aged around 13. BDR held the boys near the check post, but could not catch hold of the traffickers.

The boys told the police that they were the inmates of a shelter provided for them by an NGO at

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Prayer Timing		
June 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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