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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing the Universal Primary Education Conference '96 at a city hotel yesterday. — PID photo

Proposed telecom policy handed over to PM

By Staff Correspondent

Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim informed the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that draft of a proposed telecommunication policy was handed over to the Prime Minister and it would be endorsed in the cabinet meeting soon.

Before finalising the policy, we will seek suggestions from everyone through holding of seminars. The aim is to root out corruption and get rid of rampant allegations of ghost billing," the minister said while answering to two questions and some supplementaries during the question-hour in the afternoon sitting.

Nasim said "ghost billing will be a matter of past" after full computerisation of the telephone system and gradual replacement of the analog system by digital system.

Replying to a question from Mirza Azam of Awami League Nasim said the government has a plan to install 1.38.500 digital lines and 13.700 analog lines in districts at a cost of Tk. 803 crore and 18 lakh during fiscal 96-97.

In the last financial year (1995-96), the government earned Tk. 167.06.75.408 from trunk-call bills, he added.

Replying to another question by BNP member Mohammad Masihur Rahman (Jhenidah), Nasim said the present number of telephone lines in the country is 3.31.015 of

Litmus test for AL

From page 1

manipulating the polls gathered strength inside the party when the BNP suffered a debacle in the mayoral elections in the country's four major cities in early 1994. The top opposition party — AL — stunned the BNP by emerging victorious in the mayoral polls in Dhaka and Chittagong, the two biggest cities in the country.

Over-reacting to its declining popularity, as evidenced by the defeat in the mayoral elections, the BNP became too anxious to win in the Magura-2 by-polls, with the aim to avenge its defeat in the mayoral polls.

Nevertheless, the "facts" of the Magura polls results, failed to befoul the people. Rather, the way the ruling BNP conducted the polls convinced the people of the opposition charges against the BNP.

The by-elections to the 16 vacated seats of the present Jatiya Sangsad are in the offing. Six vacated seats by BNP and five each by the ruling AL and the JP, are to elect new MPs.

People are eagerly waiting to see the ruling party's role as far as ensuring fairness and neutrality in the holding of by-polls is concerned.

The Election Commission was blamed for failing to maintain its neutrality in conducting elections under all the successive party governments in the past. The EC was hailed both at home and abroad for ensuring fair polls under the non-party caretaker governments — the first in 1991 and again in June this year.

However, the BNP which failed to bag majority seats in the June 12 general elections brought charges of rigging and other malpractices against the caretaker administration as well as the AL that emerged as the majority party.

Already vocal against "harassment of its activists" the BNP is now contemplating launching of a full-fledged anti-government street agitation even if it finds small lapses in the process of holding the ensuing by-polls. Thus, the BNP

Hasina

From page 1

to update the curriculum.

The Prime Minister assured the organisers of the conference that the recommendations of the conference would be given due consideration. She hoped that the recommendations would be prepared in the light of Dr Qudret-e-Khuda Commission report and those would help in formulating a permanent education policy.

The inaugural session was presided over by chairman of the preparatory committee of the conference and former education secretary Kazi Fazlur Rahman and addressed by former education secretary of India Anil Bordia, Executive Director of BRAC Faze Hossain Abed and Dr Manzoor Ahmad of the UNICEF.

6 candidates

From page 1

Tasmima Manju to contest for the Pirojpur-2 seat, vacated by her husband Anwar Hossain Manju, secretary general of the party and communications minister.

The JP has also nominated Mozammel H. Lahu, brother of H M Ershad for the Kurigram-3 seat, one of the four seats vacated by Ershad.

Bangladeshi food

From page 1

General (ret'd) K M Shafiqul MP and former high commissioner to UK Ms Sheguitta Yasmin MP and British high commissioner Peter J Powell.

Finance Minister S A M S Kibria who was the special guest at the inaugural function urged the expatriate Bangladeshis to utilise the five per cent primary shares in the stock market reserved for them in the proposed budget for 1996-97.

Jailed Myanmar national dies

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 6: A Myanmar national who has been serving a prison term since 1995 died at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital this morning, police and hospital sources said.

Sharifuddin MP

From page 1

Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, in a message last night expressed deep shock at the death of Sharifuddin Ahmed MP, the Speaker conveyed his sympathy to the members of the bereaved family and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, Finance Minister Shah A M S Kibria, Irrigation, Water Resources and Flood Control Minister Abdur Razzak, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru, former minister Dewan Farid Gazi, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed MP, M A Rafiq MP, Captain (ret'd) Tazul Islam MP, Enamul Haq MP, K M Jahangir MP, and Awami League leader Dr Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin went to the hospital to see the body of the late MP.

He will be buried at his Baniachong family graveyard.

2 Bills passed

From page 1

ate with Bangladesh for achieving success in the area. They suggested that the government try to improve research facilities for the two institutes by mobilising local resources.

The passage of another bill — the Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute (amendment) Bill, 1996 — was postponed at the request of the agriculture minister request. According to Matia Chowdhury, some amendments, proposed by a special parliamentary body, which had scrutinized the bill last week, were found missing. The Speaker acceded to her request to send the bill back to the parliamentary committee.

Countervailing steps

From page 1

these cases have been filed by the USA. Among these, one case was lodged against Bangladesh.

Dr Joardar explained that the Agreement on Subsidies and Counter-vailing Measures was initiated to ensure marketing of products at commercial prices and the establishment of a transparent procedure of investigation with elements of international scrutiny for verification of transparency of national laws, procedures and proceedings.

The Uruguay Round Agreement on Safeguards permits imposition of temporary tariff and quantitative restrictions on an emergency basis to protect a specific domestic industry against unreasonably increased import of any product which threatens to cause serious damage to that particular industry.

Before further removal of quantitative restrictions like those in the Import Policy Order 1993-95, Bangladesh has to carefully assess the long-term implications of such removal, he suggested.

Explaining the Agreement on Anti-Dumping Dr Joardar said that it was adopted to protect interest of traders against "predatory" dumpers who has control over domestic and in-

Fresh areas in greater Barisal inundated

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Aug 6: The overall flood situation in all districts under Barisal division further deteriorated yesterday following heavy rain.

According to official sources, the embankments in Amtali, Betagi, Patharghata, Banna and Sadar thana areas have been breached flooding the surrounding areas. In Patharghata thana alone, five kilometres of the embankment was washed away. The onrush of flood water has damaged seed beds of aman and aus paddy.

In Pirojpur district, Tushkhali, Mirukhali, Baramachua and Telikhali unions have been inundated.

Heavy downpour this evening submerged the main roads of the town and its adjoining areas.

Our Correspondent from Kusthia adds, "The river Padma has eroded vast areas of land with standing crops, rendering some 1500 families homeless in Daulatpur thana."

According to official sources, the affected villages are Kachir Char, Kandirpara, Charpara, Choruikuri and Insafnagar. The border outpost at Insafnagar, one high school, three primary schools, 4 mosques, and one graveyard have been devoured by river erosion.

The Thana Nirbahi officer of Daulatpur, Abdullahi Baki distributed Tk 20,000, 12-50 metric tons of wheat and 25 tons of biscuits among the affected people. More relief goods are needed, the TNO said.

UNB adds: Flood situation in and around Dhaka and

ROK president praises Khaleda

South Korean President Kim Young Sam has appreciated former Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia for her cooperation during the tenure of her office, reports UNB.

In a message to Begum Zia, the ROK President said: "You have established democracy in Bangladesh and made great achievements in last five years."

Kim Young Sam highly praised Begum Zia for her eminent leadership which he said, led the country towards development and prosperity.

Recalling her visit to South Korea in May 1995, the ROK President remarked that the two countries during that period had developed a closer ties than any time before.

Kim Young Sam hoped that cooperation between the two countries would further be strengthened in the time ahead.

Budget discussion

From page 1

Md Nasim stood up and said that Alim has destroyed the cordial atmosphere of the House by giving false statement quoting a report from a paper.

Nasim said Alim had opposed the liberation war and killed many freedom fighters at that time. He urged the Chair to allow A S M Abdur Rab to explain his position on the newspaper report as quoted by Alim.

Rising on a point of personal explanation Rab said that Alim gave an untrue statement involving his name quoting the newspaper report. "My name was not linked with the newspaper in question and I shall give a reply to Alim when I will deliver my speech on the budget," he said.

Termining the proposed national budget as a balanced and exceptional one Akram thanked Finance Minister Shah A S M Kibria for working hard on it and presenting it before the Sangsad in the shortest possible time.

The structural reforms, reform in the financial sector and budget discipline initiated by former finance minister Saifur Rahman have failed to deliver the goods to the people, he said.

Akram said though the burden of foreign loan has increased manifold during the last 21 years the lot of the vast

Shopkeepers chase extortionists in city

By Staff Correspondent

A group of extortionists fired gunshots when some shopkeepers refused to pay them money and chased them near the Mitford Hospital in the old part of the city yesterday afternoon.

According to local people, the armed gang demanded money from the assistant of a medicine shop near the hospital at about 5 pm. As the assistant refused to pay them, the local people meanwhile informed the other shopkeepers of the matter.

Later, all shopkeepers chased the extortionists.

Extra police force was deployed in the area following the incident, police said.

2 labourers fall from 7th floor in city, die

By Staff Correspondent

Two labourers were killed after falling from the seventh floor of an under-construction building at Tejaon in the city yesterday.

Matiur Rahman, 35, and Saber Ali, 22, sustained serious injuries as the bamboo scaffolding collapsed at 11 am. They died while being taken to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH).

The victims were plastering the walls on the seventh floor of the 11-storied building being constructed for the Air Force officers, police said.

JS tidbits

From page 1

reading from the question-answer script while speaking on the target and the achievement of revenue earning from 1972-73 to 1995-96.

The reason for Akhtar's conduct was revealed later when he wanted to know from the Chair if he would cover his face with the papers in his hand or cover the lens of the TV camera because of what he called BTVs "distorted" broadcast of the Opposition role the day before.

A brief but lively discussion took place on the rule that MPs should bow their heads while entering the House.

Treasury bench member Begum Sajeda Choudhury, on a point of order, drew the Chair's attention that Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof Ebroddoza Choudhury and Opposition chief whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain did not abide by the rule.

Prof B Choudhury then rose and argued that no Muslim could bow his head to anybody except Allah. "The religion I've faith in doesn't permit me to do so," he said referring to a committee now examining a proposal to replace the provision.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Choudhury told the House, "Till the rule is amended, I will be happy to see no disregard. It's the House, not the Speaker to be respected."

When Barrister Nazmul Huda of BNP rose to speak on the issue, the Speaker said, "I did not give floor to Mr Barrister for many days. That's why I now give him the floor."

"Getting the floor, Huda said, "I think, it's very risky to bow head in the present situation in the House."

"Maybe, it's for you," the Speaker responded.

Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury was not in the House while the Chair was attempting to request her to place a Bill.

On her return, Matia Chowdhury said, "I went out to have a glass of water finding myself in a volley of points of order. I don't know if points of order can be raised during placing a bill."

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5th Wage Board to be made operational immediately

Decision has been taken to make the Fifth Wage Board for journalists, press workers and general employees of newspapers and news agencies, constituted under 1974 Act, functional immediately to fix their salaries, allowances and other benefits, an official handout said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The term of the Fifth Wage Board constituted on December 26, 1995, ended on June 25, 1996.

The present government has taken steps to make the Wage Board operational immediately to announce its award.

The Fifth Wage Board has already announced 30 per cent interim dearness allowance effective from January 1, 1996.

The government is determined to take all necessary steps to ensure full freedom to objective journalism and newspapers in the interest of proper development of democracy and to increase salary, allowances and other benefits of the working journalists, press workers and general employees of news agencies and newspapers.

The government has sought cooperation from all to maintain peace and discipline and proper atmosphere in this regard.

Newspapermen's rally today

The Central Coordination Committee leaders yesterday called upon all concerned to make today's rally in front of the National Press Club followed by a procession towards the Prime Minister's office a success, reports BSS.

The programme was announced demanding the immediate extension of the Fifth Wage Board and implementation of dearness allowances in all newspapers and news agencies.

The leaders in a statement yesterday said during the programme a four-hour work stoppage would be observed from 11 am to 3 pm today in all newspapers and news agencies.

BCL extended meet ends

By DU Correspondent

The two-day extended meeting of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of ruling Awami League ended yesterday with a call to stamp out terrorism from society.

The meeting started on Monday with its president Enamul Haq Shamim in the chair also expressed its firm determination to make the country free from illiteracy as declared by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

JS tidbits

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TV: Ruling party

From page 1

noisy scenes, but it does not project the causes which lead to pandemonium," he said.

Referring to Begum Zia's comment on Monday, he said the BTV cast her speech for 17 seconds only, focusing on only one word of Begum Zia, but it did not televise in what context she used it.

"It's the duty of the opposition to pinpoint government activities for which the opposition members may sometimes utter harsh words," he told the newsmen.

But the ruling party, he said, must have tolerance and avoid unnecessary attack on the opposition which may provoke quarrel.

Replying to a question, the BNP leader said the opposition BNP was waiting for the Speaker's decision regarding the call-attention notices.

A number of opposition MPs have submitted notices regarding the BTV's partial telecast of news and picture.

"If we cannot be satisfied with the Speaker's decision, then our parliamentary party will take decision in this regard," he said without elaborating what decision BNP could take if the BTV continued its partial presentation of news.

Former Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali said he felt embarrassed as the Speaker did not give him floor. "I had discharged the duty of Speaker for five years. I stood for floor on two days or three, but the Speaker did not give me the floor."

Former Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, BNP Secretary General Abd Mannan Bhuiyan and Opposition Chief Whip Khandakar Delwar Hossain also spoke on the occasion.

86 nominations valid

From page 1

two were vacated by Awami League president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while four each by BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, and detained Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad.

Besides, one seat each was vacated by Tofael Ahmed, Abdur Razzak and Mohammad Nasim of Awami League, M Saifur Rahman and Col (ret'd) OI Ahmed of BNP and Anwar Hossain Manju of JP.

Candidates

Following is the list of valid candidates: **Rangpur-2 (Vacated by H M Ershad):** M Anisul Haq Chowdhury (AL), M Ali Sarkar (JP), Advocate Arbab Hossain (BNP) and Major (ret'd) M Nasimuddin, a Jatiya Party leader, who filed nomination paper as independent candidate.

Rangpur-5 (Vacated by H M Ershad): M Nazmul Sakib Pradhan (Ind), Mofazzel Alam (Ind), M Shah Alam (JP), Khandaker Golam Mostafa Batul (BNP), Anwarul Haq Mia (Ind), H M Ashiqur Rahman (AL), M Abdur Rauf Mia (Ind), Haresuddin Sarkar Bir Pratik (Ind) and Abdul Gani Mondol (Ind).

Rangpur-6 (Vacated by H M Ershad): M Masihur Rahman (Ind), M Rezaul Sarkar Rana (Ind), M Abul Khayer Shamim (Ind), M Nurunnabi Sarkar (Ind), M Abdur Wahed Mia (AL), Nur Mohammad Mondol (JP), M Ikramul Haq Khan (BNP) and M Matiar Rahman Chowdhury, an Awami League leader, who filed nomination as independent.

Kurigram-3 (Vacated by H M Ershad): A K M Mayedul Islam (BNP), Moazzamul Hossain Lahu (JP), Rukunuddinwarah (Ind), Mamtazul Hasan Karim (Ind), Kafiluddin (Ind), Fuhul Sarker (AL), A Jallil Sarkar (Gono Forum) and M Khalilur Rahman (Khelaaf Andolon).

Bogra-6 (Vacated by Begum Khaleda Zia): M Mamunur Rashid (Islami Oikya Jote), M Zahurul Islam (BNP), Golam Rabbani (Jamaat) and Asadur Rahman Khandakar (AL).

Bogra-7 (Vacated by Begum Khaleda Zia): Helaluzzaman Talukdar Lahu (BNP), M Shaiful Hasan (Ind), M Wafiq Haq (AL), Aminul Islam Sarker (Ind), Amirul Momtin Muktar (JP), leader filed nomination as independent and T M Musa (an Awami League leader filed nomination as independent).

Sirajganj-1 (Vacated by Mohammad Nasim): Dr Mohammad Selim (AL), Advocate Lutfor Rahman (JP), Mahbubul Islam Talukdar (BNP) and M A Salam (Ind).

Bagerhat-1 (Vacated by Sheikh Hasina): Sheikh Helal Uddin (AL), Abdul Hye Bachchu (JP) and Sheikh Ohiduzzaman Tipu (BNP).

Khulna-1 (Vacated by Sheikh Hasina): Sheikh Harunur Rashid (AL), Santosh Roy (Ind), Advocate Gazi Abdul Bari (BNP), Advocate Lutfor Rahman Lahu (JP) and Fancharhan Biswas (an Awami League leader filed nomination as independent).

Pirojpur-2 (Vacated by Anwar Hossain Manju): Tasmima Hossain (JP), Abdur Wahab Hawladar (BNP) and Alhaj M Matiur Rahman (AL).

Shariatpur-1 (Vacated by Abdur Razzak): Dewan Golam Mahub (JP), Sardar A K M Nasiruddin (BNP) and Master Mujibur Rahman (AL).

Party position

Awami League	15
BNP	15
Jatiya Party	13
Jamaat-e-Islami	1
JSD (Raj)	1
Islami Oikya Jote	2
Gono Forum	1
Khelaaf Andolon	1
Jatiyabadi Awami League	1
Bangladesh Islami Dal	1
Jamiata Olama Islam	1
Independents	34
Total	86

Maid steals gold ornaments

By Staff Correspondent

A maid allegedly stole cash and gold ornaments worth about Tk 3.28 lakh from a house in Baitul Aman Housing Society at Shyamoli in the city Monday night.

Mohammadpur police arrested one Rahima Begum, 37, who had introduced the maid in the house, police said.

According to the FIR filed with police the family members of Baitul Aman Housing Society went out of their house Monday morning leaving the maid alone.

PIA passengers

From page 1

istani nationals.

A total of 74 Pakistani nationals arrived at ZIA by a PIA flight on Thursday morning with illegal documents. Immigration officials did not allow them to enter into the country as none of them was carrying genuine Bangladeshi passport.

Twenty of them, mainly women and children, were sent back to Pakistan by the return flight of PIA on Thursday afternoon.

They were reportedly arrested on their arrival at Karachi airport as the Pakistani immigration identified the Bangla-speaking people as Bangladeshis.

The rest 54 of the group, waiting for the next available flight of PIA, were stranded at the transit lounge of ZIA. Official sources said one of them had escaped from the airport on Sunday.

Surrender arms

From page 1

taken against the illegal arms holders who will not give up the weapons by the deadline.

It has been learnt that there are illegal arms across the country, the announcement said. "Recovery of the illegal arms, ammunition and explosives is a must for law and order and peace in public life."

"The ultimatum came in line with the new Awami League government's drive for curbing acts of violence, one of its avowed priority.

Foreign Secy

From page 1

sues in the bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India, with particular focus on the issue of permanent sharing arrangement of the Ganges waters and reduction of the large trade gap which is adverse to Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh delegation includes senior officials of the ministries of foreign affairs, water resources and commerce respectively.

The foreign secretary is carrying written messages from the Prime Minister and the foreign minister of Bangladesh to their respective Indian counterparts, with whom he is expected to call on during the visit.

The Bangladesh foreign secretary's visit is a part of the process of dialogue between the two governments at various levels which has been set in motion following the assumption of the new governments in Dhaka and New Delhi.