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Telecom policy to encourage private investment: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said past negligence in telecommunication sector severely hindered national growth and called for massive investment, both private and public, for development of this sector, reports UNB.

There is no alternative to huge investment in the telecommunication sector if demands for telephone connections are to be met," she said while inaugurating a national seminar on Telecommunication Policy of Bangladesh at a local hotel.

But, she said, it is not possible on the part of the government alone to provide sufficient fund. The government is committed to increase private investment along with its own initiative, she added.

She said the country is now open for private investment and stressed the need for a policy which would encourage the private sector to invest and offer quality telecommunication services through the process of competition.

The Prime Minister stressed

the need for building a coordinated telecommunication infrastructure which can cater to the increasing demand of telephones both in urban and rural areas.

She also laid emphasis on developing international telecommunication circuit system to create more opportunities through computer data processing.

The Prime Minister said speedy exchange of information at every phase of the economic activity is undeniable and prospect of telecommunication in a developing country like Bangladesh is enormous.

She stressed the need for framing an appropriate national telecommunication policy without further delay.

The Prime Minister said telecommunication sector often face two questions — quality of service and ghost bill. She called for finding out ways and means to check the irregularities and warned of stringent action against those who are associated with ill-motivated activities.

Listing some problems and negligence by the people con-

cerned of this sector, she said scientific system has to be developed to stop such ill-effects.

The Prime Minister called upon the officers and employees of the T & T Board to work sincerely and show favourable attitude in rendering services as members of an emergency service oriented organisation.

The inaugural session of the workshop was presided over by Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim and was addressed, among others, by Secretary of the Ministry M M Reza and Chairman of TKT Board M H Chowdhury.

Students clash in Barisal: 11 injured

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Nov 20: Eleven persons were injured, one of them seriously, when activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jatiya Chhatra Samaj (JCS) clashed with those of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at RC College at Mehendiganj in the district today.

According to Mehendiganj thana police and witnesses, JCD activists brought out a procession on the college campus in the morning breaching an earlier 'understanding' with the BCL.

BCL leaders protested it to the principal of the college and then brought out another protest procession.

The clash broke out when the processions came face to face.

During the clash the JCS activists joined the JCD.

The injured activists were identified as Swapan, 20, Aminul, 23, Liton, 20, Md. Alam, 21, Manjur, 24, Subrata, 25, Kabir, 27, Ripan, 24, Khalil, 20, Saharab, 24, and Jahangir Hossein, 25.

Child trafficker held, 2 minors rescued in Jamalpur

JAMALPUR, Nov 20: In a pre-dawn swoop police arrested an alleged child trafficker and rescued two children from a house at Badichandi village today, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police raided the house of one Golam Mustafa at the village at about 4 am and nabbed the house owner Mustafa, said to be the leader of an organised group of human traffickers.

The rescued minors were identified as Dipu, 4, and Munni, 3, of Gulshan in Dhaka.



Eminent 'tabalchi' Alla Rakha Khan performing at the India Festival at Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

9 new power plants to be set up: JS told

The government has taken up a massive programme for generating a total of 2600 megawatt electricity in next five years besides modernising and infusing dynamism in the entire power sector, reports UNB.

Winding up general discussion on power policy in Parliament yesterday Energy Minister Noor Uddin Khan spelt out details of the programme and said the proposed power plants are likely to be completed during the tenure of this government.

He told the House that the current installed generation capacity of the country's power plants is 2900 mw, but the actual generation is between 1800 and 1900 mw, leaving a shortfall of 150-1200mw.

The minister said the new plants include Rajon 210 mw 2nd unit, Ghorasal 210 mw, Siddirganj 210 mw, Haripur 109 mw and Rural Power Company in Mymensingh 60 mw with foreign assistance, and Meghnaghat 300-4500mw, Haripur 300 mw, Khulna 210 mw and Sirajganj 60 mw in private sector with equity from donor agencies.

About the transmission of electricity, he said steps had been taken to build a line be-

tween Hathazari in Chittagong and Comilla while transmission lines would be set up between Bhola, Barisal and Khulna.

He also informed that a reform programme had been undertaken under the aegis of Power Cell. A new company for transmission, styled Power Grid Corporation, is being floated which will take over the transmission responsibility of the Power Development Board.

The Mirpur area of Dhaka would be given to a new company, DESCO, under the reform programme. The distribution system in Dhaka, which is overloaded, will also be changed, he told the House, announcing that the PDB, DESA and REB would also be modernised.

About power tariff hike, he said it was necessary to raise the tariff by 30 per cent, but the government only made 15 per cent raise considering plight of the general consumers.

He also informed that the government had constituted a committee to carry out a feasibility study for the Ruppur Atomic Power Plant which will provide some 600 mw electricity at a cost of one billion dollar.

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Tk 13 lakh X-ray machine remains unused at Zoo

By Staff Correspondent

An X-ray machine bought in 1994 for treatment of animals at the Mirpur Zoo has been lying idle since its purchase due to lack of trained personnel, sources at the Zoo said.

X-ray films worth Tk 1 lakh bought at the same time has, by now, "disappeared," the sources there said.

The Tk 13 lakh X-ray machine bought from Germany under a Tk 4 crore government-aided Additional Facilities Project, was never used, the sources said.

Curator of the Zoo, Md Afsar Ali, when asked about the machine, said that the then veterinary officer of the Zoo who was given training to operate the machine was transferred after the training.

"As soon as the training was completed, the veterinary officer was transferred from the Zoo to another department. So the machine could not be operated," said Afsar Ali.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Shafiqul Chandra Roy, replying a question in the Jatiya Sangsad on Tuesday said that the government would take necessary action when the probe committee report on the recent mysterious deaths of four tigers in Mirpur Zoo will be available. Four Royal Bengal Tigers died in the zoo between November 9 and 14.

Speaker's car escapes being hit by truck

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury had a hair's breadth escape yesterday evening when a speeding truck narrowly missed hitting his car in the city's Dhanmondi Road No 27, reports UNB.

The incident happened at about 6:10 pm when the Speaker was coming to the Sangsad Bhavan from his Dhanmondi residence.

The speeding truck, rushing from behind, overtook several rickshaws and the Speaker's protection car. It was about to hit the car carrying the Speaker whose driver, however, managed to take a swift turn and avoided an impending danger.

Police seized the truck with its driver.

Commenting on the incident, Speaker's APS Sirajul Islam Badsha, who was in the car with the Speaker, said it seemed that the truck's movement was unlike any which usually causes accident. "I fear it was intentional and there might be a motive behind it," he said.

In this context, Badsha referred to the incident of last September when a youth was caught with a live hand bomb at a public meeting, addressed by the Speaker, in Sylhet.

A case was filed with Dhanmondi police in this connection.

Military hardware procurement: Russia offers maximum benefit to Dhaka

Dr. Eduard S Shevchenko, ambassador of Russian Federation in Bangladesh, yesterday offered maximum possible benefit to Dhaka in the procurement of military hardware from his country, reports BSS.

"We ask no special right or commission from Bangladesh, but offer a deal on favourable condition," the ambassador said at the opening of an exhibition of Russian military equipment.

Held at the Russian Club, the exhibition will be kept open for public view from 10 AM to 2 PM from today till Sunday, an official of the embassy said.

Rear Admiral Mohammad Nurul Islam, chief of naval staff, Air Vice Marshal Jamaluddin Ahmed, chief of air staff, Maj Gen Harun ar Rashid, principal staff officer to the Prime Minister and Maj Gen M S A Bhuiyan, commandant, Bangladesh Ordnance Factories, Gazipur, were among the prominent defence personnel present on the occasion.

The exhibition which is intended for market promotion of Russian military hardware has been organised by Russian State Corporation Resvoozruhenie. It is said to be the first exhibition of military hardware by a foreign country in Bangladesh.

Scale model replica of such military hardware like ICV (Infantry combat vehicle), APC (armoured personnel carrier), rocket launcher, OPB (offshore petrol boat), missile boat, frigate, helicopter and aircraft were on display. Some of the models were programmed so that they functioned like the real equipment.

JS bodies

From Page 1

(JP-Rangpur), Vice Principal Mohammad Abdus Shahid (AL-Moulvibazar), Abul Kalam Azad (AL-Jamalpur), Mustafizur Rahman (AL-Dinajpur), K Asaduzzaman (AL-Tangail), Engr Mosharraf Hossain (AL-Chittagong), M Moshed Khan (BNP-Chittagong), Hafizuddin Ahmed Bir Bikram (BNP-Bhola), M Abdul Mannan (BNP-Dhaka), and AHM Mostafa Kamal (AL-Comilla).

The 10-member committee on Estimates was formed with Dr. Mizanul Haq (AL-Kishoreganj) as the chairman. The other members of the committee are: ASM Firoz (AL-Patuaakhali), Prof Abdul Kuddus (AL-Natore), Dr. TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury (JP-Gaibandha), Prof. Prof. Mohammad Abdullah (BNP-Chandpur), Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed (AL-Maulvibazar), AKM Rahmatullah (AL-Dhaka), Mohammad Abu Hena (BNP-Rajshahi) and Mohammad Shahjahan (BNP-Noakhali).

The 10-member committee on Public Undertakings will be headed by Prof Rafiqul Islam (AL-Jessore). The members of the committee are: Imran Ahmed (AL-Sylhet), Dharendra Debnath Shambhu (AL-Barguna), Advocate Faze Rabbi (JP-Gaibandha), Mohammad Dabirul Islam AL-Thakurgaon), Kazi Shamsur Rahman (JI-Shatkira), Talukder Abdul Khaleque (AL-Bagerhat), AKM Mosharraf Hossain (BNP-Mymensingh), Shah Mohammad Abul Hossain (BNP-Barisal) and Muhammad Faruq Khan (AL-Gopalganj).

The eight-member committee on Public Assurance was formed with Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim (AL-Gopalganj) as the Chairman. The members of the committee are: Shaikh Razzaque Ali (BNP-Khulna), Dewan Farid Gazi (AL-Habiganj), AKM Jahangir Hossain (AL-Patuaakhali), Dr. Mohammad Selim (AL-Sirajganj), Alhaj Mohammad Tajul Islam Chowdhury (JP-Kurigram), Mirza Azam (AL-Jamalpur) and Mosharraf Hossain Mongu (BNP-Barisal).

JS session prorogued

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from their suggestions.

She said the government had created a congenial investment atmosphere in the country and the people wanted peace and stability for progress. "Please do not do anything that can destroy the people's aspirations for peace, stability and the pace of economic advancement initiated by the government," Hasina appealed to the BNP.

The Prime Minister said that none including herself could understand why the BNP "suddenly" started abstaining from attending the parliament session. "We came to know through newspapers the following day that the party will come back to the House if a ten-point demand is met. We learnt yesterday that the demands have been reduced to three."

Referring to the "BNP's call for ousting the government," the Prime Minister said, "The question of ousting the government is irrelevant." "Power will be transferred through elections under a caretaker government," she said asking, "has the BNP lost confidence in people?"

However, commenting that repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance freed the Constitution from a "black spot," Sheikh Hasina said, "the BNP started boycotting the session since the Bill seeking repeal of the Ordinance was introduced in the House."

In this regard, she said that the BNP had made a commitment in 1991 that it would re-

peal the "black law" in the fifth Parliament but did not fulfill its commitment.

Jatiya Party MPs including the party chief, H M Ershad was present in the House till the Prime Minister finished her speech. Jamaat-e-Islami legislators left the House few minutes after she had taken the floor.

A debate on foreign policy was shelved yesterday following a request by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad.

"The matter is very important. We want everyone to be present in the House, including the main Opposition," Samad said before urging the Chair to defer it.

He, however, blasted the main opposition for staying off the session.

Before reading out the prorogation order of the President, the Speaker regretted the absence of the main opposition for most of the time during the session, depriving the nation of their valuable contribution.

"I hope they will soon participate in all parliamentary business and help consolidate parliamentary democracy," he added.

Terming the session a historic one for passage of the Indemnity (repeal) Bill, 1996, "removing a dark chapter in nation's life," he said the session was coming to a fruitful end despite the absence of the main opposition for some days.

The Speaker thanked all concerned for making the session a success.

Armed Forces Day

From Page 1

Begum Zia termed the armed forces as the symbol of pride for the nation and said they had a valuable contribution in the country's liberation war.

Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will broadcast special programmes highlighting the significance of the day. Leading national dailies will bring out special supplements to mark the occasion.

The day's programme begins with the offering of *munajat* after Fajr prayers in all mosques at army garrisons, naval ships and establishments and airforce bases throughout the country.

President Justice Shahabuddin, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chiefs of the Staff of three services will place wreaths at the Shikha Anirban (the Eternal Flame) to pay homage to the members of the Armed Forces who had embraced martyrdom in the war of independence.

The Chiefs of three services will pay courtesy call to the President at Bangabhaban and the Prime Minister at her office.

On the occasion, a reception to gallantry award winning soldiers and members of Shahid families belonging to the Armed Forces will be held at the Prime Minister's Office, Armed Forces Division at the Dhaka Cantonment.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will meet the relatives of Shaheed Captain Mohiuddin Zahangir (Bir Shrestho), Shaheed Sepoy Md Mostafa Kamal (Bir Shrestho), Shaheed Sepoy Hamidur Rahman (Bir Shrestho), Shaheed Md Ruhul Amin (Bir Shrestho), Shaheed Lance Naik Munshi Abdur Rauf (Bir Shrestho) and Shaheed Lance Naik Noor Mohammad Sheikh (Bir Shrestho) on the occasion. In the evening, Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sheikh Hasina will host a reception at the Sena Kunja to commemorate the day.

To mark the day, a grand display of military hardware will be held at Sher-e-Bangla

Nagar in the capital. President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed will inaugurate the display which will remain open for the members of the public.

A number of BN ships will be dressed overall and kept open for visitors at Sadarghat in Dhaka, Paglaghat at Narayanganj as well as in Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Mongla.

Display of military hardware and receptions will also be held in Chittagong, Comilla, Jessore, Bogra, Rangpur and Mymensingh.

The other programmes include special *Darbar*, illustrating the importance of the day in all units, *preeti-bhaj* for the officers, JCOs, soldiers, sailors, airmen and members of their families.

An improved diet will also be served in all military hospitals.

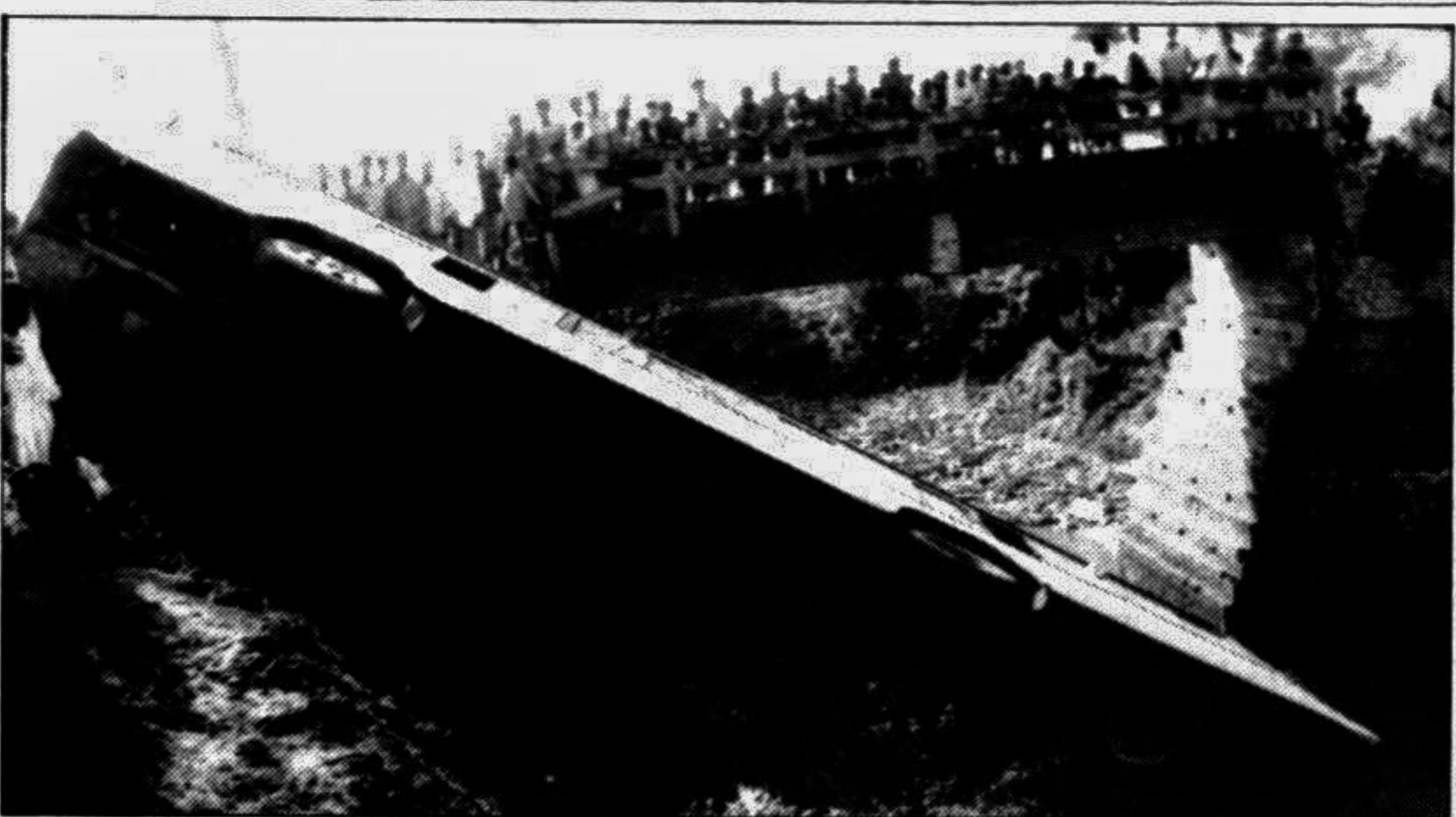
Some valiant FFs get medals

Some valiant freedom fighters, belonging to Dhaka Area of the Bangladesh Army, received medals at a simple ceremony in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman formally handed over the medals to four Bir Uttam, four Bir Bikram and four Bir Protik at a function held at Senakunja of Dhaka Cantonment.

The recipients are Maj Gen (ret'd) Kazi Mohammad Saifullah Bir Uttam, Maj Gen (ret'd) Chitta Ranjan Dutta, Bir Uttam; Col (ret'd) Mohammad Abdul Gaffar Halder Bir Uttam; Lt Col (ret'd) Zafar Imam, Bir Bikram; Lt Col (ret'd) Mohammad Nazrul Huq Bir Protik; Havildar (ret'd) Abdul Baten Khan Bir Protik and Havildar (ret'd) Hazrat Ali Bir Protik.

Meanwhile, wives of late Brig ANM Nuruzzaman (ret'd) Bir Uttam, Brig Gias Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury (ret'd) Bir Bikram; Shaheed Naib Subedar Nur Ahmed Gazi, Bir Bikram; Shaheed Naik Abdur Rab Chowdhury, Bir Bikram and late Subedar Md Chand Mia, Bir Protik also received medals on behalf of their husbands.



The overturned bus that fell from the bridge yesterday.

—Star photo

1 killed, 12 hurt in bus plunge

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Nov 20: One policeman was killed and 12 others were injured when a bus fell into a road-side ditch on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway near Madanpur under Bandar thana this morning.

Police said the driver of the bus bound for Cox's Bazar from Dhaka, lost control over the vehicle when a bicyclist suddenly came on the way and fell into the ditch.

One chopped to death in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Nov 20: A young man was chopped to death at Gozaria on Sirajganj-Kazipur highway early today, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Mukul Mia, 32, a rickshawpuller of Saluavita village in Sadar thana.

On information, police recovered the body early in the morning and sent it to Sadar hospital for autopsy.

Local people apprehended that Mukul was killed while returning from the town with goods in his van.

According to police, Mukul was first hit with sharp weapons and then chopped to death. A case was filed.

AL-BNP dialogue

From Page 1

party had no problem with the President initiating a dialogue.

Criticising the BNP for not agreeing to his invitation to a dialogue, the ruling party lawmaker told reporters at his Sangsad Bhavan office, "I made as many as 37 telephone calls to invite the BNP to a dialogue. I'm now awaiting for their response."

Suranjit termed the crisis arising out of BNP's abstention from attending the Parliament session a problem of the party's own and said, "They themselves should resolve it."

Meanwhile, Leader of the House and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition used the word 'unfortunate' while commenting on the issue.

Besides, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury called the main opposition party's absence as a 'matter of regret'.

In her winding up speech, the Leader of the House said, "It's unfortunate that they (the BNP lawmakers) are absent from here."

Expecting BNP's return to the House in the next session, she said, "We want to work together."

Asked about the prorogation of the session amid his party's absence from the House, Badruddoza Choudhury told

newsmen, "It should not have happened so. It's unfortunate." The Speaker, just before reading out the prorogation order at 11 pm, said, "It's a matter of regret that the main opposition party remained absent from attending the session for several days depriving the nation of its valuable contributions."

He also hoped that the party would contribute to the consolidation of the parliamentary system by participating in the functioning of the Parliament.

One killed, 5 hurt in kerosene lamp explosion in Feni

FENI, Nov 20: A boy was killed and five others were injured when a kerosene oil container and a lamp exploded at a bidi factory at Kashempur, in the outskirts of the town on Monday night, reports UNB.

According to witnesses, the incident occurred when a lamp exploded during pouring kerosene oil in the burning lamp. The dead was identified as Fakhrul Islam, 11.

Injured Liton, 28, Chuttu Mia, 14, Helal, 12, Shahjahan, 25, and an unidentified man were the workers of the bidi factory.

Hasina : Probe

From Page 1

Talking on condition of anonymity, meeting sources said, two ministers were heavily criticised by party lawmakers for not doing enough to ensure proper availability of fertiliser and generating employment for jobless youths.

AL MPs at the meeting demanded cancellation of dealerships of some 100 fertiliser dealers who, they said, have no experience in the field.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed, however, calmed them giving an account of steps he had taken to ease the crisis and ensure availability of fertiliser.

The Prime Minister herself turned down an MP's proposal for involving legislators in fertiliser distribution and said, "Mind it that you have been elected not just for distributing tin sheets and wheat. People elected us to power for more important jobs."

AL MPs also criticised the lack of steps to create new jobs for youth and to export manpower abroad.

In a lengthy deliberation, ALPP Leader Sheikh Hasina urged her party lawmakers to function more effectively and told them, "All the 330 MPs will soon get an office room in the Sangsad Bhavan. These offices will be equipped with computer and other technical facilities. So, please rise to the expectation of the people, who want you to build a proud nation."

It was decided in the meeting that after the end of the parliament session ruling party MPs would go to their respective constituencies to counter the 'misleading and derogatory propaganda being carried out by the BNP'.

ASM Feroz, Sharif Khasruzzaman, Prof Panna Kaiser, Tafazzuluddin Master, Kazi Keramat, Abdur Rauf Chowdhury, Anwar Hussain, Abul Kalam Azad, Anwarul Islam, Kalpe Ranjan Chakma and a number of other MPs.

JCD leader

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Ruhul Amin and Justice Mohammad Asaduzzaman instructed the government to release Boni immediately, said a press release.

The JCD leader was arrested on August 26 under the Special Powers Act and placed under detention.

Boni's wife, Tasmin Jahan, submitted a writ of *habeas corpus* challenging the detention.

After hearing both sides, the Division bench issued the order.

Golam Mohammad Chowdhury Alal appeared on behalf of the petitioner while Assistant Attorney General Mohammad Serajul Haq stood for the government.

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