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BNP leader and Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury addressing a public meeting in front of the party's central office yesterday. — Star photo

## BNP: Withdraw taxes

From Page 1  
and gas valued Tk 17 crore is being destroyed every hour. "This unprecedented loss is solely due to government's negligence," he added.

Mannan Bhuiyan demanded immediate formation of a parliamentary committee to probe into the incident whether it was 'conspiracy' or sabotage.

Former Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the fire was due to fault in government management and monitoring system.

Turning to budget, Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury said no essential item was exempted from tax. Even patients were not spared from tax burden in the proposed budget.

He said the miseries of commonman would aggravate because of the tax-laden budget.

The deputy opposition leader said earmarking only Tk 700 crore in the new budget was for a hoax to government officials and employees in the name of pay-scale.

"On the one hand, the government is offering wage hike

## Budget discussion begins

From Page 1  
Deputy Minister for Shipping, Dharendra Debnath Shambhu praised some proposals that included setting up of Employment Bank for the unemployed youths and introduction of allowance for aging people.

Termining the proposed measures epoch making steps, the Deputy Minister said in his 20 minutes speech: "The proposal of Employment Bank has already generated hope among three crore unemployed youths of the country, while the old-age pension will substantially help unburden the miseries of our aging population."

He also defended the proposal for imposing higher rate of tax in certain areas arguing that it would help create a 'tax giving culture' among the people and thus contribute to raise the GDP.

Abdul Moayeen Khan of the BNP, however, told the House that there was no point in increasing the rate of tax. "Rather it is more effective to expand the tax base among the people even at a lower rate," said Khan, who was state minister for planning in the last BNP government.

In his 30 minute speech, Moayeen Khan also criticised the Finance Minister for his budget speech in which he reportedly said that the government needed to increase the tax rate as the MPs demanded more money for development of their respective constituencies. "In order to increase the tax, you are trying to use 330 legislators of this House as scapegoats," Khan said drawing the attention of the finance minister.

Moayeen Khan said that if the

proposed budget was adopted, the peasants would be deprived of Tk 220 crore agricultural subsidy in the next fiscal. He further said that although the AL had created a 'riot situation' over the fertiliser issue during the BNP rule, the government this time has increased the price of fertiliser by the rate of Tk 1000 per ton.

He also challenged the finance minister's claim that inflation rate was 3.37 per cent over the last one year. The inflation was 10 per cent, he claimed.

Jatiya Party MP, Wahiduzzaman Sarker, praised the proposals for introducing old-age pension and creation of Employment Bank. But he criticised the budget for increasing the rate of taxes.

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury adjourned the House at 10:00 pm to resume again at 2:00 pm today.

## Dacoity at city house

Armed miscreants looted cash and ornaments worth over Tk one lakh from a house at Siddeswari in the city Tuesday night, reports UNB.

Police said two men stormed the house on the first floor of Rashida Begum at 14, Siddeswari Road when she was at a neighbour's house at about 9 pm.

She went out locking the house leaving a son and a dumb maid inside. On her return, she found the lock broken and the door closed from inside.

Two youngmen came out as she knocked at the door. They asked her not to shout and said they are only taking away cash and ornaments keeping her son and maid servant alive. Her son Babu was tied with a bed sheet.

Rashida's husband, Syed Mohammad Shahjahan, lives in USA and elder son studies in India.

A case was filed with Ramna thana. None was arrested.

## 2 female students

From Page 1  
because they had mistakenly left the identity cards inside the dormitory before leaving for home for summer vacation.

The superintendent kept the two sisters waiting outside the hall gate throughout the night even though they showed the written permission of the proctor.

A showcase notice was served to the hall super, Mahmuda Khatun asking her to give reply in 7 days.

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## The Daily Star

### Humayun Zahir murder : 4 witnesses examined

By Court Correspondent

Four witnesses were examined yesterday at the Dhaka District and Sessions Judge's court in the Humayun Zahir murder case.

Humayun Zahir, a prominent businessman, was shot dead at his Dhanmondi residence in the city on April 8, 1993.

His business partner, ex-Awami League MP Akhteruzzaman Babu is one of the accused in the case.

The witnesses are Sharif Zahir son of Humayun Zahir, M A Kuddus, ex-chairman of Janata Insurance Company, its auditor Moniruzzaman Biswas and Anwar Hossain.

But Judge Kazi Golam Rasool, who took note of the examination of the prosecution witnesses, asked Public Prosecutor (PP) Altaf Hossain and defence counsel Serajul Huq to take care of the proceedings for the sake of fair trial.

Earlier, Mohammad Borhanuddin, the lawyer hired by Zahir's family to help the prosecution, objected the way 'examination in chief' was being conducted by the PP.

Akhteruzzaman Babu is currently detained at a cabin of the Suhrawardy Hospital where he was admitted after his bail was cancelled by the High Court which asked him to surrender before the Third Additional Sessions' Judge, Dhaka on July 15 last year.

"We are convinced Babu uncle, Ex-chairman of Janata Insurance Company, directed to kill my father. Before his death there was a row between him and Babu uncle. Dad used to tell us that he was threatened by him that he would be killed. He was so afraid of that. Even he had threatened us over telephone at that time," Sharif Zahir told the court, replying to questions by both sides.

Besides Akhteruzzaman Babu, seven people were accused in the case. Of them, two are absconding.

## Barisal jail revolt 40 prisoners chargesheeted

BARISAL, June 18: Kotwali thana police submitted chargesheet against 40 prisoners in connection with the Barisal jail revolt case to the Sadar Thana magistrate on Tuesday, reports BSS.

According to police source, Kotwali thana officer-in-charge framed the chargesheet after verifying the cases lodged against them.

The officer-in-charge alleged that these 40 persons had attacked guards inside the Barisal district jail on December 19, 1996 with deadly weapons and sticks. About 100 people were injured in this revolt.

The jailor A Mannan Khan filed case against the prisoners involved in the revolt on December 20, 1996, the source said.

**Death of Shima**  
**JS probe body to visit Ctg June 21**

The parliamentary committee probing the death of Shima Chowdhury in jail custody and other related matters will visit Chittagong on June 21, reports BSS.

A government handout yesterday said the committee headed by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will reach Chittagong by the second flight of Biman and return to the capital by the afternoon flight the next day.

The committee members Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, Khandaker Delwar Hussain, Engineer Mosharraf Hussain, Barrister Aminul Islam, Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Kazi Shamsur Rahman, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, Akhteruzzaman and Prof Khaleda Khanam have been requested to reach the airport on time.

## Two killed in wall collapse

By Staff Correspondent  
An elderly woman and her grand daughter were killed when a boundary wall of a house collapsed on them at Sutrapur in the city yesterday morning.

Julekha Bibi, 60, and Rehana, 8, died on the spot. A rickshawpuller identified as Shah Alam was also injured in the incident.

Police said Julekha and Rehana, residents of a slum in Demra area, met with the accident when they were passing Sarad Gupta Road in a rickshaw at about 7 am.

Police sent the bodies to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was lodged with Sutrapur thana.

**Dhaka-Barisal route**  
**New Aero Bengal flight from today**

From Staff Correspondent  
BARISAL, June 18: Aero Bengal Airlines, a private airline, is to operate one flight every day on the Dhaka-Barisal route with its 48-seater AN-28 aircraft from tomorrow.

The airline also will operate two 17 seater Chinese aircraft on this route twice a day.

These two aircraft are being grounded for servicing.

**8 JCD activists held in Jhenidah**

From Our Correspondent  
JHENIDAH, June 18: Ten persons, including eight JCD activists were arrested by Kaliangan police yesterday in connection with the cutting off a hand of a BCL activist, Uttam Kumar.

According to police, Uttam, 18, was returning home after appearing in the HSC examination at about 7:30 pm when he reached near Namotpur, some young men cut off his left hand.

Following the incident the activists of Chhatra League ransacked the shop of a BNP leader Atiar Rahman and ransacked properties worth about taka eight thousand.

Separate cases were filed with Kaliangan thana.

**Vehicles damaged on DU campus protesting arrest of 3 JCD activists**

By DU Correspondent  
The activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, the student wing of the BNP went on the rampage on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting the arrest of three JCD workers.

JCD supporters damaged vehicles on the campus and in front of the Vice Chancellor's residence at around 1:30 pm.

The JCD also held a rally at the Agrajeyo Bangla demanding release of its leaders. The rally was addressed, among others, by Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney, Habib-Un-Nabi Shohel, Mosarraf Hossain, Monir Hossain and Shahabuddin Laltu.

Police arrested Ruhul Amin Al-Mahbub Manik, a central committee member of JCD, Shafiqul Bari alias Nata Babu, another central committee member and Rafiqul Hasan Babu, president, Zahurul Haq Hall unit of JCD from new DOHS residential area of the city at around 4 am yesterday.

Police said they are wanted in a number of cases.

**Ershad's condition improves**

Condition of former president and Jatiya Party chairman H M Ershad, who is under treatment at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases, has improved, reports BSS.

He has been shifted from CCU to VIP cabin.

The medical board headed by director of the institute Prof M Akhteruzzaman again examined him yesterday.

Ershad has been advised complete rest and not to talk. Visitors are not allowed to see him.

**Erbakan resigns**

ANKARA, June 18: Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said today that he had tendered his resignation to President Suleyman Demirel, reports AFP.

**Pol Pot surrenders**

PHNOM PENH, June 18: Khmer Rouge rebel leader Pol Pot surrendered today, Khmer Rouge radio announced, reports AFP.

"Pol Pot surrendered on June 18, 1997," the radio said, adding "a new era has begun."

However, a broadcast of Khmer Rouge radio monitored in Bangkok late today did not contain this statement but was repeat of yesterday's denunciation of Pol Pot.

**JS snippets**

From Page 1  
ullah. The state minister said 'I will reply tomorrow' resulting in laughter in the House.

Seizing the opportunity, Deputy Leader of the Opposition Dr Badruddoza Choudhury said "As per rule, the reply must be given (by the state minister) right now. There is no way to pardon him."

The Deputy Speaker then told the state minister "You're a doctor. You know many things... Therefore you can speak extempore."

Given the floor again, Dr Amanullah told the House they would ensure overall development of the country's lone mental hospital. Saying this much, he could not continue.

At this, a beaming Deputy Speaker remarked, "There is no scope for anybody else to speak... It's your turn to speak."

Prompted by two of his party colleagues sitting beside him, the state minister then added, "We'll develop the mental hospital. We'll go for improved treatment for the violent patients there."

Seeing the state minister's difficulty, Dr Badruddoza Choudhury took the floor again. He pointed out that in the absence of the minister concerned, the state minister or any other cabinet member should have been equipped with necessary information.

**Dousing to take time**

From Page 1  
ordinate all operations at the site from today.

This was decided at a meeting participated by officials of the district administration, Petrobangla, Roads and Highways, Railway, Forest Department and Occidental last night.

The decision followed a chaotic situation at the site as officials from different agencies crowded the area without knowing who was in charge.

The TNO of Srimangal arrived at the site yesterday with plans to clear a part of the jungle to make room for fire fighting equipment. But, he said, he did not know who was in charge of the operation.

The police personnel deployed at the site said that they also did not know who was in charge.

Occidental engineers were seen asking people to clear the site while police chased groups of men on the nearby Railway track.

Local administration officials said more police personnel would be deployed soon to prevent hundreds of curious onlookers from hampering efforts to tackle the fire.

Engineers from Maxwell, a contracting firm, were at the site unloading truckloads of gaspiste. They said they would relocate the Jalalabad gas line which crosses the blazing well site.

Officials shut down the pipeline after the blast. This has disrupted gas supply to a dozen tea estates in the Dolai and Monu valleys. Now it will take four days to restore gas supply to these tea estates by diverting and installing a 6000-foot pipeline.

Mahbubul Islam, an official of Bangladesh Tea Board, told The Daily Star that the 12 tea estates were losing Tk 3 crore everyday because of gas supply disruption.

These 12 estates produce 2.5 lakh kg of green leaves everyday, which makes about 60,000 kg of processed tea. Now they are sending the green leaves to other estates elsewhere to save the harvest," Mahbub noted. He added that the blast had destroyed four sections of tea plantations in 300 acres of land.

Meanwhile, Vice President of Occidental Garry Barsel has arrived in Bangladesh and he will stay till the fire is brought under control.

An expert team led by Petrobangla Chairman Md Mosharraf Hossain is now keeping round-the-clock visit and maintaining liaison between Occidental and the government. Besides, some high officials of Petrobangla are at the spot to coordinate the tasks.

A Petrobangla press release pointed out that Occidental began drilling the exploratory well following a seismic survey. Occidental had identified eight layers of possible gas structures and the gas structure which exploded was located at the lowest depth.

It further said, "Since the explosion originated from a relatively smaller pocket of an independent gas reserve, the explosion will not affect other gas reserves. The incident will also not exhaust gas reserve totally."

**Govt blamed**

From: Page 1  
practice.

As a result, the BNP leaders from Dhaka and other parts of the country were compelled to return from the area yesterday without holding the planned public rally, it said.

The BNP leaders alleged that the AL also foiled their meetings at Shailakopa and Jhenidah using the administration a few days back.

They asked the government to refrain from such practices or face a tough agitation programme in Jhenidah.

**JC: Water flow**

From Page 1  
dry season. The report would contain figures of the quantum of discharge from Farakka point during each 10-day cycle and the amount received during the same period at Harding point.

The Committee is likely to point out technical flaws that have been encountered during the concerned period.

The finalised draft after approval today will be presented to the respective governments, the sources said.

This is the fifth meeting of the Joint Committee (JC) on the Ganges. It was held in Delhi one in Calcutta and the current meeting in Dhaka is the third.

The meeting is being led on the Bangladesh side by Khalilur Rahman, Member, Joint Rivers Commission while the Indian team is being led by N V Char, member of the Joint Rivers Commission. The Bangladesh delegation comprises of water experts and engineers including Prof Aunur Nishat and Towhidul Anwar, Director, JRC. The Indian team comprises of five other members.

**10-taka note**

From Page 1  
Fort Mosque on the other side of the new currency note.

A work order for printing 20 crore ten taka notes was given to the Security Printing Corporation at Gazipur on November 13 last year, said Kibria, adding the paper and ink were now being procured for printing the notes.

He, however, said there was no plan at the moment to inscribe the portraits of Bangabandhu on the one taka and two taka notes.

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## Kibria explains impact of default loans

### Investment falling, banks facing liquidity crisis

By Staff Correspondent

The total amount of default loans in the banking sector was Tk. 14,159.64 crore till March last year and the amount was reduced by Tk. 2002.98 crore during the period between January 1 and April 30 this year.

Finance Minister Sheikh AMS Kibria disclosed this yesterday in response to two separate questions by ruling party MPs, Nurul Islam Nahid and Sheikh Md Nurul Haq in the Jatiya Sangsad.

The minister said that in many cases bank loans were sanctioned under 'partisan influence and out of sympathy'.

Kibria said the present government took up some steps to realise the default loans including formation of a task force, legal reforms, amendment to Bank Company Act, 1991 and enacting the Bankruptcy Act, 1997.

Investment in trade and commerce has led to decrease in total production and increase in unemployment thereby leaving a negative impact on the economy, he said.

Replying to another question by Jatiya Party lawmaker, Dr Md Rustam Ali Farazi, the finance minister said the government had no plan to waive agricultural loan. "Government has no plan to waive outstanding (agricultural) loan as it wants to keep the loan realisation process operative and maintain discipline in this sector."

riod between March 1, 1996 and April 30, 1997.

Responding to a query by BNP MP Md Fazul Asim the minister told the House that letters of intent were given to five institutions to operate merchant banks while giving certificates of registration to another 14 applicants for the same purpose was now under process.

UNB adds: Kibria said the government has taken measures to raise the forex reserve, currently at 1.6 billion US dollars.

The balance of foreign exchange reserve stood at 1,622.51 million US dollars, equivalent to Tk 7,066.03 crore, on May 27, he told Mohammad Selim of Awami League.

The closing balance of foreign reserve in fiscal 1995-96 was 2,038.56 million US dollars, equivalent to Tk 8,490.59 crore, he said.

Kibria said four steps have been taken to increase the forex reserve. They include removal of the problems of exporters to step up export activities, increasing remittances from expatriate Bangladeshis and netting foreign investment.

In response to a question by BNP legislator Md Shahajahan, the finance minister said that during the first six months of the 1996-97 fiscal, Tk. 607.41 crore and Tk 3040.90 crore were sanctioned as term loan and working capital loan respectively in the industrial sector.

Answering to a query from Treasury Bench deputy Abul Kalam Azad, the minister said the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs) and other financial institutions waived Tk 321.77 crore interest against 50,720 loan cases during the pe-

## In jail or in heaven!

NEW DELHI, June 18: Three Indian politicians jailed for corruption have been found leading a life of luxury, drinking liquor, using mobile phones and flaunting cash in prison, a newspaper reported Wednesday, reports AFP.

Dhruv Bhagat, Jagdish Sharma and R K Rana, serving sentences in the eastern state of Bihar, were found in possession of a mobile phone each, liquor bottles and 344,000 (10,000 dollars) in cash, the Hindustan Times said.

Detectives who searched their cells found they also had a television set. Inmates of Indian jails are not allowed to have any personal belongings.

**Two alleged child traffickers beaten up in Ctg**

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, June 18: Two suspected child traffickers were beaten up by a mob at Agrabad this afternoon, police said.

Amir Hossain and Alu Mea were admitted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital with injuries.

Police said two minor girls were allegedly kidnapped by the two suspects from the port area and brought to Agrabad by an autorickshaw.

The two girls raised a hue and cry while they were forced to get into a tempo at Agrabad. This drew the attention of the crowd who immediately started beating the two suspects, police said.

**7 girls rescued from Tanbazar brothel**

From Our Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, June 18: Seven teenage girls were rescued by police from Tanbazar brothel here yesterday.

Police said, the girls identified as Lipi, 16, Sathi, 14, Fatema, 15, Nurjahan, 17, Salma Begum, 17, Aitika, 15 and Lipi, 14, were rescued following a tip-off given by the members of Bangladesh Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity. The Executive Director of the Samity, Salma Ali accompanied the police team during the raid.

The girls now under police custody would be sent to various places for rehabilitation at the initiative of Jatiya Mahila Ainjibi Samity, police said. Nobody was arrested in this connection.

**Govt blamed**

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**10-taka note**

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He, however, said there was no plan at the moment to inscribe the portraits of Bangabandhu on the one taka and two taka notes.

**Public holiday in Manikganj-3 for June 30 by polls**

The government has declared public holiday in the Manikganj-3 constituency on June 30 on the occasion of by-election there on the day, reports UNB.

All government and semi-government offices, autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations will remain closed on the day to facilitate the officials and employees to cast their votes, said a PID handout yesterday.

**30 hurt as rival ghat workers clash in Khulna**

KHULNA, June 18: A fierce clash between pro-Awami League and BNP backed labourers at a river ghat here today left 30 people, including policemen, injured.

The A.C. of Kotwali Zone, S.I. Inamul Huq, patrol Inspector Abdul Aziz and seven constables were among the injured. Of the injured policemen, four were admitted to Police hospital with bullet injuries, while 12 belonging to the rival groups, were admitted to Sadar hospital.

According to police and witnesses, the clash which began at noon ended at 5 pm police lobbed tear gas shells and fired in the air to bring the situation under control.

At least 15 shops in and around the Skid ghat were looted and ransacked by the ghat workers. The River Police outpost and the railway office also came under attack.

Cargo handling and all trade activities remained suspended till this evening. Police arrested six persons.

**Accused in triple murder case arrested in Ctg**

CHITTAGONG, June 18: A special team of Panchalash police arrested the accused in triple murder case from a hideout at Matipara here today, reports BSS.

According to a CMP press release, the team raided a hideout of godfather of terrorist Ali Akbar alias Dhakayia Akbar and arrested him.

Later, on the basis of his statement the team also arrested his two accomplices.

One foreign-made sub-machine gun loaded with 30 bullet, one 22 bore revolver, one 303 rifle, eight bullet and one foreign-made DBBL gun loaded with 19 bullet were recovered from their possessions, the press release said.

The triple murder was committed in the Chittagong Medical College in 1993. One arm and four other criminal cases are still under trial against the accused persons, the press release said.

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