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Institute of Diploma Engineers brought out a silent procession in the city yesterday protesting the Chartered Engineers Act. — Star photo

## PW-30 tells court Gopalganj CI wasn't allowed to make 'surat hal' report

Military officers who had flown Bangladesh's body to Tungipara took signature from police and magistrate that he was buried on an army pad also signed earlier by then President Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed, reports UNB.

Senior ASP Abdur Rahman who had signed the paper on behalf of police made the disclosure while making his deposition yesterday before Dhaka District and Sessions Judge Court as 30th prosecution witness in the Bangladesh Murder Case.

The then Circle Inspector of Gopalganj, Rahman was refused by an army major to make a surat hal report of the body of the slain President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman while he discharged his duty of an unusual burial at Bangladesh's ancestral village Tungipara.

Now a senior Assistant Superintendent of Police at Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Dhaka, the witness said he on August 15 morning learnt through the radio announcement by Major Dalim that Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had been killed.

"At about 8 am on August 16 morning, SP of Faridpur phoned me and said body of late Mujib will be flown to Tungipara. He will be buried there. Take necessary arrangement to dig the grave," the then CI of police told the court.

Rahman said he carried the message to Officer-in-charge of Tungipara and asked the OC to dig the grave in the space beside the graves of Bangladesh's parents. "I along with SDPO Nurul Alam and magistrate Abdur Kader reached Tungipara at 11 am."

"The Subdivisional Police Officer (SDPO) and magistrate stayed at the dak-bungalow and I went to the helipad," the PW said, adding earlier he also visited and saw that the OC and one Abdur Mannan along with others completed digging of the grave.

Rahman said he again went to the dak-bungalow and informed the SDPO everything. The SDPO asked him to distribute duty at the helipad and the witness saw many people gathering after going there.

"A helicopter came overhead at about 2 pm but it didn't land on the helipad. Rather the helicopter was hovering over the place and someone opening a window of the helicopter asked us to remove all people," the ASP said, adding they did so.

The copier landed after all the people had been driven out. Immediately, 14 to 15 armed soldiers jumped out of the copier and took position on the ground. "I at their order went to them waving my hands," he said.

They told me here is a coffin. Take arrangement to bring it out," Rahman said, adding police personnel and Abdur Hye Sheikh, Sohrab Master, Akbar Gazi, Nurul Haq and Abdur Mannan, called by him, brought out the coffin from the copier.

Later the coffin was taken to Bangladesh's home where the grave was dug. The witness and Subedar Ishaq opened the coffin and saw the chest of country's founding father, Bangladesh Mujib, riddled with bullets.

The index (shahadat) finger of Bangladesh was blown off and his tendons cut that is done to make a death sure," recalled the police officer after 22 years of the assassination.

He said, "A Major saheb ordered me to bury the body as it is. But we tried to make him understand that body of a Muslim should not be buried without funeral bath, shroud and janaza."

"Then they allowed us to finish everything within 10 minutes. I, Rajab Sheikh and Abdur Hye Sheikh rushed to the adjacent Red Cross Hospital and took three sarees and two 570-soaps for the rituals," Rahman said.

Later they informed an Imam of the local mosque, Abdul Halim Gazi, who advised for an abluition. The witness, Nurul Haq and Imamuddin Gazi performed the bathing and dressed Bangladesh Mujib in the kafan made of the hospital sarees.

"Before the abluition, I wanted to make a surat hal report of the body of Bangladesh Mujib. But the Major didn't allow it, replying that no surat hal is necessary," said the then CI of Gopalganj police.

Recalling the burial of country's independence leader, the witness said 20 to 25 people who were present in his home compound attended the janaza and we put his body to rest beside the graves of his parents."

Rahman said, "Late Mujib was wearing a white purjaba, a check lungi. There were spectacles, smoking pipe and a pair of sandal inside his coffin. I gave the material to one of the relatives of Bangladesh for depositing to the local OC."

"Later two army officers came to me with a letter written on an army pad. It was signed by Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed designated as President. As they wanted signature on the burial, and the magistrate signed it," he concluded the deposition narrating the episode of the last journey of Mujib.

## Shell threatens

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used the proposal saying that they wanted to participate in the bidding on the basis of quality in the evaluation report. They categorically said that if the government sticks to the one block, one company formula, Shell would have to withdraw from the bidding."

Block 10, which was offered to Shell, covers Patuakhali-Bhola area. On the one hand the government is offering Block 10 to Shell while on the other hand it is finalising an agreement with a US company for development of the Shahbazpur Gas Field in Bhola, the sources said adding the offer excludes the Shahbazpur field.

They also insist on revealing the proposal evaluation report by the Second Round Block Bidding Evaluation Committee of the government. The evaluation report was supposed to be completed by August 15.

Sources in the Energy Ministry said that if the government goes by the evaluation report, it may so happen that Shell would qualify to sign Production Sharing Contract (PSCs) for at least four blocks.

Meanwhile, the government has offered the most sought after Block-9 to Tullow Oil Plc of England which began negotiations on Wednesday.

The sources described Tullow's proposal for Block-9 as "unrealistic" and said it has proposed to drill 10 wells with an investment of 50 to 60 million US dollars. Tullow did not submit the required bank guarantee (at least 50 per cent of the investment) with its proposal.

The sources said that the government's reason for declaring the 'one block, one company' formula was to ensure maximum participation in hydrocarbon exploration in the country. The ministry believes that maximum participation of foreign companies would remove chances of monopoly in hydrocarbon exploration. Such monopoly can create impact on the country's politics and economy.

This 'controversial' formula came after repeated attempts to increase the number of oil companies in the bid evaluation report. Sources said that the bid evaluation committee headed by a World Bank nominated international consultant had finalised the report on August 15. The report had disqualified proposals of some companies.

On that day, the Energy Ministry appointed three new members of the committee (three Petrobangla directors) and directed the committee to begin a re-evaluation of the 36 proposals submitted by 20 foreign companies and one local company.

The government then added some new criteria to the evaluation system. The new evaluation committee gave a report earlier this month which is similar to the first one.

"At this point, the government announced the one company, one block formula," a source noted.

The 'one company one block formula' is one that leaves room for awarding contracts to companies which are not capable.

There are other loopholes in the whole process that give companies scopes to manipulate and run away with quick profits without investing any resources, the sources said.

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## New container depot in Ctg urgent for foreign investment

The UK government's Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) representative David J Burton yesterday said construction of a new container port in Chittagong is urgent to ensure foreign investment in the country, reports UNB.

He said one of the concerns of foreign investors is the capacity and ability to import and export goods efficiently through port facilities and related supporting infrastructure.

There is a looming crisis of a shortfall in container handling capacity of around 200,000 TEUs per annum by the year 2001 even if the existing Chittagong port is developed to its full potential," David Burton told a group of newsmen in the city.

The DTI representative, now on a visit to Bangladesh, said

## Management says Prime Textile Mills facing closure again

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, Oct 26: A group of transport workers have been obstructing trucks carrying raw materials to the Prime Textile Mills at Fatullah and finished products from the mills for the last six days, threatening closure of the mill again, owners of the mill claimed today.

The mill was reopened on October 19 after a closure for 17 days following an attack on the mill.

The obstruction is being created by the transport workers demanding release of Kowar Ahmed Polash, a central leader of the Bangladesh Truck Chalak Samik Federation. Polash is the principal accused in the case filed after the attack. Polash is now in Dhaka Central Jail.

Chairman and Managing Director of the Prime Group of Industries, M A Awal in a statement today sought cooperation from the government and the local administration in restoring normalcy in the textile units of the group in Fatullah.

Awal also sent a letter to Home Minister Rafiqul Islam on Tuesday informing the minister of the disturbances created by a group of outsiders.

Asked about any action against the obstruction by trucks, Fatullah thana police told The Daily Star that they had nothing to do with the situation.

ing condemned the incident and expelled Polash for misconduct with the teacher and adopting unfair means in the examination.

Meanwhile, teachers of the college in a meeting this afternoon decided to boycott classes for indefinite period from tomorrow.

## Duty-free access

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such disclosure were allowed by the Commerce Ministry, such a provision, if allowed to continue, would compel the industrial investors to give a second thought about carrying on with their business and their investment plan."

The FICCI president strongly recommended that necessary amendment to the Act should be brought without further loss of time.

"We will certainly look into anything which is likely to impede our business and investment," replied the commerce secretary. He, however, informed that whatever needs to be done would be in accordance with international practices.

Chowdhury told the FICCI members that the country's next export and import policies were at the final stage and would be declared next month. The policies are being framed for five years with provision for annual review, he said.

He listed the measures for enhancing exports and hoped that the export-earning target, fixed at 5 billion US dollars

## Proposals on trade, micro-credit

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namely investment, environment, trade, and development and said that the world peace, security and social stability could not be achieved in condition of deep poverty and growing inequality. Special measures are essential to correct this, and in particular to help the integration of countries, especially small states and the least developed countries.

The heads of government resolved that commitment to market principles, openness to international trade and investment, the development of human and physical resources, gender equality and good governance and political stability remain major components of economic and social progress. The Commonwealth, with its shared traditions and global reach, is uniquely placed to play a key role in promoting a shared prosperity amongst its members, the declaration said.

The CHOGM welcomed the recommendations of the first ever Commonwealth Business Forum held in London on October 22-23 and said the Forum can be an important link between private and public sectors and foster vibrant private sector business links.

On investment, the declaration said the investment flows can bring benefits and that sound macro-economic policies and financial systems, strong regulatory and supervisory frameworks and political stability are essential to encourage inward flows.

The declaration further said the heads of government supported strengthening of global and regional mechanisms to help countries handle capital market volatility, vulnerability of their members and establish a task force to address the concerns of small states.

The declaration while commenting on the environment said, "We have a shared interest in protecting our environment, a global resource in which all countries have a stake. It is, therefore, incumbent on the global community to strengthen cooperation to achieve sustainable development, so that we can protect our planet for future generations."

The Commonwealth heads of government decided to establish a trade and investment access facility under the Commonwealth umbrella to assist developing countries with the process of adjusting to, and taking advantage of, the opportunities of globalisation. They also decided to explore for deepening trade relationships among Commonwealth members, and requested the secretariat to report to them before the 1999 CHOGM on the scope and possible systems and mechanisms for improving trade among members of the Commonwealth.

It also decided to work towards a comprehensive solution to the debt problem, and pursue vigorously the rapid implementation of the highly

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## 4 rly employees suspended

Four employees of the Railway have been put under suspension for negligence, reports UNB.

The suspended employees are two assistant station masters — Abdus Sobhan of Lalmonirhat Railway station and Shamsul Islam of Mohendranagar station — and pointsmen Abdul Gafur and Sushil Chandra Barman of Mohendranagar station.

A press release of Bangladesh Railway yesterday said that due to their negligence, three wagons detached from a running Lalmonirhat-bound goods train on Saturday.

Soon after, the Lalmonirhat-bound 'Ekota' shuttle inter-city train moved on the same track from Mohendranagar station.

Spotting the red light of the guard of the goods train, the driver of the shuttle train managed to halt just 200 yards from the detached wagons on the track, thus enabling the shuttle train to avoid a possible accident, the press release added.

## 10 held, arms recovered at N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 26: Ten young men were arrested on various charges from a Chinese restaurant in the town Saturday night and three firearms recovered from their possession, police said, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off, police gheraoed the restaurant near Diamond Cinema Hall at 11:30 pm and picked them while allegedly planning to commit a dacoity.

They are Sarwar, Ahad, Alamgir, Jamal Hossain Mintu, Mizanur Rahman, Ruhul Amin, Ataur Rahman, Indrajit alias Mona, Sohail Mridha and Ruhul Amin.

Police said all the arrested were known as BNP cadres in the area and accused in several cases, including snatching, terrorist activities.

They recovered two pistols and one revolver and 12 bullet.

## BNP

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respect" for "democracy and said: "It has earned hatred of the people and isolated itself from them in a short period."

The BNP secretary general accused the government of deciding on major issues of national importance bypassing the Jatiya Sangsad and failing to constitute parliamentary standing committee in nearly one and a half years. "The JS has been turned into a forum to campaign for the ruling party and materialise their whims.... The four-point accord signed on parliamentary affairs were yet to be implemented," he said.

Turning to the on-going move for peace in the CHT, Mannan Bhuiyan alleged that the government was conspiring against integrity of the country. "If this government is allowed to stay in power any longer, the country is bound to lose all that are good for the nation," he said, calling upon all professional groups to join BNP's agitation against the 'inept and stooge government'.

BNP leaders including Tariqul Islam and Fazlur Rahman Patil MP and Kabir Murad of Zia Parishad also spoke on the occasion. BADC unit leader of the Parishad, Siddique Rahman was in the chair.

## CEC

From Page 1

EC-sponsored high level probe committee as it disapproved the government claim of 'massive irregularities' in implementing the ID card project.

The EC, a constitutional body obliged to act independent of any interference from the executive wing of the state, is not expected to comply with the whims of any government, the BNP leader said. "But the reality is that the EC did not adequately assert its position on this issue," he told this correspondent, adding that he had communicated his views to the CEC during the meeting.

The BNP delegation, however, put forward some suggestions that included imposing a ban on entry and stay of outsiders in a constituency 48 hours ahead of the polling. The CEC assured that he would consider the proposal, meeting sources said.

The ruling party delegation also assured the CEC of cooperating with him in conducting the polls in a free and fair manner. They also gave some suggestions to ensure a peaceful election.

## Prices of essentials up in city markets

Star Business Report

Prices of different essentials in the city markets have risen over the last few weeks.

Retailers blamed recent rises in duties and taxes and short supply for the price hike.

The prices of rice, pulses, eggs, powder milk, edible oil, tea and other essentials are still on rise. Early variety winter vegetables like, cabbage, cauliflower, tomato and spinach also sell at high prices.

Tea price has gone up substantially. One Kg of tea is now sold at Tk 160 as against its previous price of Tk 100. Wholesalers say tea price has shot up due to its price hike in international market.

Fine rice such as Nazirshail now sells at Tk 18 to Tk 16.50 per Kg, at least one taka higher than its previous price. Coarse rice like Irri is sold at Tk 11.50 to Tk 12. Some fine varieties of rice sell at between Tk 24 to 28.

Masur, the widely consumed pulse, imported from India and Nepal, is sold at Tk 40 per Kg. Local masur is hardly available in the city markets.

A medium-sized cabbage is sold at Tk 12 to Tk 15 and a cauliflower at Tk 15 to Tk 25.

One Kg of turmeric now sells at Tk 60 to Tk 64 as against Tk 44 to Tk 48 previously. Prices of zinger varies from Tk 20 to Tk 26. Prices of green chili, onion, green vegetables are also on rise.

Soyabean oil is sold at Tk 47 against its previous price of Tk 45 per litre. Packed oil is sold at Tk 60 to 80 depending on its brand and origin. A two-Kg powder milk tin now sells at Tk 468 to Tk 483. The previous price was Tk 445 to Tk 475.

A shopkeeper in New Market area said increase in duty was responsible for the price hike of powder milk.

Fish price has also increased. Rupi fish sells at Tk 80 to Tk 120 per Kg, depending its size. Pangas at Tk 200-250, Pabda at Tk 150-180 and Hilsha at Tk 80-100.

Chicken price has gone down. It now sells at Tk 65 per Kg as against the previous price of Tk 80. Beef price varies from Tk 65 to 70 and mutton Tk 100 to Tk 120.

## Sub-regional bloc

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Prof Hug, also a former chairman of BISS, expressed his optimism that the proposed business summit next month would be successful and help evolve a greater exchange and cooperation among the three countries.

Prof Haq, who dwelt on the country's foreign policy dating back early seventies, said, "Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's decision to attend OIC summit in Pakistan in 1974 was a remarkable event."

"I was not associate with the thinking process at that time and actually not aware of what happened, but I think the Indians realised Bangladesh position," he said in reply to another query.

Fakhruddin Ahmed, a former adviser under the caretaker government of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, who was present during the talks, said: "There was no consultation with the Indians before Bangladesh decided to take part in the OIC summit in Islamabad."

Ahmed, then foreign secretary, said the Indians were told of the matter after the decision was taken to attend the summit.

To a question on the prospects of a peace agreement to end years of hostilities in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Prof Hug refrained from making any comment, but said: "Let us wait and see."

He, however, said one thing had been made clear by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that troops would not be withdrawn from the hill tracts once accord was signed.

During his hour-long talk, Prof Hug said the success of a foreign policy depends pre-eminently on the strength of its foundation, and added that no foreign policy could be stronger than the inner strength of a nation. National unity and consensus on national issues form 'the cornerstone of this foundation', he said.

Prof Hug underlined the imperative need of resolving the domestic conflict that weakens the nation, making it weaker internally. Major internal conflicts — political, economic and others — be identified and removed quickly, he suggested.

He said, "The crucial role played by India during the (Bangladesh) war of independence and India's security gains from the emergence of independent Bangladesh" are "solid grounds" for building a stable friendship between the two neighbours and resolving the outstanding problems.

Earlier, Brig Muhammad Shahedul Anam Khan, Director General of BISS, in his address of welcome said it was the third programme in a series of lectures on the country's foreign policy.

## Hasina-Sharif

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to be held next month.

The Pakistan Prime Minister appreciated Bangladesh's initiative in organising the business summit which, he hoped, would pave the way for development of the region.

Reciprocating, Sheikh Hasina said, "We want to live in peace and harmony with all the countries, we are also looking ahead to improve the economic condition of our peoples."

"If we work together, we shall be able to create better future for our peoples. We have huge natural resources as well as human resources to improve the condition of our peoples," said the Bangladesh leader.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Principal Secretary to the PM Dr S A Samad and Foreign Secretary Mustafizur Rahman were present during the meeting which was held at Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

**Radioactive**

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sources contained 18 Curie of radioactive sources containing gamma and neutron which is "million times" more than the radioactive leakage in Savar that occurred when an aluminium decay tank of the cooling system started leaking sometime in July last.

"If those sources leaked the result could have been disastrous," asserted another BAEC scientist. He said BAEC has officially asked Occidental to make sure that those sources are always kept at a safe distance from the well in any future operation.

Asked whether those were kept at an 'unsafe' distance at Magurchhara, the scientist said it was confusing because the crater was so large and the safe distance would still become 'unsafe' in such a situation.