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## BNP unlikely to join JS session today

After a four-day recess, the Jatiya Sangsad resumes its session at 10 this morning, reports UNB.

The House may constitute the remaining 21 parliamentary standing committees on different ministries. Earlier, 14 standing committees were formed.

Besides, today's business will include the Prime Minister's Question Time and the thanks-giving motion on the President's address.

The long-drawn session, which began on January 14, may be prorogued tomorrow, if not today.

Opposition BNP, which walked out of the House on May 3, will not join the today's session.

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## Another train derails

CORILLA, May 11: Another train accident on Dhaka-Chittagong route this evening led to the disruption of rail communication between the two cities, reports UNB.

The accident occurred at Imambari station in Akhaura at about 6 pm, just 38 hours after the fatal accident near Nauti station in Laksham thana on Sunday which left at least 18 persons killed.

The mishap occurred as the engine of Chittagong-bound Karnaphuli Express from Dhaka derailed soon after leaving the Imambari station.

However, there is no report of casualty.

When contacted, Railway officials in Dhaka said a relief train from Akhaura has started rescue work.

Makeshift arrangement has been made to ferry the passengers between the two sides of the spot, said the officials.

## Laksam train accident death toll rises to 18

By Staff Correspondent

The death toll from Sunday's train accident in Laksam rose to 18 as another injured person died later in the night, official sources said yesterday.

About Taher, 40, son of Abul Wahab, a resident of Shashanpur under Laksham thana died while being brought to the Chest Diseases Hospital in the city. Taher died when the vehicle carrying him reached near the Kangpur bridge.

Taher's father also died in the same train accident, officials added.

Seventeen people died when the Chittagong Mail from Dhaka rammed some detached wagons of a goods train at 4:52 am on Sunday at a place between Nauti and Nangolokt railway stations.

## 2 die after taking poisonous liquor

SYLHET, May 11: Two sweepers of the Osmany Medical College Hospital died allegedly after taking poisonous home-made liquor on Thursday, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Pradip, 32, and Murai, 45.

Police and hospital sources said the two sweepers fell sick after taking liquor during their duty hours.

They were declared dead by the attending physicians within a short time of their admission to the hospital.

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## Pakistan to make its defences 'impregnable': US may impose sanctions

# India conducts 3 N-tests

NEW DELHI, May 11: India shook the world today with a sudden announcement that it had conducted three underground nuclear tests, its first in 24 years, report agencies.

The government said its blasts, carried out close to the Pakistan border in the desert state of Rajasthan, established that it had 'proven capability' for a weapons programme.

Islamabad assailed its arch-foe over the unexpected experiments, and officials in Washington said the move could perhaps trigger US sanctions on India. China, India's nuclear-armed neighbour to the north, was silent.

Foreign experts said the explosions could spark testing by China or Pakistan.

Also today, the Indian army successfully test-fired a home-made short-range missile.

The 'Trishul' (trident) missile was tested at the Chandip firing range in the eastern state of Orissa.

"The trial was carried out by the army to test its surface-to-surface capabilities."

The Trishul, which has a range of 50 kms is being developed by the defence research and development organisation as a surface-to-surface and surface-to-air weapon.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told a hurriedly summoned news conference that the controlled nuclear tests were carried out at 3:45 pm with a fission device, a low-yield device and a thermonuclear device.

"The measured yields are in line with expected values," he said in a statement from the lawn of his residence, a national flag standing beside him. "Measurements have also confirmed that there was no release of radioactivity into the atmosphere."

The British Geological Survey said its equipment had picked up tremors from the tests measuring 4.7 on the Richter Scale — the equivalent of a light earth-

quake.

The blasts were conducted in Pokhran, an uninhabited area east of the city of Jaisalmer and about 100-km south of the border with Pakistan. Pokhran was also the site of India's only previous test on May 18, 1974. The Press Trust of India said today's test devices were exploded 100 metres below the ground.

The tests come seven weeks after the coalition led by Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party took power.

The BJP made the option to introduce nuclear weapons a key plank of its platform in spring elections, but the government said last month that it would decide whether to build nuclear weapons only after a strategic defence review.

The first country to propose a ban on nuclear testing, India has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. See Page 12 Col 6

## Bank under pressure to issue fresh loans to a top defaulting company

By Inam Ahmed and M Shamsur Rahman

Political pressure has mounted on Agrani Bank to provide fresh loans to a top defaulting business concern. Orion Infusion, which has Tk 26.84 crore defaulted loans as of March 30, 1998, with the bank. This company has not repaid a single taka since December 1995.

The finance ministry recently sent a letter to the bank asking it to 'review and take decisions based on reality' on Orion's proposal to provide Tk 7.5 crore fresh loans with 'different limits' and reschedule its earlier loans.

Orion is not ready to make 10 per cent down payment to reschedule its loans as required by law.

It is learnt from a highly placed source in the banking circle that a top official in the highest office of the government has also taken interest in Orion's case and is pursuing the matter over the telephone.

In violation of the Banking Company Act (BCA), 1991, Orion Infusion now wants fresh loans without making the required 10 per cent down payment to reschedule its bad debts. It is learnt that a member

of the bank's board is also trying to persuade the bank to provide loans to this company in violation of law.

Agrani Bank has reviewed the proposal of Orion and proposed Tk 1.5 crore loan. The proposal has been forwarded to Bangladesh Bank (BB), which has instituted an investigation into the matter.

Agrani Bank had given Orion Laboratories a special treatment in 1997. After its loan limits expired on December 31, 1995, it was supposed to provide Tk 6.10 crore additional mortgage of property.

Orion agreed to the proposal, but later it gave mortgage of the same property to Janata Bank and took further loans.

Managing Director of Orion Orion Karim has come forward with a rather funny explanation. He said when he promised to mortgage the Orion corporate building to Agrani Bank as additional security, he said.

"We became a defaulter because the company was closed for a year as the bank took time

did not know that the building was already mortgaged to Janata Bank. His explanation shows either how callous an MD of a publicly traded company can be, or how far one can go to misrepresent facts to the bank.

Agrani Bank, in a recent investigation, also detected huge shortfall in stocks of both Orion Laboratory and Orion Infusion. Orion Laboratories could not give proper accounts of Tk 8.21 crore shares which the company had shown as purchase in its balance sheet. But, Orion's MD Obaidul Karim claimed that there was not even a Tk 10 shortfall in stocks against the company's CC pledge. The shortfall has been created because of interest accrued over the last two years, he said.

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