

Nor'wester kills 4

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Police identified the dead as Ayesha Akhter, 65, wife of Sahar Ali, Shahjahan, 2, son of Jalal Uddin, Salma, 2, daughter of Akkas Ali of Sindhura village in Dhubaria upazila.

The nor'wester lashed over 150 villages of Dhubaria, Phulbari, Gaffargaon, Bhaluka, Trishal, Muktagachha, Guripur and Sadar upazilas, damaging crops and snapping electric supply.

The HSC examinations that began yesterday were hampered in at least 20 centres due to disruption in power supply.

Shipon High School and Chalakanda Dakhil Madrassah in Gaffargaon were badly damaged by the storm.

Our Staff Correspondent from Sylhet writers: A seven-month-old girl was killed in house collapse at village Sikandarpur during a nor'wester yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Panna, daughter of Bogai Miah of Sylhet sadar upazila.

BTTB asks for fresh bid

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The cancellation of the bid will also project a negative image of Bangladesh abroad because the BTTB move goes against the norms needed to follow to cancel an international tender, he added.

Four internationally reputed telecommunications equipment vendors namely Alcatel of France, Siemens of Germany, Ericsson of Sweden and China Machinery and Engineering Corporation (CMEC) had participated in the bid.

The project had created a great deal of enthusiasm among the public as it was claimed to deliver the cheapest cellular service in the country due to the fact that the BTTB had required infrastructure in place and need not go for additional investment, sources in the state monopoly said.

BJP braces for the worst

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the alliance with AGP and the consequent sharing of a strong anti-incumbency factor may well see the party squandering the gains it had made in 1999 Lok Sabha elections. But the main objective was to try and stop Congress.

The BJP would have liked to see dislodging Left Front government in West Bengal as long as its alliance with Trinamool was intact. But with Trinamool having quit Vajpayee government and joining hands with Congress in the state, BJP would not mind Left Front retaining power in West Bengal, analysts say.

The BJP leadership is conscious that a victory for the Congress in Assam and Kerala would only prompt Sonia Gandhi's party and the rest of the Opposition to mount a stronger attack on Vajpayee government on a number of issues, including economic liberalisation.

To minimise the effects of possible negative outcome of polls in the

Project 'Litigon' comes under fire

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research works on the Sunderbans and wildlife, told The Daily Star that instead of such aimless project the zoo authorities should try to breed animals, which are on the verge of extinction.

Khasru added that in the 1940s there were wolves in Noakhali area, big-tail monkey in Teknaf area. He said authorities should also try to perform DNA test on the Sunderbans tiger, which is now scientifically known as Panthera tigris tigris.

The National Zoo has an excellent record of breeding Indian tigers. At present the zoo has a total of 14 tigers, all born in the zoo to a tigresses brought in from India. However, it does not have a single Royal Bengal Tiger from the Sunderbans.

"The Royal Bengal Tiger is a unique sort of feline with distinct

Zobayer Adel sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday sent Zobayer Mohammad Adel, accused in the Kamal Hossain murder case, to the Dhaka Central Jail.

The Judge, Hasan Imam, after hearing both the sides, cancelled the bail prayer of Zobayer and sent him to jail.

Earlier, Zobayer and his father Jahangir Mohammad Adel were granted ad-interim bail to attend the namaj-e-janaza of Hena Adel, wife of Jahangir Mohammad Adel, on the night of August 14, Pakistan's Independence Day.

The court fixed June 6 for hearing on charge framing.

The storm damaged standing crops and houses. A good number of houses were razed to the ground and power supply was disrupted in many areas of sadar upazila.

Our Magura Correspondent adds: Nor'wester hit sadar and Shalikhla upazila of the district yesterday noon, damaging over 1000 houses and standing crops.

Some 20 people were injured as house collapsed on them during the storm at Arpara Uzgram, Chukinagar, Talkar, Shalai and Srihatta villages in Shalikhla upazila and Jagla, Angardaha and Kechuadubi in Sadar upazila.

According to Sirajganj correspondent: At least 55 people were injured as nor'wester lashed the Sirajganj and Pabna district yesterday.

The affected upazilas are Shahjadpur, Belkuchi, Chowhali, Kamarkhand, Tarash and Ullapara in Sirajganj district and Bera, Chatmohor and Bhangura upazilas of Pabna district.

The project will be implemented on a turn-key basis through suppliers credit and the BTTB will have to invest about Tk 100 crore. The project was said to be launched in 'the shortest possible time'.

The BTTB had floated the international tender for supply, testing and commissioning of required equipment and accessories for public mobile telephone services throughout the country.

BTTB officials, when contacted, were reluctant to speak on the issue saying, "We have re-tendered according to the decision of higher authorities."

Earlier, a five-member committee was formed to evaluate both technical and price offers put forth by the companies under the two-envelope system.

five states, NDA managers are active in roping in new allies to shore up the numerical strength. Ruling alliance is reportedly in touch with the dissidents in Trinamool Congress, including Ajit Kumar Panja, and Jat leader Ajit Singh whose Rashtriya Lok Dal party has a few pockets of influence in Uttar Pradesh and some independent members of Lok Sabha.

Panja has been highly critical of Mamata Banerjee for her decision to quit Vajpayee government and align with Congress in West Bengal. He even shared dais with Vajpayee at an election meeting near Kolkata early this week when the Prime Minister indicated that Panja might be re-inducted in his ministry. Before Trinamool quit Vajpayee government, Panja was the minister of state for external affairs. A few other Trinamool members of Lok Sabha are unhappy over the party leaving the government and are reportedly ready to break ranks and return to NDA.

identity. A DNA test could give it a separate identity altogether, it could well be panthera tigris bengalensis," said Khasru.

"This sort of crossbreeding is a whimsical fun without any philosophy to support it, in the nature you could never find such inter-breeding among the species," he added.

Professor Noorjahan Sarker of the Department of Zoology at Dhaka University said that this kind of crossbreeding could only take place in captivity and their offspring do not have any reproductive capacity. Sarker said that every zoo should have an objective of educating and growing awareness among the mass about animal behaviour.

"This kind of crossbreeding, in my view, does not have any educational, environmental or economic objective," Sarker said.

BNP expels SQ Chowdhury, Zahid

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rank and file of BNP and its front organisations that demanded immediate expulsion of Chowdhury. Since then, Chowdhury continued making "arrogant and indecent" comments during newspaper and television interviews against BNP's top leaders, and its policies and strategies in the anti-government agitation.

Besides, allegations are there that Chowdhury was instigating intra-party bickering with the help of his followers in the party. Since joining BNP, Chowdhury has been leading the BNP's hardliners group.

Khaleda convened yesterday's emergency meeting of the standing committee amidst growing pressure by party activists for punitive action against Chowdhury, party sources said.

BNP sources said SQ Chowdhury, who never participated

in parliamentary elections on a party ticket twice, is looking for a way out to quit BNP, and thus started carrying anti-party activities so that BNP take action against him.

They said Chowdhury and his family had collaborated with the Pakistani occupation forces and reportedly killed many people during the War of Independence. He was first elected MP on Muslim League ticket in 1979.

He then joined hands with military dictator HM Ershad, became a minister and was elected MP in 1986 on Jatiya Party ticket. He quit JP ahead of Ershad's ouster in a mass upsurge in 1990 and formed the Nationalist Democratic Party (NDA) with Anwar Zahid and other anti-liberation elements. He was elected MP in 1991. Finally, he joined BNP ahead of the June 12, 1996 parliamentary polls and ran in the election and won on BNP ticket.

the law enforcing agencies and other aspects of the upcoming general election.

Three Election Commissioners Shafiur Rahman, M M Munsef Ali and A K Mohammad Ali EC Secretary Mohammad Anwar Hossain, Home Secretary M M Reza, Joint Secretary Zanibul Haq, Inspector General of Police M Nurul Huda, Director General of DGFIAS M Nazrul Islam, Additional Inspector General of Police (SB) A K M Shamsuddin, Director of National Security Intelligence (NSI) Kutubur Rahman, Deputy Inspector General of Police (Dhaka range) Abul Kashem Hawlader and DMP Commissioner Matur Rahman, among others, attended the meeting.

Sources said the CEC has asked the law enforcing agencies to give special attention to some 'sensitive'

Menacing BSF manoeuvres

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Kausar Ali Mia whose house is about 80 yards from the border. "After the recent incidents, BSF troops beat us for staying in our houses and ordered us to vacate the area."

After the Baraibari incident, BSF positioned heavy artillery and raised the number of troops virtually encircling Bangladesh's northernmost enclave - Dahagram-Angarpota.

"At one stage we thought BSF would attack the enclave. Every night BSF carried out manoeuvres very close to the zero line, ordering us to vacate our houses," said Shamsul Huda Pradhan, Union Parishad Chairman of the 6,621-acre enclave.

BSF also mobilised troops and positioned heavy artillery around 30 other Bangladeshi enclaves inside India across the 300 km long border, north of Lalmonirhat. They set ablaze more than 100 houses in Nalgram, Maisamari and Falnapur enclaves recently, witnesses said.

Prosecution witness cross-examined

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president Khondaker Mushtaque Ahmed, wanted to know about the detained leaders after the assassination of Bangabandhu and his family members on August 15, 1975.

Rahman further said Dalim carrying arms went to his office on November 2, 1975 and asked him to make arrangements for his entry into the jail. As he was aware of 'Dalim's power', he took him (Dalim) inside the Jail where the leaders were kept.

On the same day, Faruk wanted to know over telephone from the Bangabhaban where the leaders were confined. At about 3 pm on November 3, the then IG (prison) asked him (Rahman) to come to the central jail. As he went there, the IG asked him to take necessary steps to ensure safety of those detained, he mentioned.

The prosecution witness said the then DIG(prison) Kazi Abdul Awal informed him that a telephone call came from the Bangabhaban and some assailants wanted to take away some political leaders from the Jail. He then alerted the security guards.

The IG then got a telephone call from the Bangabhaban saying that captain Moslem along with some army officers would go to the jail within a short time. At about 4.00 pm on November 3, Moslem with some other armed men went to the jail gate and 'I asked them to sign visitors' book', Rahman said.

The then president later made a telephone call to the jailor's office asking for the IG. The IG talked to the president over telephone and told the jailor (Rahman) that Mushtaque ordered him (IG) to allow the "killers" to do what they wanted, the witness said.

Moslem then asked the IG to bring the four national leaders in one cell. They were brought in cell number 1 and Moslem along with some other army officers killed them and left the spot. After a while, four others went there to be sure of their death, he said.

Kazi Abdul Awal filed a murder case with Lalbagh thana on November 4, 1975 in this connection.

Two district magistrates prepared inquiry report on the dead bodies at about 4 pm on November 4

People there cannot also go to retail stores for shopping or nearby medical centres for treatment.

The people living in such Bangladesh enclaves inside India as Dhabalshuti, Chitbari, Srirampur, Kuchlibari, Balapukuri and Bhandardaha constantly fear attacks by BSF. There are reports that that BSF sends Indian citizens inside the enclaves to monitor movement of BDR.

Some people coming to the mainland from the enclaves told this correspondent that BSF has now set up camps inside the enclaves and asked hundreds of inhabitants to leave their houses

In the last four years, 15 Bangladeshis were killed in BSF attacks inside Bangladesh territory. The latest killing in Lalmonirhat border took place in Chandrapur village last year.

The attacks left hundreds of people disabled and many of the injured died later, some sources

There is allegation that he switches party whenever his position in his constituency becomes vulnerable. In the last election, one of his cousins contested against him on Awami League ticket and was defeated by a narrow margin, which exposed his vulnerability once again.

BNP sources said SQ Chowdhury may not have got BNP nomination this time around, as leaders and activists from his constituency in a letter to the party chairperson had urged her not to nominate him. The local leaders also threatened to work against him if the party leadership decided otherwise.

Meanwhile, BNP's thana units at Rangunia and Raozan have declared SQ Chowdhury persona-non-grata in Chittagong. Earlier, the Dhaka city chapter had also gone for a similar move.

CEC calls for arrest of listed criminals

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and the next course of actions to be taken to free the election from the influence of illegal arms and muscle powers.

Presided over by the CEC, the meeting was informed that the situation might improve during the tenure of neutral caretaker government as the law enforcers will go for a massive hunt for the criminals. A list of the wanted criminals is being prepared, the meeting sources said.

'Series of meetings will take place to chalk out a comprehensive plan to free the upcoming election from influence of illegal arms,' M A Syed told a group of newsmen after the meeting. He termed yesterday's meeting as pre-mature one.

During the two-hour long meeting started at 11 am, the EC officials and the law enforcers shared their experiences, discussed the limitations of

districts across the country. The EC has identified Feni, Laxmipur, Kusthia, Chittagong, and some northwestern districts as vulnerable.

Regarding the deployment of army personnel during the election, the EC would follow the previous practices as they were deployed in the last two general elections under the civil administration.

Giving a detailed description of arms recovery, Home Secretary said the police have strengthened drive for illegal arms recovery. A good number of illegal arms have already been recovered, he said.

The CEC suggested the home ministry officials to write to the Ministry of Finance for additional allocation for police to make necessary procurement as police have to work with lack of logistic support and resources.

mentioned.

"We do not come to know about such incidents immediately due to remoteness of the areas. But we strongly protest such acts by BSF. But they deny this despite clear evidences," said a BDR officer.

In Joypurhat, border areas were seen very tense. BDR has deployed additional troops at Koya, Bashudevpur and Koral as BSF frequently intrudes into Bangladesh territory for brief periods.

In Ushna village close to zero point, BSF burnt seven houses and damaged four houses on the night of April 25. The terrified villagers were yet return to their houses although BDR personnel are keeping vigilance in the areas.

"Due to the prevailing tension, we cannot send our troops to villages near zero point. This is a major obstacle for us now," said a BDR official requesting anonymity.

and as per directives from the government, the bodies were handed over to relatives of the leaders on November 5, Rahman said.

Eight of the 21 accused in the case were present in the court. They are Taher Uddin Thakur, Shah Moazzem Hossain, K M Obaidur Rahman, Nurul Islam Manzoor, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Feroquo Rahman, Lt Col (retd) Sultan Sharir Rashid Khan, Maj (retd) Bazlul Huda and Maj (retd) Khairuzzaman. They others are absconding.

Obaidur Rahman yesterday showed the court reports in two bengali dailies on April 30 and prayed for ensuring publication of reports on the hearing properly. The court asked reporters to take note of this.

Metropolitan PP Quamrul Islam and Special PPS Mosarraf Hossain Kajol and Anisul Haq appeared for the state while Advocate Abdul Majid Munshi, Hazi Nazrul Islam, TM Akbar, Syed Mizanur Rahman, Mohammad Hanif, Pran Nath, SM Rafiqul Islam, Abu Abdullah Bhuiyan and Masud Ahmed Talukder for the accused.

of some 200 acres of land. But the 1974 agreement suggests that both the countries keep the direction of the river unchanged by taking various preventive measures on consensus along the 2.175 km bordering bank line.

Forty-five border sub-pillars from Nizkailkapur to Majumderhat are missing from the riverside. These pillars might have been washed away due to the change of river course.

Bangladesh had taken up a project to protect its riverbank in 1978-79. Meanwhile, the river course had changed to such an extent that the entire Muhurichar went beyond the river. Under this project, the BWDB constructed some permeable spurs and groyne.

In line with a decision of local JRC meeting in 1996, Bangladesh took up a Tk 56-crore project to guard its land from river erosion

7,257 expelled on first day

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correspondent reported. Mokamtolla exam centre under Shibganj upazila was cancelled for alleged mass cheating, our Bogra correspondent added.

Palting of bricksbats, scuffle with the on-duty police, and damage of furniture occurred at various examination centres across the country including some centres in Barisal and Chittagong. Examinees were compelled to use candlelight due to outage as rain and stormy weather prevailed in some eastern districts including Feni and Comilla.

HSC examinees at different centres yesterday went on rampage, obstructed traffic movement on the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, damaged vehicles, attacked government offices, confined officials and clashed with police.

Five lakh, seventy-one thousand, one hundred and fourteen examinees had registered for the HSC examinations under 982 centres with five centres abroad.

According to the Dhaka Education Board officials, 973 examinees were expelled from different centres for cheating and adopting unfair means.

Four have been expelled in the greater Dhaka city, the officials added.

Of the expelled, 171 were in Netrokona, 218 in Mymensingh, 26

in Kishoreganj, 34 in Gopalganj, 24 in Shariatpur, 11 in Munshiganj, 46 in Narayanganj, 24 in Faridpur, 10 in Manikganj, 121 in Jamalpur, 110 in Tangail, 12 in Madaripur, 16 in Rajbari and 62 in Gazipur.

The Rajshahi Education Board recorded the highest number of the expelled. As many as 3536 examinees were expelled from different centres of the board. Of them, 508 were in Rajshahi, 127 in Nawabganj, 78 in Natore, 150 in Naogaon, 188 in Pabna, 640 in Sirajganj, 92 in Joypurhat, 387 in Rangpur, 397 at Gaibandha, 132 in Nilphamari, 127 in Lalmonirhat, 279 in Bogra and 431 in Thakurgaon.

Two hundred and ten examinees were expelled under Chittagong Education Board.

According to the board officials, 232 were expelled in Chittagong, 28 in Cox's Bazar and 12 in Khagrachhari, 11 in Rangamati and four in Bandarban.

Four hundred and sixty-three examinees were expelled under the newly commissioned Barisal Education Board.

According to board control room sources, 239 of whom were expelled in Barisal, 28 in Borguna, 33 in Jhalokhati, 45 in Bhola, 74 in Patuakhali and 35 in Pirojpur.

Our Barisal correspondent adds: Pelling of stones and bricksbats, scuffle with the on-duty police,

Sayeded defends draft

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criticism about the proposed laws, highlights of which he made available to reporters.

"The authorities, one each for Bangladesh Betar (radio) and Bangladesh Television (BTV), will administer, manage and guide the two media," he said and added that the authorities would comprise prominent and acceptable persons from among the intellectuals.

Defending government's authority to appoint chairmen and members of the bodies to administer the two media, Prof. Sayeed observed that the constitution has to be changed for vesting the appointing authority on the president.

"In a democracy, it is the elected government that should put such authorities in place."

He said the Betar and BTV authorities would enjoy absolute administrative, financial and functional powers, and the proposed laws would not allow government interference in their performance.

But, he said the existing officials and employees of the two organisations would continue enjoying their status as public servants, as he clearly hinted that they had strongly objected to become staffers in an autonomous body.

The authorities will have the power to make fresh appointments or bring in government servants on deputation, if necessary. Such authorities will also be responsible for making, guiding and selecting programmes including news bulletins, he said.

7 dengue victims hospitalised

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Dr Mohammed Arshaf Uddin, Chief Health Officer of DCC, when contacted yesterday said they have already launched a dengue awareness campaign.

The study had identified 45 DCC wards out of the 90 as favourable breeding grounds for Aedes mosquito.

Experts fear that the rate of dengue infection may be higher this year than last year's. When the on-going intermittent shower will stop, stagnant water may cause outbreak of dengue this year earlier. Last year, dengue broke out in the city in July and continued till December.

Aedes mosquito lays eggs in clean stagnant water.

According to a government estimate, 98 people died of dengue fever last year. Unofficial estimates put the figure at nearly 200.

In its budget for 2000-2001

14 killed in polls violence

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during violence in the southeastern state of Tamil Nadu, after they ransacked the poll office of the rival political party, police said. The mob, armed with bombs and long knives, also stabbed a poll agent who was admitted to hospital.

Two television stations, quoting exit polls, predicted a rout for the ruling communists in Kerala and a marginal lead in West Bengal where the Communist party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) has predicted a resurgence of the Italian-born Sonia

damaging of a government vehicle and ransacking of administrative office by a former Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader and his supporters marked the first day of HSC examination at Government Gourmadi College yesterday.

According to sources, Ansiur Rahman, former president of BCL Gourmadi upazila and his supporters pelted bricksbats and were engaged in scuffle with the on-duty police when he was debarred from supplying copies to his wife, an examinee.

One hundred and four examinees were expelled under Sylhet Education Board. Of them, 34 were in Moulaivabazar, 21 in Sylhet, 11 in Hobiaganj and 38 in Sunamganj.

As many as 1361 examinees were expelled under Comilla Education Board. Of them, 845 were in Comilla, 152 were in Feni, 120 in Luxmipur, 87 in Chandpur, 86 in Brahmanbaria, 241 in Noakhali.

Six hundred and one examinees were expelled under Jessore Education Board. According to board officials, 84 were expelled in Jhenaidah, 28 in Jessore, 22 in Narail, 33 in Sakthira, 102 in Chuadanga, 11 in Magura, 200 in Kushtia, 59 in Bagerhat, 29 in Khulna and 23 in Meherpur.

"Once the parliament passes the laws, a national broadcasting policy will be formulated in line with the spirit of the Independence War, and social and national interests," the minister said. He also said the policy will not protect any party or individual.

He hoped that the laws would come to effect before the end of the Awami League government's term.

Responding to former information minister Nazmul Huda's comment, Prof. Sayeed said that Huda himself had said on several occasions that the state-run radio and TV would be run at his dictates. He also criticised the past BNP government for ignoring its election pledge to grant autonomy to the two media.

The draft laws proposed two separate authorities for Betar and BTV because of the differences in their functioning.

The minister said the concept of autonomy did not suit in the era of free flow of information. "We're fulfilling the election pledge and only time will say how much autonomy the state-owned media will have."

Asked about the belated move as regards the autonomy, he told reporters that they had to go through a long process involving examination of similar organisations in seven countries. The country's social, economic and political realities had to be taken into consideration, as well, he added.

financial year, DCC allocated Tk 13 crore for mosquito control. Announcing the budget, Mayor Mohammad Hanif had said that mosquito control would be among DCC's four prioritised programmes.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old woman was admitted to Central Hospital with dengue haemorrhagic fever (DHF) yesterday.

A six-year-old boy was admitted to Sishu Hospital earlier as a suspected dengue patient.

Two other dengue patients were admitted to the same hospital earlier. One of them has been released and the other is improving, doctors there said.

Two other dengue patients were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and another at the Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital last one week.

Gandhi-led Congress party, which is projected to grab power in at least two states, Assam and Kerala, on its own.

The Congress could also win in Tamil Nadu in alliance with a powerful regional party AIADMK led by former actress Jayaram Jayalalitha, exit poll estimates said.

A significant feature of Thursday's elections, which witnessed an average turnout of 55 percent, was the widespread use of electronic voting machines, used for the first time in nearly 90 per cent of the balloting.

PM : India

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aggravate the situation.

She said the longstanding problem of sharing of the Ganges water was resolved when the Ganga Hill Tracts Peace Accord signed ending the insurgency problem without mediation of the any third party. The CHT Peace Accord has now become a model for other countries to end their ethnic problems.

"Our foreign policy is based on friendship to all and enmity to none," Hasina said.

The prime minister urged the foreign ministry officials and Bangladesh missions abroad to strongly pursue her government's "economic diplomacy" to increase foreign investment, create international markets for Bangladesh products and further enhance the country's image.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Foreign Secretary Syed Moazzem Ali also spoke at the meeting.

Later, the prime minister reviewed the performance of the foreign ministry and listened to various problems.