

MPs demand cut in mobile call charges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haq in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday came under a volley of questions from lawmakers, treasury bench and opposition, who demanded reduction of the call charges of private cell phone operators.

During the question-answer session, the lawmakers asked the minister to make a categorical statement on whether his ministry will take any step to compel the private operators to reduce their "huge call charges."

The minister told the House that the private operators pledged to reduce their call charges. However, his answer could not pacify of the lawmakers who rejected the minister's reply by shouting.

"It's not an answer, we want specific initiatives of the ministry," one member was heard shouting when the minister was replying to a

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2 vital Rajuk sections most corrupt

Finds JS probe, recommends action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two vital departments of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk)--estate and design--have become afflicted with severe corruption and irregularities of which the officials concerned themselves have admitted, an investigation by a parliamentary probe body revealed.

Formed by the parliamentary standing committee on housing and public works ministry and headed by BNP lawmaker Alamgir Haider Khan, the probe body recently submitted its report on Rajuk's irregularities and corruption to the parliamentary body.

The Rajuk has lost public confidence due to the corruption of these officials, the probe body observed and recommended actions against the corrupt officials to eliminate

existing irregularities.

The report said the government has lost possession of a large number of abandoned houses in the city that has resulted in losses of some hundred crores of taka since the independence. Shady deals by the Rajuk officials in allocating these houses to ineligible persons were also found in the investigation.

The report said the Rajuk officials allocated an abandoned house on a land of over one bigha to a person who was not eligible. The probe body recommended cancelling the allocation.

The Rajuk authorities also allocated pieces of land in the Nikunja and Uttara Model Town areas to the Rajuk Officials' Welfare Association and the Rajuk Officials' Cooperatives Association Limited at the rate of Tk 1.80 lakh per bigha

through irregularities, the parliamentary probe body pointed out in the report.

The probe body urged the Anti-Corruption Commission to investigate the matter.

The probe body also found that implementation of projects under the Rajuk is very slow.

One of the reasons is Rajuk's failure to compensate the affected people who often bar the contractors from work in its project area, the report said. Another important reason is that Rajuk itself creates complexity in tender schedules by imposing unnecessary conditions that frustrate genuine contractors.

The report marked lack of monitoring of the contractors' work as another reason behind the slow pace of project implementation.



PHOTO: STAR

A view from inside the crash-landed DC-10 aircraft which was emptied yesterday to drag it onto the runway of Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong.

5 outlaws to die for killing dy minister Dulu's cousin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi

A court yesterday awarded death sentence to five outlaws belonging to Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) for murdering Majedur Rahman Mridha, a union BNP leader and cousin of Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu, deputy minister for land.

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AL's reform demand a pretext not to go to polls

Says Ershad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the demand for reforming the caretaker government system is just a pretext of Awami League (AL) for not going to

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BNP cadres gang-rape schoolgirl

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

Rajshahi

Seven cadres of ruling BNP raped a class nine student after kidnapping her from her school in Natore town on June 20 while a local ward commissioner loyal to the BNP tried to save the rapists.

The brutal incident became known yesterday when the victim's father Tayab Ali, a small businessman in the town, lodged a case with

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PHOTO: STAR

Suruz Mia collects metallic objects from under water using a magnate tied with a rope. He earns up to Tk 300 a day by selling those in Sadarghat area in the capital.

Envoys under target in Iraq

Bahraini envoy wounded in kidnap attempt; gunmen open fire on Pak envoy

AFP, REUTERS, Baghdad

Bahrain's top diplomat in Iraq was wounded in an apparent kidnap attempt and the Pakistani ambassador narrowly escaped an assassination attempt yesterday, as insurgents targeted Muslim envoys in an apparent new tactic.

The Iraqi government chastised diplomats for travelling without protection.

Gunmen opened fire on a convoy carrying Pakistan's envoy to Iraq yesterday in the third attack on a senior diplomat in three days, police sources said.

The sources said two cars of gunmen fired at the convoy in the wealthy Mansour district of Baghdad but sped off after guards

returned fire. Nobody was reported hurt, they said.

Pakistan is to withdraw its ambassador from violence-plagued Iraq after the envoy said he had a "very narrow escape" from an attack on his convoy in Baghdad yesterday.

Envoy Younis Khan will be shifted to the Jordanian capital Amman following the assassination attempt, the third attack in four days on a foreign diplomat in Iraq's main city, Pakistan's foreign ministry said.

Iraq's interior ministry said the attack happened at an intersection in the upmarket Mansur district, not far from where Bahrain's envoy was wounded just hours earlier in an

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Dhaka energising economic diplomacy

FM outlines 6 policy priorities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday outlined Bangladesh's six key foreign policy priorities that governed its imperatives, including protecting and projecting the country's image as a moderate and tolerant society with practising democracy.

He said Bangladesh is energising economic diplomacy and seeking a competitive edge in the current globalised world in five other key areas--access to new markets and enhancing export to the old ones, investment, manpower export, development assistance, and information and communication technology.

Morshed Khan was addressing a

certificate awarding ceremony of the course on "Diplomacy, International Relations and Foreign Policy" organised by the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) at its conference room. Former foreign secretary and BEI President Farooq Sobhan chaired the function.

Besides reinforcing extended neighbourhood diplomacy, he said, Bangladesh is exploring new areas of relationship with the "Go East" policy to supplement the existing South Asia and West Asia ties.

Consolidating the existing relations with traditional friends and development partners like the US, UK, Japan and Europe, Bangladesh

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6 raiders of Babri Mosque site killed

AFP, Lucknow

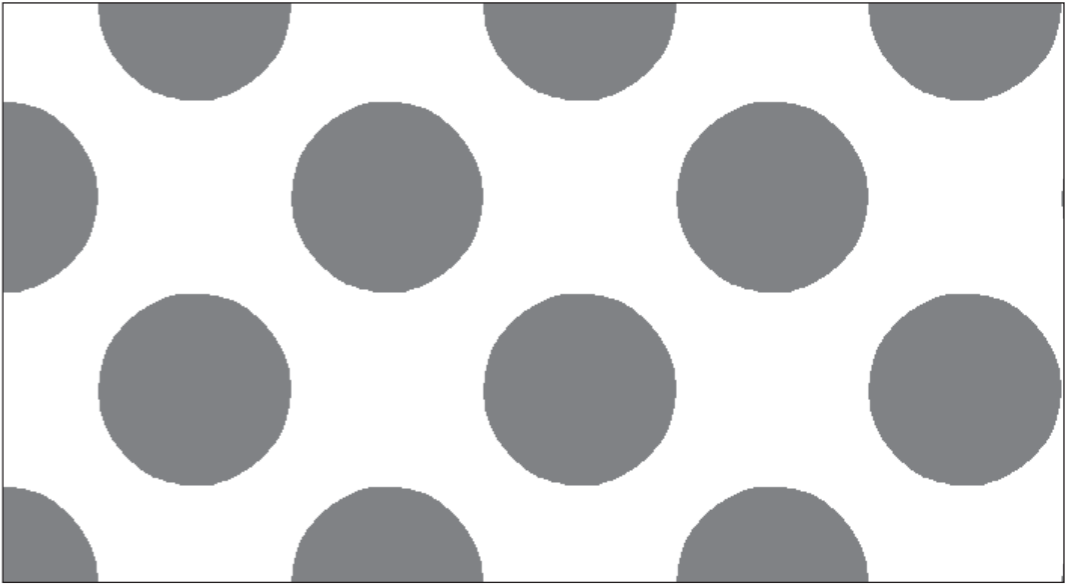
Six gunmen were killed yesterday after storming a holy compound in India claimed by both Hindus and Muslims, prompting a nationwide security alert to prevent an outbreak of religious violence.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh condemned the attack as a "terrorist act" and appealed for calm after the assault on the temple-mosque compound in Ayodhya, one of the most bitterly disputed religious sites in the world.

But the main Hindu nationalist party -- which rose to prominence after the Babri Mosque at the site was demolished in 1992 by Hindu right-wingers -- quickly called for nationwide protests across India on Wednesday.

Police said one of the attackers may have been a "human bomb" laden with explosives as the group launched its assault on the compound around 9:15 am (0345 GMT), sparking a two-hour shootout with security forces.

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Prayer Timing		
July 6		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-57	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		