



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Fire fighters' hectic effort to douse flame on a microbus, which caught fire from its battery while moving in Panchlaish area of Chittagong city.

Three vehicles damaged as batteries catch fire in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three vehicles were gutted in a fire at Panchlaish in the port city yesterday.

Sources said the fire originated from batteries of a running microbus in front of Panchlaish Police Station and spread quickly to the whole microbus.

The driver jumped out of the microbus immediately after the vehicle caught fire. There was no passenger in it, witnesses said.

The fire immediately engulfed a private car and a microbus standing along the road, damaging the vehicles.

Two fire fighting units from Chawk Bazar Fire Station rushed to the spot and put out the fire after a half-an-hour efforts.

Sub-Inspector Anwar Uddin of Panchlaish Police Station said vehicular movements on the Panchlaish-Muradpur road remained snarled for an hour due to the fire incident.

Humayun Kabir of Chawk Bazar Fire Station said the fire damaged three vehicles worth Tk 35 lakh but recovered valuable worth Tk 50 lakh.



SWID-
Bangladesh
executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jowaherul Islam Mamun was elected president and Hemayet Uddin Ahmed as general secretary of the Society for the Welfare of the Intellectually Disabled, Bangladesh (SWID-Bangladesh) for 2011-2013.

The 21-member executive committee was elected at the annual general meeting of its national council held on May 28 in the city, says a press release.

Other office bearers are Md Moslem: First vice-president, Prof Miah Lutfar Rahman: Second vice-president, Samir Chandra Kar: advocate: Third vice-president, Shahidullah Khan: advocate: First joint-secretary general, Shree Sushant Bhowmik: Second joint-secretary general, Md Shah Alam: Treasurer, Advocate Jahid Hossen Khan: Organising secretary, Abduhu Safi Mahmud Faruk: Publicity, sports and cultural secretary, Mrs Rashida Begum: Welfare and rehabilitation secretary.

Members are M A Baten, Sayeda Jahanara Begum, Toufiqul Islam, Md Enamul Haque Faruk, Akkas Ali Monju, Md Ali Akbar, Maksud Ahmed Sikdar, Sayed Kamrul Islam, A K M Shamsul Haque, Jobaidur Rahman Milon.

EC begins dialogue with political parties

JP, LDP support e-voting during talks; BNP's decision to sit still uncertain

RASHIDUL HASAN

The Election Commission yesterday kicked off their elaborate dialogue process for reforms in the EC with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and Jatiya Party (JP) expressing their support for introduction of an electronic voting system (EVS) in the next general polls.

As the main opposition BNP continued to shun it, both LDP and JP expressed their satisfaction with the electronic system at talks that lasted for over three hours.

EC will hold talks with 38 political parties registered with the EC, leaders of the

civil society and media personalities to get their views on different issues including the EVS, strengthening of the EC, appointment of election commissioners and government funding for political parties to meet election expenses.

BNP has opposed the EC's move to introduce an EVS saying the move is an 'ill intention' by the government to manipulate the results of the upcoming parliamentary polls.

The party is yet to decide whether or not to participate in the talks with EC, saying the EC was working for the present government's interests.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda said BNP's reservation about the new system comes from their inadequate knowledge about how it works. He pointed out that the system has already been used on a limited scale in the Chittagong City Corporation election.

Huda expressed hope that BNP would eventually join the dialogue.

LDP President Col (retd) Oli Ahmed, who led a five member delegation to the talks, said afterwards that he had called upon the EC to introduce use of fingerprints to identify voters.

Talking to the press, the veteran politi-

cian opined that political parties should get funding in proportion to the votes they have obtained in the previous election. He called for new policies to be introduced for funding to newly formed parties.

Col (retd) Oli also proposed that government should provide funds to political parties to set up their offices.

"Once this is done, no political party can resort to raising funds by extortion from the people," he said.

Anwar Hossain Manju, who led the seven member Jatiya Party team to the talks, pointed out how the EVS is used successfully in neighbouring India. During the talks

Professor SM Lutful Kabir from the Institute of Information and Communication Technology, BUET demonstrated how the EVS works and answered queries.

One of the main questions raised by the political parties was if there was any scope to manipulate the casting of votes or cast fake votes using this system which the BUET professor said was not possible.

The EVS has been prepared locally under the joint collaboration of BUET and Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory.

The EC sits today with Bangladesher Shamimobadi Dal and Krishok Shromik Janata League.

MPs demand quick end to power, gas crises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A good number of ruling alliance lawmakers in parliament yesterday demanded the government to immediately resolve the ongoing power and gas crises.

Expressing disappointment, a number of MPs also wanted to know when the continuing load shedding and gas shortage will be over.

Replying to lawmakers' queries, Enamul Haq, state minister for power and energy, informed the House about government's short, mid and long-term measures to tackle the situation.

The government is trying hard to improve power and gas supply, he said adding that the ongoing load shedding will be over by this year.

Awami League (AL) lawmaker Zahid Malek told the House that country's housing sector is on the verge of collapse due to this shortfall.

He enquired the state minister about government's measures to save the industry.

In reply, Enamul said efforts are on to generate 15,000 megawatt power by 2016.

He hoped that more electricity and gas connection will be given across the country as well as to the housing industry.

About lawmakers' concern over gas crisis, Enamul said the government has decided to expand gas pipeline network.

"Once the step is implemented, gas production is likely to jump to 1,740 million cubic feet per day by 2015 and it will be possible to supply gas continuously. The problems of housing sector will also be solved," he said.

AL lawmakers Kazi Keramot Ali, Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun, Jatiya Party MP Mujib-ul-Haque, among others, took part in the question-answer session.

Contribute more to nat'l development
President urges lawyers

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday urged the senior members of Bangladesh Bar Council to contribute more to the national development alongside their legal profession.

He made the call when a delegation of the Bangladesh Bar Council led by its Chairman Attorney General Mahbub-e-Alam called on him at Bangabhaban.

Bar Council Vice Chairman Abdul Baset Majumder and Secretary Enayet Fazlur Rashid were on the delegation.



Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina along with party leaders places wreaths at the portrait of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the city's Bangabandhu Bhaban yesterday, marking the historic June 7. (Story on Page 2)



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