

Housewife murdered brutally

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered the badly mutilated body of a young housewife from an apartment of a five-storey building in the capital's Mirpur.

The victim, Brishti Akter, 24, lived with her husband at their rented apartment on the third floor of the building at Monipur.

The decomposed body bore at least 70 stabbing marks, said Bhuiyan Mahubub Hasan, officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station. There might be more stabs to her body as all the injury marks could not be counted, he added.

Failing to reach Brishti over the phone since Sunday, her elder sister along with her husband came to Dhaka from Barisal yesterday and broke into the apartment in the afternoon, only to find her dead.

Police were looking for victim's husband Shohag, 27, a staff at a boutique hotel in the capital. He had married Brishti about a year ago and brought her to Dhaka from her village home in Barisal.

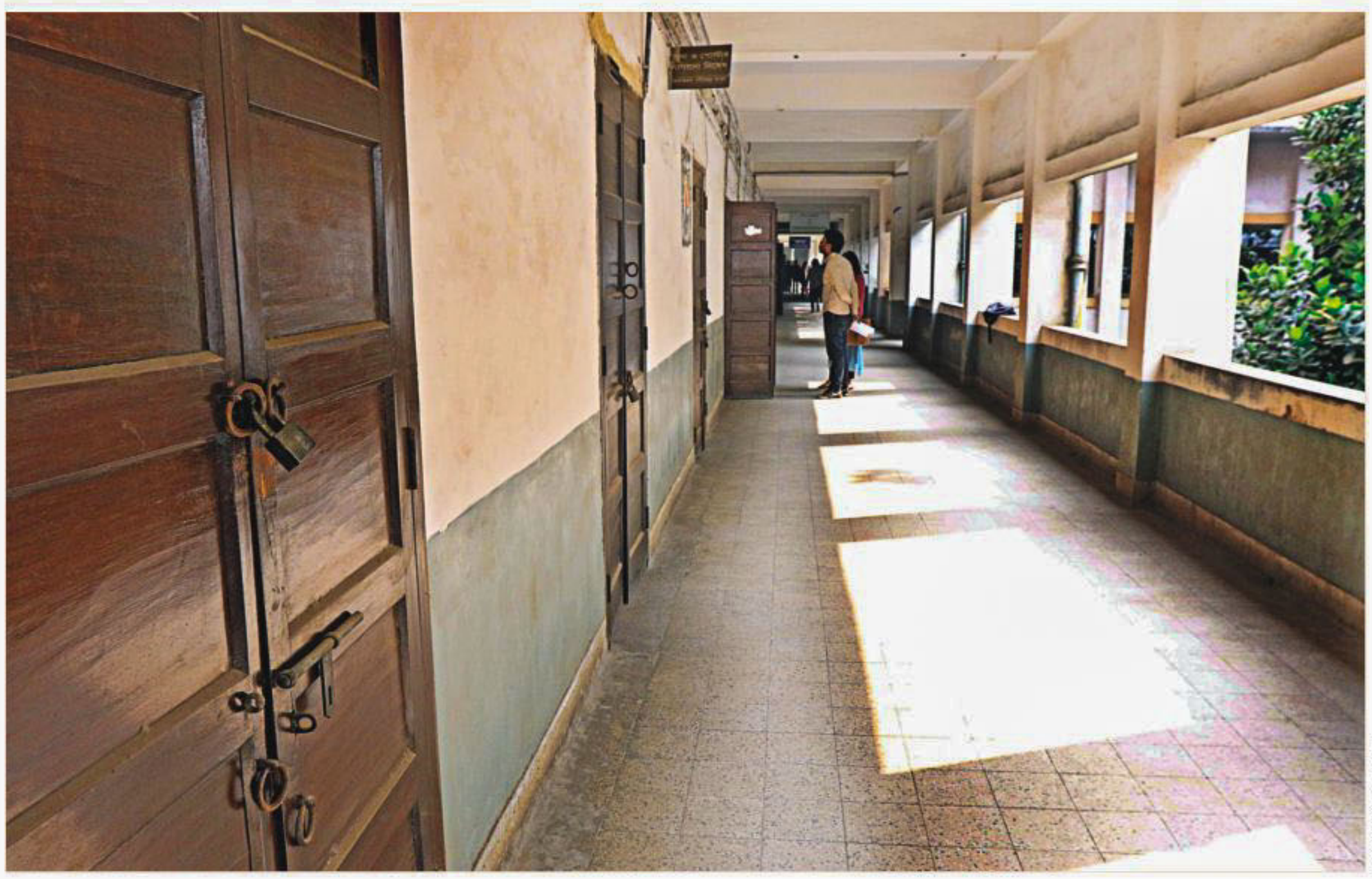
Victim's neighbours told police that they often heard screams coming from the couple's apartment. Many thought that Shohag used to beat up his wife.

Some tenants of the building noticed that the main door to Shohag's apartment had been padlocked since Saturday.

Brishti's parents and elder sister called Shohag and found him to be evasive, said Mahubub Alam, assistant commissioner (Mirpur Zone) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

"When they wanted to talk to Brishti, Shohag either hung up the phone or said she was in washroom," added Mahubub.

Police later sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for an autopsy.



An almost deserted corridor of the Arts Faculty Building of Dhaka University yesterday, hours before the teachers of public universities postponed their indefinite work stoppage. Academic activities at all 37 public universities came to a near halt since January 11 due to the strike over "disparities" in the pay scale.

Teachers call off strike

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said they were not ending their movement and that the suspension was rather part of the movement.

The association members decided to meet again on February 3 to review the progress in fulfilling their demands.

"We hope our demands will be met by that time. If not, we will set our next course of action at the meeting," Prof Maksud said.

Teachers will not accept any delay in resolving the matter due to bureaucratic tangles or if their demands are met partially, he added.

"What we have put forward is a package. We believe we have been able to make the prime minister

understand that our demands are legitimate."

The proposal placed by the association suggests that 25 percent professors should be given grade 1 status while 5 percent should be recognised as distinguished professors whose salaries and status would be equivalent to senior secretaries.

Public university teachers have been protesting the eighth pay scale since May last year, pressing for a four-point charter of demands, including the formation of a commission to initiate an independent pay scale for them.

Other demands include upgrading of teachers' status in the order of precedence and equalisation of the

provisions of cars, foreign and government scholarships, and other allowances between teachers and bureaucrats.

Things turned worse after the government issued a gazette on the pay scale on December 15.

Frustrated with the pay scale for not having time scale and selection grade, teachers of all 37 public universities began an indefinite strike on January 11.

Following a meeting with the education minister, they submitted their package proposal to the ministry on Sunday.

The ministry has already begun working on the proposal, a source at the ministry said.

Another bad cop

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an accounts officer of Christian Commission for Development in Bangladesh (CCDB), in a police microbus that drove around different areas in Mirpur.

In the microbus, the cop cuffed Proloy and told him that they found two yaba pills in his pocket and asked for Tk 1 lakh, his family alleged.

It comes only days after sub-inspectors Masud Shikder and Arshadul Islam of Mohammadpur and Jatrabari police stations were suspended for assaulting Bangladesh Bank official Golam Rabbi and Dhaka South City Corporation official Bikash Chandra Das.

The DMP suspended the duo following police investigations over the incidents. Both the SI's were charged with beating the victims and also threatening to shoot them.

Proloy's brother Palash Baidya told The Daily Star that Proloy works in Mymensingh. Recently he came to his house at Mirpur-13 on a vacation.

On Sunday afternoon, he went to Mirpur-10 area to buy some food, said Palash, a lawyer.

In front of a shop there, two men started searching Proloy's pockets from behind around 4:30pm, without saying anything, Palash quoted his brother as saying.

"They suddenly shouted: 'Sir! Got it,'" he added.

In no time, the ASI came and together they dragged Proloy into the microbus.

The family later came to know that the two men who searched Proloy were Aminul's sources.

Under the law, sources cannot search anyone.

In the microbus, the ASI slapped Proloy and took away his cell phone and wallet, as the microbus drove in different areas, added the brother.

At one point, Proloy agreed to pay Tk 20,000 but the ASI refused to accept it.

The family came to know about Proloy's detention from a security guard who saw it.

Family members went to the police

station but found that Proloy was not taken there. When they contacted the ASI over the phone, he asked them to meet him in front of the BRTA office at Mirpur-13.

Palash said through the intervention of some relatives who work in the police, the matter went to the DC's office. At one point, Aminul apologised to him for the incident.

Proloy was freed around 11:00pm that night.

The family filed a complaint against the ASI that night.

Assistant Commissioner (Pallabi zone) Zakir Hossain, who investigated the allegation, submitted the report to the DC yesterday.

The probe found that the ASI did not take Proloy to the police station as required by the law, said Zakir.

The ASI also had the detainee's body searched by his sources instead of doing it himself or asking other cops to do so, he added.

The AC, however, did not find the allegation of asking bribe to be true.

Contacted, ASI Aminul claimed he was not in charge of the team that picked up Proloy.

He also claimed that he himself searched Proloy's body and found two yaba pills in his left pocket.

He denied asking for any money, but admitted that the team drove on different streets.

Asked why he did not take Proloy to the police station, he said he had other duties to attend.

MORE COPS FACE THE MUSIC
Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner has recommended punishment for three sub-inspectors for their involvement in yaba peddling, reports our correspondent there.

They are Shahdat Hossain, Jewel Sarkar and Sheikh Sajib.

Shahadat is currently working at Dampara Police Lines and the two others at the CID in Dhaka.

The allegation against the three were found true, said Additional Police Commissioner AKM Shahidur Rahman.

Rift in JP widens

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Raushan opposed Ershad's "unilateral" decision, and asked him to convene meetings of the party's presidium and parliamentary party to discuss the issue.

Ershad and Hawlader walked out of the meeting halfway through.

Emerging from the hour-long meeting, the JP chief told reporters that he would "stick to his decision till his last breath".

Party insiders told this correspondent that the conflict between Ershad loyalists and Raushan's supporters reached its peak over Bablu's removal.

According to article 39 of the JP constitution, the chairman has the authority to appoint anyone to a party post or remove anyone.

"However, he [chairman] has to discuss the issue with the party's presidium while exercising the powers," reads the article.

After the JP parliamentary party meeting, State Minister for Labour and JP lawmaker Mujibul Haq Chunnun told The Daily Star that Bablu is the "legitimate" secretary general of the party.

CRISIS IN JP

The party plunged into a crisis after Ershad announced on Sunday that he appointed his younger brother GM Quader as co-chairman.

A number of JP leaders and MPs opposed his decision, saying the party doesn't have any post of co-chairman, according to insiders.

On Monday night, a group of party leaders, including Bablu and JP Presidium Member Anisul Islam Mahmud, held a meeting with Raushan, also leader of the opposition in parliament, at her Gulshan residence.

A couple of hours after the meeting, Bablu told reporters that the JP presidium and parliamentary party decided to make Raushan the party's acting chairman.

JP insiders said Bablu and Anisul made the move with the government's blessings. They kept Ershad's wife Raushan at the forefront to put pressure on him to scrap the decision to appoint Quader as co-chairman.

On several occasions, Quader criticised the January 5 national polls of 2014, and argued that JP ministers should quit the cabinet so it could play the role of a real opposition party.

At yesterday's press conference, Ershad said the JP constitution mandates him to appoint or remove anyone from a party post.

"Bablu worked as party's secretary general for about two years. But he couldn't hold any meeting of the party presidium. I had to attend around 40 council meetings at this age because he couldn't do it."

Ershad said Bablu had opposed his decision to appoint Quader as co-chairman.

On Bablu's announcement of making Raushan party's acting chairman, Ershad said Bablu had no jurisdiction to make such an announcement, and that no meeting of the presidium or parliamentary party was held on Monday.



Security is stepped up in front of the city office of Jatiya Party yesterday evening, a day after the party was hit by a crisis over leadership dispute.

Bablu and Anisul phoned several party leaders and MPs that night, asking them to come to Raushan's house, said Ershad.

"It was not a presidium meeting and they had no authority to decide on such a matter. I will make the decision as I am still the party chairman."

"I can firmly say that not even 10 party leaders are with Bablu and Anis [Anisul]," he added.

TAJUL'S BRIEFING

After the JP parliamentary party meeting, Presidium Member and Opposition Chief Whip Tajul Islam told reporters that Raushan was unwilling to talk to the media and asked him to brief reporters.

"The meeting asked the party chairman to elaborately discuss the matter at meetings of party presidium and parliamentary party," Tajul said.

Asked about Ershad's response to it, he said, "The party chief told the meeting that he will inform us after discussing the matter with Raushan Ershad."

Anisul, who was with Tajul, claimed the meeting rejected Ershad's decisions.

Earlier at the meeting, Raushan criticised Ershad for his "unilateral" decisions to appoint Quader as co-chairman and remove Bablu from secretary general's post, according to meeting sources.

Raushan said all party men will accept Ershad's decisions but he needs to discuss those in party forums.

Two of the lawmakers criticised Ershad for making decisions unilaterally.

Ershad told the meeting that he had appointed Bablu to secretary general's post "under pressure" from the government, and Bablu "failed to discharge his duties," according to the sources.

grassroots level and the party suffered a humiliating defeat in the recent local body elections, he said.

Criticising the government for its "interference" in JP affairs, he said though the government gave him the honour of serving as PM's special envoy, it "humiliated him" in different ways, said the sources.

The JP is in an identity crisis and cannot play the role of a real opposition party for having three of its leaders in the cabinet, he said.

Raushan then urged Ershad to convene a meeting to discuss these issues.

Referring to the present crisis in the JP, Awami League Joint Secretary General Mahubul Alam Hanif said, "Whatever is happening in the Jatiya Party is their internal affair."

The AL doesn't believe in splitting political parties, Hanif told reporters after a meeting of the AL nomination board on local government election at the Gono Bhaban.

The recent developments in the JP have given rise to speculations over another break-up in the party that has split thrice since 1998. The party also faced severe internal conflicts on several occasions.

The seed of the present crisis was sown during the January 5 election.

A few weeks before the polls, Ershad announced that his party wouldn't contest the election, which was already boycotted by the BNP-led alliance. He directed his party nominees to withdraw nomination papers.

But defying Ershad's decision, a group of JP leaders, including Anisul and Bablu, decided to participate in the election under Raushan's leadership.

Sheikh Hasina appointed Bablu as one of her advisers in the polls-time government.

After the AL returned to power through the January 5 polls, JP leaders Mujibul, Moshir Rahman Ranga and Anisul -- all loyal to Raushan -- were inducted into the Hasina-led cabinet.

Raushan became the leader of the opposition in parliament, and Ershad was made special envoy to the PM.

Of late, the party got polarised over Ershad's statement that the three JP ministers should leave the cabinet to restore its "image as a real opposition party".

JP SPLIT THRICE

Formed in 1986, Ershad-led JP first split in 1999 centring the party's then secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju's decision not to quit Hasina's cabinet as communications minister.

Ershad later formed an electoral alliance with the BNP and launched street agitation against the AL-led government. But he couldn't maintain his relations with the alliance.

Under "pressure" from the then AL-led government, Ershad announced quitting the BNP-led alliance. His announcement resulted in another split in the party before the 2001 parliamentary election. This time Nazim Rahman Manzur led the revolt and formed another faction of the JP.

At the end of the previous tenure of the AL-led government, there were intra JP conflicts following Ershad's decision to join the Hasina-led election time government.

The dissident leaders accused Ershad of going back on his earlier statement that his party wouldn't contest the election if other opposition parties boycotted it.

Ershad expelled party's senior leader Kazi Zafar Ahmed, accusing him of leading the dissidents. Kazi Zafar and a group of dissident leaders formed a new party in November 2013.

Trapped in lift for 2 hours

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Five people were rescued after they got trapped as lift of Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) collapsed yesterday afternoon.

A patient and his four other family members were rescued around 6:20pm, nearly two hours after the accident, said Shahidur Rahman, assistant director of Mymensingh Fire Service and Civil Defence.

The five are Jasim Uddin (patient), 45, his wife Anwara Parvin, 35, and their children -- Sumi, 11, Shihab, 13, and Shahin 16.

They were admitted to the MMCH, hospital sources said.

An adequate amount of oxygen was pumped into the shaft earlier to support the trapped people, the assistant director said.

The accident took place around 4:30pm when four people along with their patient in the lift were going to the orthopedic department, which is on the first floor of the three-storey hospital building, from the ground floor, said Dr Motiur Rahman Bhuiyan, secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association's Mymensingh unit.

On information, firefighters rushed to the spot and started the rescue operation that continued for around two hours, said hospital sources.

A three-member probe body, headed by MMCH Assistant Director Dr Abul Ahsan, was formed to investigate the incident, said Brig Gen Nasir Uddin Ahamed, MMCH director.

The body was asked to submit its report to the MMCH authority within 10 working days.

Moghbaraz flyover

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Now the ramp of the flyover would be extended to Sonargaon intersection, which was earlier supposed to end at the FDC level crossing, he said. With the extended length, the flyover would be 8.70km.

"The prime minister has directed the extension of the ramp of the flyover over the level crossing to facilitate traffic movement," he added.

Construction of the extended 450-metre flyover will cost Tk 85 crore, he said, adding that installation of earthquake-resistant equipment and construction materials were the reasons for the project cost shooting up.

Project Director Nazmul Alam had told The Daily Star that they had trouble implementing the designed foundation work. They had to change the design almost at every step as there was no exact information on various underground utility service lines.

The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) and OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) have already agreed to increase the amount of the project aid by \$15 million and \$6 million respectively.

Meeting sources said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina directed the authorities concerned not to give permission for setting up of new industries in Tejgaon Industrial Area. However, buildings could be set up there for commercial operations.

A total of 10 projects were approved in the Ecneec meeting involving Tk 4,830.92 crore. Of them, seven were new, said the minister.

The projects include development of power distribution system, Rangpur zone (Tk 1334 crore), identification of valuable minerals in the sand of rivers and its economic assessment (Tk 35.63 crore), LED Light (CKD) assembling plant in ETL (Tk 33.52 crore), construction of residen-

tial building for justices of the Supreme Court (Tk 173 crore), Nilphamari-Jaldhaka road development (Tk 66.34 crore), establishment of Shaheed M Mansur Ali Medical College and 500-bed Hospital in Sirajganj (Tk 636 crore), establishment of Shaheed Kamruzzaman Textile Institute (Tk 74.62 crore), small farmer development foundation assistance, 2nd phase (Tk 64.10 crore) and development of Cox's Bazar airport, 1st phase (Tk 1193 crore).

Another ship breaking worker killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A ship-breaking yard worker was killed as he was hit by an iron-plate at a yard in Chittagong's Sitakunda upazila yesterday.

The dead is Akkas Ali, 45, of Chauddagam upazila of Comilla.

Akkas was working in Asad Steel Ship-Breaking Yard at Madam Bibir Hat in the morning. He was cutting a scrap ship there, said Tariqul Islam, senior assistant superintendent of police of Sitakunda Police Station.

Suddenly, an iron-plate fell on Akkas around 9:00am, killing him on the spot, he said.

The body of Akkas was sent to Chittagong Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said the police officer.

At least 13 workers were killed in accidents in ship-breaking yards in Chittagong last year. Around 60 workers were killed and 125 others injured in accidents in ship-breaking yards in the last five and a half years, according to Ship-breaking Workers' Trade Union Forum.