

# Pvt operators collect toll at 3 bus terminals from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two private operators will collect Tk 30 in toll from each passenger bus daily at the city's three terminals - Sayedabad, Mohakhali and Gabtoli from today.

Under a contract signed with the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) on September 24, the operators will also look after the management of these terminals for three years.

Of the two operators, Rora Enterprises Ltd will be responsible for the management of Sayedabad and Mohakhali terminals while Diba Enterprise for Gabtoli.

According to the contract, the DCC will receive Tk 1.42 crore from Sayedabad, Tk 46.38 lakh from

Mohakhali and Tk 1.36 crore from Gabtoli terminals per year.

Previously, the DCC earned yearly Tk 3.50 crore from the three terminals and spent Tk 1.50 crore for maintenance.

The national committee to stop extortion from the transport sector at a meeting headed by Communications Minister Nazmul Huda on Monday approved the DCC's decision to allow the private operators to collect toll.

Earlier, the ten-member committee, formed on August 11, imposed a ban on toll collection from inter-district passenger buses at the terminals to restore discipline in transport sector.

Monir Hossain, a driver at Gabtoli, told this correspondent yesterday that, "Since the imposition of the ban, we did

not pay any toll. But now we have come to know that we are to pay a toll of Tk 30 for each bus from today."

Same views were expressed to the correspondent during his visit to Sayedabad and Mohakhali terminals.

To upgrade three bus terminals, Roads and Highways Department and a Bangladesh-China joint venture construction firm signed a Tk 44.20 crore contract on September 10 under Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP).

The World Bank is providing the fund. Work on the project is expected to start from this month and will be completed in nine months, according to Dhaka Urban Transport Coordination Board officials.



PHOTO: STAR

Children took out a procession in front of the Press Club in observance of the National Girl Child Day yesterday. Girl Child Advocacy Forum organised the event.

## JICA gets full autonomy today

BSS, Dhaka

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) appears anew with full autonomy from today and ability to take quick decision for programme implementation.

"JICA will be turned into an 'independent administrative institution' tomorrow from its early status of a 'special public institution' established in 1974," Additional Resident Representative of JICA Mitsuyoshi Kawasaki said yesterday.

He said they have been expecting a gradual overhaul in the JICA activities, its staff and salary structure with the new set up.

The JICA and the Economic Relations' Division (ERD) sources said the government of Japan made the change to bring more dynamism and efficiency in JICA activities and ensure its highest accountability to Japanese taxpayers.

JICA is the Japanese official technical assistance provider to 152 countries including Bangladesh in the fields of health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, human resources development and water management.

It spent 2.5 billion yens as technical assistance and 201.62 US dollars as grants for Bangladesh in 2001, sources said.

An official of the ERD said the change would no way affect Bangladesh in receiving the JICA technical assistance as well as Japanese grants under the Officials Development Assistance (ODA) programme.

Bangladesh welcomes the initiative of Japan for its reform programmes to make JICA more vibrant, he added.

A new president would also take over as the head of JICA for the first time from outside the Japanese foreign ministry officials, he said.

Ogato Sadako, who served as the chief of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), will take over as the new president of JICA, he said.

### President visits ailing DU teacher

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed visited Dhaka University teacher Professor Dr Mahmudul Amin at BIRDEM Hospital here yesterday.

The President spent some time with him. He also enquired about the treatment of Prof. Amin from the attending doctors.

# US-Bangladesh air exercise begins

BSS, Dhaka

Exercise Cope South-2003, a week long joint air exercise between Bangladesh Air Force (BAF) and US-111 Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) of 1st Marine Air Wing, began at the BAF Base Bashar here yesterday.

The aim of the exercise is to exchange training experiences for

mutual benefits, said an ISPR press release.

Besides 70 BAF and 90 US Air Force personnel, 25 personnel from Bangladesh Army and six from Bangladesh Navy are taking part in the exercise being held in Dhaka and Sylhet.

The exercise is scheduled to conclude on October 7.