



Road digging by the BTTB during the monsoon season has added to the suffering of the passers-by in Chittagong city. This picture was taken from Rahmatganj area yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## Tk 41 crore Japanese grant for portable steel bridges

UNB, Dhaka

Japan will provide 700 million yen, approximately Tk 41 crore, grant assistance to Bangladesh for constructing portable steel bridges in rural areas.

To this effect, an Exchange of Notes was signed here yesterday between the two governments. Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Masayuki Inoue and Economic Relations Division Secretary M Ismail Zabihullah signed the agreement on behalf of the respective sides.

At the signing ceremony, the Ambassador said the grant would greatly contribute in improving transportation network in the rural areas, which is one of the high priorities in reducing poverty in Bangladesh.

Under the Exchange of Notes, 30 dilapidated bridges will be renovated to improve communication networks in the rural areas of 14 districts.

Moreover, portable steel bridges will be installed at the crucial locations of major rural roads of the districts where existing water channels are critically impeding the road traffic of goods and people.

It is expected that the project would contribute greatly to the continued vitalisation of the rural economies in Bangladesh. Local Government Engineering Department will implement the scheme.

Since 1994, Japan government has supplied 266 portable steel bridges to both Roads and Highways Department and the LGED.

## MISAPPROPRIATION

### Tariqul challenges TIB allegation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam yesterday challenged Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) to prove the allegation of misappropriation against his ministry.

At a press conference at the ministry auditorium, Tariqul also criticised TIB for not contacting the authorities for their versions regarding the accusation.

The TIB report launched on July 5 said Department of Forest had misappropriated Tk 67.25 crore last financial year. The report was based on 84 articles from 26 national dailies.

"How could we embezzle the amount mentioned in the TIB report when we had spent only Tk 46 crore in last year," the minister questioned.

"They wrote about misappropriation of funds but did not say how, when, and who did it. They did not even bother to have our versions," Tariqul said.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury, Secretary Zafar Ahmed Chowdhury, and Research Director of TIB SI Lasker were present at the press conference.

"I admit there is some corruption at the forest department but the authorities are trying their best to contain that. I never compromise with corruption," said the minister.

Tariqul quoted statistics saying that he has dismissed two forest conservationists, suspended five assistant conservationists, eight

forest rangers, three divisional forest officers, seven deputy rangers and 28 foresters on charges of corruption.

The department has also filed departmental cases against 518 officials accused of corruption, he added.

Replying to a query, he said so far, the ministry has sold wood worth Tk 67 crore. Those trees were seized after they had been felled illegally.

"We know there are some cases of illegal logging in different forest areas. But the practice is nothing new, it has been there since the pre-historic era," the minister observed.

Comparing the department's revenue collection during his stint with that in the previous government, he said, "The past government earned only Tk 265 crore while as of last May, the department has generated Tk 456 crore in revenues."

He also claimed that he has recovered nearly 35,000 acres of forestland (from the grabbers) which is worth not less than Tk 500 crore.

"When we are carrying out such drives, the TIB report not only discourages us but also raises question whose purposes they are in fact serving," the minister said.

He criticised the method of TIB corruption report, which is usually based on the newspaper reports.

He declined to say anything when asked what sort of method a non-government organisation should use to find out corruption within government organs.

## KILLING OF HOSPITAL STAFF

### Punishment to killers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad (BMP) yesterday condemned the killing of a woman staff of a hospital in the city after gangrape on Friday night.

Quoting newspaper report, the parishad in a press release said Shahnaz Akhter Erina, 19, assistant technician of ultra sonogram department of Greenland Hospital at Uttara, was working with Likhon, another employee of the hospital at night.

At around 11:00pm two to three friends of Likhon came to meet him and gangraped Erina after confining her to ultra sonogram room.

They left the scene after strangling her.

Police recovered the body on Saturday morning.

The parishad demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the persons responsible for rape and murder.

The parishad also urged the authorities concerned to ensure security and human rights of women at workplace.

## JMB member arrested in Mymensingh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members arrested a member of banned Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) at Muktagachha, Mymensingh on Saturday.

Acting on a tip off, Rab-9 members raided the area and arrested JMB member Abdul Kadir alias Anaz, 21, says a Rab press release yesterday.

## Cop atrocities protested

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi unit of the 14-party opposition combine staged a demonstration at Shaheb Bazar zero point in the city yesterday, protesting police atrocities, killing of one of its leaders during the July 4 countrywide shutdown and demanding electoral reforms.

At a rally at zero point, the 14-party leaders demanded resignation of the BNP-Jamaat alliance for their failure to govern the country smoothly.

They also condemned police aggression on opposition activists during countrywide rail, road and waterway blockade programme on July 4 that left Golam Mostafa Milon, an Awami Sweschasebak League leader, killed in Dhaka.

Criticising the government's stance of suppression, 14 party leaders urged people to oust the unruly government.

"The government has no other options left and it has to accept the 14-party's reform proposals or resign," they said. The leaders also demanded resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner and the two other commissioners.

Rajshahi Awami League Acting Secretary Shafikur Rahman Badsha, JSD City General Secretary Abdullah Al Masud Shibli, Workers' Party leaders Debashis Pramanik and Hikol addressed the rally.

## CHEATING CASE Boishakhi TV Director Bulu's estranged wife gets bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Boishakhi TV Director MNH Bulu's estranged wife Hosne Ara Naznin yesterday obtained bail in a cheating case filed against her by one Monir Hossain on July 6.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman granted her bail upon a bond of Tk 10,000 with two guarantors when she along with her lawyers appeared before the court and prayed for bail.

Meantime, Naznin filed a criminal case against her ex-husband Bulu for torturing her for Tk 2 crore in dowry on May 30. But the proceedings of the case were stayed earlier following a criminal appeal filed by Bulu with the High Court.

In his complaint, Monir Hossain of Maddhya Monipur mentioned that Naznin put her signature on a non-judicial stamp of Tk 150 and received Tk 8 lakh on April 10 from him as she sent him to London. But she failed to do so and he asked her to repay the money.

On the other hand, she threatened him with life if he asked her to repay the money that he gave her on April 10.

## Japanese envoy meets Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

New Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue yesterday made a courtesy call on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina and discussed future planning of socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

"We've discussed many things ... various aspects of our bilateral relations," the Ambassador said after an hour-long meeting at Sudha Sadan.

In reply to a question, he said Bangladesh's future socio-economic planning came up for discussion.

Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil MP and International Affairs Secretary Syed Abul Hossain MP were present at the meeting.

## Verdict in two cases against Sunny, six others July 17

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will deliver verdict of two cases on July 17 against Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) military commander Aatur Rahman Sunny and six others.

After completion of arguments from the prosecution and the defence, Judge Monzurul Bachhid of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday set the date.

The cases, one under the Arms Act and another under the Explosive Substances Act, were filed with

Sabujbagh Police Station on September 8 last year.

Earlier, the court recorded statements of 28 prosecution witnesses in three workdays that began on June 6.

The six other accused are AHM Shamim, 23, Zakaria alias Jewel, 21, Nur Azam Siddique alias Yeasir, 27, Belal Hossain alias Tamim, 21, Aleya Ferdous, 27, and Akramul Islam, 23.

Rab on September 8 last year arrested five of them at a house in East Bashabo, which was rented by Sunny to coordinate the August 17 country-wide serial blasts. Law enforcers believe he narrowly escaped arrest at

that time.

Rab personnel also seized from the house one sawn off rifle, one revolver with a bullet, 700 capacitors, 60 CDs, 92 books and four audiocassettes on 'jihad', 17 masks made of black cloth, one computer with two printer machines and 10 floppy disks.

Other seized items include one electric blower, three books of madrasa money receipts, three diaries, nine books with maps of different districts, one motorcycle, one punching machine and Tk 2 lakh.



Although most non-government schools and colleges across the country remained closed as the teachers have been observing an indefinite strike demanding payment of 100 percent basic salary from the government exchequer, classes in some city schools are being held as usual. This picture was taken from Motijheel Ideal School and College yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

## 54th ACAD begins

The 54th Advanced Course on Administration and Development (ACAD) begins at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) at Savar yesterday, says a press release.

A total of 29 deputy secretaries to the government and their equivalents are taking part in this two and a half month long training course. Rector Md Abus Salam Khan presided over the inaugural function and inaugurated the course.



Activists of Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine chant slogans during a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday. The 14-party staged countrywide demonstration protesting police atrocities and demanding electoral reforms. PHOTO: STAR