

# JS sessions riddled with quorum crisis

**SHAKHAWAT LITON**

The quorum crisis has emerged as a chronic problem with the eighth Jatiya Sangsad (JS), inflicting a huge financial waste on the exchequer.

In its 132 workdays so far, the JS has never witnessed the presence of 60 legislators -- the minimum number required to begin a sitting -- on schedule.

A survey by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) said such delays in 38 workdays in

three sessions cost the nation about Tk 2.35 crore.

The eighth Sangsad began its journey amid boycott by the main opposition Awami League and set the highest record of delay in taking up the day's order.

It also set another record of beginning a sitting without fulfilling the quorum requirement and on several occasions had to adjourn sitting because of the crisis.

Some ruling alliance deputies have lost their interest in attending the session. "There is no work for

us there, we have to only utter 'yes' or 'no' during votes," explained one, requesting anonymity.

A ruling alliance whip admitting his failure in guiding lawmakers to the House and said: "Parliamentarians do not respond to invitations. They like drinking tea, gossiping and making delays without any reason. They are not taking the issues seriously."

Concerned with the problem, Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar

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# Tk 34 lakh swindled Janata Bank money recovered

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Janata Bank authorities yesterday traced out a large portion of its money swindled out of its Motijheel Corporate Branch.

Golam Sorwar, officer-in-charge of a section of the branch, swindled the bank out of Tk 45 lakh last week of May and went to Sweden on June 5.

The bank authorities yesterday found that Sorwar deposited Tk 31.5 lakh to his wife's account with Islami Bank and Tk 3 lakh to his own account.

Sorwar siphoned the money as loans using fake documents and went on a five-day leave from May 31.

As he did not join even after expiry of leave, the bank authorities smelled something wrong and launched an investigation which found that Tk 45 lakh was missing.

The authorities filed a case with the Motijheel Police Station Sunday.

"While checking through the account holders' list at Islami Bank's

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# JS body sends report on perk bill to House

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Aparliamentary standing committee yesterday submitted its reports to the House on two bills proposing a rise in remuneration and privileges for the prime minister, ministers, state ministers and deputy ministers.

Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry, submitted the reports on the Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002 and the Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2002.

The reports were submitted with a suggestion for abolishing the clause of retrospective effect that means the prime minister, ministers, state ministers and deputy

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PHOTO: STAR

An employee of the Office of Deputy Postmaster General in Dhaka leaves his workplace walking through stagnated water from driving rains over the past few days.

# Army slaps down cell phone project in hills

## Security problem feared

**STAR REPORT**

A move to expand cellular phone networks to three hill districts has stalled following objections by the armed forces on security ground, sources concerned said.

Private cell phone operators planned expansion of their networks to the districts -- Khagrachhari, Bandarban and Rangamati -- after assessing viability.

But the army objected to the installation of a base at Khagrachhari by a private cell phone company and told the Bangladesh Telecommunication

Regulatory Commission (BTRC) that cell phone operation will be "a serious concern for national security", a BTRC official told The Daily Star on condition of anonymity.

Advised by the Prime Minister's Office, the BTRC convened a meeting of chief executives of the cell phone operators and asked them not to expand networks to the hill districts, sources said.

At least two operators including the GrameenPhone and the Telecom Malaysia International Bangladesh (TMIB), the service

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# WASA wobbles with 49pc systems loss

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) operates with a 49 per cent systems loss in water supply, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the House yesterday.

In reply to a question, Bhuiyan said a high-level committee was recently formed to specify its systems loss more accurately.

He also mentioned the steps undertaken or planned by the government to curb the systems loss. The government is now thinking of importing billing meters through the private sector to install them at 61,000 connections, now supplying water without meters, the minister said.

The WASA carried out surveys on the misuse of water at different holdings and severed connections upon reports of irregularities, said

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# Acid attack on 2 schoolgirls in Barisal, Jhalakati

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Miscreants threw acid on two schoolgirls in Barisal and Jhalakati districts.

The victims are Mahmuda Aktar Moni, 15, of village Andharmanik under Hizla upazila of Barisal and Sabina Yasmin, 14, of village South Rajapur under Rajapur sadar upazila of Jhalakati.

According to police and hospital sources, four miscreants -- Illiyas, Tazim, Rubel and Indrajit -- threw acid on Mahmuda Aktar Moni, a student of class ten, while she was

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# Young man shot at Shantinagar

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A youth was shot by an armed gang at Shantinagar yesterday.

A gang of about six or seven swooped on a market at Shantinagar where Tofazzel Hossain Titu, 30, worked and shot him in his left thigh at around 4:00pm.

Titu, a cable operator and son of Toyeb Ali, is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Titu is an accused in a robbery case, Ramna police said.

Meanwhile, muggers stabbed a youth near Khilgaon rail gate and snatched Tk 1,000 from him.

The victim is Faisal, a resident of 465, South Goran, Khilgaon.

A gang of three snatchers waylaid Faisal, 20, as he was going to the Khilgaon market on a rickshaw at around 1:30pm. When Faisal refused to give them money, one of the gang members stabbed him in the abdomen.

# One to walk gallows, 2 get life in Fahima rape case



PHOTO: STAR

Police take three persons to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday after a speedy trial tribunal convicted them of raping Fahima who committed suicide out of shame.

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A young man was sentenced to death and two others were given life imprisonment in the sensational Fahima rape case yesterday.

A Speedy Trial Tribunal awarded death sentence to Sumon and life imprisonment to his uncle Halim and friend Nasir under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act. It also ordered Halim and Nasir to pay Tk 1 lakh to the family of the victim.

All the accused are in jail.

Judge Jahangir Alam Mollah delivered the 32-page judgement in a jam-packed courtroom amid heavy security yesterday, about 15

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# Bangabandhu Murder Case gathers dust for two years



**ZAYADUL AHSAN**

The Bangabandhu Murder Case has been gathering dust at the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court (SC) for almost two years as judges had expressed, one after another, their embarrassment to hear the case.

The hearing on the leave to appeal petition in the case would not be held before February next year unless a judge is appointed on an ad hoc basis at the Appellate Division to form a three-member bench.

At least three judges are required for hearing the case. Three judges had already expressed their embarrassment and two others had heard the case at the High Court Division of the SC and therefore cannot hear it at the Appellate Division.

It seems from the current line-up of judges at the Appellate Division that the bench to hear the case would not have the least three members, who did not feel embarrassed to hear the case, before February next year.

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# Justice Hasan takes oath

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Justice K M Hasan was sworn-in yesterday as chief justice. He replaces Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury who retired on Sunday.

President Iajuddin Ahmed administered the oath-taking at a simple ceremony at Bangabhaban yesterday morning. The Supreme Court Bar Association boycotted the ceremony protesting the appointment of KM Hasan as chief justice, superseding two senior judges.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, former chief advisors of the caretaker government Justice Latifur Rahman and Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman, ministers and judges of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division of the Supreme Court were present.

However, the Supreme Court Bar

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