

# 20 double-deckers join city fleet in two months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) will introduce 20 double-decker buses on the city roads within two months.

BRTC Chairman Taimur Alam Khandaker disclosed it yesterday at the signing ceremony of an agreement between the BRTC and Rahman and Company, the Dhaka-based agent of Punjab Engineering. Under the agreement, Rahman and Company will supply 20 Roadking double-deckers on lease basis.

"If the buses turn out to be financially and technically viable, we will introduce another one hundred such buses in the city in the same process," the BRTC chairman said.

He also said the 95 Volvo buses would be procured with Swedish grant and credit facilities.

"Communication Minister Nazmul Huda is now in Sweden to discuss the

matter," he added.

The BRTC will also introduce another 200 CNG-run buses in the city within a year with the financial support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and set up five more CNG filling stations in its depots across the country, he added.

The government approved procurement of 350 buses for the BRTC after it came to power, and purchasing of the Volvo buses is the part of that arrangement.

The chairman also said the BRTC is not a losing concern now and it had an operating surplus of Tk 23 crore in the 2002-2003 fiscal, after paying Tk 4 crore for Debt Service Liabilities (DSL).

BRTC sources said it has more than 800 buses and 200 trucks. Of them, 500 buses, including 50 Volvo double-deckers, are plying the city roads.

# Bangabandhu

**FROM PAGE 1**

The case came to a halt in August 2001 when a judge at the Appellate Division expressed embarrassment to hear it. Later, the then chief justice requested the government to appoint a judge on an ad hoc basis. But the government did not.

Three judges were then appointed at the Appellate Division. But all of them expressed their embarrassment while the judge who had previously felt embarrassed retired.

Meanwhile, with the retirement of chief justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury Sunday, there is now only one judge - Fazlul Haq- who is entitled to hear the case.

The vacuum created by Mainur's retirement is supposed to be filled by the High Court Division's senior most judge Hamidul Haq.

On June 30, justice Fazlul Haq goes on retirement. He is supposed to be succeeded by justice Syed Amirul Islam.

Both Hamidul Haq and Amirul Islam can hear the case. However the bench would still need another judge to hear the case.

On August 23, another Appellate Division judge- Justice Abu Sayeed Ahammed, who had earlier expressed his embarrassment, will retire. He is supposed to be succeeded by Justice MM Ruhul Amin. Justice Amin had already expressed his embarrassment at the High Court and therefore his elevation would not facilitate hearing of the leave petition.

On December 20 this year, Justice Hamidul Haq would retire and he might be succeeded by justice Tafazzal Islam. Islam would be entitled to take up the case but one more judge would be needed.

Former Public Prosecutor for the case Advocate Anisul Haq told The Daily Star last night, "The sooner the government realises the case needs to be finished fast, the better it is for establishment of the rule of law. I am very much apprehensive of its intention. I see the necessity of appoint-

ment of a judge on an ad hoc basis at the Appellate Division to form a three member bench."

Meanwhile, new Chief Justice KM Hasan, who had also expressed embarrassment, will retire on January 27 next year. He is supposed to be succeeded by Justice MA Aziz.

With his arrival, the Appellate Division might be able to form a three-member bench with justices Aziz, Amirul and Tofazzal.

Filed on October 2, 1996, the trial court had given its verdict on the Bangabandhu Murder Case on November 8, 1998. Fifteen retired and sacked army men were given capital punishment. Afterwards, the High Court upheld the capital punishment of 12. Of them, only four are in jail.

These four filed a leave to appeal petition with the Appellate Division against the High Court verdict. But hearing on the leave to appeal did not take place since August last year as a judge expressed his embarrassment to hear it.

The trial court had given the verdict two years after the case was filed.

Bangabandhu was killed on August 15, 1975.

## WASA

**FROM PAGE 1**

Bhuiyan.

The minister also told the Jatiya Sangsad that work is underway for replacement of 90-kilometre run-down water supply pipes.

The responsibility of bill collection in the WASA revenue zone Nos. 4 and 5 has been given to the WASA Employees' Welfare Cooperatives to minimise revenue evasion, said Bhuiyan.

A special taskforce was formed to streamline the billing and bill collection, and a campaign is on through newspapers to make people aware of the misuse of water, he said.

# JS sessions

**FROM PAGE 1**

Hossain last week asked the treasury bench members in writing to be present in the House on time.

But the request went unheeded as the sitting on Saturday witnessed the record delay of 100 minutes: it began at 5:40pm in stead of 4:00pm.

But the parliament secretariat said it was not recording the delay in proceedings.

In stead of effectively addressing the issue, the ruling and opposition parties shifted blame on each other Sunday.

The chief whip said the AL MPs did not attend the session although they were present in the Sangsad Bhaban.

They wait outside for the quorum to be fulfilled by the ruling alliance deputies first, he said, adding: "It is not a good practice."

"The Opposition has fewer MPs. The ruling alliance commands two-thirds majority and need not depend on the Opposition to ensure a quorum."

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid told the Daily Star yesterday.

He alleged that the four-party alliance deputies were busy with personal business and lobbying and were losing their interest in parliament.

Parliament secretariat officials said the seventh parliament also saw the quorum crisis. But the speaker then used to be present in time that encouraged legislators to turn up.

The quorum crisis gained force from the beginning of the eighth Sangsad and the speaker has never entered the house on schedule.

Explaining the reason, Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui said: it is not appropriate (for him) to enter the house before there is a quorum." Siddiqui is chairing the current budget session.

Former speaker Abdul Hamid dismissed the suggestion. "Appropriate or not is not the question. I would take the seat to pressurise parliamentarians to attend the House in time. It proved beneficial."

The eighth parliament that has 305 MPs now including six technocrat ministers, began its journey on October 28, 2001. The inaugural session began at 10:10am instead of the 10:00am schedule.

The beginning sessions in 2002

and 2003 also began 25 and 30 minutes late.

The budget session in 2002 began 22 minutes behind schedule on June 6 and the current one began 15 minutes late on June 12.

The TIB report on the loss incurred by the eighth Jatiya Sangsad published in May said there were 38 working days in the fourth, fifth and sixth sessions, none of which began on time.

The quorum crisis inflicted a financial loss of Tk 2,35, 35,000, wasting 1,569 minutes one of which requires a spending of Tk 15,000.

On February 27 this year the speaker began the session without a quorum after a wait of 35 minutes.

It began the sitting with 44 legislators and continued without a quorum for 15 minutes.

## Mondol murder

**FROM PAGE 1**

2:30pm to seek bail. Judge Shahed Nooruddin cancelled his bail prayer and sent him to jail.

Tonai is among 13 others who have been awarded lifetime in the Mondol murder case.

Police said Tonai came to Dhaka from Madaripur in 1973 and got involved in mugging. He also worked as police informant.

Later, he got involved in robbery and maintained relations with the underworld bosses. Tonai came close with the notorious criminal gang 'Seven Star Group'.

Tonai was elected chairman of Jajira Upazila under Madaripur in 1990.

## Justice Hasan

**FROM PAGE 1**

welcomed the new chief justice through organising a function.

Chief Justice Hasan said at the function that justice can be ensured if there is rule of law, which protects liberty.

Attorney General A F Hasan Ariff and Rokanuddin Mahmud, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, welcomed the new chief justice.

# Little time spent on budget in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers have spent only seven hours until yesterday of a 40-hour slot for the budget discussion.

To catch up with time, the main opposition Awami League proposed two sittings a day from today, as the House has merely five workdays to the scheduled passage of the budget on June 30. But the treasury bench proposed only June 28 and 29 for the two-sitting schedule.

Since the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday heard both sides expressing different views on the issue, Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui told the chief whips of the treasury and opposition benches to settle the matter through discussions later and inform the Chair about it today.

Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid first raised the issue and said only about four and a half hours' time was spent on the discussion on the proposed budget until Sunday.

Reminding the Chair of a Business Advisory Committee decision on the 40-hour budget discussion, Shahid suggested that the House sit twice a day from June 24 to June 29.

Taking the floor, Chief Whip Khondaker Delwar Hossain said the House could sit twice a day on the last two days to the passage of the 2003-04 budget.

He rather proposed that if the cancelled call attention notices could only be tabled in writing in parliament, it will save some time for the budget discussion.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid, however, said the House could hear a few notices of the lawmakers and others could be tabled.

Responding to the prime minister's recent comment that the government would not give concessions to the AL any more, she said, "From the day she took office, the prime minister has been trying to destroy the AL, but she has failed." She claimed that the AL could not be eliminated as the party had a strong base among the masses.

The opposition leader criticised the government for the quorum crisis in the Jatiya Sangsad and said, "Despite the two thirds majority of the government, the parliament regularly witnesses quorum crisis."

Terming the present alliance rule as 'a force against Islamic norms and values' Hasina criticised the government initiative to introduce books of Moulana Moududi for madrassah students.

The opposition leader briefly described development activities of the previous AL regime, and urged the people to compare the present regime with the AL rule.

"My government was the victim of propaganda by some quarters", she

# Wall collapse kills boy at Badda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A boy died when a wall of an under-construction building collapsed at Badda yesterday.

Habi Noor Rahman, 12, was working in a grocery shop adjacent to the Badda Police Station. He had joined the shop as an assistant only minutes before the incident.

At around 8:25am, the wall of an under-construction building, owned by Abul Hasem, collapsed suddenly on the shop leaving Noor instantly dead.

Shop owner Jahangir took Noor to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Noor had been brought to Dhaka from his home in north Ghoshkhali in Amtali, Barguna Sunday by his uncle.

An unnatural death case was lodged with the Badda Police Station.

## Fishermen

**FROM PAGE 12**

upazila due to flash flood.

Kurigram, Gaibandha, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari and Rangpur were inundated in low-lying areas. River erosion also worsened in those areas.

Jamuna river caused erosion in Sariakandi, Sonatala, and Dhunat of Bogra and Kazipur of Sirajganj, Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) officials said.

Chandpur Protection Embankment was washed away at Railway Boro Station area as water level raised in Padma and Meghna rivers due to heavy downpour.

BWDB asked ground officials to be ready with geo-bags to combat devastating river erosion.

Feni Sadar, Parshuram, Chhagal-naiya and Phoolgazi in Fein went under water.

In Noakhali, roads, residential areas, Collectorate building, Dattar hat, Sonapur, Maizidi bazaar area went under water, UNB reported.

Houses in Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Gaibandha and vast areas of land were washed away in the last 24 hours, BSS added.

Met office forecast moderate to heavy rain at places over the country today.

## Janata Bank

**FROM PAGE 1**

head office yesterday, I came upon Sorwar's wife's name and found that Tk 31.5 lakh was deposited to the account recently," Deputy General Manager of Janata Bank Laila Arjumand Begum said.

"Later, we found another document showing that Sorwar sent Tk 3 lakh to his own account through a demand draft," she added.

Sorwar and his wife are missing. When Janata Bank officials went to his rented house at Ahmedbagh in Motijheel, it was found locked.

Motijheel police arrested an official of the bank's Rajarbagh branch, Abdul Hye, on suspicion Sunday night.

During interrogation, Hye told police that Sower left the country on June 5.

**FROM PAGE 1**

ministers will be getting the perks from July 1, 2003 instead of July 1, 2002, once the bills are passed. The committee recommended passage of the bills.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan piloted the bills in the House on June 17 amid strong opposition by the Awami League.

## JS body

**FROM PAGE 1**

ministers will be getting the perks from July 1, 2003 instead of July 1, 2002, once the bills are passed. The committee recommended passage of the bills.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan piloted the bills in the House on June 17 amid strong opposition by the Awami League.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addresses a meeting on the party's 54th founding anniversary at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in Dhaka yesterday.

# Hasina: Chief justice

FROM PAGE 12

violence saying, "She (prime minister) herself patronises the criminals". Hasina asked the prime minister to defend the case of criminals stabbing opposition lawmaker Abdul Hye at Jhenidah in presence of police.

Responding to the prime minister's recent comment that the government would not give concessions to the AL any more, she said, "From the day she took office, the prime minister has been trying to destroy the AL, but she has failed." She claimed that the AL could not be eliminated as the party had a strong base among the masses.

The opposition leader criticised the government for the quorum crisis in the Jatiya Sangsad and said, "Despite the two thirds majority of the government, the parliament regularly witnesses quorum crisis."

Terming the present alliance rule as 'a force against Islamic norms and values' Hasina criticised the government initiative to introduce books of Moulana Moududi for madrassah students.

The opposition leader briefly described development activities of the previous AL regime, and urged the people to compare the present regime with the AL rule.

"My government was the victim of propaganda by some quarters", she

# 'Turn to surface water for safety'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Excessive dependence on groundwater instead of surface water is badly affecting environmental condition.

Though surface water is plentiful, it remains almost unused, because of the mismanagement of the resource and the donors' prescription that encourages people to get water from deep tube-wells, speakers at a seminar observed yesterday.

Decades back only surface water was used in farming but today's agriculture is almost totally dependent on groundwater, which is very unfortunate and upsetting the environmental balance, observed the seminar on 'Water and Water Resources'.

The seminar was organised by the Health and Environment Journalists' Forum, Bangladesh (HEJFB) in association with the Dhaka Community Hospital.

"Any plan regarding water resources should be carefully reviewed and linked to the development strategy. Local government should be involved in managing water resources," said social economist Hossain Zillur Rahman.

"Millions of people are now exposed to arsenic and other heavy mineral contamination. But the government still continues to install tube-wells even deeper which may invite another disaster," said Professor Quazi Quamruzzaman, chairman of the Dhaka Community Hospital, Trust.

"Many experts argued surface water has bacteria and other germs which can cause widespread waterborne diseases. In fact, simple boiling can remove the bacteria from surface water but boiling would never eliminate heavy minerals like arsenic," he said.

Fanida Akhter, executive director of the UBINIG, an NGO, feared that soon poor people would have to buy water.

Former Petrobangla chairman SKM Abdullah said the government is yet to make any significant progress in combating arsenic contamination. "Only two per cent of the total tube-wells are being used for drinking purpose and the rest for agriculture. So, we should carefully assess how the wells are being used and managed."

A committee was formed yesterday to probe Dr Sujit Kumar Roy's death at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

The four-member committee will submit its report within three days after examining whether the hospital management was responsible for Dr Sujit's death.

Headed by Chairman of Orthopaedic Department Prof Humayun Kabir, the committee includes Prof Azizul Haque of Medicine Department, Emergency Medical Officer Dr Abdur Rashid and Assistant Director (Administration) Dr Saidur Rahman.

However, the third day of interns' strike almost paralysed RMCH and 50 patients left the hospital yesterday.

Interns' Council (IC) called the strike on June 21 to protest Dr Sujit's death. The IC said the death was an outcome of hospital authority's mismanagement.

Dr Wasim Hossain, president of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), Rajshahi, told this correspondent the BMA yesterday asked agitating interns to withdraw the strike considering the sufferings of patients.

However, IC vice president Rabul Islam said the strike will continue until the hospital director resigns.

## Acid attack

**FROM PAGE 1**

going to school at village Andharmanik in the morning yesterday.

Moni suffered burn injuries in the face and other parts of the body. She was admitted to the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

Police quoted family sources as saying Moni refused a marriage proposal by one of the gang members a few days ago.

Sabina Yasmin, a student of class nine, came under acid attack while she was asleep in their house at village South Rajapur at midnight on Sunday.

The miscreants threw acid on Sabina through a window. She got burnt in different parts of the body. She was also admitted to the medical college hospital.

Separate cases have been lodged with Hizla and Rajapur Police Stations.

# Vajpayee greets Khaleda, people of Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday greeted Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the people of Bangladesh on his way to China.

"As I overfly the territory of Bangladesh on my way to China, I convey greetings and good wishes to you and the friendly people of Bangladesh," Vajpayee said in a message from Air India flight-1 carrying the Indian premier to Beijing.

"Our two countries are bound by close traditional ties of friendship based on shared history, culture and geography," he said.

"I look forward to working with you to realise the potential for close cooperative relations between two neighbours," he added.

The Indian prime minister also wished good health of Khaleda Zia.

## Border dispute

**FROM PAGE 12**

and frankness as between friends".

The two then covered the border dispute and other bilateral topics besides international and regional issues, including cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.

While standing by their earlier commitment that the border issue should not hold up progress in other areas, both sides were of the view that the process of sorting out their differences on the issue should be expedited.

Wen, a younger generation Chinese leader, who assumed office only three months ago, suggested that the differences on the border should be phased out and that the two countries should have consultations on "equal footing in a friendly atmosphere to find solutions".

Officials of the two countries then began discussions to see if the differences on the border issue could be narrowed down during Vajpayee's stay in Beijing.

No further details of what the officials were attempting were given nor was it clear whether a joint statement would be issued at the conclusion of the Indian leader's talks on Tuesday.

External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha, who was present during the talks, was reticent to give details except to say that the border issue and the question of Chinese recognition of Sikkim as an integral part of India had come up during the discussions.

## 10-point

**FROM PAGE 12**

through trains and suggested raids on those spots by the task force.

It noted that drug peddlers in connivance with a section of officials bring smuggled drugs into the capital.

A special operation team should be formed with powers to stop any suspect trains and conduct a search. Stern action should be taken against railway employees and police concerned if drugs were found in the train, the meeting suggested.

It also suggested that DNC officials of the rank of an inspector and above, engaged in anti-smuggling operation should be equipped with revolvers and that accountability of BDR personnel concerned must be ensured.

The proposed task force will be given a final shape at a meeting with public representatives later, meeting sources said.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by, among others, Home Secretary Moahammad Omar Farooq, Director of Zia International Airport Wing Commander Humayun Kabir, Director General (DG) of Coast Guard Captain SMH Kabir, DG of Ansar Maj. Gen. Monjurul Alam, Deputy Director General of Bangladesh Rifles Brigadier General Ibrahim Khalil and high officials of the DNC, customs intelligence and investigation and railway.

## Fahima

**FROM PAGE 1**

months after the incident.

The court was convinced that Sumon, with the help of Halim and Nasir, raped Fahima. The girl committed suicide out of shame and sorrow.

The court said a girl killed herself out of shame after falling prey to the lust of some sex-maniacs. Terming the incident a heart-rending one, the court said there is no reason to show sympathy for the accused.

The three accused were produced before the court at 12 noon, minutes before the verdict was read out. The accused and their relatives burst into tears at the judgement.

Fahima's mother Safura Khatun and father Abdul Jabbar could not hold back tears during the deliverance of the verdict. Later, they said they are satisfied with the judgement and thanked the authorities for completing the trial in a short time.

According to the case, Sumon used to tease 13-year-old Fahima. At 9:30pm on March 3 last year, Fahima went to his brother Rafiq's shop to eat Chatpati. When Rafiq went home to bring some spices, Sumon and Nasir forcibly took Fahima to a room of one Keramat Ali in Tolarbagh. Sumon raped her with the help of Nasir and Helal.

Fahima's parents and relatives, who went there in search of the girl, witnessed the incident and the three rapists fled the scene. Fahima hanged herself from the ceiling of her room with a scarf the same night.

Her father filed a case with the Mirpur Police Station. Sub-inspector Rowshan Ara submitted the chargesheet within 12 days.

The hearing of the case could not be held for 10 months as the witnesses did not appear before the court. The trial began on May 18 this year.