

# 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 Roading 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 on 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 Ahmed, 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 Tafazzul 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 MAAziz.

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 rundown 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.

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 12

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 life-term 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 Arif and Rokanuddin Mahmud, president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, welcomed the new chief justice.

The beginning sessions in 2002

## 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.

## 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 Abu 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 Goshkhali 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 Kazirpur 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 Feni went under water.

In Noakhali, roads, residential areas, Collectorate building, Dattarhat, Sonapur, Maizdi 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 Sonwar'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 Sonwar 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 Sonwar left the country on June 5.

## 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.

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



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

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.

Along with AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, the discussion was addressed by party leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Anu, Abdur Razzak, Tofael Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of the Workers Party, Mujahidul Islam Selim, general secretary of the Communist Party of Bangladesh and Hasanul Haq Inu, president of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, also addressed the meeting.

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's 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 said.

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 Goshkhali in Amtali, Barguna Sunday by his uncle.

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

Though surface water is plentiful, it is 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 will never eliminate heavy minerals like arsenic," he said.

Farida Akhter, executive director of the UNBING, 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."

Acid attack

going to school at village Andharmanik in the morning yesterday.