

## Wedding party ends in tragedy as bus crashes

26 killed, 56 hurt; cops blamed to have chased truck to accident for toll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

A head-on collision between a wedding party bus and a speeding truck killed 26 people, mostly children and women, and injured 56 others, 20 of them critically, in Chittagong early yesterday.

The bus carrying about 80 wedding guests to Anwara from the port city slammed into the truck loaded with heavy logs at a sharp turn in Charpatharghata under Kamaphuli Police Station at about 12:30am.

Local people blamed the accident on the police, who they said chased the truck in a desperate hunt for toll, sending it running full-pelt on Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Road. The truck that did not use a number

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PHOTO: STAR

The bent, twisted body of the bus that with a wedding party on board crashed head-on with a speeding truck early hours yesterday killing 26 people and injuring 56 others in Chittagong.

## Hasina gets death threat again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday received yet another death threat from an anonymous source.

Hasina's Political Secretary Sabar Hossain Chowdhury said a postal mail that was received yesterday, carried the threat. It was marked "Congratulation Letter".

But inside, a letter in English read "Ready to die at any time like your father and mother at House 32."

It continued: "Sheikh Hasina, we are around you and waiting of your movement with our bomb. We will

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## Communications ministry faces JS music

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP lawmakers yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over the poor performance of the communications ministry in the construction of roads, bridges and culverts and non-allocation of funds for their constituencies.

But a lone lawmaker of Jamaat-e-Islami, a ruling coalition partner, stood up for Communications Minister Nazmul Huda during the question time in the Jatiya Sangsad

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## It watch on borders, terrorism rule talks

Delhi places list of 195 Indian 'insurgent camps'; Dhaka seeks action against anti-Bangladesh elements

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Joint security operations on the border, implementation of border treaties, and insurgency and terrorism issues dominated the opening day of the fifth Dhaka-Delhi home secretary-level biennial talks that began in the city yesterday after a four-year hiatus.

The home secretaries, Omar Farooq of Bangladesh and Dhirendra Singh of India, led their respective delegations in discussing a range of issues centring on security along the 4,156-kilometre border shared by the two neighbours.

The meeting yesterday did not reach any specific decision on a proposal for joint security operations along the border that India had

been pushing for some years, sources said.

Yesterday Dhaka sought immediate Indian measures against anti-Bangladesh elements, including some notorious criminals, currently in Indian territories, they added.

In reply, the 12-member delegation from Delhi stressed that signing of an extradition treaty would be needed between the two countries for the return of anti-Bangladesh individuals or groups currently on Indian soil.

Delhi also presented a detailed list of some 195 Indian insurgent camps that it claimed were in Bangladesh and specific information on them to Bangladeshi delegates. Dhaka however denied knowledge of any such camp but

said it would look further into the matter, sources said.

Bangladesh also reiterated its wishes for India to ratify the 1974 Border Demarcation and Land Boundary Accord, also known as the Mujib-Indira agreement, nearly three decades after its signing.

State news agency BSS reported that Dhaka asked Delhi to hand over 10,000 acres of land on the basis of the 1974 treaty. Currently, Bangladesh has 51 enclaves in India with a total area of 7,110 acres, while there are 111 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh covering 17,158 acres of land.

India possesses 3,506 acres of Bangladeshi land while 3,024 acres of Indian land is in Bangladesh's

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## Comilla dam burst floods 20 villages

Several thousand marooned; army called out to check further erosion; Dhaka still reels from torrential rains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rain-swollen Gumti river burst its banks in Devidwar upazila in south-eastern Comilla district on Wednesday evening and inundated 20 villages marooning several thousand people while Dhaka reeled from fresh bout of torrential rains yesterday.

About 100-foot portion of the Gumti dam was damaged by the swelling river water but no deaths or injuries were reported, an official in Comilla town, 150 km off the capital,

said. Local people however blamed the authorities for not repairing a crack, which caused the disaster. Army personnel have been deployed to check further damage of the embankment.

AGMG Airlines flight from Dhaka could not land at Barisal airport yesterday afternoon due to poor visibility amid heavy downpour and gusty wind.

Met office forecast the current spell of rain that started six days ago paralysing life and economic activi-

ties across Bangladesh would continue for four more days.

Yesterday's rain was the result of monsoon and the depression that crossed Bangladesh on Tuesday, a forecast officer said. "There will be light to moderate rains in Dhaka and rest parts of the country in next three to four days. But the situation is improving."

**GUMTI BURSTS BANKS**  
"I was cooking at about 6:30pm and suddenly found water entering my house," Amena Begum, a housewife

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## Dy Speaker blasts AL for House demonstration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui yesterday launched a blistering attack on the main opposition Awami League (AL) for their demonstration in parliament on Wednesday, terming it deplorable.

The deputy speaker, who chaired yesterday's sitting of the House, also castigated the AL for not participating in the general discussion on the August 21 grenade attack on its rally. "They (AL) did not want to discuss the grenade attack. So, they closed the ways for discussion by with-

drawing their notices," he asserted. "We have not observed such an incident (demonstration) in parliament for long," he said responding to a point of order raised by opposition lawmaker Abdul Kader Siddiqui.

Akhtar Hamid told the House, "You will be astonished to hear that AL lawmakers Mohammad Nasim, Shahahan Khan and Panchanon Biswas withdrew their notices submitted under provisions 48 and 147 (of the rules of procedure). After withdrawing the notices, they tried

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PHOTO: STAR

Cart horses and rickshaw-pullers wade knee-deep through floodwaters carrying passengers on a road near Hosselini Dalan in Old Dhaka yesterday, six days into a deluge that near-freezes the city life.

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## 34pc crops in 81 upazilas under water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ongoing deluge has inundated 34 percent of the standing crop including aman and vegetables of 81 upazilas in 19 districts, sources at Agriculture Extension Department (DAE) said.

They however are not sure of the extent of damage to transplanted aman as it may revive if the water recedes in a day or two. "Transplanted aman can sustain 72 hours totally submerged. Even with a few leaves left above the water, it continues to live and grow. So, we can't calculate right away how much of the aman crop will be spoiled," said a DAE official.

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## Australia romp into semifinals

AFP, London

Andrew Symonds blasted a quickfire 71 not out as Australia beat New Zealand by seven wickets in the ICC Champions Trophy here at The Oval on Thursday.

The win puts Australia into Tuesday's semifinals of the only major competition in world cricket to have eluded them so far where they will play either old enemy England or Sri Lanka who meet in Southampton on Friday.

Symonds hit four sixes and seven fours in a brutal display of hitting and Damien Martyn added 60 not out.

The pair put on 100 for the fourth wicket to chase down the New Zealanders total of 198-9 with 12.4 overs to spare.

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## Dhaka can but won't restrict trade with Delhi: Morshed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said Dhaka-Delhi relations were on the up and even if Bangladesh could impose trade restrictions on India it would not do so as Dhaka believes that retaliatory measures do not play a part in improving bilateral ties.

"Bangladesh does not believe in retaliation against anyone, if Bangladesh wanted, it could've done so, but that does not improve relations," Morshed said in reply to questions by reporters if Dhaka would slap para-tariff and non-tariff barriers on Indian imports to narrow the trade gap between the countries.

"You can only improve relations by logic and reasoning for a more long-lasting solution to issues," Morshed told a weekly foreign ministry briefing.

"Dhaka-Delhi relations are

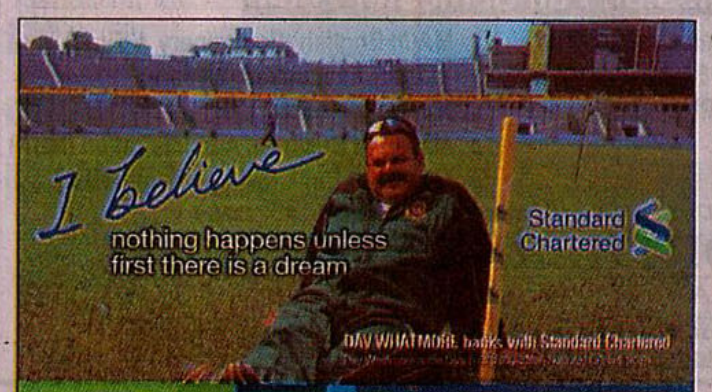
always improving and not decreasing," the foreign minister said, adding his comments on Indian policies on August 7 in Dhaka were hyped up by the press, not his description of bilateral relations.

Morshed stressed the ongoing meeting of Bangladesh-India home ministries and the just concluding Joint Committee of Experts on water-sharing between the two countries in Dhaka testified to 'where the relations currently stand'.

Asked about his views on mudslinging between the two countries on various issues, including the presence of terrorists in each others' territories, water-sharing and trade, Morshed said: "The blame game has turned into a habit of politicians on both sides, but people want something concrete. The onus is on us to find lasting solutions."

Morshed also said he was likely to

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**মেল চলাকালীন সুদের হারে ১% ছাড়\***

### মাই লোন মেলা ২০০৪

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