Suhrawardy's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The nation today remembers respectfully Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, one of the great leaders of undivided India, on his 41st death

The political wisdom and uncompromising leadership of Suhrawardy, who dedicated his life for public welfare by upholding democracy above all, made him a great statesman of his time.

President Jajuddin Ahmed in a message paid homage to Suhrawardy, saying he is a shining

chapter of Bangladesh's history of democracy. His uncompromising struggle against undemocratic and autocratic forces has made him a unique political personality.

The president said a champion of democracy, Suhrawardy's lifelong mission was to ensure welfare of the common people through establishing democracy.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in her message said Shaheed Suhrawardy was a great personality in the political history of the subcontinent. In his long political career, he upheld the value of

Explosives

under speedy trial by 60 more days.

Anisur has all along been making contradictory statements regarding his involvement with Islamist militants. Earlier in Gaibandha he admitted his involvement with Jamaat-ul-Mujaheedin, said sources.

He said Harun-ur-Rashid of village Barokona under Shaghata upazila recruited him to Harkat-ul-Jihad. He was lured in the militant outfit by promises of a 'guaranteed entrance to heaven' while a fortune on earth.

On the night of November 11, dictated by Harun he met Amjad Hossain at Tanin Student Hostel in Gaibandha town. The next morning he went to Gaibandha Railway Station, where Naim hunded him a bag conea and asked him to go to Bogra by a local train. But police at Bonarpara Station arrested him.

He describes how cumbersome it

The road, which connects the

was to travel along a muddy road during

therains. So, he prays for the road build-ers. "They are fulfilling something that

two rural 'growth centres',

Narkelbaria and Kaliganj, with the

highway linking Jhenidah, Jessore

and the capital, is set to make all the

locals as happy as Khayer. They now

hope to market their produce

directly to the capital and earn much

Government and Engineering

Department (LGED)-supervised

road started last June and is sched-

uled to be completed by next

16 districts of greater Kushtia,

Jessore, Khulna, Patuakhali and

Barisal are now expecting good days

ahead while the construction of

link- and feeder-roads goes on in the

areas. Nearly 1,060km of upazila

roads and 50km of union roads with

5.05km of bridges and culverts are

being built in the areas under the

Rural Infrastructure Improvement

aims to develop 68 rural growth

centres, build 100 new union coun-

cil complexes, set up 55 river

wharves, introduce ferry service at

five points as well as provide capac-

ity building training. The \$170 million project is scheduled to be com-

(ADB) has promised 51 percent of

the project cost while Kreditanstalt

for Wiederaufbau (KfW) and

German Technical Cooperation

(GTZ) will contribute 18 percent and

the government the rest, 31 percent.

will be used for the civil works in the

16 beneficiary districts and the rest,

20 percent, for capacity building of

economic vistas for the rural poor, and

reduce transportation and marketing

costs to a high extent," says Abdus

GIZ Country Director Michael

Nienhaus says, "The project area has

been chosen on the basis of poverty

and low level of development, as

almost half of the 22.6 million people

is already helping farmers get better

markets for their products is dem-

onstrated by Sohel Islam, 18, a

vegetable farmer of Kefavetnagar.

who carries eggplants just plucked

from the fields on his bicycle to

Haibutpur Bazaar nearly 5km away.

How the emerging infrastructure

of this area live in abject poverty."

Sahid, the project director.

"The project will open up new

Eighty-percent fund of the Rijo

The Asian Development Bank

Launched in July 2003 the Riip

in fact, millions of farmers in the

Construction of the Local

we have dreamt for long."

more than the past.

Project (Riip)

pleted by June 2009.

tributed immensely to promote people's well-being.

The prime objective of his politics was to ensure welfare of the people and establish good governance," Khaleda said

Paying reverence for Suhrawardy, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in her message said the nation will always remember him for his contributions to democracy, rule of law and communal harmony.

The Bangladesh Betar, and the state-run and private TV channels will air special programmes on the life and activities of Suhrawardy today. National dailies will also publish special articles on the great

Different organisations have arranged programmes to observe the day. Today's programmes will start by offering munajat and placing wreaths at the mazar of Suhrawardy in the morning.

Shun FROM PAGE 12

auditorium along with stage and cafeteria, has been estimated to cost

Three art galleries in an area of 65,000 square feet will be built in the third phase at a cost of Tk20.03 crore.
The National Music and Dance

Center, to be built in two phases, will cost Tk 34.06 crore. The first phase of the centre that includes infrastructure up to the third floor has been completed at a cost of Tk14.84 crore: Earlier, the prime minister unveiled the plaques separately of the three units on the academy premises in Segun Bagicha area.

Presided over by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman. the inaugural function was also

addressed by Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas, Secretary for Cultural Affairs Kazi Abul Kashem and Director General of Shilpakala Academy

Ministers and a large number of cultural leaders and workers were

present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister was also presented with a crest at the function. She also witnessed a brief cultural programme of dance and main hall of the National Theatre.

drama staged in the newly built Riip to help farmers

proper place in the society shortly.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Vice-chancellor of Dhaka In the past, Sohel had to travel complete, the cost would come down to no more than Tk5," Khayer says.

more than 15km to reach any of the growth centres. "We are now waiting for the completion of the road which would be a blessing to us," said the youth in enthusiasm. "These roads I believe will take

local vegetables not only to city markets but also to Europe, said Hermann Nicolai, charge d' affairs of the German Embassy in Dhaka.

TRIPLE MURDERS

Arrest warrant against Jubo Dal leader Kajal

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued warrant of arrest against Jubo Dal leader Rafiqul Islam Kajal and seven others for the triple murder of an Old Dhaka businessman, his son and chauffeur in March this year.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shamim Ara Khatun accepted the charge sheet in the case and issued the warrant after scrutinising the case docket (CD) and other related documents.

Earlier, the court had directed Sufia Haq, complainant in the case, to appear before it yesterday as it needed her opinion for accepting the charge sheet.

Sufia appeared before the court and appealed to it to accept the charge sheet, earlier submitted to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of Police on October 5 pressed charges against main accused Kajal and eight others.

Businessman Mohammad Shamsul Haq, his son Russel Sheikh, and chauffeur Moazzem Hossain were abducted on March 26 and butchered allegedly in a bid to grab a hosiery market and Tk5 lakh.

The charge sheet accused Kajal's brother M Sirajul Islam alias Faruq, Maloy Sarker, Bhutto alias Abu Taleb, Kazi Noor Kayum, Kalam alias Narsinghdi Kalam, Md Mintoo, Nizam alias Mirzon and Md Rahim of abetting the grisly murder.

Of the accused, Rahim is in jail custody and prime accused Kajal, and the rest are absconding.

During investigation, Rahim gave a confessional statement to a magistrate disclosing the names of his fellow culprits.

BCL agitates at Ctg to protest Mohim killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Crg

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) city unit yesterday staged demon-stration in front of Chittagong Press Club to protest the death of its central leader Mohim in 'crossfire' in Rapid Action Battalion's (Rab) custody.

A few hundred BCL leaders and activists, mostly students from Government City College and Omar Ghani MES College, turned up in procession and held a rally.

The speakers at the rally termed deaths in crossfire a gross violation of human rights and pre-planned killing by the Rab 'at the direction of Jamaat-Shibir.' They warned the government of tougher agitation if deaths in crossfire' continue to

The Rab arrested Mohim on November 28 at Shah Amanat International Airport. He was killed in a 'shootout' between the Rah and criminals loyal to him, said the Rab.

Work on tunnel

'accountability" for road digging and, if necessary, awarding "punishment" to those violating the rules of the DTCB.

The meeting discussed various development works under the DUTP, including development of three inter-district bus terminals, development of road corridors and road intersections in the capital, installing the remaining 21 earthquake-prevention STU machines in the Mahakhali flyover, construction of footbridges at Progoti Sarani and Bangla Motor and establishment of electronic traffic signals at 69 important road intersections.

State Minister for Communications Salah Uddin Ahmed, Communications secretary Md Shafiqul Islam, Divisional Commissioner Mia Mustafa Ahmed, chairman of BRTA Faruq Ahmed, Executive Director of DTCB MA Momen, Directur General of Bangladesh Railway AFM Mustafizur Rahman and representatives from finance ministry, home ministry, local government ministry, BIWTA, DCC, BRTC, DMP and Rajuk

4.5m disabled

FROM PAGE 12 to ensure safe future for children. The ratio of disabled children is much higher in war-ravaged and disasterprone countries, he said.

The minister mentioned that the

ratio of disabled people in war-affected Afghanistan is over 20 percent of the total population while the aver-age ratio of the disabled in other devel-oping countries is around 10 per cent. Describing government efforts for welfare of the disabled in the country, the minister hoped they would find

University S M A Faiz, Unesco Country Representative Wolfgang Vollman, James Jenning of Unicef, Prof Peter D Pumfrey from UK, Prof Sultana Zaman, Prof Nausheba Khatun and

Faiz said disabled children could be integrated into the society only through proper education.

Vollman said the issue of disability should be addressed every day, instead of observing a day for the handicapped. Unesco is working hard to improve their lot, he added. He stressed public and private

sector cooperation to create a better environment for the disabled. Sultana said people are gradually realising that handicapped people have the right to get proper education and healthcare, and live a normal life.

Pumfrey underscored action-based vision for the betterment of children with disability.

Anumber of papers were presented at the working session of the seminar in the afternoon. National Professor M R Khan chaired the session.

Prof Naila Zaman Khan presented a key-note paper on prevention and early detection of childhood disability.

Govt plans

now stands 11th in terms of CNG consumption in the world.

The government has provided facilities for private investors to lease land for setting up CNG station at only Tk 10 lakh," he said, adding that converting 10,000 vehicles to CNGrun ones and introducing 400 more CNG-run buses are also included in the project.

The state minister stressed the need for providing training for proper maintenance of CNG-run vehicles. Presently there are 73 CNG filling

stations of which 64 are in Dhaka and over 29,000 CNG run vehicles are plying the streets of which about 20,000 are converted, RPGCL Managing Director Abdul Wadud said. He also said that there are 38 conversion workshops in the country and about 900 vehicles are being con-

Presently about 10 mmcfd (million of cubic feet per day) of gas is used for running 29,000 CNG-run vehicles which is less than I percent of total gas consumption in the country, he

verted into CNG-run ones every

There has been marked improvement in terms of reduction of environ ment pollution in Dhaka over the last three years, Abdul Wadud observed.

CNG codes specialist Nick White presented the key-note paper in the inaugural session of the workshop. Resident representative of UNDP

(United Nations Development Programme) Larry Maramis and Chairman of Petrobangla SR Osmani



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia along with others offers prayers after inaugurating the National Theatre, the National Art Gallery and the National Music and Dance Centre at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in the capital yesterday.

SM Ali's birth anniversary

FROM PAGE 12 nephew of famous writer Syed

Mujtaba Ali and Syed Murtaja Ali. He died in 1993 in a Bangkok

hospital at the age of 65. SM Ali made his way up from a cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years.

Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB). He was educated in Calcutta, Dhaka and London. SM Ali was one of the few Asian

He was also chairman of the

journalists who stood apart in regional journalism. He started as a reporter with the Pakistan Observer during his student days at Dhaka University. He went on to hold important positions in various regional publications in

Pakistan, Hong Kong, Thailand and

He later joined the Press Foundation of Asia as its Executive Director in the 1970s. In 1981, he became Unesco's Regional Communication Advisor for Asia and the Pacific and was based in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur. Ali returned to Bangladesh in

1989 and had a brief stint with The Bangladesh Observer as its Editor. He launched The Daily Star in 1991 and worked tirelessly to establish this newspaper as a leading inde-pendent national daily even until the day before his flight to Bangkok for treatment.

To mark the day, The Daily Star will distribute sweets among the children at a city orphanage today and offer doa at its office tomorrow

Pepsi music

FROM PAGE 12

act as media partners. The DBC will gradually organise festivals in different districts,

Convenor of the festival committee Ahmed Hassan Shaheen, singer Suvra Dev, Marketing Manager of Pepsi-Cola Golam Murshed and General Manager of Transcom Distributors Khurshid Erfan, among others, spoke at the press confer-

Dhaka to tag strings

FROM PAGE 1 should also provide Bangladesh transit facilities to carry goods to Nepal, an issue that Dhaka has been pressing for long, Saifur observed.

"Discussions have to take place on the basis of these interrelated issues," he maintained.

Saifur will attend a three-day India Economic Summit coorganised by World Economic Forum and Confederation of Indian dustry, beginning tomorro where he will speak on the subject 'Creating a Dynamic South Asian Region.

He will meet his Indian counterpart Palaniappan Chidambaram, External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh, Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, Commerce Minister Kamal Nath, Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar and Tata Group Chairman Ratan Tata.

He is likely to call on Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and will meet former prime ministers Inder Kumar Gujral and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. India's National Security Adviser JN Dixit will call on Saifur at his hotel suite during his five-day

"We want to improve relations with our neighbours with a fresh, liberal mindset and I will have talks on ways to further boosting ties between the two countries. Europe is marching ahead with a similar attitude... Leaders of the Saarc nations need to work collectively

at Dhaka Medical College and

Following a tip-off that Sohrab was

in a meeting with his accomplices, a team of Rab 4 raided Sirajnagar

village at around 9:45pm, said Major

him, his accomplices fired shots that

injured Nurul Hoque, an aide to

spot while three of his associates

managed to drive off on two motor-

Rab sources said they recovered

Following leads from Sohrab

under interrogation, the Rab team

later went on an arms hunt in

Baharchhari under Keraniganj at

"There when Sohrab's associates

opened fire on us, we returned fire

and at one stage Sohrab got shot and

died on the spot," Major Samad said.

including three for robbery and one

for murder with Keranigani Police

Station and several others including

two for murders with Savar Police

by police, had fled to India. He

returned to Bangladesh on Friday,

Sohrab, who was evading capture

Station, Rab sources said.

said Major Samad.

Sohrab was accused in four cases

one revolver and four rounds of

Sohrab," Major Samad added.

ammunition from the scene.

"Just when we moved in to nab

"We arrested Sohrab from the

Hospital (DMCH).

RABVERSION

Samad of Rab 4.

One killed in Rab

burying past mindset," the finance minister said when asked what this India trip is all about. This is Saifur's maiden trip to

India after the Congress-led government came to office in May this year. On Bangladesh's having a free trade area (FIA) with India, he said

since leaders of seven Saarc countries have agreed to put in place a South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) in 2006, there is no need to have such a bilateral trade arrangement.

"It will be tantamount to degrading Safta if we go for a bilateral FTA

Asked if Safta or FTA will help Bangladesh to reduce the bilateral trade gap now heavily in favour of India, Saifur said it will not happen automatically. Bangladesh will have to raise the number of its exportable items and make them cost competitive on the one hand and India will have to liberalise its trade regime on the other.

Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar is expected to push hard for a pipeline to carry natural gas from Myanmar through Bangladesh to India when he comes to Dhaka during the 13th Saarc Summit.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs last week shelved the gas pipeline proposal, saying it requires a 'high-level discussion' since it has implications on national security and inter-country relations.

Nurul Hoque, son of Haji Abdul

Ali of Shvamalshi under

Dharaliapara union of Savar, told

reporters at the DMCH that while on

his way home from a Jatiyatabadi

Chhatra Dal (JCD) meeting at

Joynagar at around 4:00pm, he came

friends on the culvert at Uttor

Baherpur, when the Rab men

pounced on them at around

"The Rab men straight way shot

'I claimed myself innocent and

"Rab men roamed for more than

pleaded not to shoot, but they

turned a deaf ear and shot me in the

two and a half hours while I was

bleeding bad," said Nurul. They took

him to the DMCH at around

South Korea for 13 years and came to

Dhaka during Ramadan. He was

scheduled to fly back to South Korea

seized his mobile phone and motor-

body to Mitford Hospital for

Star that they heard gunshots at

He also claimed that Rab men

Keranigani police sent Sohrab's

Locals of the area told The Daily

Nurul claimed he had been in

He was talking to two of his

WITNESS'SVERSION

across Sohrab.

6:00pm, he said.

thrice at Sohrab," he said.

stomach." he added.

on December 11.

bike from the spot.

around 2:30pm.

autopsy.

Rumsfeld stays put

AP. Washington

Overcoming criticism about his handling of Iraq, Defence Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has won a strong vote of confidence from President Bush and will remain at the Pentagon.

It settles one of the last major questions about who goes and who stays in the second-term Cabinet.

Rumsfeld's future was sealed in an Oval Office meeting with Bush on Monday but not announced until Friday. Also on Friday, Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson announced he was leaving departing with a warning about a possible terror attack on the nation's food supply.
"For the life of me, I cannot

understand why the terrorists have not attacked our food supply because it is so easy to do, Thompson said. "We are importing a lot of food from the Middle East, and it would be easy to tamper with

With Thompson's resignation, eight members of Bush's 15-person Cabinet have said they will depart. Treasury Secretary John Snow, despite being called by the White House a valuable member of the president's economic team, has not received a public endorsement of continued service.

Rumsfeld's tenure has been marked by unanticipated postwar violence in Iraq and more than 1,250 US deaths, as well as enormous increases in spending on the military after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. Despite controversies, the hawkish, sometimes acid-tongued Rumsfeld has kept Bush's confidence.

Bush hosts

FROM PAGE 12

nuclear secrets to Libya, North Korea, Iran and possibly other countries. -Musharraf's own backtracking on a

pledge to relinquish his military post. Musharraf, whose visit was to congratulate Bush on his re-election, also has unanswered wishes for the administration. He has repeatedly urged

Washington to engage more aggressively in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He was expected to raise with Bush the need to help resolve that dispute as well as issues of poverty and illiteracy important to Muslims.

Despite such potentially irritable differences, nothing has dampened Washington's view of Pakistan as a crucial ally in the war on terror. In particular, Bush repeatedly cites Pakistan's capture of al-Qaeda suspects, several of whom have been

Akheri

take part in the munajat from rooftops of nearby mills, factories and high-rises, and houses in Uttara and Tongi

The second largest Muslim congregation after the Hajj organised by Tablig Jamaat took off Friday with over 15 lakh devotees offering the

Juma prayer together.

The attendees spent the second day listening to bayans (sermons) delivered by Islamic scholars of home and abroad, besides offering regular prayers en masse. A total of 3.733 foreigners from 54 countries are participating in this year's Ijtema.

One of the Ijtema organisers said, so far, 10,000 people have enlisted as new members of Tablig Jamaat and volunteered to take part in chilla (a pilgrimage with a mission of religious campaign) of different tenure. At least 127 couples were

solemnised without dowry yesterday. More than 15 thousand security personnel including 6,500 police and 1,000 troops of Rapid Action Battalion are deployed in the area to maintain law and order. The law enforcers arrested 127

people for fraud and pickpocketing until vesterday. The authorities have closed the road section from Cherag Ali, Tongi to

Banani, Dhaka for all sorts of vehicles from 12 midnight yesterday to facilitate movement of ljtema participants. The route is jam-packed with pedestrians rushing towards the venue some 30km from the capital. The government agencies concerned have arranged special bus, train, and ferry services for them.

Iraq suicide attacks

FROM PAGE 12 have been battling insurgents who staged an uprising in the city last month, attacking police stations and offices of the Kurds, who are close US allies.

In fierce fighting in the city on Friday, gunmen tried to storm four police stations but were repelled. the US military said. About 70 guerrillas also ambush a US patrol with roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and small-arms fire. After regrouping. US and Iraqi forces struck back on insurgent positions, killing more than two dozen fighters, the military said. The latest attacks, however, were

particularly audacious and sent a clear message that the insurgents can strike wherever they choose. The police station hit Saturday was just yards from the seat of American and Iraqi power in the country. On Friday, 11 carloads of gunmen attacked a police station, killing 16 policemen, on highway to Baghdad's international airport, which has been extremely dangerous despite frequent patrols by US

Meanwhile, two American soldiers were killed Saturday by roadside bombs -- one in eastern Baghdad that wounded five other Americans, the other in the town of Ghalabiyah, 6 miles west of the insurgent hotbed of Baqouba, north of Baghdad, the military said. A

suicide car bomb hit an American forward operating base near Iraq's border with Jordan on Friday, killing two US service members, the US command said Saturday. A Marine spokesman said the attack had been directed at members of the 1st

Marine Expeditionary Force. Iraq closed its Karameh border crossing into Jordan until further notice, Jordanian officials said

Threat

The Bandarban Betar Kendra, established at a cost of Tk 20 crore, has been transmitting programmes experimen-

It was suspected that communica-tions over powerful walkie-talkies used by the miscreants in the hill areas were nterrupted by the radio transmission

According to the sources, "miscreants" have been threatening to loot the transmission machine for a week making phone call to the residence of Regional Director Mustafizur Rahman.

The higher authorities, including the deputy commissioner and police superintendent, were informed of the matter. Police Superintendent Iqbal Bahar and other police officials have visited the radio centre.

Six policemen are now on duty at the radio centre. "They are not sufficient for guarding all sentry posts of the centre," said one of the officials.

Date with death

admitted being helpless about the situation. The Minister for Communication, Nazmul Huda told The Daily Star that lack of enforcement of the existing laws is the main cause behind the 'undesirable situation' on

When the police stop a vehicle on the road, we all know it is not for implementing the laws but to do other things. We cannot expect any discipline on the roads unless the law enforcers start doing their jobs properly," said Nazmul Huda.

Time and again road safety issues have been discussed and many direc-tives have been sent out to the police and the local administrations across the country but unfortunately nothing has changed," the communications

In fact, the country's 20,800 kilo-metres of highways are fraught with anarchic and dangerous conditions at any time of the day. Nighttime driving poses the most danger, with most vehicles, particularly, trucks and buses having no control switches for their beams. In addition, many drivers do not care to lower beams for oncoming vehicles, and thousands of trucks have fitted their vehicles with additional lights that virtually blind the drivers of oncoming vehicles. There are also hundreds of vehicles with only one

While the official speed limit has been set at 60 kilometres per hour, buses, trucks and other vehicles wilfully defy the speed limit. According to a top official of the Ministry of instance in the country of a driver being booked for reckless driving. He said that prosecution only takes place when the driver has had a fatal acci-

BRTA officials admitted that more than ninety percent of the drivers' licences in the country are fake, At the BRTA office in Mirpur gangs of youths openly operate and 'sell driving licen-ces.' Most drivers are ignorant of road signs and try to overtake other vehicles on dangerous bends, risking not only the lives of their own passengers but also others using the same road.

According to an investigation by The Daily Star, transport companies also force their drivers to engage in reckless driving by creating timetables for arrival that require their drivers to rush. For instance, most transport companies in Dhaka promise to take passengers to Rajshahi, 270 kilometres away, in four and a half hours. This means that the driver has to maintain an average speed of 60 kilometres per hour. Considering human activities, such as bazaars and non-mechanised vehicles on our national roads, it is impossible to maintain such an average speed unless the driver takes huge risks by speeding whenever he can. And most of the 63,981 buses and minibuses plying on the national roads do invariably take risks. Interestingly, leading transport companies in Dhaka promise to take passengers to Chittagong, 264 kilometres away, in four hours. Here the driver is expected to maintain an average speed of more than 60 kilometres per hour -- a blatant violation of the official speed limit.

Most of the country's 51, 375 trucks are old and unfit for roads, BRTA sources said, adding that these trucks are invariably overloaded and therefore break down more often. Chairman of the BRTA. Faruque Ahmed said that they have even discovered that some garages rent out new tyres, lights and other parts to vehicle owners just before the vehicles are brought into the BRTA office for fitness certificates.

Four years ago the government borrowed Tk 44 crore from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and com-pleted building five computerised Vehicle Inspection Centres (VIC) in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi. Since 2001 the five VICs are lying idle for mysterious reasons. According to BRTA sources, vested groups operating in the BRTA and in the transport sector are preventing the authorities from starting the VICs, which if operated, would disqualify thousands of faulty vehicles from plying our roads. BRTA officials how-ever said that they were again trying to start the VICs with another loan of Tk two crore from the ADB.

One of the most dangerous elements on our roads is the existence of humps or speed breakers that lack any warning signs or markings. Local people, trying to prevent speeding through their towns or villages often set up these unauthorised humps. Any

road user not familiar with the road faces risks of a serious accident.
In numerous small villages and towns along the highways the Roads

and Highways Department has built concrete walls on both sides of the road to make "bus bays." The walls separate the local traffic from the main road and also make separate room for loading and unloading of local buses, with the idea of keeping the main road free. But total lack of enforcement has encouraged grabbers. Now, shops have been set up in the R&HD's "bus bays," some used for rickshaw and tempo parking and some for truck terminals Local buses load and unload on the narrowed highway, blocking the main thoroughfare. The Chief Engineer of the R&HD, SK Rabiul Islam however denied having any knowledge about such 'bus bays' saying, "I will have to inquire with my offices before commenting on it."

Contempt

and Bhorer Kagoj, and the five others to appear in person before it at 10:00am on December 12 to give

their explanations. On October 31, The Daily Star, New Age and Bhorer Kagoj ran reports about detention for a few hours of an additional HC judge by law enforcers on charges of urinating

The Prothom Alo published a post

editorial on the matter on November The HC Registrar's Office had earlier sent letters to The Daily Star and Bhorer Kagoj asking for detailed information about their reports. The two dailies responded to that on November 27 and 28

Hepatitis E

IEDCR experts observe that the viruses spread through polluted water supplied to the three halls It has been found that there was leakage in Zia hall water supply

pipes laid close to the sewerage line.

Besides, the dining system of the

halls is quite unhygienic, which can cause the viral attack IEDCR experts suspect before the month of Ramadan a number of staff contracted jaundice which

later infected others. The experts suggested chlorinating water and ensuring hygienic food supply to prevent infection

CNG conversion

with hepatitis viruses.

FROM PAGE 1 have so far been converted but to no avail," said an energy ministry

official requesting anonymity. Many a driver of government vehicles reportedly sell petrol for Tk 20-22 a litre in different parts of the city including Chankharpool. Kalvanpur and Karwan Bazar areas, whereas the government buys petrol at Tk 35 a litre from the authorised filling stations. When asked about the delay in

conversion of the government vehicles. State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharraf Hossain said they would be able to convert 80 percent of the target of around 230 government vehicles by the end of this year. "We are monitoring the CNG conversion process regularly," said

have decided not to convert the worn-out vehicles as they will be will be of no use." Conversion of petrol and dieselrun government vehicles would save about Tk 5 crore every year while the cost of conversion would be recov-

Mosharraf Hossain adding, "But we

ered within a year. The state minister said certain government employees on various pretexts are trying to discourage the conversion for their own benefits.

He said the government has plans to gradually convert all the petrol and diesel-run vehicles of the semi-government and autonomous institutions.

Islamist militant leader Harun, who hailed from village Barokona, is on the