



Potholes at Pallabi bus stand in the city cause suffering to passengers, but the authorities have turned a blind eye to the problem.

PHOTO: STAR

## JMB militant arrested in Natore

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A militant of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) has been arrested in Natore.

Abdul Hannan Shah, son of Abdul Bari Shah of Joan Kamarpur under Naldanga upazila, was arrested from Peergachha bazar at around 10.45pm on Wednesday.

The officer-in-charge of Naldanga Police Station told reporters that Hannan is an accused in several cases including one for militancy and another for possessing arms.

Police said he was an associate of Bangla Bhai and former deputy minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukdar Dulu.

## BATB launches free sapling distribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) launched a free sapling distribution programme 2007 at Krishibid Institution at Farmgate in the city yesterday as part of its annual afforestation programme.

Environment and Forest Secretary AHM Rezaul Kabir formally inaugurated the programme as the chief guest while Chief Conservator of Forest AKM Shamsuddin was present as special guest.

A total of 2 lakh saplings of fruit, timber and medicinal trees will be distributed this year at different points of the city, said the BATB officials.

The people can collect saplings from the Krishibid Institute from June 22, from Nandan at Dhanmondi on June 24, from Nandan Mega shop at Gulshan on June 25, from Lavender at Gulshan on June 26, from Family Needs at Uttara on June 27 and from CSD at Cantonment on June 28.

Appreciating the BATB's initiative, AHM Rezaul Kabir said, "The private companies should come forward to strengthen the government's campaign for tree plantation in order to protect the environment for the next generation."

He also said participatory approach of both the public and private organisations is needed to preserve the forest.

As part of its corporate social responsibility, the BATB started its sapling distribution programme in 1980 and since then it has planted and distributed more than 5.50 crore saplings, said Golam Mayeenuddin, deputy managing director of BATB.

Saiful Bahari Mahapar, head of corporate and regulatory affairs, also spoke.

Later, the secretary and chief conservator distributed saplings to several guests.

## Orientation on first aid for acid victims ends

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur.

An orientation programme for doctors and nurses on administering instant treatment to acid victims ended in Gazipur yesterday.

The programme, which began on June 18 at the district civil surgeon auditorium, was organised by Acid Survivors Foundation (ASF).

Three acid survivors and 200 doctors and nurses attended the programme.

The acid survivors recounted how they fell victim to acid violence, adding that the accused criminals in all the three incidents are now behind the bar.

Dr Rebecca Milton, manager of ASF medical unit and Dr Sharif Hasan, associate professor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Medical University also spoke on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Matra and Payokat Bangladesh, two NGOs, in collaboration with Health and Family Welfare Ministry and Save the Children USA organised a workshop in the district yesterday.

The workshop titled, "HIV on Mass Media and AIDS Dissemination Activities" was held at the Gazipur District Parishad auditorium.

Civil Surgeon Hafizur Rahman Khan chaired the programme while Shahabuddin Khan, deputy director of Islamic Foundation and Hasina Akhter, district information officer, also spoke.

## Pak traders offer reward for Rushdie beheading

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani traders yesterday announced a reward of 10 million rupees (165,000 dollars) for anyone who beheads Salman Rushdie following Britain's decision to award the novelist a knighthood.

The announcement came during a protest by 200 traders at Aabpara market, one of the main bazars in Islamabad, an AFP photographer said.

"We will give 10 million rupees to anyone who beheads Rushdie," the secretary general of the Islamabad Traders Association, Ajmal Baluch, told the cheering crowd.

He also called on Islamic countries to boycott British products in protest at the honour to Rushdie, the author of "The Satanic Verses", which some Muslims consider blasphemous.

Participants chanted "Cut off the head of Salman Rushdie!" and carried placards calling for Rushdie to be killed.

Other placards demanded that the Pakistani government give the country's highest award to fugitive Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar and Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in response to the British move, witnesses said.

Rushdie was issued with a death sentence by Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989 in a fatwa that has never been revoked.

Khomeini's successor as supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said in January 2005 he still believed the British novelist's killing would be authorised by Islam.

## Saudi king meets Sarkozy to discuss cooperation

AFP, Paris

Saudi King Abdullah, on a week-long visit to Europe, met yesterday with France's newly elected President Nicolas Sarkozy to discuss bilateral economic cooperation.

The trip to France was meant to precede a Paris meeting aimed at ending the crippling political deadlock in Lebanon. But the French foreign ministry said yesterday the conference had been postponed and could take place in mid-July.

Sarkozy's spokesman said the president and the king, who were meeting for the first time, had "discussed major economic cooperation projects" and had agreed that their advisors would draw up a review of these projects.

The Saudi leader met with Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner earlier in the day and both men reaffirmed their support Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas in his trial

of strength with Hamas rivals, French officials said.

Abdullah arrived in France from Spain, where he had met with King Juan Carlos and held talks on economic relations and the situation in the Middle East with Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.

Juan Carlos bestowed on the king Spain's highest distinction, the Order of the Golden Fleece.

The pro-communist opposition group United Left dubbed the award an "insult to democrats," charging that Saudi Arabia "does not respect basic human rights," particularly those of women.

Abdullah is due to head to Poland on June 24 before leaving for Egypt and Jordan between June 25 and June 28, according to Saudi diplomatic sources.

## Bogra cop suspended for demanding bribes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

A sub-inspector of Sherpur Police Station was temporarily suspended yesterday for demanding bribes from a plaintiff of a woman repression case.

SI Samsul Haque, who was the investigation officer of the case, was suspended at the directive of the police super, said Assistant Police Super (B-circle) FM Ashrafuzzaman.

Sherpur police said Farida Khatun, wife of Abdur Razzak, filed the case under the women and children repression prevention act on May 20. But the accused have been giving threats to her and her husband to force them to withdraw the case.

On Tuesday, Farida and her husband came to the police station and met SI Samsul to inform him of the threats. But SI Shamsul told them that he would submit the charge sheet if they give him Tk 10,000, the police said, adding that he also misbehaved with them when they refused to pay the money.



PHOTO: ISPR

Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff (Logistic) Commodore SMM Zaman gives away the trophy to the best allround new entry sailor at the passing out parade of a batch of Bangladesh Navy on the BNS Titumir Parade ground in Khulna yesterday.

## EC drafting rules

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made in that behalf, be made by the President."

In recent times, the appointment of Justice MA Aziz to the post of CEC and former EC secretary SM Zakaria and former police chief Modabbir Hossain Chowdhury as election commissioners triggered huge controversy, leading to a political crisis that contributed to postponement of the parliamentary election scheduled for January 22.

CEC Aziz and all the election commissioners resigned following the declaration of the state of emergency on January 11.

"Had there been a law regarding the appointment, there could have been a board or council to scrutinise the tentative candidates [for the appointment to the post of the chief election commissioner or an election commissioner]. If done through scrutiny, the appointments could have been better," the election commissioner said.

"In absence of the law, the governments have appointed persons as per their choice," Sahul said, adding, "We have discussed it and moved for making a law. The future appointments will be better on the basis of the law if we can make it."

About the preparation of voter list with photographs, he said the field level task for electoral rolls will begin in Rajshahi City Corporation area in the next month. Tenure of the Rajshahi City Corporation office bearers has expired. Election to the city corporation can be held if the electoral roll with photographs is completed, Sahul said.

He said the task for electoral roll with photographs will begin in Khulna City Corporation area after completion of the task in Rajshahi city.

CEC ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday made a sudden visit to Sripur municipality to see the progress of the pilot project for simultaneously preparing the voter list with photographs and national identity cards.

He visited a few voter registration centres and exchanged views with the people who went to register their names in the voter list.

"The future of the country's democracy depends largely on a fair voter list. The culture of casting fake votes will stop once the voter list is prepared with photographs. We hope the task [of the pilot project] will be completed on time [June 30]," the CEC told reporters, expressing satisfaction at the progress of the task.