

# Guidebook trade behind artificial textbook crisis

## Syndicate of publishers, traders manipulates supply, prices

SURANJITH DEABNATH

Some unscrupulous school textbook publishers in collusion with some dishonest government officials are creating an artificial crisis of textbooks on the market, to boost the sales of so-called guide books, also published by them.

Secondary school students are being forced to turn to guidebooks sold on the market since they are not being able to follow the school curriculum due to the false text book crisis.

Sources said a syndicate of publishers including some who won government tenders for publishing textbooks, are delaying distribution of secondary level textbooks to hike up the sales of their guidebooks.

According to the Notebook Prohibition Act-1980, no notebooks or such type of books of up to Class VII can be printed and marketed. Besides, no notebooks of above class VIII can be printed or marketed without permission of the National Curriculum

and Textbook Board (NCTB).

While students of class VI to X are yet to get the textbooks even after one and half months since the academic year began, different types of guidebooks are flooding the market all over the country, despite a recent crackdown on unscrupulous publishers initiated by the government.

The publishers are also spending a huge amount of money for advertising their guidebooks, including TV advertisements.

The top guidebooks on the market at the moment include Panjeri from Panjeri Publication Ltd, Janani from Hasan Book Depot, Anupam from Kajal Brothers, Lecture from Lecture Publication Ltd, Anushandhan from Chaki Kalpona Publications, Jupiter from Jupiter Publications, Talent from Ideal Publications, Diganta from Popular Library, Galaxy from Galaxy Publications, Popi from Popi Publications, Star from Biswa Parichoy Publication Ltd, and Jhalak from Moushumi Publication.

Sources in the education ministry and

NCTB alleged that the syndicate works in collusion with some dishonest top officials of the textbook board.

Many of those publishers win government tenders to print textbooks, some of which they get under their own names and some more they get under fake names, with the help of their official partners in crime.

The syndicate then creates an artificial crisis of textbooks on the market by delaying printing and distribution, and in the meantime they do extra business by flooding the market with their guide books.

NCTB sources alleged that Hasan Book Depot alone won tenders worth Tk 22 crore using names of 67 publishers, with the help of NCTB officials in exchange for kickbacks.

Sarker and Sons, Anannya Traders, Abdullah and Sons, Popular Library, Janata, Moushumi, Offset Press, Alamgir Press, and City Publication also won more than one tender each under fake names through similar deals, the sources added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

# Stalled polls in 6 upazilas on April 6

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) yesterday decided to hold the postponed upazila parishad elections in six upazilas on April 6 while re-election at eleven polling stations of eight upazilas on March 16.

This decision was taken at a meeting held at EC Secretariat, Assistant Senior Secretary to the secretariat Abdul Baten said.

Elections to the six upazilas - Brahmanbaria Sadar, Ranganj of Lakshimpur, Barura of Comilla, Belkuchi of Sirajganj, Dighinala of Khagrachhari and Ukha of Cox's Bazar - were postponed due to the violence and electoral irregularities took place just before and during the polling on January 22.

According to the EC's decision, the candidates who joined the race of 22 January

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

# Trapped in tailbacks

## Traffic jam rises on unfit buses, illegal rickshaws, VVIP movements, lax law enforcement

HELEMUL ALAM

Return of unfit buses and illegal rickshaws on the city streets is one of the reasons why traffic congestion has worsened over the last two weeks, say traffic cops and public transport employees.

They blame the tailbacks also on rapid rise in the number of new cars with little expansion of the road network.

Special measures to ensure seamless ride for the VVIP motorcades add to the sufferings of commuters. To make matters still worse, demonstrations blocking roads have intensified in the last few days.

Speaking in return for anonymity, a traffic sergeant said the beat-up buses that were banned from the streets in 2002 are getting back to business with changes on the exterior to look new.

This has been continuing unhindered with the connivance of a section of officials at Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), he added.

Nur Islam, a private bus line staffer, said some 100 out-of-condition buses have returned on Motijheel-Banani route in the last three months including 20 in the last week alone. Similar is the situation along the other

routes.

A sergeant at Zero Point said a huge number of illegal rickshaws have begun crowding the roads after the December 29 election.

He said they often cannot stop rickshaws entering the VIP roads due to manpower constraints and rush of the three-wheeled carts. The simultaneous plying of motorised and non-motorised vehicles severely hampers the traffic movement.

A Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) official said authorised rickshaws, rickshaw-vans and push-carts are far outnumbered by the ones running without permission.

The properly licensed rickshaws total 79,616, rickshaw-vans 7,916 and push-carts 120 against more than 3 lakh unauthorised rickshaws, 50,000 rickshaw-vans and 20,000 push-carts.

A BRTA official said 150 to 200 new vehicles save motorcycles get on the roads across the country everyday. Of them, 40 to 50 join the city traffic.

A sergeant, on duty in Ramna area, said the traffic personnel have to dedicate more time now to clearing the roads for VVIP motorcades as the number of ministers, state ministers and advisers is over 40.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

# Zillur sworn in as president

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran Awami League (AL) leader Zillur Rahman was sworn in as the country's 19th president in a simple ceremony at Bangabhaban yesterday.



The Election Commission (EC) Wednesday declared Zillur, an AL presidential nominee, elected president unopposed. Zillur was the deputy leader of the House.

Among those who witnessed the investiture were Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Speaker Abdul Hamid, Deputy Speaker Shawkat Ali, chief advisers to caretaker governments Fakhruddin Ahmed and Justice Latifur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# 9 killed as bus falls into ditch

## Many other picnickers of Ctg College feared dead

STAR REPORT

At least nine people were killed and over 35 were injured when a bus carrying students of Chittagong Government College on a picnic fell into a ditch beside Bandarban-Chittagong Highway in Bandarban yesterday.

The report on casualties remain scrappy as there were no less than five people still trapped inside the wreck late last night.

"The possibility of the trapped students surviving is small," Additional District Magistrate of Bandarban Mahub Karim told The Daily Star.

Eight of the deceased were identified as Hasan, Farzana, Ovi, Munni, Nipa, guardian Siddiqur Rahman, Dilwara Begum and Kapil Barua. The identity of the other person could not be confirmed.

Members of armed forces, police and firemen said they with

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



Traffic congestion in the capital worsened in the last few weeks. This photo taken yesterday at Farmgate shows the gridlock that stopped all vehicles on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

# Part of Mumbai plot hatched in Pakistan

## Islamabad admits for first time; 'main operator' captured; India hails response

AP, AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan acknowledged for the first time that the Mumbai terrorist attacks were launched from its shores and at least partly plotted on its soil, saying yesterday that it had arrested most of the main suspects including one described as "the main operator."

Interior Ministry chief Rehman Malik said Pakistan has started criminal proceedings against eight suspects some of them also named by India as the masterminds of the attacks but he reiterated that authorities needed more evidence from New Delhi to secure convictions.

The revelations suggest Pakistan is serious about punishing those behind the November

attacks, which killed 164 people and stirred fear that the nuclear-armed neighbors could slide toward war and that Pakistan might be distracted from its struggle against the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

India and the US have pressed Pakistan hard to dismantle Lashkar-e-Taiba, a banned Pakistan-based group fighting Indian rule in the divided Kashmir region that is widely blamed for the Mumbai carnage. Islamabad and New Delhi have fought two out of their three wars since 1947 over the region.

India's Foreign Ministry called Pakistan's announcement "a positive development" and said it would consider Islamabad's request for further information.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

# আমরা শোকাহত



ডঃ মাহমুদ আলী ভূইয়ার সহধর্মিণী এবং বেক্সিমকো গ্রুপের পরিচালক জনাব এম এ কাশেম এবং তার সহধর্মিণী ফার্স্ট লিজ ইন্টারন্যাশনাল লিঃ এর চেয়ারম্যান জনাব রাজিয়া খানমের জ্যেষ্ঠ কন্যা রেবেকা মাহমুদ (৪৯) গত ১২/০২/২০০৯ইং তারিখ রোজ বৃহস্পতিবার স্কয়ার হাসপাতালে ভোর ১.৩০ মিনিটে শেষ নিঃশ্বাস ত্যাগ করেন। (ইন্না লিল্লাহে ওয়া ইন্না ইলাইহে রাজিউন)। তিনি ফার্স্ট লিজ ইন্টারন্যাশনাল লিঃ এর একজন উদ্যোক্তা শেয়ার হোল্ডার ও পরিচালক ছিলেন। মরহুমা ১ ছেলে, ১ মেয়ে, ৩ ভাই ও ১ বোন, বাবা মা ও স্বস্তর শাশুড়ি সহ অসংখ্য সন্তানসহী রেখে গেছেন। কানাডায় অধ্যয়নরত মরহুমার ছেলে দেশে ফেরার পর ১৩ই ফেব্রুয়ারী শুক্রবার বাদ আছর মরহুমার কুমিল্লা জেলায় হোমনা থানার ওপারচর গ্রামে পারিবারিক কবর স্থানে সমাহিত করা হবে।

মরহুমার বিদায়ী দোয়া ও মাগফেরাতের জন্য ৩০ বাবর রোড, মোহাম্মদপুর, ঢাকা-১২০৭, অবস্থিত ঢাকাস্থ নিজ বাসভবনে আগামী ১৪ই ফেব্রুয়ারী বাদ আছর দোয়া মাহফিল/কুলখানীর আয়োজন করা হয়েছে। আত্মীয় স্বজন ও গুণগ্রাহীদের উক্ত অনুষ্ঠানে উপস্থিত থাকার জন্য বিনীত ভাবে অনুরোধ করা যাচ্ছে।

মরহুমার পরিবার বর্গ

# TACKLING RECESSION FALLOUT Dhaka says no to IMF support offer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

IMF offers Bangladesh support in its efforts to offset any negative impact the country may face due to the global financial crisis, but Bangladesh says it does not need such assistance right now.

IMF Director of the Asia and Pacific region Anoop Singh at a press briefing yesterday said IMF has increased its assistance globally and is ready to help Bangladesh. A close dialogue will be maintained over the coming months, he added.

Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed told journalists: "IMF has proposed to give assistance if there is any pressure on balance of payment. However, we have said our overall economic situation is still strong. So we don't need assistance at the moment."

The central bank governor added the IMF proposal might be considered if any negative impact is found after getting the statistics of January and February.

A three-member IMF team led by Singh yesterday met members of the new government and discussed how best IMF could

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

# WE MOURN



We are deeply shocked by sudden death of our beloved Colleague Mrs. Rebecca Mahmud, Sponsor Shareholder and Director of First Lease International Limited on 12/02/2009 at 1.30 AM, in Square Hospital at the age of 49. May Almighty Allah rest her departed soul in peace. We express our deepest condolence on the saddest event. Mrs. Rebecca Mahmud was the wife of Dr. Mahmud Ali Bhuiyan and daughter of Mr. M.A. Qasem, Director of Beximco Group and Mrs. Rajia Khanam, Chairman, First Lease International Limited.

She will be buried at her family graveyard in Operchare, Homna, Comilla on 13/02/2009 after Asar prayer.

Relatives and well wishers are requested to attend her Namaz-E-Janaza on 13/02/2009 at Operchare, Homna, Comilla.

Board of Directors of First Lease International Limited

# WE MOURN



We are deeply shocked by sudden death of our beloved Sponsor Shareholder and Director, Mrs. Rebecca Mahmud, on 12/02/2009 at 1.30 AM, in Square Hospital Limited, at the age of 49. May Almighty Allah rest her departed soul in peace. We express our deepest condolence on the saddest event Mrs. Rebecca Mahmud was the wife of Dr. Mahmud Ali Bhuiyan and daughter of Mr. M.A. Qasem, Director of Beximco Group and Mrs. Rajia Khanam, Chairman First Lease International Limited. She will be buried at her

family graveyard in Operchare, Homna, Comilla on 13/02/09 after Asar prayer.

Relatives and well wishers are requested to attend her Namaz-E-Janaza on 13/02/2009 at Operchare, Homna, Comilla.

Employees of First Lease International Limited