STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday fixed May 24 for passing an order on the leave-to-appeal petition filed against a High Court (HC) verdict.

In an unprecedented move, an HC judge had delivered the verdict in a property related civil case on December 16 last year -a public holiday on the occasion of Victory Day.

During hearing on the leave-to-appeal petition, the delivery of the verdict by Justice Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan, the then HC judge, on a public holiday came to the notice of the three-member bench of the Appellate Division of the SC headed by Chief Justice Syed

Mahmud Hossain. Justice Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan has already retired from the service.

During hearing yesterday, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam said a judge cannot deliver judgement in any case on a public holiday.

The apex court may give a verdict with some guidelines determining the responsibility of the judges for upholding their honesty, competence and transparency, he added.

The attorney general told The Daily Star that the HC judge had delivered the judgement in the absence of any lawyer on a public holiday.

Advocate Mahbubey Alam could not say the subject matter of the case in which the then HC bench of Justice Mizanur Rahman Bhuiyan had delivered the verdict.

One Johura Khanom had filed the leave-toappeal petition with the SC against the HC verdict.

Johura's lawyer Advocate Md Ozi Ullah could not be reached for comments over the phone.



Pedestrians squeeze through narrow slit-like gaps between the pillars of the foot-bridge on the footpath, as some wait to pass through. The photo was taken from the Farmgate area in the capital recently. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Stuck between a foot-bridge and a hard place

Star

LIVE

**FAHMIM FERDOUS** 

To paraphrase Syed Mujtaba Ali, "A footbridge will cure pedestrians' woes, but what will cure the foot-bridge?"

In the capital's Farmgate, a newlyconstructed foot-bridge has become a pedestrian nuisance even before it has for-

2nd Edition

mally opened. The pillars of the bridge have blocked the already narrow footpath in a way that passers-by have to squeeze "through" it instead of around it, and that too can require contortionist-level flexibility for some. "If it doesn't help people

walk through, what's the use of this? Such a waste of money!" said an irked senior citizen while talking to The Daily Star's video journalists about the foot-overpass. "It's just the work of unskilled people."

Being one of Dhaka's central intra-city bus hubs, Farmgate sees heavy foot-traffic on a daily basis, many of who need to cross the road. Particularly on the Ananda Cinema Hall side, the next over-bridge is at Tejturi Bazar and is not wide enough to accommodate the traffic pressure.

The back-story of this over-bridge, adjacent to the Ananda Cinema Hall on one side and the Tejgaon Government Girl's High School on the other, is a classic tale of administrative lethargy and poor planning.

A concrete foot-bridge on this spot was closed by metal bars at entrance and a sign saying "Risky over-bridge, do not cross" by

authorities on July 18, 2014 after a study team of the Bangladesh University of **Engineering and Technology** (Buet) termed it risky for use. It remained in that state for the better part of a year, before demolition work on it began on April 17, 2015. Work on constructing the new steel bridge was completed only recently, meaning it took a little under four years for the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) to

replace the old foot-bridge. And that too not without causing a literal roadblock for people.

Asked about it yesterday, Md Arifur Rahman, superintendent engineer of DNCC's Traffic Engineering Circle, the body in charge of constructing the bridge, took a SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

VESTED PROPERTY RETURN ACT

# Corrupt officials causing delay in implementation

Says citizen cell, demands prompt action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of communal and corrupt officials with ulterior motives are blocking implementation of the Vested Properties Return Act 2001, despite court orders clearing doubts over the matter, said a national citizens' cell that looks into the implementation status of the act.

As many as 2 lakh appeals for recovery of the properties are still pending with the vested property return tribunals, said advocate Subrata Chowdhury at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Against this backdrop, the National Citizen Coordination Cell to Implement the Vested Properties Return Act drew attention of the law ministry and the land ministry to the HC directive.

The listing of any property as enemy property or vested property after March 23, 1974 is illegal and those involved in this would be responsible for the illegal act, said the High Court while disposing of a writ petition filed in 2011. The full verdict was released on the Supreme Court website on April 1 this year.

The government had enacted the act to return the properties listed as enemy properties to its original owners and their beneficiaries, and government officials are instructed to implement the court orders without delay, the HC said. No excuse for any delay would be acceptable.

Some land administration officials have been including more and more properties of the minority communities in the list of enemy properties, in violation of the court's verdict and

directives, according to a press release issued by the cell.

Hindus have lost as much as 26 lakh acres of land between 1965 and 2006 in the country, the press release said citing research by Prof Abul Barakat.

The government may form an exclusive tribunal in each district to dea with appeals filed under Section-10 of the Vested Properties Return Act, the court said, adding that more number of tribunals could be formed in districts with backlog of appeals.

The cell demanded effective actions from the ministries immediately to form such tribunals.

According to the 2001 act and its amendments in 2011, 2012 and 2013, judgements of the Appellate Tribunal is final in regard to the return of vested

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

#### Polls must be free, fair to save democracy

Says Fakhrul STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A free and fair election must be ensured for saving the democratic future of the country, said BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday.

He said this at an iftar programme hosted by BNP at a city hotel for diplomats stationed in Dhaka. "If we fail to ensure a

free, fair, acceptable and inclusive election, democratic future of the country will be destroyed," he said in a written statement.

High commissioners, ambassadors and representatives of countries including India, China, Canada, Australia, the Netherlands, the US, the UK, Pakistan and EU attended the programme along with party leaders and guests.

## Accept 23 UPR recommendations

Rights groups urge govt

**SCAN THE** 

QR CODE

**VIDEO** 

TO WATCH

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alliance of human rights organisations has called upon the government to immediately accept 23 recommendations, on which Bangladesh deferred its decision while taking part in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the UN recently.

A total of 251 recommendations were placed at UPR to improve rights situation in Bangladesh, of which the government accepted 167 and rejected 61. About the remaining 23, the government "sought time" till this year-end to take a decision, saying those were "politically sensitive" and it was "not well-prepared".

The recommendations include ensuring credible investigation into enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, trial and punishment of law enforcement agencies and their members for committing such incidents, repealing a provision that allows child marriage in "special circumstances" in the Child Marriage Restraint Act, and review of the proposed Digital

Security Act to ensure freedom of expression. In a statement, Human Rights Forum Bangladesh (HRFB) also urged the government to review the 61 recommenda-

tions it rejected during the UPR held in Geneva on May 7-18. HRFB, an alliance of 20 rights groups, said the rejection of the recommendations was not "acceptable". During the second cycle of UPR (2012-2016), Bangladesh turned down

SEE PAGE 4 COL 8

## Women aged 18-30 most vulnerable to cyber-crime

Victims' faith in law enforcement low, study finds

Women aged between 18 and 30 years constitute the highest percentage of cyber crime victims at 73.71 percent, according to a recent survey conducted by Cyber Crime Awareness Foundation.

A roundtable was organised by the foundation yesterday at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the capital to share the findings of a survey, conducted on 133 victims of cyber crime incidents.

About 51.13 percent of the victims were women and 48.87 percent were men, said Kazi Mustafiz, convener of the foundation.

Around 54 percent victims of cyber crime are not satisfied with the response of law enforcers after reporting the incidents, the survey has found.

It also found that 39 percent of the victims did not report the cases of cyber crime to law enforcement agencies. Some 23 percent think they would be harassed instead of getting justice, while 25 percent thinks that it would not help them reporting the incidents to law enforcement agencies.

Meanwhile, 30 percent of the victims do not know how to seek help in cases of cyber crime. Other rea-

### WHY VICTIMS DO NOT REPORT



sons not to report the incidents include safeguarding social status and the accused being influential.

Victims of cyber crime think that instant punishment of the criminals, increasing implementation of law and raising awareness among the citizens will help control cyber crime.

The cyber crime incidents which the victims SEE PAGE 4 COL 5

#### DU students seize four buses protesting sexual harassment

UNB, Dhaka

Students of Dhaka University (DU) have seized four buses of Trust Paribahan and kept them on the campus, protesting alleged sexual harassment of a fellow female student by a helper of the transport service on

May 17. Helper Sahabuddin allegedly misbehaved with the victim -- a student of finance -- and sexually harassed her while she was travelling in the bus at Karwan Bazar on Thursday. Later, she got down at Shahbagh intersection, said victim's friend Rashed

Mahmud. After the incident, friends of the victim seized one bus of the company the same day and demanded punishment for the

helper. As the bus authorities remained indifferent, students seized another three buses yesterday. The four buses were kept at Mall Chattar on the campus, witnesses said.

Proctor Dr AKM Golam Rabbani said he heard the matter but no written complaint was filed in this regard.

shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH) where he passed away on April 17.

officer of the case submitted a petition

seeking permission to include a murder

ent areas of Dhaka soon after the incident.

They were later placed on a two-day

Meantime, the Supreme Court on May 17

fixed today for passing an order on two

petitions that challenged the High Court

order asking the owners of two buses --

BRTC and Sajan Paribahan -- to pay Tk 1

A four-member bench of the Appellate

Division headed by Chief Justice Syed

crore to the family of Rajib Hossain.

The bus drivers were arrested from differ-

charge section in the case.

After Rajib's death, the investigation

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### Bring down JSC exams to 650 marks Chairmen of all boards propose

to edu ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Students of class-VIII are likely to sit for a 650-mark Junior School Certificate (JSC) examination next year, following a proposal made by the chairmen of all education boards.

They proposed to the education ministry to bring down textbook numbers and exam marks in a bid to lower the pressure on studies.

At present, JSC examinees sit for 850-mark test including an optional subject. If the proposal is approved, the students will sit for a 650-mark set of exams on seven subjects.

The approval is awaiting a decision of the National Curriculum Coordination Committee meeting, which will be held on May 27. The decision was made yesterday at a meeting on the

proposal, chaired by Sohorab Hossain, secretary of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education division. A meeting source said the ministry nodded in favour of the board chairmen.

According to the proposal, students will not have to sit for tests on Agricultural Studies, Home Economics and their optional subject.

The board chairmen also proposed for dropping multiple choice questions (MCQ) from the 2019 examination.

### DEATH OF RAJIB Bus drivers denied bail again

SC order on compensation today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected the bail petitions of two drivers accused in a case filed for the killing of Rajib Hossain, a thirdyear student of Government Titumir College. The accused are Wahid Ali, 35, and

Khorshed, 50, bus drivers of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) and Sajan Paribahan. Metropolitan Magistrate Md Mazharul Islam passed the order after the drivers'

lawyers submitted petitions seeking bail for their clients. In the order, the magistrate said their bail petitions were rejected considering the

depth of offences, adding that the case is now at the primary stage of investigation. Rajib lost his hand after it got stuck between two speeding buses of BRTC and

Sajan Paribahan trying to overtake each other in the capital's Bangla Motor area on April 3.

Soon after the accident, he was taken to SEE PAGE 4 COL 4 | Samorita Hospital in Panthapath and later

Mahmud Hossain fixed the date after holding hearing on the petitions filed by BRTC and Sajan Paribahan. On May 8, following a petition, the HC

remand.

ordered the bus authorities to pay Tk 1 crore to Rajib's family.