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HSC results



This year's HSC and equivalent examination results were published on September 7 with some upward trend in the pass percentage and top graders. The result shows an overall pass percentage of 65.65 which was 59 last year.

Board-wise pass percentage stands like this: Dhaka Board 74.75, Rajshahi 56.76, Comilla 63.73, Jessore 54.40, Chittagong 61.54, Barisal 61.50, Sylhet 65.45, Madrassah 75.23 and Technical Education Board 69.74. The pass percentage of female students is 64.64, male 66.36, which is a good sign for the efforts to increase the standard of female education in the country.

The top institutions in the country are Notre Dame College, Viqarunnessa College, City College, Bir Sherstha Noor Mohammad Rifles College, Dhaka College, Dhaka Commerce College, Motijheel Ideal College, Holy Cross

College, Rajuk Uttara Model College and Residential Model College of Dhaka. Notre Dame College bagged 875 GPA-5 out of 2181 candidates and Viqarunnessa 519 out of 1143.

It shows that education is for city and town people, not for the rural people. Rural people have been neglected and will remain neglected. They will not get quality education.

In some developing countries good educational institutions are being established in rural areas. The matter deserves a closer look.

Time has come to think of decentralisation not only educational institutions but also other establishments.

Md. Masum Billah

Post Primary Basic And Continuing Education (PACE) Programme, BRAC Head Office, Dhaka

Bangladeshi community in UK

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Mr. Md. Anwarul Kabir, Assistant professor of AIUB for his article entitled 'A Glimpse of the UK Bangladeshi Community' published recently in your daily.

As a member of the UK Bangladeshi community I am always curious to know more about the growth of this new community. Mr. Kabir's article has prudently explained different cultural issues of Sylheti people (who are the major constituent of the UK Bangladeshi community) relevant to kinship and the migration processes. However, in this context, another point that I would like to add is that most of the first generation people of the UK Bangladeshi community migrated from different remote villages of Sylhet division with an agro-based cultural background. Most of them had no formal education with no or little knowledge of English language. This is really an interesting study area to investigate how they could adapt themselves with this society.

Many researches have been carried out on different immigrant communities in the UK. Unfortunately, there is no major research carried out on the UK Bangladeshi community. I hope some scholars from Bangladeshi community will come forward to fulfill this gap.

Farhana Rahman
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Phulbari coal: some questions

While condoling the loss of lives at Phulbari, I cannot but praise the courage and unity of the people to protect their interest related to resources and the environment. The course of events raises some of the issues pertinent to planning

and development of Bangladesh that citizens of the country must know. These are:

- What is the 'win-win situation' as expressed by Mr. Mahmudur Rahman on many occasions regarding gas and coal extraction?

- What did he mean by 'outsiders and unrepresentative' bodies involved in the Phulbari incident? Fact is that the Asia Energy Corp. (AEC) is the sole outsider in this case and we saw agitating people were locals who had been protesting against the project for the last several years.

- Was there any tender/bid, national or international, floated to exploit the coal resources? In that event what were the contents in this document i.e. was the area portrayed as a vacant landmass, thinly populated or uninhabited by human beings?

- Nearby the Barapukuria coal is being extracted by shaft-mining procedure without any significant damage to other resources, population and the environment. Then, why a similar method of mining was not advocated or adopted in case of Phulbari? (often arguments of accidents are put forward to justify the latter case, but did not we have worse accidents in Magurchara and elsewhere and the government utterly failed to negotiate for appropriate compensation?)

- We have heard about an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in case of Phulbari coal project. One of the key elements of EIA is that the findings should be made public, particularly in the area concerned, so that the people can review, assess and express their opinions for better implementation of a large project, like the Phulbari one.

The above issues and other related matters were not adequately addressed and the whole project operation yielded nothing but:

- Produced a number of national and local collaborators at the cost of people's interest and local envi-

ronment.
- Produced a number of local touts and sycophants who worked to sell out the life and livelihood of the local people, and also to play a key role in destroying the biodiversity of the whole region.

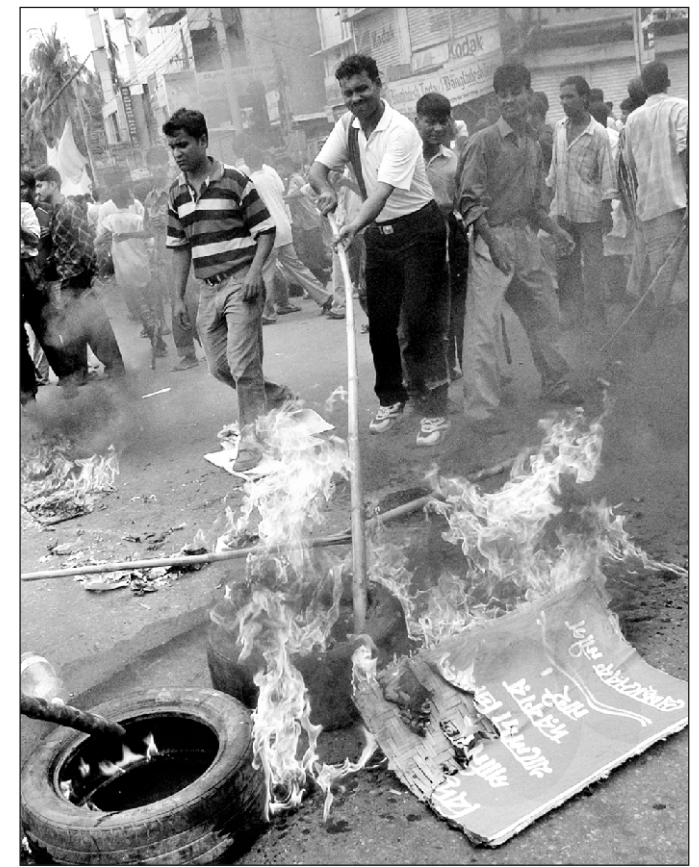
- Mr. Mahmudur Rahman has assured the AEC of all government support in their effort to continue their work at Phulbari. How could he do that when he, being at the helm of policy making in the development process of this country, is supposed to protect the interests of the people and the country?

I must ask the government machinery that they evaluate and educate themselves about the situation that developed in the Karnafuli Multipurpose Project (KMP) at Kaptai in the 1960s. At that time the Pakistan government assumed that only 3,000 hill people would be affected by the Kaptai Lake on the Karnafuli and that the affected people would be resettled. This was so, KMP initially envisaged the formation of 655 sq.km. in the early 1960s but it submerged an area of over 1036 sq.km by the early 1970s. As a result, more than 100,000 people were displaced and 40 per cent of the Chittagong Hill Tracts' total farmland was lost. Only about 5,000 families (or about 25,000) were resettled. Many took shelter in other parts of the district and some left the country. The local people hardly benefited from the economic and institutional opportunities from this project.

The fallout of this project was far reaching and devastating for the local people. This led to social and political unrest and later culminated in a long-drawn insurgency.

Our leaders and policy makers in the government should read history.

Dr. K. Maudood Elahi
Professor, Dept. of Environmental Science, Stamford University Bangladesh, Dhaka



Violence during hartal

The police and pickets often get embroiled in bloody clashes during opposition programmes. This barbaric practice must come to an end in the interest of all.

Our democracy is like a car without wheels which is standing in the middle of the road, violating traffic rules and creating traffic jam. The political parties should try to reactivate it.

Farhad Khan
Uttara, Dhaka

The future of democracy

I read Mr. Badiul Alam Majumdar's column 'Elections and the future of democracy' on 'Point-Counterpoint' with great interest. Given the fact that the next parliamentary election is impending, there will be projects for many of us to draw some lessons as to how the democratic system in Bangladesh is working and how to have an objective evaluation of the process. Although his article addresses many of the predominant issues of the days of democracy in Bangladesh, it hardly shoots any glance into the remarkable success Bangladesh has made so far. With an academic framework in mind, I would like to present some of the points missing in his article.

Firstly, there has never been any democracy in the world where there has been government of the people (because people do not directly orient with the day to day running of the government). It has never been by the people (because people do not work as government, rather political parties form them), for the people (because government policies do not always favour the public

opinion or the best interest of the people). What Abraham Lincoln said was an unworkable political philosophy. You can always say what you want as a political leader, but reality might always beg for further discounts. The reality of democracy counts two factors, in fact two golden rules: free contesting and free participation. Bangladesh, as a study of democracy, very much identifies with the rules given the fact that none in Bangladesh is barred from contesting as a candidate or barred from participating in the voting process.

Secondly, the advances of democracy always remain as a subjective term. In politics, there is no common objective unitary goal for all as there are philosophical and intellectual differences from man to man, and thereby, political party to political party. Democracy allows the individual being to behave as individual and vote accordingly to express his opinion. Like the individual nature of mankind in democracy, the political parties and their behaviour as an entity also remain divisive. The only place to form any

conformity remains the strategic bargain table where each of us may argue and debate on the best course for the nation. If the bargain succeeds, it may shape a policy acceptable to parties. If it fails, you look out for future prospects and work for it. You work for it - not because you might be able to guarantee success in future, but because there has been no one party to remain in political power forever. In Bangladesh, we may have a huge lack of bargain in the political process, but election lets us have the inspiration for retrials to change governments for their failed policies. The short span of democracy that Bangladesh has been through seems to prove this analysis. The problems like lack of bargain that relates to the institutional democratisation cannot be solved by anyone. Rather the issues would prolong into future generations as an endless cycle of debate. Democracy is never good enough as a system, as it does not accept any finite goal. It is a system for change: either for good or bad.

I understand the frustration of Mr.

Majumdar after observing the daily doses of wrongs the government, the political parties, and people at large indulge into in our political arena. But to my understanding, Bangladesh has done mostly good since the beginning, given the fact that it has placed higher importance to shape the structural norms for all to accommodate the basic principles of an emerging democracy. No one in the nightmares wonders to be a dictator or autocrat in Bangladesh.

The country has slowly but gradually opened itself into the value-system of the liberal democracies, and success in the unregulated market economy seems to prove it. A robust free press just makes this trend a potential for further enlightenment. Democracy in Bangladesh cannot fail, unless we all fail.

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