

13 students vie for each seat Govt school admission tests begin tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

More than 80 thousand candidates are likely to vie for some 6,288 seats in 24 government high schools in the city this year.

Yesterday was the last day of submission of application forms for admission into the government schools.

But the exact number of the total applicants were not available immediately. Last year's statistics and probable figures provided by the school authorities show that as many as 13 students are expected to compete for each seat.

Distribution of the application forms began on January 2.

Admission tests of the schools divided into three groups - A, B and C - will be held on January 9, 10 and 11 respectively. The schools have been divided into groups for handling the admission tests properly.

Schools under group 'A' will enroll 1855 students. Government Laboratory School will take 290 children, Nawabpur School 282, Mirpur High School 396, Motijheel Girls' High School 310, Khilgaon School 195, New Govt Girls' High School 141, Islamia Govt

School 136 and Mohammadpur High School 105 students.

Under group 'B' there are eight schools who have 1928 vacant seats. Dhanmondi Girls' School will take 210 students, Armanitola School 207, Sher-e-Bangla Boys' School 400, Banglabazar Girls' School 200, Govt Science College (School Branch) 150, Motijheel Boys' High School 257, Narinda School 323 and Dhaka Govt Muslim School 171 students.

Another eight schools under group 'C' will enroll 2445 students. Dhaka Collegiate School will take 265 students, Qamrunnesa Girls' High School in Tikatuli 185, Dhanmondi Boys' School 469, Sher-e-Banglanagar Girls' School 196, Tejgaon Girls' School 354, Ganobhaban High School 503, Tejgaon Boys' School 260 and Qamrunnesa High School in Dhanmondi will enroll 256 students.

When contacted, officials in the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education said three sets of question papers were prepared for the three groups of schools. And a committee of the directorate will supervise the entire admission procedure, they said.



A press conference was held to highlight the features of the new International School Dhaka (ISD) opening shortly. The institution will be run by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS). From left are Ms Fiona Findlay, the Principal, Dr Michael Maybury of ECIS and Will Kiddell, Director of Studies.

International School Dhaka OPENING SEPTEMBER 1999

A new comprehensive English medium school of international standard run by the European Council of International Schools (ECIS) opens in Dhaka in September.

Announcing this at a press conference in the city, Dr Michael Maybury, executive secretary of ECIS, the largest association of international schools worldwide, claimed that the International School Dhaka would maintain highest quality of education with highly qualified teaching staff from home and abroad.

The principal of the school Fiona Findlay and Director of Studies Will Kiddell were also present at the press conference.

Some 500 schools in 100 countries are members of the ECIS.

The school, first of its kind in Bangladesh, will run nursery (3 years) to grade 5 in the first phase and the admission process begins on Saturday. The school is located in Basundhara in the city. It will also open middle and upper level classes in phases.

The school, being built on 5.5 acres of land, is a joint venture project worth about Tk 20

JP will never be B team of any party : Ershad

Apart from taking part in united movement with other political parties, Jatiya Party will also go its own way demanding all elections under caretaker government, reports UNB.

"Jatiya Party will never be 'B' team of any political party," said JP chairman H M Ershad while addressing an emergency meeting of the presidium that adopted a resolution on joining the opposition movement.

The ex-president also told the meeting that in the united movement, party leaders and workers would have to play significant role and organisational strength be shored up to assume power in the next election.

The emergency meeting on Wednesday decided that no leader of the party, except chairman Ershad, should make any statement to the press to avert any confusion. The secretary general may go in print through press release.

It asked all coordinators of district units of the party to complete council by March next. Efforts will be made to hold the central council shortly.

Khaleda flies to Arabia

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia left for Saudi Arabia yesterday.

She will perform Umrah and offer feteah at the Rawaja of Prophet Hazrat Mohammad. She will also have a check-up at the King Faisal Hospital where she underwent an operation for arthritis in 1996, BNP sources said.

The former prime minister is paying the visit at the invitation of King Fahad Bin Abdul Aziz. She is expected to return on January 18.

The opposition leader is accompanied by, among others, former Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia and ex-mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin.

Top party leaders and a large number of activists saw her off at the Zia International Airport at noon.

This is her third visit to Saudi Arabia. Earlier she visited the kingdom in November 1996 and February last year.

Responsible politics

But the faults were within reasonable limits that characterise elections everywhere in the developing world. So where is the fault of the CEC, and why this Constitutional Office should suddenly be made a part of political controversy?

Let us examine the facts in Pabna-2 by polls after the defeat in which BNP has intensified its demand for CEC's resignation. The first point is that till date there has been no written official application by the BNP to the EC demanding cancellation of the by-polls and re-election in the same. Demand has only been made in public meetings, through press statements.

The Pabna by-polls was held on the 10th of December. At 2.13 p.m. on the election day, according to EC sources, a letter under the signature of Harris Chowdhury of BNP was submitted to the EC office at Dhaka raising objection against the way polls were conducted in 23 centres. However the letter only named 11 centres. The rest 12 centres remained unnamed.

At the close of polls 15 complaints were submitted to the CEC, complaints against 11 centres under the signature of the BNP candidate Selim Reza, handed over to him while the former was boarding the helicopter at Pabna, and 4 sent to him by fax. The CEC immediately forwarded the complaints to the Returning Officer (RO) for investigation. During the investigation by the RO the complainants never showed up nor were they represented by anybody, nor did they supply any evidence or witnesses to support their complaints. So what was the RO supposed to do?

On the 14th of December the candidate Selim Reza sent a fax to the CEC saying that he could not present any evidence to the RO because time was too short. However in this fax he expanded his complaint from the original 15 centres to cover all centres demanding an 'inquiry and justice' by the CEC about the conduct of polls in all centres. In this letter the candidate DID NOT ASK FOR CANCELLATION OF THE POLLS OR FOR RE-POLLING, just for 'inquiry'.

But by then BNP had already conducted a daylong hartal on the 13th. Another fact that needs to be considered is that till date there has been no written complaint from the BNP against any polling personnel in any of the centres of the Pabna-2 by-poll.

This writer was present with the CEC during his visit to various centres on the polling day. Immediately on arrival by helicopter, several BNP leaders met the CEC and complained that polling agents of their party were forcibly thrown out of many centres. CEC immediately set out to visit those centres. While in the centres included in the BNP complaint the CEC asked the candidate himself to name the polling agents who were thrown out, or show the list of those who were

supposed to be on duty. Candidate Selim Reza failed to give names or to produce any list of BNP polling agents who were supposed to be in the centres in question. On inquiry it was revealed that BNP had not sent any polling agents in many centres to start with. At one stage BNP candidate said 'We did not give any polling agents in these centres because of fear for their lives. Since we could not ensure their safety, so we did not put any polling agents.' This explanation was quite in contrast to what was said earlier while lodging the complaint.

Prior to the polls BNP submitted two complaints to the EC about the conduct of the ruling party ministers. One complaint said that ministers were using government vehicles and other protocol privileges in the election campaign. The other complaint was the DC and the SP were seen with the state minister for information, Abu Sayeed, during his election campaigns. A two-member Electoral Inquiry Committee, with one sub-judge and one senior assistant judge, was set up to look into the charges. Notices were issued to both sides to appear before the Committee. Nobody from BNP showed up. The complainants were not present in person nor did any duly authorised person represent them.

As is clear from the above, BNP appears to have suffered from some sort of ambivalence about how seriously to participate in the Pabna-2 elections. It surely did not take many of the EC procedures seriously. It did not also follow through with their complaints. It is difficult to understand why not. Given the above background BNP's demand for the resignation of the CEC appears to come more from a political decision rather than from the facts of the Pabna by-poll. If that be the case we are forced to state that such a course of action will necessarily politicise a vital institution in the country whose status in politics must be maintained at all cost.

We recall that the Chief of the last caretaker government, Justice Habibur Rahman with the consent of all major political parties appointed the present CEC. BNP accepted Abu Hena as the CEC. For it now to start questioning his neutrality just because it lost a by-election does not speak well of its own credibility. If there is evidence of gross misconduct against the present CEC, let the BNP submit it to President Shahabuddin. The President enjoys the trust of all concerned. He will definitely initiate the appropriate judicial procedure if the BNP complaints justify it. That will be the most responsible and the most democratic step to take.

Meanwhile we urge our political parties not to politicise the Constitutional Office of the CEC. We need this office to remain above all partisan fights and political considerations. Please do not muddy this office.



Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal convenor Khurshid Khan MP distributing rice among the destitutes in Dhanmondi yesterday on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

Forest being raised on sea beach

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 7: The Department of Forests has been raising a forest of tamarisk trees on 120 hectares on the sea beach to make it more attractive as tourist spot, reports BSS.

Minister for Environment and Forests Sajeda Chowdhury today visited the afforestation project and asked the officials to complete it within the stipulated time.

The government has been spending Tk 42 lakh on the project undertaken last fiscal year. It will be completed by 2001.

Terming the sea beach the highly prospective tourism centre, the minister said necessary steps would be undertaken to plant other trees on the sea beach.

The creation of forests on the sea beach was first undertaken in 1974 under the directive of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Afterwards, it suffered extensive damage due to natural disasters.

Death anniversary

The first death anniversary of Salauddin Ahmed, a leading businessman, will be observed today, reports BSS.

Ahmed, 47, was the director of the Kohinor Jute Mills and specialised jute yarn and twin mills, Khulna.

A milad mahfil will be held in this connection at his residence at Road No 9, Dhanmondi residential area today after Asr prayers.

Qulkhwan

Qulkhwan of Rowshon Ara Begum, wife of late Dr Bande Ali Ahmed, will be held today after Jumma prayers at the residence of her second son F Q M Faruq, Member, Bangladesh T&T Board at 28, Baily Road, says a press release.

She died on Wednesday at BIRDEM hospital. She was 82. Relatives and friends have been requested to attend her qul.

Obituary

A M M Tafakur Hossain, former Director of Traffic of Bangladesh Railways, died on January 6 at 5:15 am, says a press release.

He was born on the 1st of February 1924 in Madaripur. He graduated in 1944 from Rajshahi Government college. He subsequently joined the Bengal Railway. He is the elder brother of HT Imam, the first cabinet secretary of Bangladesh. He left behind his wife, two sons, five daughters and 16 grandchildren.

His second namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gano Bhabon Mosque after Jumma prayers today. He will be buried at Budizibi graveyard in Mirpur. Relatives, friends are requested to attend the namaz-e-janaza and pray for his departed soul. His qulkhwan will be held at 12/2, Iqbal Road, Mohammadpur after Asr prayers on Sunday.

Godown of garment factory gutted

By Staff Correspondent

A godown of a garment factory was gutted in a fire at Baridhara in the city early yesterday.

The fire started at about 1:45 am at 745 Nayanagar, Mol-larpura of Baridhara under Badda thana. The factory belongs to Zipro Group of Cos.

Fire Brigades source said that the fire could have been originated from a burning mosquito coil. And the loss was estimated at about Tk 2 lakh.

Fire fighters from three stations - Kurmitola, Tongi and Tejgaon - rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control after one and a half hours struggle.

A case has been lodged with Badda thana.

Beheaded body recovered

By Staff Correspondent

A beheaded body of a young man was recovered from the bank of Turag river near Gabtali in the city yesterday noon.

The identity of the young man could not be known. Police said the body bore several marks and the head was separated from the body. Police recovered the body from the bank of Turag river at Gabtali at about 1:30 pm yesterday.

The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) morgue for autopsy. A case has been lodged with Mirpur thana in this connection.

Distribution of pry books to continue

The Primary and Mass Education Division yesterday asked the concerned authorities to continue free distribution of primary school books till January 14 before the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation, reports BSS.

The distribution 'which began on January 3' will resume on January 25, after the Eid, it said.

NGOs in CHT to have different modus operandi

By Special Correspondent

The fourth meeting of the committee to prepare a guideline for operations of NGOs in Chittagong Hill Tracts was held at the CHT affairs ministry yesterday.

According to sources the committee is nearing completion of its guideline which will be sent to the prime minister for her approval.

The NGOs working in the hills are likely to have different modus operandi in the CHT with rates of their service charge and interest varying with those charged elsewhere in the country, sources said.

Bir Bahadur MP chaired the meeting.



WAITING FOR WORK : Porters sit idle at the Banglabazar book market as book sellers from the countryside who employ them for collecting and packing books are nowhere in sight. Though January is usually the peak season for the publishing houses, it is yet to prove so this year.

Old Scouts Reunion Feb 10

A day-long Old Scouts Reunion will be held on February 10 at the National Scout Training Centre, Mouchak, Gazipur during the 6th Bangladesh National Scout Jamboree to be held from February 5 to 11, at the same venue, says a press release.

The old scouts who were associated with the scout movement are eligible to attend the ceremony.

Interested old scouts have been requested to register their names with the Jamboree Secretariat at the NHQ by January 28. Registration fee is Tk 100 per person.

They may attend the ceremony along with their spouses and children. For each accompanying person.

Programme on 137th birth anniversary of Vivekananda

A two-day programmes to mark the 137th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda begins at the Ramkrishna Mission today, says a press release.

Today's programmes including special puja and bhajans begins at 8 am.

A discussion on 'Present world and Swami Vivekananda' will be held at 5 pm. A musical soiree will also be held at 7:30 pm.

Another discussion on 'Swami Vivekananda and the Youth' will be held tomorrow at 5 pm. A voluntary blood donation programme will also be held tomorrow at 2 pm and a film on 'Swami Vivekananda' will be screened at 7:30 pm.

Another shark caught at Bay

COX'S BAZAR, Jan 7 (APB): Fishermen have caught another giant shark, weighing about one ton, from the Bay of Bengal near Saint Martin's Island.

The shark, about 18-feet in length and 12-feet in breadth, was caught from the shallow waters of the Bay in the early hours of Wednesday, three days after a ten-mound shark was netted at the same place, the fishermen said.

They said both the sharks were very ferocious, locally known as Bagha Hangar. Local experts said, sharks of this kind live in the ocean and are not normally available in the Bay of Bengal. The two may have come in the Bay waters after losing their path.

Thana health complexes to be upgraded

MUNSHIGANJ, Jan 7: The government has taken up a programme to upgrade the country's thana health complexes from 21 to 50 beds and district sadar hospitals from 50 to 100, reports UNB.

Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf said this while addressing a function marking the opening of a nursing institute here today.

The minister told the function that every year 30 to 40 per cent patients of the country go abroad for treatment, wasting a lot of foreign currency.

The government has established Sheikh Mujib Medical University and increased the number of medical colleges to 13 from 8 to check the trend, and make specialised treatment facilities available in the country, he said.

He said the government was setting up nursing institutes in district towns to raise the standard of nursing profession.

Dhaka Divisional Director (Service) Dr Kazi Sahid Ahmad, Civil Surgeon Afroz Haque and Nursing Institute Instructor Mahmuda Amin also spoke on the occasion.

Timbers worth Tk 2 lakh recovered

RANGAMATI, Jan 7: Forest department men yesterday recovered valuable timber-worth over Tk 2 lakh, illegally extracted from Karnaphuli Range under Kaptai thana, reports APB.

A source in the local forest office said, acting on a tip off, their men recovered the timber measuring about 300 cubic feet from eight sunkenboats in Karnaphuli river.

ICMAB students continue their protest campaign

By DU Correspondent

About 600 students of the Institute of Cost and Management Accounts of Bangladesh (ICMAB) formed a human chain from the Matshya Bhaban to the Press Club at around 12 noon in the city yesterday protesting the authorities decision to raise tuition fees.

The activists of ABP earlier brought out a procession from in front of the institute in the morning and paraded toward the Press Club.

Students under the banner of 'Andolan Baftabayan Parisad' (ABP) have been agitating since December 20 to realise their 20-point demand including immediate reopening of the institute.

The ICMAB authorities on December 30 put the institute under lock and key for an indefinite period following what they said "a brawl with the students".

The ABP extended a three-day ultimatum to the authorities to reopen the institute, warning a tougher actions otherwise.

They will submit a memorandum to the Prime Minister today to press home their demands.

Tofail opens bridge, road at Bhola

BHOLA, Jan 7: Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed said here today that the present government believed in the politics of uplifting of the status and empowerment of the commonman, reports BSS.

Inaugurating a 26-metre bridge at Alimuddin Bazar and the 13-kilometre Doulatkhan-Banglabazar-Udoypur road here, the minister said the government considered the commonman as the source of all power.

"So we are implementing different development activities for their socio-economic emancipation," he said.

Criticizing the entente of BNP and Jatiya Party, Tofail who is also the presidium member of the ruling Awami League said the people are more conscious now and know who their real friends are.

"The vote dacoits, who snatched the people's franchise in the elections of 1988, 91 and '96, will be rejected by the people due to their ill political motives," he said.

Tofail Ahmed said Khaleda Zia and Ershad have taken the same platform at a time when the export is high amid world recession and the foreign currency reserve is increasing. However, he said that no conspiracy would be able to resist the government to carry on its development activities.

Doulatkhan thana Awami League president Nazrul Islam, Borhanuddin Thana Awami League president Bashir Ahmed, Moulana Abdur Rahman Khan, Abdul Momin Tulu and Zulfikar Ahmed were, among others, who spoke on the occasion.

4 hurt in clash in N'ganj

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 7: At least four people were injured and way-side shops ransacked and looted in a clash between transport workers and rickshaw-pullers and hawkers in the town today, reports UNB.

Road and rail communications between the district and the capital remained snapped for an hour as transport workers blocked roads with buses.

Witnesses said a bus on the Dhaka-Narayanganj route hit a rickshaw that fell upon a wayside vegetable shop, leading to the clash near Fakirna mosque on Chamber Road at about 9 am.

Backed by rickshawpullers, footpath hawkers beat up transport workers Abdus Salam and Saju, prompting their accomplices to ransack the wayside shops.

Bus workers put barricades on the road and rail tracks. Communications, however, were restored after negotiations between police and the transport workers.

Police evicted the unauthorised shops on both sides of the road and rail tracks to convince the transport workers to withdraw their barricades.

Kidnapped victim recovered

The Detective Branch (DB) of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) rescued a kidnapped victim from Kalyanpur area Wednesday night and arrested a gang leader for his alleged involvement in the kidnapping, reports BSS.

Police said, a team of DB police led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Abdul Baten rescued Mahbubur Rahman alias Babu from the roof top of a five-storied building of Kalyanpur and arrested one Ershad.

Ershad and his accomplices kidnapped Babu, son of one Ibrahim Khalil from his Mugdappa residence on January 2 and took him to an unknown place. The miscreants demanded a handsome amount of money as ransom from the father of Babu over telephone.

A case was registered with Sabujbagh police in this connection. Police is trying to arrest other accomplices of Ershad.

Abdul Matin hospitalised

Language Movement veteran Abdul Matin has been admitted to the Suhrawardy Hospital with heart complications, reports APB.

Matin, a member of the Workers' Party politburo and Jatiya Krishak Samity president, is likely to undergo an operation soon.

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