



VOL. IX NO. 303 REGD. NO. DA 781

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28, 1999

33 days to the
3rd Millennium

AGRAHAYAN 14, 1406 BS

SABAN 19, 1420 HIJRI

16 PAGES PRICE: TAKA 6.00

Degree exams begin today

By Staff Correspondent

The Degree (Pass and Certificate) Examinations, 1999 under National University (NU) begin today at 588 centres across the country.

A total of 2,68,379 candidates are to sit for the examinations. Of them, 1,84,067 are male while 84,312 female, officials said last night.

Meanwhile, many candidates were seen collecting their admit cards even yesterday.

According to press reports yesterday, there was uncertainty over holding of the examinations as per schedule as admit cards of a large number of candidates were not distributed till Friday.

A press release of the NU yesterday said all preparation has been taken for holding examinations smoothly and fairly. An information desk has been opened in the capital to make available any information regarding the exams, the release added.

People seeking assistance regarding the exams have been requested to call: 9800656, 011868794, 9800655, 017538008, 017538009, 017538010, 9800651, 9800652, 9110261, 9800678, 8110290, 8110261, 9010894 and 9800656-62.

High-powered vigilance teams have also been formed with the teachers and officials of affiliated colleges to check unwanted activities during the exams, the release added.

The NU authorities have sought cooperation of all for holding of the examinations smoothly.

Loadshedding grips DESA areas

By Staff Correspondent

Many areas under Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority outside the capital experienced loadshedding for 15 to 20 times yesterday because of 'weak transmission lines', DESA sources said.

The areas include Fatullah, Jinjira, Madanganj, Madhabdi, Aricha and Munshiganj, Narangang and Gazipur towns.

"We had to stop power supply in those areas repeatedly as the transmission lines could not bear the load," one source said.

In the city, there was no power supply in some parts of Dhanmondi residential area from 10 am Friday till the writing of this report at 10 last night. DESA sources said the disruption was due to shutdown of some electric circuits following leakage in a cable line.

The sources further said loadshedding in DESA's command areas totalled 135 yesterday, against the requirement of around 1000 MW. PDB supplied 800 MW to DESA.

PDB sources, however, said total loadshedding in the country was estimated at 152 MW yesterday while generation of power totalled 2277 MW.

Inside Today

Article

Post-referendum Australia: Democracy, Monarchy and the Down Under

by A M M Shahabuddin
Page 4

Law and Our Rights

The Judiciary and the People
Page 5

Business

End to anarchy gives banking sector a better shape: Tofail

WTO talks pit Asia against West on a variety of fronts

DSE, CSE price quotations
Pages 6, 7 & 8**Prayer Timings**

November 28

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-42	4-00
Magrib	5-20	5-25
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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President reiterates call for consensus Political rivalry must not turn into personal animosity

President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday called for a consensus among political parties to resolve major issues for maintaining peace on the campus and in business and industries, reports UNB.

Shahabuddin stressed the need for united efforts by all concerned to weed out corruption that gripped every aspect of national life.

The Society for International Development (SID)-Bangladesh organised the daylong seminar on "Bangladesh in the 21st Century: Socio-Economic Perspectives."

Education Minister ASHK Sadique, who is also the president of SID-Bangladesh, chaired the inaugural function while Agriculture and Food Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, FBCI President Abdul Awal

mosphere on the campus and in industrial belts. It is affecting quality of education and hindering industrial growth, he added.

The President said that the foreign entrepreneurs were shy in investing in Bangladesh despite liberal policy of the government. He said foreign investors hesitate to invest in an atmosphere of socio-political unrest.

Violence and terrorism in educational institutions stood in the way of quality education. Passing in examinations by adopting unfair means is now an admitted fact, Shahabuddin said.

Hinting at the trade unions' interference in management, he

See Page 12 Col 4

Old man beaten to death, stabbed teenage boy dies

By Staff Correspondent

An 83-year-old man was beaten to death by hoodlums in the city yesterday evening.

The victim was identified as Hazi Mohammad Sikandar, a resident of Dakhil Kajla under Demra thana.

Quoting the victim's relatives, sources at Dhaka Medical College Hospital said three local hoodlums were gossiping in front of Sikandar's house at about 6:45 pm.

When the old man came out of his house and asked them what they were doing there, an altercation began.

At one stage, Sikandar slapped one of the young men. The gang threatened him and drove away in their motor cycles. After a few minutes, they returned with iron rods and sharp weapons, beat him indiscriminately and left the place.

Sikandar was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died at about 7:30 pm. The body was sent to DMCH morgue for au-

See Page 12 Col 1

Two Kasaituli blast victims die at DMCH

By Staff Correspondent

Two of the three persons, who sustained severe burn injuries while allegedly making bombs at Kasaituli in the city on Wednesday night, succumbed at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

Police and hospital sources identified the dead as Shamsuddin, 27, son of late Helaluddin, a resident of Kasaituli and Akash Chowdhury, 25, son of Jibon Chowdhury, a resident of Alubazar under Kotwali thana.

Shamsuddin, Akash and Hasan were injured in an explosion when they along with some others were making bomb in a makeshift house near Kasaituli Math Ground at about 11:30 PM on Wednesday, police said.

They were admitted to DMCH where Shamsuddin and Akash succumbed to their injuries at 2 pm and 10 pm respectively yesterday, hospital sources said.

Hasan was undergoing treatment at the burn unit of DMCH. His condition was stated to be critical, sources said last night.

See Page 12 Col 1



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is being presented with a crest of the Bank Asia by its chairman M Syeduzzaman after she inaugurated the bank at a city hotel yesterday.

—Star photo

Keep off default loans, PM alerts new banks

Bank Asia starts operation

Emphasising political stability for economic progress, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said she would continue efforts to solve disputes with the opposition through talks, reports UNB.

It is not possible to hold dialogue without two sides. How will it be possible to sit across the table if they remain rigid? Even then I will continue my efforts, she said while inaugurating another private bank, Bank Asia, at a function at Hotel Sheraton yesterday.

Bank Asia stepped into the country's banking arena with a mission to provide high quality service to its customers and to take part in the economic growth, the bank officials said.

The paid-up capital of the bank is over Tk 21 crore while its authorised capital is Tk 80 crore.

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed, Bangladesh Bank Governor M Farashuddin, Bank Asia

Vice-chairman A Rouf Chowdhury and managing director Quazi Baharul Islam also addressed the inaugural function which was presided over by chairman of the bank M Syeduzzaman.

The ruling party has repeatedly been calling the opposition to the table, but it refused to budge off the stance, the prime minister said.

She mentioned the tragic death of a truck driver in the capital during hartal on Nov 25 and asked: What's the justification of creating abnormal situation by calling hartals and killing innocent people?

She said a political system has been introduced in the country. The ruling party will hand over power to a neutral caretaker government for holding the general election.

Mentioning the government steps for restoration of discipline in the banking sector for development of financial and banking institutions, Hasina said huge irregularities still

prevailed in different segments of the sector.

She said the amount of classified loans of some banks has reached an alarming stage. Some private banks also face huge unpaid loans that appear to be contrary to the smooth management of those banks.

Besides, she said, failure by a number of private banks to keep adequate reserve capital also hinders the growth of a healthy banking system.

"I hope each private bank will be careful about this," Hasina said and called upon the banking sector to make desired contribution to economic development by bringing back discipline and healthy environment of competition.

She said the banks would have to face tougher competition because of the open market policy and globalisation process. They will have to take more bold and effective steps to build up skilled human resources, adopt modern technology.

See Page 12 Col 2

Roushan's remarks cause stir in opposition camp

By Staff Correspondent

BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, Islami Oikya Jote and Jatiya Party leaders have expressed surprise at the remarks made by JP leader Roushan Ershad MP opposing the current united movement against the government.

The members of the Liaison Committee of the four party alliance have said Roushan's remarks will not affect the current one-point movement.

However, a number of top BNP leaders said her remarks will create confusion among leaders and activists of the parties and the people.

When contacted, some leaders of the alliance said this will create mistrust regarding JP and its chairman. This may also affect the unity and further delay the planned meeting of

See Page 12 Col 6

Winter will be late this year

By Special Correspondent

The winter is still a few days away.

"It is going to be normal, but coming a bit late as in the past two years," Director of Meteorological Department Arshad Hossain said last night.

The mercury dropped to a minimum of 13 degree Celsius at Sathkhira and 13.1 at Srimangal early yesterday.

The early mornings are going to be cool in the next three-four days. But cold waves are not likely before January, he said.

Elsewhere in the country, the minimum temperature was 14.4 degree C at Rajshahi, followed by 15.2 at Dinajpur, 15.4 at Khulna, 15.5 C at Ishwardi, 16 at Rangpur, 16 at Sylhet, 16.2 at Barisal and 16.6 C at Bogra.

In the capital, the minimum temperature was 16.8 degree C and in Chittagong 18.7.

Half-day hartal in Sathkhira today

From Our Correspondent

SATHKIRA, Nov 27: The District Liaison Committee has called a half-day hartal in the district tomorrow to protest killing of an Islami Chhatra Shibir activist at Kaliganj on Thursday.

District BNP brought out a torch procession in the town today in support of the hartal. The processionists damaged three vehicles and a sweetmeat shop.

A tense situation was prevailing in the district. Huge contingent of police has been deployed on several trouble spots to maintain law and order, said the SP of Sathkhira.

The speakers demanded arrest and punishment to the killers of Ali Mostafa.

Later, the Jamaat activists attacked the Kaliganj Thana Islami League office, damaging the furniture and tearing off the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Condition of hartal victim Zakir critical

By Staff Correspondent

The condition of Zakir, helper of truck driver Nasu Mian who was killed on November 25, is critical, hospital sources said.

Zakir is now under treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Nasu Mian was burnt alive in his truck when a petrol bomb was hurled on it in the city's Shahjahanpur area at about 5 pm during hartal hours on November 25.

Dr Milon's death anniversary observed

Different socio-cultural and political organisations yesterday observed the ninth death anniversary of Shahid Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milon, reports BSS.

They recalled the contribution of Dr Milon who was killed during the anti-autocracy movement in 1990.

Bangladesh Awami League observed the day by placing wreaths and offering fateha at his grave.

Dr Milon Sangsad observed the day through an elaborate programme including placing of wreaths at his grave and the memorial tomb and through a discussion meeting.

Water Resource Minister Abdur Razzak, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Hasanul Huq Inu, journalist Faez Ahmed, Barrister Syed Ishaq Ahmed, writer Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, See Page 12 Col 7

Prabhakaran offers olive branch

COLOMBO, Nov 27: The chief of Sri Lanka's main guerrilla group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, asked the government today to de-escalate the fighting and begin talks to end the 16-year war, reports AP.

Though the LTTE stands today as a formidable force with the military capability to liberate our homeland, we have not abandoned the path of peace, Prabhakaran said a speech on his 45th birthday from his hideout in the northern jungles.

There was no immediate comment from the government.

The speech was broadcast over the clandestine Voice of Tigers radio and transcripts were made available through the organisation's office in London.

We want to resolve the Tamil conflict through peaceful

means, through civilised methods without recourse to bloodbath and destruction of life, Prabhakaran said.

Prabhakaran made it clear he would not like to hold talks with the present government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga who is running again for the top job in the Dec 21 election.