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

www.dailystarnews.com

DHAKA SUNDAY NOVEMBER 28, 1999

3rd Millennium

AGRAHAYAN 14, 1406 BS

SABAN 19, 1420 HIRI

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 9800658-62.

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, Madhobdi, Aricha and Munshiganj, Narsingdi, Narayanganj 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.

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Prayer Timings

November 28

Fajr 5-15 5-45

Zohr 12-45 1-15

Asr 3-42 4-00

Maghrib 5-20 5-25

Esha 7-15 7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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.

"In a democracy, political rivalry will be there, but it must not degenerate into personal animosity," he said while inaugurating a seminar at Agargaon LGED Bhaban.

The President advised the political leaders to seek cooperation instead of confrontation saying blaming each other will not help ensure peace and development.

He expressed his concern over the use of students and workers for political purpose that led to a deteriorating at-

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

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, FBCCI President Abdul Awal

Mintoo, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad Chairman Dr QK Ahmad and SID-Bangladesh Secretary General Nilufar Banu also spoke.

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

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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 Dakshin 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-

topsy.

When contacted last night, Demra police said they were investigating the incident but no case was filed.

Hospital sources quoted the victim's son Minhaz as alleging that a woman, who is one of the tenants, might have link with killers. The woman was involved in anti-social activities. His father recently took an initiative to stop these, Minhaz said.

Meanwhile, a teenage boy, who was stabbed allegedly by his friends at Bania Nagar under Shutrapur thana on November 17 afternoon, succumbed to his injuries at the city's Orthopaedic Hospital Friday evening.

The dead was identified as Polash Kumar Saha, alias Jony, 17, son of one Dilip Kumar Saha, a resident of Nandalal Datta Lane in the old city, hospital sources said.

The reason behind the

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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 Jiban 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.



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 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 Dr 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.

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Discard politics of vengeance: Rawshan Ershad

Jatiya Party Vice-chairperson Rawshan Ershad MP yesterday called for discarding politics of vengeance and animosity and changing the trend of opposition movement in the greater interest of the nation, reports UNB.

She regretted that Awami League, BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami joined hands to launch movement against the Jatiya Party government. When BNP was in power, three other parties were united against the government. Now BNP, Jatiya Party and Jamaat are united against the Awami League government.

The opposition parties always got united to fight against the government. This trend of movement should be stopped for the welfare of the country as it obstructed development, Rawshan said.

She was exchanging views with newsmen during her unscheduled visit to Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

She, however, said there would have no movement or

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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.

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

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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 Satkhira 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 Satkhira today

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, 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 Satkhira.

Jamaat held a protest rally at the Local football ground at Kaliganj this afternoon.

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

Later, the Jamaat activists attacked the Kaliganj Thana Awami 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 Shahajampur 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 Shaheed 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 Ishtiaq Ahmed, writer Prof Sirajul Islam Chowdhury,

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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.

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.

"We do not trust Chandrika. She does not have the honesty and determination to resolve the Tamil national conflict in a fair and reasonable manner", he said.

Tamil political analyst Pakyasothy Saravanamuttu said the Tigers were sending signals ahead of the elections that if Mrs Kumaratunga returns to power, the conflict will go on.

Most Sri Lankans want an end to the war, which has now

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Tehran jails leading reformist politician

TEHRAN, Nov 27: Iran's clerical court sentenced Abdollah Nouri, the country's leading reformist politician, to five years in jail today for political and religious dissent and closed his outspoken newspaper, reports Reuters.

Meeting behind closed doors, the Special Court for Clergy also barred Nouri from journalistic activities for five years after completion of his jail term and fined him 15 million rials, worth \$5,000 at the official rate.

In a second high-profile case, reformist editor Mashallah Shamsolvaezin was sentenced to three years in prison on charges of forgery and questioning Islamic principles, state television reported today.

Aides to Nouri, a mid-ranking Shiite Muslim cleric with a sterling revolutionary pedigree, said he was later whisked off to Tehran's Evin prison from a side exit.

Nouri told Reuters in a recent interview he had no plans to appeal any sentence and he called on people to remain calm. Protest and civil disorder, he said would only undermine the reform movement.

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Aduddullah Nouri



Mother of Dr Shamsul Alam Milon and others offering fateha after placing wreaths at his grave yesterday.

—Star photo

A 'hasty' demolition drive by Rajuk

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk yesterday demolished two 'unauthorised' structures on the premises of a well known kebab house at Satmasjid Road in Dhanmondi on the basis of a complaint.

Owners of La Bamba kebab house alleged that the Rajuk move was orchestrated by some political high-ups and top bureaucrats. The plan of the shop was approved by Rajuk, but later cancelled.

They also said that they took an initiative to demolish the shop after Rajuk served a notice on them about a week ago. The kebab house was established more than ten years ago with a trade license from the DCC, they said.

About a hundred policemen in riot gear, led by Rajuk's Magistrate and the Authorised Officer, arrived at the spot yesterday and insisted that the boundary wall of the house be demolished. The officials said the boundary wall and a garage on the premises were unauthorised structures and the pay loaders knocked down those.

The people who ordered the demolition from behind the

scene had been eyeing the property for sometime, sources concerned alleged.

During the demolition drive, the Authorised Officer, SM Asaduzzaman, working on a weekend, was so keen to complete the task that he even refused to attend a phone call from a minister who wanted to inquire about the 'hasty drive', the sources said.

The Authorised Officer said that the drive was not a part of Rajuk's usual demolition operation. He said they were acting on a specific 'complaint' from 'someone'.

The Rajuk team also demolished a tin-shed structure on the premises of the kebab house.

The Rajuk team instantly gathered a crowd of onlookers. Owners of some other unauthorised shops and structures in the area came there to inquire whether the drive would continue.

The sources claimed that at least twelve unauthorised structures have been built for shops and business houses along the Satmasjid Road.

PCJSS member kidnapped in Rangamati

By Staff Correspondent

RANGAMATI, Nov 27: A member of the Parbaty Chhatragram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) was kidnapped allegedly by anti-peace accord activists from village Lekhyachhara of Sadar thana here early yesterday, reports UNB.

Police and residents said about 16 activists of Prosit group led by Sahib Chakma surrounded the house of Bishantr Chakma alias Rupok, and took him blindfolded to the deep forest at gun point early in the morning.

Two PCJSS members were also gunned down and another critically injured by the anti-peace activists in Khagrachhari district on November 16.

They kidnapped an activist of pro-peace accord Pahari Chhatra Parishad from Sukkurchari in Rangamati on November 18.

"Terrorists of anti-peace Prast-Sanchoy group backed by an influential quarter of the government abducted PCJSS member Bishantr Chakma (Rupok) at dawn today," a PCJSS statement signed by Mangal Kumar Chakma said.

It also accused a section of

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AL CWC sees conspiracy against democracy

The central working committee (CWC) of Bangladesh Awami League today denounced the politics of hartal and violence and decided to resist such activities unitedly with the common people, reports BSS.

President of Awami League Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting of the CWC at the Gonobhaban here.

It urged the people to be vigilant against vested quarters who it said are engaged in conspiracies against democracy and directed the party leaders to start organisational tours across the country at district and thana-levels.

Listing different achievements of the present government the meeting strongly condemned incidents like arson and violence during hartal hours and said "the common people would never accept undemocratic activities like hurling of petrol bombs."

The meeting lauded the role of UNESCO for upholding the dignity of the 1952 Language Movement martyrs who sacrificed their lives to protect the

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