

SSC examinee stabbed to death in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi
An SSC examinee was stabbed to death by one of his friends at Pakuria in Bagha upazila on Saturday night.
The victim, identified as Anwar Hossain Nannu, 16, son of Bayejuddin of village Pakuria, was appearing in the SSC examinations from a local high school.
Police quoting witnesses said the incident occurred of about 7-30 pm while Nannu was gossiping with his friends.
At one stage, Nasir, one of Nannu's friends, took him to a nearby place and stabbed in his chest indiscriminately. He succumbed to his injuries on way to Bagha upazila health center.
Police suspected that Nannu and Nasir had a rivalry over a girl.
Nasir had gone into hiding soon after the incident. A case was filed with Bagha thana in the connection.

Alleged top terrorist & his wife shot in city

BSS, Dhaka
An alleged top terrorist and his wife were shot by a gang of unidentified miscreants in the city's Green Road area yesterday afternoon.
Police said Alexander and his wife, Sharmin Akhter Liza, came under attack in front of New Alrazi Hospital when they were passing the area by a rickshaw at about 12-30 pm.
The couple was immediately taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Alexander was undergoing treatment at the hospital under police guard.
Police said Alexander is accused in various criminal cases including murder and extortion.
A case was registered with Dhanmondi police in this connection.

Police officers to be assigned exclusively to probe cases

UNB, Dhaka
The government will assign police officers exclusively for investigation into cases, under a set of measures announced yesterday for rapid disposal of cases.
Also, the government will provide 'special security measures' for the plaintiffs and witnesses.
"All the police members will be given identity numbers and separate police officers will be engaged for investigation into the cases," said an official release.
The decisions were taken in a

Announcement of mayoral candidature Delay displeases BNP men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The delay in announcement of mayoral candidature from the BNP for the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) elections has created resentment among the rank and file of the party and its front organisations.
The BNP is learnt to have 'unofficially finalised' nomination of Fisheries and Livestock Minister Sadeque Hossain Khoka as mayoral candidate for the DCC polls scheduled for April 25.
Still, the BNP is in a dilemma that has arisen from the emergence of two more aspirants -- Housing and Public Works Minister and former mayor Mirza Abbas and former FBCCI president Awal Mintoo -- for mayoral nomination.
The nomination-hopefuls have already scaled up their 'publicity campaigns' across the city.
Although the city corporation elections are non-political, the political parties traditionally nominate candidates for the posts of mayor and ward commissioner.
In late 1998 when the Awami League government made a move to hold mayoral elections to the four city corporations just before the expiry of their tenure, the then leader of the opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a public meeting at Paltan Maidan for-

mally declared Sadeque Hossain Khoka to be the party's mayoral candidate.
The Chittagong City Corporation aside, Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations could not hold their elections due to a boycott by opposition parties and pending cases in connection with delimitation of city boundaries and other legal complications.
There is a longstanding conflict between Khoka and Abbas over nomination, but Mintoo's joining of the BNP ahead of the last parliamentary polls has lent a new edge to the conflict.
Over the last few months, Mintoo has succeeded in curving a niche in the BNP and some influential persons are advocating for him.
Competition among the three aspirants has landed party policymakers, ministers, central leaders and activists in a serious trouble, so far as their support for the candidates is concerned.
Khoka is backed by the BNP's liberal faction, while Abbas is backed by hardliners. Some mid-ranking BNP leaders, including a nephew of Khaleda and a state minister from technocrat quota, are lobbying for Mintoo.

BNP MPs accuse AL of seditious activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Some treasury bench members in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday lambasted the main opposition Awami League for what they said its involvement in seditious activities and asked the government to act immediately to protect national sovereignty.
Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui allowed them to speak for about half-an-hour though he later said that the deliberations were not covered by the parliamentary rules.
Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, ministers and others in the treasury bench encouraged three lawmakers in blasting the AL leaders, particularly former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, for launching a 'fresh conspiracy' against the state and the government.
They accused Alamgir of revolting against the previous BNP government in 1996 in violation of the constitution. He had joined the Janata Mancha (people's dais) and instigated other public servants to follow suit to overthrow a legitimate government, breaching the Public Servants Act, they alleged.
The BNP lawmakers further alleged that the former state minister, who left the country soon after the last general elections, had returned home to launch a 'fresh conspiracy' against the BNP-led coalition government. They also demanded of the prime minister to bring sedition charges against him.
Police arrested Alamgir as he returned home Friday after five months. He was shown arrested in a case of attempted murder in his hometown, Chandpur.
Moazzem Hossain Alal spear-headed the fiery attack on the former state minister. Alal termed Alamgir a 'pervert and a hated person', and accused him of embezzling public money.
Moshiur Rahman of the same party blamed the opposition for the recent incidents of fire and breakdown in law and order.



People gather around the badly damaged bus that skidded off the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway into a ditch, killing eight persons yesterday.

'Confrontational politics, military intervention threatens to South Asian democracy'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Discussants at a conference in the city yesterday identified politics of confrontation and military interventions as major impediments to the growth and strengthening of democracy in South Asia.
They called for greater political tolerance and commitment for building sustainable democracy.
The two-day conference on 'Strengthening Democratic Governance,' held at a city hotel, was jointly organised by Asian Centre for Democratic Governance (ACDG), National Endowment for Democracy (NED), USA, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
Former Chief Election Commissioner of India Manohar Singh Gill, IA Rehman from Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, renowned economist Rehman

Sobhan, former US diplomat Dennis Kux and Henry Shelton Wanasinghe from Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka were the designated speakers at the working session on functioning of democracy in the region. Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed moderated the session.
Earlier at the opening session, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan delivered the inaugural address while Farooq Sobhan of BEI, Tapan Chowdhury of MCCI, Gautam Adhikari of ACDG and Sushanta Sen of CII made welcome remarks.
In his speech, MS Gill dwelt on electoral reforms. He viewed that India, like Bangladesh, should try to adopt the caretaker government system at state level to eliminate corruption and ensure better polls.
Referring to intermittent military rules in Pakistan, IA Rehman noted that the major loss that people suffer in a

Biman to float fresh tender to sell 2 ATP aircraft

UNB, Dhaka
Re-tender will be called soon to sell off two ATP aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines as government authorities found the previous bid to be faulty.
The decision was taken in the 265th meeting of Biman Board of Directors, which asked for inviting tender immediately in this regard.
Board Chairman and State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Meer Mohammad Nasiruddin chaired the meeting held at Biman's head office Balaka.
The board also asked the Biman authorities to ensure transparency in the country's gas reserve estimate; rather it should go for drilling and seismic survey.
A session on the second day of a three-day workshop on sustainable development yesterday also suggested undertaking of a long-term (forty to fifty years) energy plan entailing the issue of exploring alternative energy sources.

Jail Killing Case Bail prayer of Taheruddin Thakur rejected

BSS, Dhaka
The High Court yesterday rejected the bail petition of Taheruddin Thakur, an accused in the Jail Killing Case.
A division bench comprising Justice M A Aziz and Justice Mamtazuddin Ahmed passed the order after hearing the petition.
Four national leaders Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and AH M Qamruzzaman were killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.
A murder case was filed accusing 28 people. Of them, K M Obaidur Rahman, Shah Moazzem Hossain, Nurul Islam Monjur and Khairuzzaman were granted bail by the High Court.

TUs continue toll collection

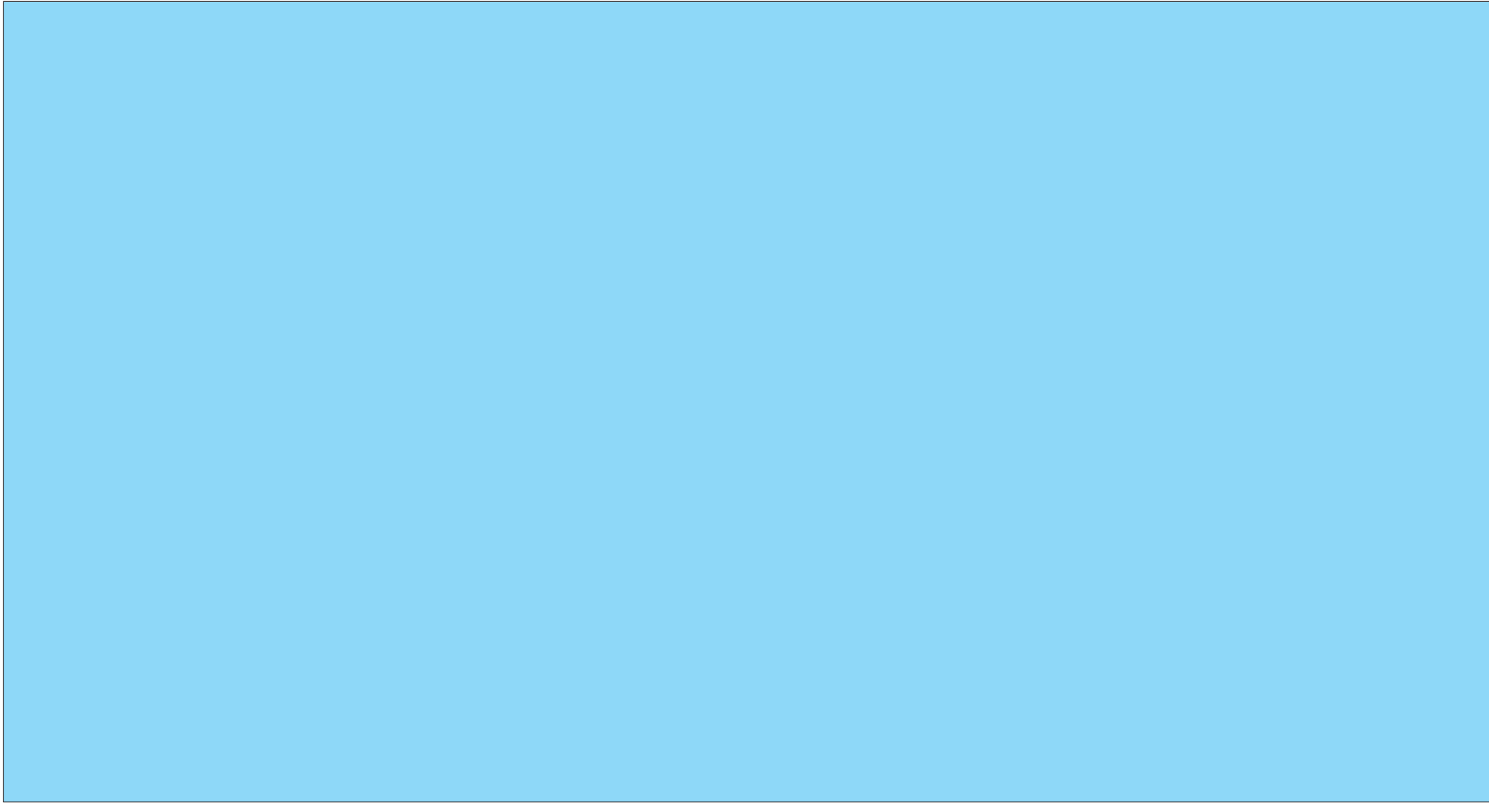
RAFIQ HASAN
Toll collection in the name of transport workers' trade unions continued in different city routes despite issuance of showcause notices by the government.
The Directorate of Labour yesterday served shawcause notices on seven unions. They were asked to reply in writing within seven days why legal action would not be taken against them for collecting toll from vehicles and "creating anarchy in the transport sector".
But toll collection continued as it was, conductors and drivers of some human hauler services told this correspondent yesterday evening.

Fresh violence jolts US bid to broker ceasefire

AFP, Jerusalem
New Palestinian attacks on Israel and a move by Israeli tanks back into the West Bank town of Bethlehem yesterday broke a two-day lull in violence and jolted a US bid to broker a ceasefire.
US envoy Anthony Zinni had already hit a wall of mistrust when his efforts were further complicated by a Palestinian gunman's shooting spree in central Israel, a suicide bombing in east Jerusalem and clashes in Bethlehem.
Three Palestinians and one Israeli woman were killed in the

Govt asked not to entertain guesswork on gas reserve

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Speakers at a workshop in the city yesterday said the government should not accept any guesswork on the country's gas reserve estimate; rather it should go for drilling and seismic survey.
The participants were divided on the gas export issue, but most of them agreed that only seismic survey and drilling would help determine the actual gas reserve.
Former chairman of Bangladesh Power Development Board Nuruddin M Kamal chaired the session on "Energy security in Bangladesh". The workshop titled, "Sustainable development in Bangladesh: Achievements, opportunities and challenges at Rio+10" was organised by Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad (BUP).
Energy experts, academicians, former bureaucrats, environmentalists, representatives of major donors, politicians and professionals participated in the session. Prof. M Nazrul Islam of the Institute of Appropriate Technology of BUET presented the keynote paper in the session. Dil Afroz Begum, a professor of chemical engineering of BUET, also made a presentation in the session.
The session chair said the latest study jointly conducted by the



Saudi Arabia pours cold water on US war plans for Iraq

AFP, Jeddah
Saudi Arabia has dissociated itself from any US plan to overthrow the Baghdad regime, reportedly telling Vice President Dick Cheney there is no question of using an air base in the kingdom to attack Iraq.
King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz made clear to Cheney during talks here yesterday that the kingdom would not allow use of its soil to launch military strikes on Iraq "or any other Arab or Muslim state," the Saudi daily Al-Watan reported, citing "reliable Saudi sources".
This was in sharp contrast with Cheney's success as defence secretary in 1991 to secure the use of Saudi facilities for the US-led Gulf War that ended with the eviction of Iraqi troops from Kuwait.
This time round, Saudi leaders advised Cheney that the United States should "exert international efforts to force Iraq to comply with UN resolutions".
The kingdom's reluctance to serve as a springboard for US military action against a fellow Arab or Islamic state was already in evidence months ago when it barred use of its Prince Sultan air base for bombing missions in the US-led war on Afghanistan launched last October.
Riyadh's snub strained ties with Washington, prompting US media and congressmen to raise the possibility of a redeployment of some of the 5,000 troops stationed in the kingdom to other Gulf Arab states.
Qatar, where Cheney arrived yesterday after Bahrain, was recently cited by The New York Times as a prime candidate to host US troops, especially since it is already the biggest depot of US pre-positioned armament in the Gulf.
However, Cheney denied any such plans at a press conference in Bahrain.
"We have not made any plans to make any change in our military positions with respect to Saudi Arabia," he said.
"I am not aware of any adjustments that we are planning nor did I discuss with the Saudis last night (Saturday) any modification of our overall force," he added.
"America cannot overthrow Saddam (Hussein)," warned the Saudi daily Asharq Al-Awsat in its banner headline Sunday, citing remarks to this effect by Abdullah in a CNN interview aired Friday.