

# The Daily Star

COMMITTED TO  
People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XI No. 44

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 16, 2002

FALGUN 16, 1407 BS

ZELHAJ 3, 1421 HURI

16 PAGES PRICE: Tk 6.00

www.dailystarnews.com

## HSC exams from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations begin today amid tight security including ban on gathering of more than four people (section 144 of the CrPC) within 200 yards of examination centres as well as punitive measures including video monitoring and summary trial courts for identifying and punishing cheaters.

A total of 7,16,637 examinees from 6,690 colleges and madrassahs will appear for the exams at 1,486 examination centres all over the country. Of them, 5,85,572 will take the HSC exams under the seven education boards, 28,800 the HSC vocational (trade course) under the Technical Education Board, and 67,245 the Alim, 25,540 the Fazil and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

## Gangsters go untouched

### *Toy pistol, shaving razors, beer and liquor recovered on third day of special drive*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the third day of its special anti-crime drive, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) yesterday arrested 561 persons, but not a single one of them a listed criminal.

An over 2,000-criminal list in hand, police launched its 'massive drive' on Monday. The failure to nab any of the top criminals has given rise to speculations that the well-publicised operation was badly planned and executed. Ever since the drive started, only seven listed criminals have been arrested.

The anti-crime drive assisted by the BDR and ansar personnel has also caused frustrations among senior police officials. Many of them suspect that the criminals were tipped off about the police move. Some officials have strongly emphasised the need for controlling information regarding movement of police prior to any operation. They are also disturbed as many low-ranking police officials are still using mobile phone sets.

Meantime, all that police could haul yesterday are two shaving razors, a

toy pistol, three bottles of foreign liquor and five cans of beer.

With the number of yesterday's arrests, police have so far detained 1,622 people in last three days. On the first day, 495 including three listed criminals and on the second day, 566 including four criminals were arrested.

Police also failed to net any one of the most wanted priced criminals during the special drive. Earlier, the home ministry made a list of 23 such miscreants.

Sources in different city areas alleged that police are mostly looking for opposition political activities and are not at all sincere to catch the listed criminals having links to the ruling BNP.

Meantime, of those arrested yesterday, 27 were charged under section 54 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 420 under the DMP Act, 77 under regular cases, and seven under the Motor Vehicle Act. Only 29 were shown

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

## Dhaka mulls new route to Bangkok

M ANWARUL HAQ

Both Thailand and Myanmar have agreed to a Bangladesh proposal for a 'new Asian Highway route'. The new proposal suggests Dhaka getting linked to Yangon and Bangkok through Teknaf in the south.

When opened, the new regional road network will allow traffic from Dhaka to move straight to Bangkok and onwards to East Asian countries.

Although India has not agreed to the new proposal and still sides with the old one that envisages an uninterrupted roadway through Tamabil in northeastern Bangladesh, the new route can still go through, sources said.

Roads on the Myanmar side are almost ready barring some bridges while Bangladesh's and Thailand's infrastructures are already in place.

The new proposal was placed during a three-day meeting of the Expert Group on Asian Highway in Bangkok from May 8 to May 10.

A three-member official delegation from Bangladesh led by M Rahmatullah, a former director of ESCAP and now an expert with the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), attended the three-day meeting. The delegation also included economic and political counsellors at the Bangladesh missions in Bangkok.

The governments of both Myanmar and Thailand -- members of the five-nation regional forum BIMSTEC -- are eager to complete necessary infrastructural work to link the three countries, which would give a boost to trade, investment and tourism in the region, sources said.

Thai Deputy Prime Minister Pitak Intrawittawant a

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Design flaws sank MV Salauddin-2

### Probe committee detects misplaced centre of gravity

MORSHED ALI KHAN

MV Salauddin sank due to faulty structural construction. Its centre of gravity, supposed to be at the keel, was on the bridge-deck and so when hit by a twister, it just tipped like a toy boat in the Meghna, a Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) probe reveals.

Sources said a team of four BIWTA experts had a look at the original design of the vessel drawn in 1988 and found that its owner illegally constructed a bridge-deck adding two double cabins, two single cabins, one master cabin, one bathroom and a cabin for security guards.

The owner also removed the built-in benches from the sides and added a saloon on the first floor.

It was also found that the vessel is two feet larger in length than originally designed. The team however failed to compare the original depth of 1.91 meters with the present depth because the draft of the hull and the hold were submerged in water.

The extra weight caused serious loss of stability and made the vessel 'extremely vulnerable to gust and minor collision', experts said.

MV Salauddin-2 capsized and sank in the Meghna near Shaitnal under Matlab South at around 9:30pm on May 3 with about 500 passengers on board on its way from Dhaka to Rangabali under Patuakhali district.

More than 400 passengers drowned in the river in the incident. The salvaged launch is now at Chandpur.

Despite these gross deviations, MV Salauddin-2 went on to 'pass the fitness tests' for years without a question being raised by the authorities

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



STAR FILE PHOTO

Grisly reminder of death...the MV Salauddin-2 sank into the Meghna on May 3 with about 500 passengers aboard. Here the launch is being salvaged.

## Titas seizes its jeep used by meter reader Mahbub

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Petrobangla has asked Titas gas authorities to inform it what action has been taken against 'corrupt' meter reader Mahbubur Rahman and others like him.

In a letter to the managing director of Titas yesterday, the director (administration) of Petrobangla sought information on the progress of the investigation against Mahbubur Rahman.

The meter reader, who is Vice-president of Titas unit of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Karmachari Union, was arrested by the Immigration authorities from Zia International Airport when he was leaving for Singapore recently. But he was released a few hours later.

Following yesterday's report of The Daily Star on Mahbub's ill-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## President stays off BTV camera

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President AQM Badruddoja Chowdhury has been avoiding visual coverage in the Bangladesh Television (BTV) for the last couple of weeks.

Sources said the president's programmes outside the Bangabhaban are not being covered by visual footage for about last one month, although the BTV continues to cover the president's programmes as part of its news.

BTV sources said the Bangabhaban has stopped sending it invitations for covering programmes of the president.

The BTV has been using wire services news to report on the presi-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Crime curbing investment

### MCCI sees no progress in situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) yesterday expressed its deep concern over the worsening law and order, saying it is working as a damper on business and investment.

"There will be hardly any new investment unless the law and order improves. We are concerned and feel threatened. We have communicated our sentiment to the prime minister and the finance minister. Still, we don't see any improvement," Tapan Chowdhury, MCCI president, said yesterday.

The MCCI president and other members of the leading chamber exchanged views with the country's economic reporters yesterday.

MCCI Secretary General CK Hyder, members Mahbub Jamil,

Jamaluddin Ahmed and Feroz Rahim, President of Economic Reporter's Forum (ERF) Shamsul Huq Zahid and ERF General Secretary Shawkat Hossain Masum spoke on the occasion.

Tapan said workers of different industrial units and business houses regularly get mugged while returning home from their workplaces.

MCCI member Jamaluddin Ahmed, a former BNP minister, said people are losing confidence on the government. "If the government fails to improve the law and order, no reforms will work," he added.

The MCCI said it is anxiously waiting to see firm measures to improve the quality of governance since it is directly linked to cost of doing business.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Chilavert's mouthful for Spain

AFP, Asuncion

Paraguay 'keeper Jose Luis Chilavert has rubbished his country's World Cup opponents Spain, saying they would not have reached the finals had they gone through the South American rounds.

Paraguay's controversial captain, speaking to Paraguay radio, said the Spaniards would never have made it to the May 31 to June 30 showcase event had they competed in the CONMEBOL qualifiers.

"It's really easy to get through if you are playing teams like Andorra, Liechtenstein or Israel," said Chilavert in comments to Asuncion-based radio station Nanduti.

Chilavert travels with his teammates to Montecatini in Milan before playing a friendly against Sweden in Estocolmo on Friday.

The delegation will shortly afterwards travel to Matsumoto in Japan

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8

## Expansion of graveyard Khoka's first task

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sadeque Hossain Khoka has taken up something very delicate as his maiden assignment as the new mayor of Dhaka.

With his assumption of power yesterday, he homed in on the expansion of the country's biggest and oldest graveyard at Azimpur in the city.

"I have ordered the chief executive officer to draft an application requesting the works ministry to allocate a piece of land adjacent to the eastern side of the Azimpur graveyard for its expansion," the mayor told reporters.

Dwelling more on his first job, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) mayor pointed out that the century-old Azimpur graveyard was too small to cope with the increasing number of burials in the capital.

"Over the years, the time-span of reusing the graves has now been so short that the survivors cannot identify graves of their nearest and dearest," he said referring to the problems many raised with him on many occasions.

Khoka, who along with the may-

ors of Khulna and Rajshahi, was sworn in on May 5, took over the office of Dhaka's second elected mayor by chairing the meeting of the DCC Board comprising the mayor and ward commissioners.



Sadeque Hossain Khoka

The skyscraper Nagar Bhaban housing the DCC offices wore a festive look yesterday with hundreds of people mostly belonging to the ruling BNP crowding. They and the DCC staff were found wishing the new mayor and the commissioners. Banners welcoming the newly-elected representatives of the Dhaka people were all around and the DCC flags were waving at the entrance of the Nagar Bhaban.

The jubilation of crowds often hampered the celebration, especially when the new mayor addressed his first news conference.

The new mayor was accorded a warm reception as he arrived at the Nagar Bhaban in the morning. He was showered with petals amid slogans welcoming the new city father.

"I have taken over at a time when the city dwellers have lost confidence in the DCC that failed to live up to expectations of the ten million people," the new mayor told the press conference. Shoring up confidence in the DCC will be his first

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## 7 killed in Bhola bus plunge

UNB, Bhola

At least seven people were killed and 30 others injured as a bus fell into a roadside ditch at Panirkal on Charfashion-Aicha road yesterday.

The deal were identified as Kulsum, 28, Dilip, 38, Sikder, 30, Mahmudullah, 40, Subhash Chandra Boidya, 38, Shahjahan, 40, and Kalu.

The injured persons were admitted to Charfashion sadar hospital.

Police and witnesses said the bus skidded off of the road and fell into the ditch while it was trying to make a way for another bus. Five people died on the spot while two others on way to hospital.

## A small spark can ignite Indo-Pak war, warns US

### Infiltration by Islamic militants into Kashmir must stop, says Christina Rocca

AFP, New Delhi

The United States yesterday warned a small spark could ignite a war between nuclear-armed rivals

Pakistan and India in the aftermath of a bloody attack in Indian Kashmir. Infiltration by Islamic militants into Indian Kashmir to carry out acts of "terrorism" must stop, US

Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca told a news conference in New Delhi.

"Terrorism against India is as unacceptable as it is against America or against any other country," she said just before her departure for the Pakistani capital Islamabad.

Rocca, who is on a visit to the region aimed at reducing tensions, described a militant attack Tuesday against a bus and army post in Indian-administered Kashmir as "barbaric".

Her peace mission has taken on fresh urgency after Kashmir militants killed 33 people, mostly women and children, in the attack near Jammu.

"Acts like this are intended to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7



See the rules and coupon of



	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
May 16		6-34pm
May 17	5-15 am	

Prayer Timings		
May 16		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-38	6-43
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		