

SSC results on Wednesday

BSS, Dhaka
Results of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations under seven education boards of the country are likely to be announced in the first week of July.

Minister of State for Education A N M Ehsanul Haque Milon told BSS yesterday. He said, we have already fixed July 3 to formally announce the SSC results after taking approval of the Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia.

Meanwhile, the authorities concerned in principle have taken a decision to give grace number due to complicated examination in Mathematics in Dhaka Board.

The state minister said grace number will be given in two separate methods one for those who will secure up to 50 marks and the other for those who will get above 50 marks.

AL leader murdered in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

An Awami League leader was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants near Dhemrakhola in Tala Upazila on Thursday night. Abdur Rouf, 45, president of Islamiyat union Awami League, came under attack while he was returning home from Sujansaha Bazar riding a motorbike.

The assailants stabbed in different parts of his body. He died on the spot. On information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Satkhira Sadar hospital for autopsy.

The reason behind the murder could not be known. A case was filed with Tala Police Station.

Vajpayee on Farooq Abdullah's candidature

PTI, Lucknow

India's Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday said Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was considered for the Vice President's post but later the decision was changed.

"Abdullah was considered for the Vice President's post but later his candidature was changed," Vajpayee said. Replying to questions at a press conference at the Raj Bhavan (official residence of the Governor) in this northern Indian city, Vajpayee said Abdullah had been consulted by the Government on the Presidential candidature.

"He (Abdullah) knew everything," Vajpayee said adding the J and K Chief Minister had a meeting with him recently and gave the assurance that his party, National Conference, would remain a part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and continue its support to NDA.

PBCP leader Pankaj held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Pankaj Sarker (32), one of the top leaders of Tala thana unit of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) was arrested Thursday afternoon while he was demanding toll from a fish farm owner. Pankaj Sarker is wanted in several murder cases.

His father Dhir Dhali is still a think-tank of PBCP's south-western zone, OC of Tala thana said.

Magurchhara blowout Compensation claim shelved for 5 yrs

STAR REPORT

Five years have passed since the Magurchhara blowout on June 15, 1997 but Petrobangla could not yet officially demand compensation from US oil company Unocal (previously Occidental) whose negligent operation led to it.

In mid-May, State Minister for Energy Mosharraf Hossain stopped Petrobangla from lodging a compensation claim of Tk 3900 crore for damaging a gas reserve of an estimated 245 billion cubic feet at Magurchhara. He said the claim should be cross-checked by 'foreign experts' to make sure Petrobangla is on the right track. Since then the claim remains shelved.

Despite this, the claim was finalised through a cautious process. The energy ministry and the Petrobangla Board approved it twice, and legal experts vetted it. The state minister's move, sources said, delayed further the compensation claim process and reduced the amount of compensation to a level that was 'agreeable' to Unocal.

During a conversation with the Petrobangla chairman on the issue in mid-May, the minister hinted that the claim should be reduced. It should be 'genuine' and not 'inflated' he told the chairman, sources said.

Soon after the state minister stopped delivery of the compensation claim letter, the local Unocal chief in an interview with UNB made an ironic claim that the company had 'settled all legitimate claims' excepting that for environmental damage which is yet to be properly assessed.

Unocal chief Scott Barber also termed the blowout a mere accident. "We were sorry then and we are sorry now, but the claim that 245 BCF gas was burnt is totally unrealistic."

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PHOTO: STAR

HERE'S THE LUCKY ONE: Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Sadek Hossain Khoka shows the coupon of the first prize winner of the Bumper Round Draw of The Daily Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz at the National Press Club auditorium yesterday.

Demolition drive at Sylhet 'finally' comes to a halt

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Demolition of illegal structures on public lands in the city has stopped due to lack of coordination among the district administration, municipal authorities and police, sources said. It is alleged that some influential quarters are out to foil the drive, welcomed by the city dwellers since it began four weeks ago.

It came to a halt on June 22 after demolition of part of the Sandha Bazar, a kitchen market at Zallarpar, "illegally" constructed on the bank of a canal flowing into the Surma river. The authorities stopped the demolition following a rule nisi by the High Court.

There is also a controversy as to who ordered the demolition at Zallarpar. The eviction team had said that the demolition was done on orders from the municipal authorities. But Municipal Chairman Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran denied having ordered the demolition and said it was done at the instruction of the finance minister who is also the MP from this area and the minister in charge of the district.

Talking to this correspondent, the DIG of police however held the municipal chairman responsible for suspension of the drive. The Sandhya Bazar traders association at a press conference on June 22 at Sylhet Press Club said they are running their businesses in the market after taking prior permission from the municipal authorities.

On the following day, 10 ward commissioners at a press conference said some vested quarters "managed officials" and grabbed lands by constructing multi-storied markets on the banks of the canal. There are allegations that the municipal chairman who is also

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Jewellery shop looted at Sylhet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Gold ornaments and other valuables worth nearly Tk 20 lakh were looted from a jewellery shop at the Chhatak upazila headquarters Thursday night. Sources said about 8 masked men carrying firearms arrived at the Madhyabazar Ghat in a motorised boat at 8:30pm and then went straight to the nearby Matri Jewellers. They fired several gunshots to disperse the local people, and ordered the shop owner Mohadev Paul to open the locker and show cases.

The robbers looted the entire set of gold ornaments weighing 300 tolas as well as Tk 5000 from the shop and fled the scene firing blank shots in the air. People said the robbers escaped by the same boat, the engine of had been left running. Local MP Kalim Uddin Milon and the SP of Sunamganj Mir Shahidul Islam visited the spot around midnight. A case was filed with Chhatak Police.

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ASM NURUNNABI

The rivers flowing past most of the towns in the country are polluted. This is particularly true of the Dhaka city. The main cause is the dumping of waste from mills, factories and clinics.

The rivers Buriganga, Turag, Dhaleswari, Banghi and Balu flowing throughout the capital have been polluted for long, endangering fish and the ecology.

According to officials of the Department of Environment, dumping of solid and liquid wastes from various industries is raising the riverbed and hindering the free movement of vessels. The people of Lalanchati, Nasirabad, Dasarkandi, Trimohini and Barogram in the Khligoan area, and Rayerbazar, Gabtali, Katasur, Bansibari, Basila in the western part of the city, all hold this opinion.

People in these areas lead a subhuman existence due to the stench emanating from chemical wastes. Many people suffer various water-borne and skin diseases following the use of river water.

DOWN TO EARTH

Pollution of river water

A survey carried out in 1999 on the Karnaphuli showed that the offshore area and the confluence of the river were the most polluted regions in the country. Fishermen failed to make any catch within 30 kilometres of the Karnaphuli due to the discharge of effluents from over one hundred mills and factories in Chittagong.

The spilling of various pollutants, including used oil and other wastes from motorised boats, launches and ships, have also polluted the river. Experts of the Environment Department said the rate of pollution of the rivers flowing through the Dhaka, Chittagong and Khulna regions is all too high.

There are four water treatment plants in the country. However, most industries discharge liquids and solid wastes without treatment. Only two industries, the Bata Bangladesh at Nayarhat and the Apex Tannery at Savar, discharge wastes into the rivers after treatment at their own plants.

The Ghorasal Fertiliser Factory usually discharges liquid waste into the nearby Shitalakhya after separating it from solid wastes in its reservoir. The authorities in the Department of Environment say tannery, cement, pulp, paper, sugar, textiles, food processing, engineering and chemical industries as well as fertiliser and pesticide factories are mostly responsible for polluting the rivers. Sources in the Dhaka WASA say some 10.40 lakh tonnes of waste

accumulate in the capital every day, of which the WASA treats only 20 per cent. Twenty-five per cent waste spills into the rivers through different channels. The Dhaka WASA has so far brought only 262 square kilometres of the capital under its drainage system. But 162 square kilometres in the eastern part of the city remains out of the drainage system.

The sources said some 16,000 tonnes of waste accumulates in the Hazaribagh tannery zone alone and another 12,000MT in the Tejgaon industrial area. The accumulated waste spills into the Buriganga and the Turag through the WASA spillways in Rayerbazar and Gabtali, severely contaminating the rivers.

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WC Quiz ends Bumper prize Morshed's

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Morshed Ahmed, a service holder from Moneswar Road, Hazaribagh, of the capital became the lucky winner of the most lucrative prize, a 29" Toshiba Bamba colour television, of the Bumper Round draw of The Daily Star Rangs Toshiba World Cup quiz yesterday.

Minister for Fisheries and Livestock and Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Sadek Hossain picked the entry of the 34-year-old in front of a packed auditorium of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Zakaria Pintoo, captain of the Swadhin Bangla Football Team, former national footballers Golam Sarwar Tipu, Ashrafuddin Ahmed Chhunu and national striker Alfaz Ahmed were also present and drew coupons of the other winners

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Diarrhoea situation in Jessore jail still 'alarming'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Diarrhoea situation in Jessore Central Jail is 'alarming' with no effective steps to combat the disease till yesterday, reports received here said. The disease broke out as prisoners were allegedly given stale food on Sunday and the number of patients crossed 300 by Thursday.

The jail authorities remained tight-lipped about the latest situation. Lack of necessary steps for treatment of those already attacked with the disease and preventing further spread of it has created panic among the nearly 4000 inmates of the jail - convicts and under trial. A large number of anxious relatives of the prisoners are crowding the jail gate every day to know the situation. Many prisoners alleged that they

are given stale beef and fish and moth-eaten rice and pulses cooked with impure water. This led to the outbreak of diarrhoea, according to sources. When contacted over telephone, Jailor Zahiruddin Babar admitted that the situation is 'alarming.' But he declined to say anything when asked if effective steps in this regard have been taken so far.

Six more diarrhoea victims in the jail were admitted to Jessore general hospital yesterday, raising the number to 16. Their condition is critical, hospital sources were quoted as saying. The Deputy Commissioner of Jessore could not be contacted over telephone despite repeated attempts till 5pm yesterday. Inmates of the jail include more than 1000 notorious criminals of

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Legal notices asking to stop earth-filling at Ashuliya

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) has served a legal notice on the Jamuna Group of Industries, asking it to stop filling the low-lying land of Ashuliya and remove the dumped earth from the area by 72 hours. BELA also served legal notices on the secretaries of the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Forest and Environment and the Ministry of Land, asking them to take effective steps in this regard, a BELA release said on Thursday.

The Rajuk chairman, the director-general of the Directorate of Environment, the deputy commissioner of Dhaka and the office-in-charge of Savar Police Station were also issued with notices. BELA in the notices said the earth-filling activities have been

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89 killed as heavy rains flood western India

AFP, Mumbai

At least 89 people have died in heavy monsoon rains that have flooded India's western state of Maharashtra and neighbouring Gujarat, officials said yesterday. Suresh Joshi, principal secretary of Maharashtra, said 41 people have died over the past three days due to incessant rains that flooded the state's Thane district some 50 kilometres north of India's financial capital Mumbai.

Another 23 people have been killed, most of them by drowning, due to rain elsewhere in the state, he told AFP. Joshi added that 6,000 families had been rendered homeless, while a number of farmers in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg farming districts had lost their crops when the rains submerged entire villages.

The heavy rains have also disrupted the movement of trains in Thane. Police said it would take days to reconstruct the damaged rail network which is a transport lifeline of the area. Flash floods triggered by monsoon rains in the neighbouring state of Gujarat have also submerged villages and marooned up to 4,000 people, state administrative officials said Friday.

"At least 25 people are estimated to have died in rain-related incidents over the past week," a Gujarat state administrative official said.

Zillur protests police raids on Tofail's house

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday protested police raids on the house of AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed on June 19 and 27. "After assuming power through vote-rigging in the October 1 election, the alliance government started killing AL leaders and workers and implicated them in false cases," he said in a statement.

Zillur urged the government to stop harassment and violence, otherwise, he warned, the government has to bear the consequences arising from the situation. In another statement, Zillur protested the arrest of Abdullah Al Islam Jacob, who contested the October 1 election on an AL ticket from Bholia-1 constituency, and filing of a false case against him. He demanded his immediate release.

SUST stalemate continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Academic activities are yet to resume at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology with the teachers on an indefinite strike since May 28 demanding punitive action against those involved in handling three teachers including the proctor and assistant proctor on May 17 in nearby Madina market area. A number students

declared by the authorities on June 2 in the wake of a tense situation on the campus. The teachers have been on an indefinite strike since May 28 demanding punitive action against those involved in handling three teachers including the proctor and assistant proctor on May 17 in nearby Madina market area. A number students

reportedly belonging to a JCD faction were involved in the incident. This led to the teachers' strike. Vice Chancellor Prof Shafiqur Rahman assured the Teachers Association on June 25 that proper action would be taken against those responsible for the untoward incident. He requested the teachers to call off their strike but the teachers did not agree.

The JCD faction threatened on Thursday that it would go for a fresh agitation if punitive action is taken against any of its activists. Meanwhile, a probe body formed by the university authorities following the May 17 incident is yet to submit its report. Headed by Treasurer Prof Abdul Aziz, the probe body could not complete its work due to the summer vacation, sources said.



PHOTO: STAR

Workers of the Adamjee Jute Mills move on to a different place yesterday ahead of its closure tomorrow. The government has decided on the closure of the mills to cap huge losses the enterprise incurs every year.