

# Most Sylhet colleges face student crisis

43,200 seats in 136 colleges in the division while 15,270 pass SSC under Sylhet board

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

Most colleges in Sylhet division face a serious crisis of students this year.

A total of 15,270 SSC examinees passed this year from schools under the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), Sylhet while 136 colleges in Sylhet division have 43,200 seats, sources said.

This will keep 27,930 seats vacant in the colleges this year, they said.

Officials of Sylhet education board and teachers said most colleges, will face a 'great crisis' during 2007-08 academic session. Especially, colleges in rural areas will be the worst sufferers.

Four reputed colleges in Sylhet city have a total of 1900 seats. A good number of students

with better results will be absorbed in the four colleges.

This year, 713 SSC examinees got GPA-5 and another 2411 got Grade-A. Most of them will be interested for admission to the four colleges at the divisional headquarters, teachers said.

It will cause a great blow to the rest 132 colleges, which will vie for 100 students each, putting their existence at risk, some teachers of non-government colleges told this correspondent.

Board sources said there are 136 government and non government colleges in the division. They include 60 in Sylhet, 19 in Habiganj, 28 in Moulvibazar and 29 in Sunamganj districts.

The 60 colleges in Sylhet have a total of 20,850 seats in Science, Arts and Business Studies faculties.

In Sunamganj, 28 colleges have 8700 seats while the number is

10,050 in 29 colleges in Moulvibazar and 7,050 in 19 colleges in Habiganj.

Due to shortage of students, most of the seats in these colleges will remain unfulfilled.

The colleges in four districts in the division have a total of 20,400 seats in Science group but only 5566 students passed in the group this year. So, 14,834 seats will remain vacant.

In Arts group, there are 14,400 seats colleges in the four districts while only 8463 examinees passed in the group. A total of 5937 seats will remain vacant in Arts group in the colleges.

In Business studies group, there are 11,805 seats, while the number of successful students is

1241. There is possibility of 10 564 seats remaining vacant.

Four reputed colleges for Science students—MC College, Sylhet Government College, Sylhet Government Mohila College and Madan Mohan College—will enroll 1250 students, leaving each of the rest 132 colleges vying for only 33 students on an average.

In Arts group, each of the 136 colleges will get only 63 students.

In 2006-07 academic session, nine colleges in Sylhet did not get any student.

With start of admission, most eligible students are going the good colleges.

MC College has 300 seats, Sylhet Government College 800, Government Mohila College 600 and Commerce College has only 200 seats.

## 3 outlaws arrested

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Police and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested three alleged members of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in Sirajganj and Khulna yesterday and the night before.

Tarash thana police in Sirajganj in a drive arrested alleged outlaws Onil Kumar, 35, and Zohurul Islam, 26 from Dewragram village in the upazila, our correspondent reports.

Acting on a tip off, police raided their houses in the morning and arrested them.

Police said they were accused in several criminal cases including a murder.

In Khulna, Rab arrested alleged outlaw Zahidul Islam alias Fantu Zahid, 24, Tuesday night from Khalispur housing estate in Khulna city, our staff correspondent reports.

Zahid hails from Harirampur upazila in Manikganj district.

Rab recovered ten grams of heroin from his possession. He is an armed cadre of Janajuddho faction of outlawed PBCP, a Rab press release said yesterday.

## 2 held with arms making tools in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two alleged notorious terrorists of South-Western region from a hotel at Dakbunglow Road in Khulna Tuesday night.

The arrestees were identified as Md. Mehedi Hasan alias Feroze Gazi, 26 and Md. Abdul Wadud, 32, both hailing from Digholia upazila in Khulna district.

Acting on their confession, Rab recovered a revolver, a shutter gun, a pipe gun and some arms making equipment from the house of Feroze Gazi yesterday.

A Rab press release said the two arrested terrorists gave sensational information about network of underground organisations and illegal arms trade in south-western region of the country.

The two were wanted in several criminal cases including murders. They were also involved in supplying illegal arms to pirates in the Sundarbans, the press release said.

## Tk 16 lakh smuggled powder milk seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police yesterday seized a fishing trawler and recovered Indian smuggled goods worth Tk 16 lakh from the trawler.

On a tip-off, police seized 25 sacks of banned powder milk and seven electric fans from the trawler anchored on the bank of the Lawkathi.

However, police could not arrest anybody from the trawlers.



A vegetable farmer at Gaidghat village in Bagherpara upazila of Jessore district taking care of a pheromone trap in his field that kills pests without use of pesticide.

# A 'silent revolution' in safe pest control faces setback

Acute crisis of pheromone hinders cultivation of insecticide-free vegetables

Hossain Seraj, back from Jessore

The inspiring initiative by Jessore-Magura farmers to produce insecticide-free vegetables faces a major setback.

With cooperation from BARI (Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute), they bade goodbye to pesticides and used 'Pheromone trap' and bio-agent (beneficial insects) instead of harmful pesticides.

But the 'silent revolution' in pest control may die down soon as pheromone, the principal ingredient used in the process is missing. It is yet to be imported on commercial basis, farmers told this correspondent.

This correspondent visited Gaidghat village in Bagherpara upazila, Nongorpur in Jessore Sadar and Pearpur in Shalikhapuzila recently and talked to farmers.

They are still growing vegetables like brinjal, snake-gourd (Chichinga) and balsam apple (Korola) without use of pesticide on about 324 bighas of land.

They said they want to continue the new pest management system as it is less costly, beneficial and hygienic.

But they are facing crisis of pheromone as in local markets.

Sazzad Ali Khan at Gaidghat village said vegetable production using pesticide is at least eight times costlier than using pheromone trap and beneficial insects. He however said part of the pheromone they need is now supplied by BARI for free and they have to buy a plastic bottle which costs Tk 15 only.

"The supply is limited and we have to buy from market when we need more", he said.

Laxman Mondol said former agriculture minister MK Anwar during a visit in May 2005 assured farmers that the government allowed a multinational company to import pheromone and that they would not face its crisis. But the assurance has not yet turned into a reality, plunging their laudable initiative into uncertainty, they lamented.

A top official of agriculture ministry after a visit to the area on July 5 told The Daily Star that the government had taken steps to bring 70 tonnes of pheromone to distribute among farmers.

Pheromone is a chemical capsule that is kept in a plastic bottle half-filled with water. It attracts insects into the bottle to

drown, the farmers said.

Farmers who earlier used to apply heavy doses of pesticide in their vegetable fields, now need this wonder capsule they call 'tabiz' (talisman) along with some beneficial insects.

However, farmers also use some beneficial insects supplied by BARI.

Mohammad Raziul Hasan Mondol, Scientific Officer of RARS (Regional Agricultural Research Institute) under BARI in Jessore said, beneficial insects like Bracon, Habator, Trichogramma, Chilonis and Chrysopa eat up harmful insects.

Senior Scientific Officer (SSO) of BARI's Entomology Division Dr. Syed Nurul Alam said pheromone-based technology can eliminate use of pesticide in vegetable cultivation.

BARI took up Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme in 2001 to discourage farmers from using harmful pesticide. The programme assisted by DFID, UK, achieved a great success. The National Resources Institute (NRI) in UK and Asian Vegetable Research and Development Centre (AVRDC) in Taiwan cooperated in the research, officials said.

# NGO worker commits 'suicide' in Patuakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

An NGO worker has allegedly committed suicide at her Pura Bazaar residence in Patuakhali town.

Anamika Datta, 25, field supervisor of Speed Trust, an NGO, working for sex workers, committed 'suicide' in the early hours on Tuesday.

But the victim's husband Moloy Datta claimed that her wife had committed suicide following sex harassment by the project manager of Speed Trust, Kazzal Baran Das. He lodged a complaint to this effect with Sadar Police Station.

On contact, AHM Shamsul Islam

Dipu, team manager of Barisal office of Speed Trust said Anamika took four days leave from office on July 22. She and her husband went to Khulna for a personal work.

On their return from Khulna on Monday, Moloy left his residence. In his absence, Kazzal came to his residence at about 10 pm. Moloy claimed. He stated that he had come back to his residence early next morning only to find his wife's dead body. On the night, their six-year-old child, Prorrel, was sleeping at the residence, Moloy said.

Police got two pieces of papers from the spot where Anamika wrote something.

Police recorded an unnatural

death (UD) case in this connection.

After the incident, Speed Trust formed two probe bodies to find out the cause of the incident.

Dr Sunil Baran Halder, chairman of the Trustee Board of Speed Trust is leading a three-member committee while the other two-member committee is led by Asadur Rahman, programme officer of Barisal office of Speed Trust.

Members of both the committees visited Patuakhali yesterday. It will submit reports within three days, said Dipu, Barisal office team manager of Speed Trust.

The body was cremated after autopsy Tuesday night.

## RALLY FOR HASINA'S RELEASE

# RU BCL leader held

RU CORRESPONDENT

Joint forces Tuesday night arrested Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader Tuhiin Reza from Rajsahahi University campus allegedly for organising demonstrations on Sunday protesting arrest of Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina.

On Sunday, BCL staged a demonstration in front of the arts faculty building protesting Sheikh Hasina's arrest. They chanted slogans against the caretaker government and demanded resignation of the

law adviser. Reza is organizing secretary of RU BCL unit.

Following the demonstration, joint forces raided two dormitories of RU Monday night and searched for BCL leaders and activists, campus sources said.

Law enforcers Tuesday night also raided the house of RU BCL unit joint secretary Ujjal near the university area but could not find him, sources claimed.

Contacted, RU Proctor Enamul Haque acknowledged arrest of the BCL leader.

## 'Aggyan party' man, drug traders held in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested a member of 'aggyan party' from housing estate area in Khalispur in the city Tuesday night.

A Rab press release yesterday said arrested Md Miraj Molla, 26, of Mohammadpur upazila in Magura district was a hardened criminal involved in snatching after drugging the victims.

Rab also recovered Tk 2000 from him, which was snatched

from a person recently.

Rab also said they arrested two snatchers and two drug traders in special drives in Khulna city and Dumuria upazila on the same night.

The snatchers arrested from Gobarchaka area under Sonadanga thana of Khulna city were identified as Fazlur Rahman, 18, and Salam Mallick, 26.

The drug traders arrested from Dumuria were identified as Moktar Ali, 38, and Mohammad Ali, 45.



One of the homesteads devastated by a twister in Sharishabari in Jamalpur yesterday (L) and flooded Arambagh area of Feni town.

PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

## 'Dredge Kobadak river'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Leaders of Kabodak Bachao Andolon Samannay Committee (coordination committee to save Kabodak) at a press conference in Jessore yesterday urged the government to re-excavate Kobadak river to save over 50 lakh people in three districts from recurring flooding.

The Kobadak is the lifeline for over 50 lakh people of 77 villages in Jessore, Khulna and Satkhira districts. The silted river can not retain water, causing recurring floods and directly affecting over 10 lakh people living near its banks, they said. As flood water can not flow out through the silted river, water-logging has become a

problem for people in the river basin areas, seriously affecting agriculture and other means of livelihood, they said.

"This problem persists in the region. Whenever there is rain there is water-logging as the river is silted up", Anil Biswas, convener of the Samannay Committee.

Over the years, encroachment of the riverbank by land grabbers and obstruction of its flow by fish farmers hastened its death.

Biswas demanded immediate government steps to remove the encroachments and obstructions and dredging of the river. Restoring Kobadak's link with Mathabanga by re-excavating it would solve the problem to a great extent, he said.

7.5X3

4X2

5X3