

SSC EXAMS
SQ system to
be introduced
from 2010

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In the face of objections from teachers, students and guardians, the education ministry has decided to introduce the structured question (SQ) style for the SSC examinations from the year 2010.

Originally, the method in which a question asks for several bits of information on a single topic was planned to be brought into use in 2009.

Education Adviser Ayub Quadri yesterday signed papers deferring the SQ system for one more year as teachers and students are not ready yet for it even after seven months into the current academic session, ministry sources said.

"We have decided to put off the method till 2010, considering the concern of the guardians and students. Instead of 2009, now it will be in effect from the 2010 SSC

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JMB PATRONAGE
Charge framing
against Dulu
on Aug 13

UNB, Natore

Charges will be framed against former deputy minister for land Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu on August 13 for patronising Islamist militants.

District and Sessions Judge Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan fixed the date yesterday after preliminary hearing of the case.

Selim Reza of Ramshar Kazipur village in Maldanga upazila filed the case on April 8 against 22 people including the deputy minister of the immediate-past BNP government.

After investigation, Officer-in-Charge of Natore Police Station Zahidur Rahman submitted charge sheet against 33 people, including Dulu, on June 4.

On last Thursday, Dulu and 88 others were sentenced to eight and seven years imprisonment in a case filed for arson and looting.

Newspaper ads to
ask Siraj, Harris
to surrender

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the authorities to publish advertisements in two national dailies asking former minister Shajahan Siraj, his wife Rabeya Haider and son Rajib Siraj to appear before the court within three days in connection with eleven tax evasion cases.

The same court directed the authorities to publish an advertisement in two dailies asking Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, to appear before it within three days in a money laundering case.

Detained former communications minister Nazmul Huda and his wife advocate Sigma Huda were shown arrested in a graft case while a Dhaka court yesterday allowed

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SONAMASJID LAND PORT
Govt denied Tk 6cr
tax a month

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

An investigation by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) found that on an average importers evade government tax of Tk 6.25 crore per month at Sonamasjid land port in Chapainawabganj, with the help of some customs and other government officials.

The importers allegedly evade the customs duties on imported goods from India in collusion with some customs officials mainly by making false declarations about the weights of the goods imported.

"Making false declarations about the weights of the goods in loaded trucks is one of the main ways of dodging government duties," said a source.

Sources said a total of 5,105 fruit laden trucks, with average capacity of bearing 15 metric tons of load, were allowed through Sonamasjid land port from India in the FY 2005-06, but the importers showed the average capacity of those trucks as 10 metric tons to evade customs and other duties.

"In the financial year 2005-06, importers evaded government taxes worth about Tk 41 crore by showing lower than real weights of fruit laden trucks," said a source.

"A huge number of fruit laden trucks were released through the land port without charging them any government tax in presence of customs officials during the last ten years," said a senior officer of Rajshahi Commissionerate.

Locally the system was introduced by some customs and government officials, which is known as 'stand released'.

In July last year, a total of 735 truckload of fruits were imported from India through Sonamasjid land port showing the average weight of the fruits in those trucks as 15 metric tons on the Indian side. But the average weight of the imported goods was shown as 11.73 metric tons on the Bangladesh side, the sources added.

Sultan Md Iqbal, commissioner of the Customs Excise and Vat Commissionerate of Rajshahi, acknowledged the phenomenon over the telephone on July 18. "A

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PHOTO: STAR

A mobile court seizes 12,000 kg mangoes from a house in Uttar Jatrabari in the capital yesterday after toxic chemicals were found mixed in the fruits. The court arrested six people in this connection.

Ex-BNP MP
Shahidul sent
to jail after
surrender

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

A Patuakhali court yesterday sent former BNP legislator Shahidul Alam Talukder to jail, rejecting his bail petition, after he surrendered before it as he is an accused in a case filed in connection with illegal possession of ammunition.

ABM Sajedur Rahman, additional district and sessions judge, had earlier fixed yesterday for closing arguments of the case.

Shahidul had been on the run since January 11 this year when the state of emergency was proclaimed.

Joint forces during a raid seized two magazines of a pistol at his home in Baufal upazila February 16 this year. Officer-in-charge (OC) of Baufal Police Station Mizanur Rahman had filed the arms case against him.

Rafiqul Islam, investigation

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Schoolboy
strangled to
death in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 14-year-old schoolboy, whose body was found at the Botanical Garden in the capital Saturday afternoon, was strangled to death, sources in the Dhaka Medical College (DMC) morgue yesterday said.

A security guard of the garden found the body of Saiful Islam, a class VIII student of Nayanpur High School in Ramganj, Laxmipur, in an isolated place and informed police of the matter.

Police had recovered the body and sent it to DMC morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was filed with Shah Ali Police Station.

Saiful's father Abdur Rashid, who works as an office assistant in a

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Delhi offers
'gift' to Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

India will give 40,000 metric tons of rice, 10,000 metric tons of wheat and 1,000 metric tons of milk powder as a 'gift' to Bangladesh.

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee informed Foreign Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury of the 'gift' in a letter. Indian High Commissioner Pinak R Chakraborty delivered the letter personally to Iftekhar at the foreign ministry yesterday.

During last week's visit by Indian State Minister for Commerce Jairam Ramesh, Dhaka had asked New Delhi whether Bangladesh could import some of these products. India has decided to 'gift' some of the goods to Bangladesh instead.

Ramesh had said that some of the goods that were asked for could not be provided since India itself imports those goods from other countries.

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PHOTO: STAR

Shanties are built cutting hills at Pahartoli in Chittagong even though there is a ban on such activities. Low-income people live in these houses for cheaper rent.

Outsourcing firms woes
of Bangladeshi workers
Finds HR organisation

PORIMOL PALMA

The outsourcing companies are largely responsible for high migration cost and exploitation of Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia, a survey by a renowned human rights organisation of the Southeast Asian nation revealed.

Tenaganita, the organisation that prepared the survey report after interviewing 150 jobless and stranded Bangladeshi workers and studying 36 cases of the workers, also described their exploitation as trafficking.

Part from the official fees including visa, levy and attestation, the outsourcing companies had to pay between 1,500 and 2,000 Malaysian Ringgit equivalent to Tk 30,000 and Tk 40,000 in different forms to the Malaysian home ministry, according to a statement signed by Tenaganita Director Irene Fernandez.

The outsourcing companies, which pen deals with the principal companies for supplying workers through recruiting agencies in Bangladesh, also spend between 1,000 and 2,000 Malaysian Ringgit equivalent to Tk 20,000 and Tk 40,000 as 'lobbyist fee', the statement added.

MAH Salim, former president of now dissolved Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies, earlier told reporters that they had to charge more money than the government-fixed rate (Tk 85,000) from the workers for paying the 'lobbyist fee' in Malaysia.

Tenaganita said the Bangladesh government has arrested Salim for collecting unauthorised fees from the workers.

"With such developments, why the Malaysian government is still continuing the outsourcing system for workers recruitment?" said the human rights body.

Tenaganita also submitted a memorandum to the Malaysian Human Rights Commission in this regard.

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Talks stalled over
Korean hostages
Taliban set fresh deadline

AP, AFP, Kabul

Afghan officials yesterday reported no progress in talks with tribal elders to secure the release of 22 South Korean hostages held by the Taliban.

A purported Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, said the militant group had given a list of 23 insurgent prisoners it wants released in exchange for the hostages and was now waiting for the government to act.

"The government had told us they need time to negotiate and soon they will release the prisoners," Ahmadi said. He said the Taliban has stated their demands and no longer needs to negotiate but still has open channels with the government.

Taliban said Sunday they would kill some of their 22 South Korean hostages unless progress was made by noon Monday (0730 GMT) on their demand for the release of jailed militants.

The Taliban leadership announced that if the Afghan and South Korean governments "don't pay attention to this issue by tomorrow 12 o'clock, the Taliban will kill some Korean hostages," a militant spokesman told AFP.

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Gen Jamali
new BCB
president

SPORTS REPORTER

Putting aside all the guessing, a 12-member ad-hoc committee was announced yesterday to run the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) with Bangladesh Army's Chief of General Staff Maj Gen Sina Ibn Jamali named as president of the country's most affluent sports body.

The inclusion of the new BCB chief Jamali was expected but most of the other names are different from the recent media speculations.

The National Sports Council (NSC), the apex body of the country's sports, issued the official circular to kill all rumours about the formation of the new committee after the *en masse* resignation of

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Japan's PM suffers
defeat in polls

Abe vows to stay in power

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's government suffered a crushing defeat in upper house elections yesterday but the conservative leader insisted he would stay in power.

Exit polls said that Abe's Liberal Democratic Party, which has ruled Japan almost continuously since 1955, was set to suffer one of the worst drubbings in its history, meaning a rocky road ahead for the hawkish premier's agenda.

Abe assumed power last year on a mission to build a nation prouder of its past, but he has come under fire over a raft of scandals including a government agency's mismanagement of the pension system.

Abe's coalition looked on course to lose around half of the seats it was defending in the upper house of parliament, exit polls said. If confirmed, the house would come under opposition control.

But the more powerful lower

house -- where Abe's ruling coalition has an overwhelming majority - was not up for grabs, and the prime minister said he would stay in office.

"I have to sincerely accept the voice of the people," a sullen-looking Abe said in a television interview.

But he added: "I will continue to assume my responsibility as prime minister because my task of nation-building has just begun."

Abe's top aides said they did not believe that voters had repudiated his signature policy goals, such as rewriting the country's pacifist constitution.

"I don't think people have judged that Prime Minister Abe's policies have failed or have rejected his basic directions," said LDP secretary general Hidenao Nakagawa.

Nakagawa's deputy, Nobuteru Ishihara, acknowledged: "This was the most severe election verdict I have ever experienced."

But he added: "There are still

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Mass hysteria
affects students
in 3 districts

STAR REPORT

Mass hysteria affected 40 more students in three districts yesterday.

Twelve students of Raushanara Jalil Girls' High School at Ashuganj in Brahmanbaria district fell ill yesterday with the symptoms of mass hysteria.

According to school sources, a student of class eight first fell unconscious in the morning and within 20 minutes 11 other students fell ill with the same symptoms.

UNB says: At least 14 students of Boidyapur Secondary School in Jhalakathi fainted with convulsion one after another between 8:00am

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Prayer Timing		
July 30		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		