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HSC exams begin tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 6,20,020 students sit for the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination and its equivalent Alim and Business Management examinations tomorrow under nine education boards of the country.

The figure is an increase from the number of HSC candidates last year.

Measures have been taken across the country to ensure a secure environment for the candidates during the exams. Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has slapped a ban on public entry into 200 yards of city exam centres during the examinations.

The ban will remain in force until the examinations are over, a DMP press release said.

The 6.20 lakh candidates will sit for the exams at 1800 centres, including five abroad, this year under the Dhaka, Rajshahi, Comilla, Jessore, Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet, Madrasa and Technical education boards.

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Tk 21CR BRIBERY

Charge hearing deferred till June 3

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing on charge-framing in the case of Tk 21-crore bribery following the murder of Humayun Kabir Sabir, a director of Bashundhara Group, has been deferred to June 3.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of a special court passed the order as the High Court in an interim order on Monday restrained the trial court from proceeding with the case until June 2.

The High Court stalled the case proceedings on a petition filed by BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, one of the accused in the case, for quashing the proceedings against him.

Meanwhile, the prosecution yesterday failed to produce accused Tarique Rahman and former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar in the court.

Prosecution told the court Tarique and Babar are 'sick' according to custody warrant.

Only Abu Sofian, director of East-West Property Development Ltd, a concern of the Bashundhara Group, was produced from among the eight accused.

In October last year, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the bribery case with Ramna Police Station, accusing eight people. The commission on May 6 pressed charges against Tarique Rahman, former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar and six others in the case.

100-acre land in Delhi allotted for South Asian University

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Indian government Monday allocated a 100-acre land in South Delhi for setting up the main campus of the South Asian University.

The first academic session of the university, proposed by Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the 13th SAARC Summit in Dhaka in 2005, is expected to begin in 2010.

Speaking on the occasion, India's External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee said, "The

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2 ex-MPs sued for ill-gotten wealth

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed two cases against two former lawmakers for amassing illegal wealth.

ACC Assistant Director Kazi Shamsul Islam filed an FIR (first information report) with Ramna Police Station against former BNP

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Prayer Timing		
May 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-43	6-47
Esha	8-05	8-35
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Manpower export to Bahrain stops

No work permits for Bangladeshis; embassy in Manama terms the move 'unacceptable'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Employment of Bangladeshi workers in Bahrain comes to a halt, as the country on Monday stopped issuing work permits to Bangladeshis, Bahraini newspaper Gulf Daily News reported yesterday.

The Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain says the move is "shocking" and "unacceptable" and they will pursue the Gulf nation to review the decision. Bahraini human rights activists also term it "xenophobic".

Recruitment businesses observe the ban is a great shock for

Bangladesh's overseas labour market that came after a halt of recruitment in Kuwait in late 2006, reduction in employment in Saudi Arabia and a temporary ban in Malaysia.

Jobseekers now in Bahrain with work visas but yet to get work permit and those with visas but yet to leave for Bahrain will be in troubles, agencies told The Daily Star yesterday.

The recent restriction came following directives by Interior Minister Shaikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa and was revealed in a statement by search and follow-up assistant under-secretary Colonel

Yousuf Al Ghatam.

Earlier on Sunday, a group of lawmakers demanded ban on Bangladeshi workers following death of Mohammed Jassim Dossary killed in an attack after an argument with a Bangladeshi mechanic at a workshop in Suq Waqif, Hamad Town on Friday.

Bahrain, which is home to around 1.6 lakh Bangladeshis, is presently the third largest manpower receiving country in the Persian Gulf.

Bangladesh Embassy Charge d'Affairs Saiful Islam told The Gulf Daily News on Monday the move

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Old woman freed after 14yrs in jail without trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A sexagenarian who languished in Bagerhat jail for 14 years on end without trial was released on Monday, three weeks after the High Court granted him bail.

Bagerhat jail authorities set Moslemuddin Biswas, 60, free after the May 5 High Court order reached them. Jail officials, however, refused to comment why he was kept behind bars for so long a time without trial.

Moslem Biswas, son of late Ishaque Biswas of Shakhariakati village in Pirojpur's Mathbaria upazila, was arrested by Sharnkhola police of Bagerhat on August 11 in 1994 on charges of violence.

The following day he was shown arrested under Special Powers Act in two more cases.

Though he was later acquitted on the violence charges, Biswas was kept behind bars in connection with the two other cases in which he was produced before court only once in 14 years, jail sources said.



Visiting United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres calls on Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday.

RE-DEMARCATION OF CONSTITUENCIES

EC gets 1057 appeals from the aggrieved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aggrieved by the Election Commission's (EC) move to redraw parliamentary constituencies, politicians and other people have filed 1,057 appeals with the EC against re-demarcation of 43 constituencies.

Amidst growing opposition from major political parties, the EC on April 29 unveiled a draft list of parliamentary constituencies with 133 of the 300 seats redrawn, and invited appeals against it by June 1, if any.

Officials at the EC Secretariat said they received the appeals concerning 43 seats by Monday, and the number might go on increasing till expiry of the time limit.

Election Commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Sakawat Hussain however said yesterday appeals from only six or seven constituencies have merits and the remaining ones do not contain sufficient substances.

"We will decide whether we will hear all the appeals or only those with merits," he told reporters at

his office.

The EC will start hearing of appeals from the second week of June so that it can publish final list of the re-demarcated parliamentary constituencies by the end of the month.

Sakawat said they have received some appeals even from constituencies with no changes in their boundaries. "These appeals contain demands for re-demarcation of the seats," he added.

Major political parties are opposing the EC move saying it would create obstacles to holding the ninth parliamentary polls by the year end, as per the announced electoral roadmap.

The EC however repeatedly said this would in no way hamper holding of parliamentary polls in time.

The constituencies from where appeals have been filed include Sirajganj-1,2,3,4 and 5, Faridpur-1,2,3 and 4, Dhaka-2 and 10, Chittagong-3, 5, 6 and 13, Chandpur-1 and 4, Pirojpur-2 and 3, Satkhira-3 and 5, Comilla-7 and 8, Barisal-land 3, Gazipur-3,

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DIALOGUE WITH GOVT

BNP to announce stance soon

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) is likely to spell out soon its position on joining the ongoing political dialogue with the caretaker government.

Senior BNP leaders told UNB last night that they were seeking opinions from leaders of all tiers of the party, including district level leaders and ex-MPs, on the issue of joining the dialogue.

During the exchange of views with them, a consensus is

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Home mulls reviving 1996 murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry is seriously considering reviving the murder case of an expatriate Bangladeshi who was killed 12 years ago in Dhaka inside Zia International Airport (ZIA).

The home ministry has decided to seek law ministry's advice as to whether a petition should be filed with the higher court to review the judgment of the case by a lower

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POWER PLANT CASE

Hearing on HC rule begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday started hearing on the rule it had issued earlier on a writ petition filed by former prime minister Sheikh Hasina challenging legality of trial proceedings of the barge-mounted power plant corruption case against her.

An HC bench comprising Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid and Justice Md Ashfaqul Islam also fixed today for further hearing on the matter.

Trial of the corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is going on in the Special Judge's Court-1 on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises.

Hasina's counsel Barrister Rafique-ul Huq yesterday submitted before the HC that as per Section 6(A) of the Criminal Law

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A portion of guard rails of Mohakhali flyover in the capital was stolen. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Ex-MP Salim gets 7yrs in extortion case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced former BNP lawmaker from Bagerhat MAH Salim to seven years' rigorous imprisonment for extorting Tk 12 lakh from the owner of a construction firm in September 2006.

Salim was also fined Tk 50,000 in default of which he will have to suffer two months more in jail.

Judge Nigar Sultana of the Fourth Assistant Sessions Judge's Court handed down the sentence in the presence of the convict.

This is the first time Salim, also chairman of private television channel Channel 1, has been convicted in a case since his arrest on March 7 last year under section 16(2) of the Emergency Power Rules.

Earlier, the prosecution and the

defence had completed arguments and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses.

Zahidul Islam Faruq, proprietor of Faruq Construction Firm Ltd, filed the case against Salim with Gulshan Police Station on June 10 last year, saying Salim demanded Tk 12 lakh for letting him work on a project of the Local Government Engineering Department. Zahidul had won work orders for the project.

The complainant said he had no option but to give in to the then lawmaker's mounting pressure and pay him a cheque of Tk 12 lakh on September 19, 2006.

After Salim's arrest nine criminal cases were filed against him in Bagerhat while two cases for extortion and one each for tax evasion and graft were filed with Gulshan police on different dates.

Village named after language martyr Salam

UNB, Feni

Language martyr Abdus Salam's ancestral village Laxmanpur in Daganbhuiyan upazila of the district has been renamed Salamnagar.

The village was renamed under a government move to show respect to the language martyrs and the Birsreshthas.

The government, earlier, decided to rename the nine villages and one union of seven Birsreshthas and three language martyrs for their heroic deeds and struggles in 1971 and 1952 and establish a library and a memorial museum in each of their villages through local district committees.

Under the plan, Feni Zilla Parishad, with the technical assistance of LGED, constructed

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Subsidence continues in 10 Dinajpur villages

Cultivable lands at Barapukuria go under water

KONGKON KARMAKER, Dinajpur

Several pieces of land in 10 villages adjacent to the Barapukuria coalmine in Dinajpur have subsided recently and the cultivable lands have now gone under water.

Sources said many pieces of land over the coalmine Phase-1101 and Phase-1103 have subsided and the coalmine adjacent areas are vulnerable to sinking.

Locals alleged they often have to rush out their homes in panic as quakes have become quite frequent, sometimes two to four times a day. They alleged that around 200 houses have developed cracks during the last two years in differ-

ent nearby villages. The coalmine, however, claims only seven houses were damaged due to subsiding of lands. They say that 53 houses are now vulnerable to land subsiding.

According to coalmine sources, the land sinking occurred on the surface over Phase-1101 (coal extraction completed) and Phase-1103 (extraction ongoing) due to a major geological fault.

Sources said the geological fault is 1,200-1,400 feet under phases 1101 and 1103.

The coalmine officials claimed only nine acres of land have

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Nepali parties agree on ceremonial president, executive PM

New assembly sworn in

PTI, AFP, Kathmandu

Nepalese leaders yesterday agreed to create a ceremonial president, with the executive powers in the hands of the prime minister ahead of a key Constituent Assembly meeting tomorrow that is set to abolish the 240-year-old monarchy and declare the country a republic.

Overcoming a deadlock in the formation of a coalition government, the CPN-Maoist in principle agreed to the demand of the mainstream parties to create a separate post of a president with a ceremonial role.

"The Maoists have agreed to

create a separate post of president after abolishing the monarchy," said Nepali Congress vice-president Gopalman Shrestha after the conclusion of the crucial meeting of the mainstream parties.

"However, formal agreement to this effect is yet to be signed," he said. The high-level meeting of the top leaders of the major political parties -- the Nepali Congress, the CPN-UML and the CPN-Maoist -- are yet to decide whether both the executive and ceremonial posts will be held by a single party or will be distributed among the coalition

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Myanmar junta extends Suu Kyi's house arrest

16 supporters of democracy leader arrested

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's ruling junta has extended the house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi by another year, an official said Tuesday, as 16 of the democracy leader's supporters were arrested.

Seven Myanmar officials went to the lakeside Yangon home that has been Aung San Suu Kyi's prison for most of the last 18 years and delivered the news on Tuesday afternoon during a 10-minute meeting, a state official said.

"Her detention was extended by one year," the official told AFP.

The Nobel Peace Prize winner's

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PHOTO: STAR

SNAIL'S PACE... Dhaka Wasa has been repairing underground drainage system in Central Shaheed Minar area for three months. The photo was taken yesterday.

ASSAULT OF JOURNO

Tangail jailer transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jail Directorate authorities yesterday transferred Tangail jailer Nazrul Islam to Meherpur jail in punitive measures after complaints were filed against him for assaulting the Tangail Correspondent of The Daily Star on May 24.

The probe committee, led by Tangail Jail Super Mohammad Sagor Miah, formed to investigate the assault is meanwhile also looking into earlier allegations against the same jailer.

These include charges of bribery and job rules violation. Sources said earlier that jailer Nazrul Islam was suspended once before and two departmental cases were filed against him for his acts.

Earlier on May 26, the authorities suspended two jail guards for

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