

## No bail for tree plundering

PM wants new law with provision to punish offender, buyer; prior permission to be made mandatory

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked authorities concerned to draft a new law with stringent provisions for taking action against people responsible for rampant tree felling.

The prime minister instructed them to include a non-bailable section there so that offenders cannot get bail from courts in cases filed in connection with tree felling, according to sources at the Prime Minister's Office.

She also suggested that a provision be kept

for awarding punishment not only against the offenders but also the people who buy or use those trees.

Sources said the prime minister desired another provision in the new law making it mandatory for people to take prior permission from authorities concerned for cutting down a tree at any green place.

PM sources said the prime minister was unhappy with the continuing felling of trees in different places in the country and asked the

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## Rural kids shine with hard work

STAR REPORT

It was the hard work, perseverance and relentless endeavour of her parents and teachers those were behind the success of Sadia Shikdar, a student of Monohardi Model Government Primary School in Narsingdi who stood first in the Primary Education Terminal Examination.

She got 593 marks out of 600, which is 98.83 percent.

Being a student of a rural school, Sadia thinks persistence and hard work is more important than that of urban facilities to do well in the exam.

Daughter of Tajul Islam, a madrasa teacher and Nasima Begum, she told The Daily Star she wants to be a pilot in future.

Dipannita Tithi, a student of Arpara Shibnagar Model

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Smiling faces of the girls say it all—hope and aspiration for the future—as jubilant students of Viqarunnisa Noon School in the city yesterday celebrate their success in the primary education terminal examination.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## 6,000 workers stay put in Mauritius

Decision to send them back withdrawn after Dipu Moni's visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Mauritius government has withdrawn its earlier decision to send back around 6,000 Bangladeshi male workers, and proposed to import eco-friendly bags from the country.

The assurance came when a Bangladeshi delegation led by Foreign Minister Dipu Moni met the authorities of Mauritius, the first African nation that recognised the independence of Bangladesh, says a foreign ministry release yesterday.

The Mauritius government in July announced that it would not renew the job contracts of 6,000 Bangladeshi male workers after 31 December this year, saying their economy was hit by the global economic recession.

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The foreign minister returned home last night after a two-day visit to Mauritius.

During the visit, Dipu Moni called on Mauritius' Prime Minister Navin Chandra Ramgoolam, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Economic Empowerment Ramakrishna Sithanen, Foreign Minister Arvin Boodell, Minister for Labour, International Relations and Employment Jean Francois Chaumiere, and Minister for Industry, Science and Research Dharanbeer Gokhool.

Ramgoolam fondly recalled the close friendship between his father, the founding prime minister of Mauritius Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Bangladeshi's Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

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## Students go berserk over bus fare row

30 vehicles vandalised in city; 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of Dhaka University students vandalised at least 30 vehicles and several ticket counters at Shahbagh in the capital after employees of a bus counter stabbed two students following a row over bus fare.

The scuffle that broke out near Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University left at least 10 people injured inside buses and private cars.

Traffic movement on the road was suspended for about half an hour after the incident.

Employees of Super Paribahan on Motijheel-SaDhaka University and another of Jahangirnagar University in front of BSMU around 4:30pm, police and witnesses said, var route stabbed a student of

## Tobacco use on rise despite law

Goes up to 43pc from 37pc in 2004, says WHO study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Use of tobacco among adults has increased to 43.3 percent this year than that of 37 percent in 2004 in spite of massive campaign and enactment of law, revealed Global Adult Tobacco Survey Bangladesh Report-2009 yesterday.

World Health Organisation (WHO) conducted the study in association with the health and family welfare ministry with the technical support of US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The study was conducted on 11,200 households. It also found that tobacco consumption is higher among males than females and more prevalent in rural areas.

At a dissemination programme at Hotel Sheraton it was said that a total of 41.3 million people in the country are now in the habit of using tobacco -- either in the form of smoking or chewing.

Of them, 58 percent are male and 28.7 percent are female. The prevalence of tobacco use in rural areas is 45.1 percent and 38.1 percent in urban areas.

The study revealed that 45 percent, among adults, are exposed to second-hand smoke in public places and males are more exposed than females.

An estimated 1 percent of the national income in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) is spent on purchase of cigarettes and 0.4 percent on bidis, it says.

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## Bangladesh seizes global spotlight

Govt terms its 'climate diplomacy' a success

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has drawn the attention of the global community during the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen through a successful climate diplomacy under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

State Minister for Forests and Environment Hasan Mahmud said this yesterday. But he acknowledged that the

summit did not achieve the

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## 'Graft suspects' may get back Tk 1,232cr

Govt finds money collected by an agency during the anti-graft drive of caretaker rule lacked legal basis

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Under pressure from different lobbies and also for legal reasons, the government is considering refund of the money deposited to the exchequer following anti-corruption drives during the last caretaker government.

Bangladesh Bank on Monday sent the finance ministry a list of 16 firms and individuals who deposited "illegally earned" Tk

1,232 crore to the Fakhrudin Ahmed-led caretaker government's exchequer.

A meeting of high officials of Bangladesh Bank and finance ministry with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair discussed the matter. The BB sent the list after the meeting.

A government source said there is a pressure on the government to return the amount while the government is also looking into the legality of the procedure

through which the money was taken from these organisations and individuals.

Proper legal framework was not followed while collecting the amount, said different sources, adding that the money was rather collected in the spirit of punishing corruption suspects.

If the government now wants to return the money, which has already been spent,

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## New primary exam records 89pc pass

Sadia Shikder of Narsingdi secures first place as girls rule the merit list

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

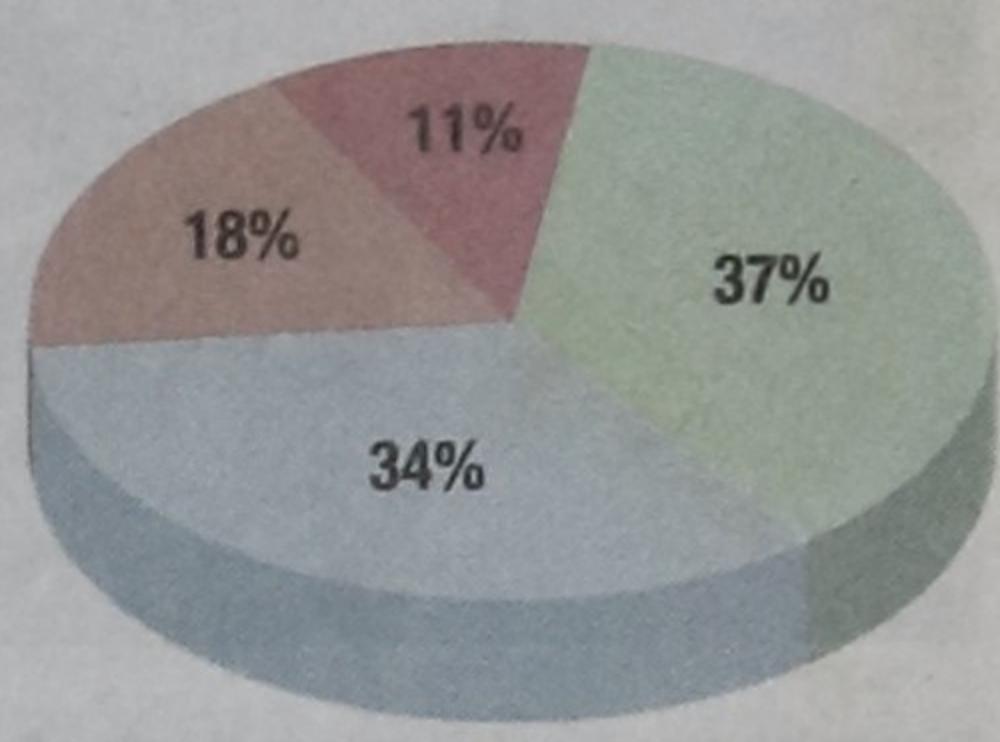
The results of Primary Education Terminal Examination, the newly introduced and largest public examination in Bangladesh, were published yesterday with 88.84 percent students passed.

A total of 16,20,054 class-V students--7,51,465 boys and 8,68,589 girls--passed the examinations held for the first time in Bangladesh.

The stats show that success rate of boys (90.44 percent) is higher than girls (87.51 percent) even though girls dominate the merit list. The number of girls who took the exams was also higher than boys.

Some 6,76,717 students obtained First Division, 6,15,350 secured Second Division and 3,27,987 Third Division and 2,03,411 failed the exams.

A total of 19,79,895 class-V students from



81,372 schools of different categories got registered to appear in the exams. Of them, 18,23,465 students--8,30,879 boys and 9,92,585

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## BANGABANDHU CASE

## Death warrants for 5 today

Convicts get verdict copy

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court is set to issue death warrants today against the five convicts in condemned cells in connection with the Bangabandhu assassination case.

Meanwhile, the convicts yesterday received the certified copy of November 19 Supreme Court verdict for filing review petitions against it with the same court.

After issuing the death warrants, the trial court would ask the senior jail super of the Dhaka central jail to take necessary steps to execute the death sentences of the convicts, said court sources.

Judge (vacation) Abdul Majid of the District and Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka would pass the order, the sources said.

The same court received the copy of the verdict Monday and scrutinising the documents it decided to pass the death warrants today (Wednesday), the sources added.

The five convicts are Lt Col Syed Farooq Rahman, Lt Col Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan, Maj Bazlul Huda, Maj (Lancer) AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Lt Col (Artillery) Mohiuddin Ahmed.

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## MACHINE-READABLE PASSPORT Project sees only change in decisions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government's race against time for introducing machine-readable passport (MRP) and machine-readable visa (MRV) is being delayed due to constant change of decisions in appointing a firm to implement the scheme.

In less than a month, the seven-member evaluation committee for MRP and MRV has changed its decision thrice. Brig Gen Md Refayet Ullah, project director (PD) of the venture, heads the committee.

On Sunday the committee, comprising representatives from home ministry, Department of Immigration and Passport, Security Printing Corporation Ltd and police department, backed from its first decision of selecting Malaysia-based IRIS Corporation Berhad for the project to meet international deadline, which is to expire on April 1, 2010.

"We sent the latest (third) evaluation report to the home ministry Sunday to consider IRIS as the first and Flora as second responsive firms since IRIS was recommended in the first report," the PD told The Daily Star last night.

Sources in the home ministry said the committee recommended IRIS again after getting information on the company

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## Stop lining up students on roads for reception

Govt asks edn institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has directed educational institutions to stop the practice of making students line up on roads to welcome dignitaries, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

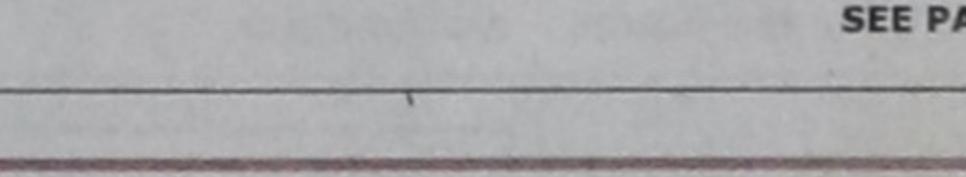
This custom must come to an end, he told journalists after an inter-ministerial meeting on the draft education policy at his ministry.

Nahid said the government already issued a notification forbidding

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