

## Junior School Certificate exams in early Nov

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The education ministry in a meeting yesterday decided that the first-ever Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations for the students of Class VIII will start in the first week of November.

About 19 lakh Class VIII students of schools and madrasas across the country will sit for the exams under eight general education boards and one madrasa education board while the question papers will be the same all over the country.

Chaired by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, the meeting also decided that the junior scholarship exams and final exams for class VIII students will not be held anymore from this year.

Scholarships will be given on the basis of the results of the public exams and the successful students will be enrolled in Class IX on the basis of results.

There will be no admission tests. The results of the exams will be published in December in the grade point average system, the meeting decided.

Nahid told newsmen that the JSC and JDC exams for schools and madrasa students respectively will improve the quality of education.

Such exams will also help reduce the existing gap between the quality of education in urban and that of the rural areas, he said.

Education Secretary Syed Ataur Rahman, Director General of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education Prof Noman-ur-Rashid and Dhaka Education Board's Chairman Prof Fahima Khatun were also present at the meeting.

## SC BAR ASSOC POLLS

### 38 lawyers submit

### nomination papers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A total of 38 lawyers will contest in the annual election to the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) to be held on March 24 and 25.

The lawyers yesterday submitted their nomination papers to contest for 14 executive posts of the SCBA.

Four senior lawyers - Munsurul Hoque Chowdhury, Khandaker Mahub Hossain, Giasuddin Chowdhury and Zakir Hossain will vie for the post of president while Momtaz Uddin Ahmed, Badruddoza Badal and Saifuddin Chowdhury will contest the election for the post of secretary.

The SCBA authorities yesterday finalised their candidatures after scrutiny, sources said adding that over 1,900 lawyers have been enlisted to cast their votes in the election.

## Two students qualify for Int'l public speaking competition

BSS, Dhaka

The English Speaking Union (ESU) has selected two Bangladeshi students for an international public speaking competition on 'Speculation on our future' to be held in London in May.

According to a press release of the organisation, 16 students aged between 16 and 20 of three educational institutions in the city took part in the maiden event of ESU's Bangladesh chapter, launched last month.

A jury board headed by chairman of the English Department of Dhaka University Rebecca Huq selected Aiman Ahmed of Scholastica School and Ashiqul Alam of Rajuk Uttara Model School and College after the competition held at the Scholastica School on Tuesday. ESU Bangladesh Chapter President Asif A Chowdhury and General Secretary Maj Gen (ret'd) Jibon Kanai Das and other members of the chapter were present.



PHOTO: ZAHEDUL I KHAN

(Left) An artiste plays a flute at the cultural programme 'Celebrating Life' at the Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin auditorium of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) yesterday. (Top) BAU Vice Chancellor Prof MA Sattar Mandal speaks at the programme. 'Celebrating Life' is a composite competition, jointly organised by The Daily Star and Standard Chartered Bank.

## Celebrating Life: Cultural show enthralled audience

PORIMOL PALMA and AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Several thousand enthusiastic students and residents in the traditional town of greater Mymensingh yesterday enjoyed a unique cultural evening -- Celebrating Life - in a mood of positivism to build a prosperous Bangladesh.

They thronged the Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) campus, as noted singers like Fahmida Nabi, Sarah Naz Billah, Biman Chandra Biswas and Bijon Mistry, musicians Murtaza Kabir Murad and Shamim Zahir and Chhayanaut artistes from Dhaka were there to enthral the audience.

Artistes of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote BAU unit Prosenjit Saha, Sonali Bhakta, Mukta Mondal, Suchi Saha and others also rendered songs and recited poems.

The programme kicked off at Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin Auditorium of BAU at 7:30pm with the song "Mago Shapath Korao Ma..."

The performers of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote walked on to the stage to be greeted with a big round of applause. The troupe created a milieu of adoration by singing "O Amar Desher Mati Tomar Pore Thekai Matha..."

The audience continued to clap their hands when singers Fahmida Nabi, Sarah, Biman and Bijan sang, making the event truly celebrating. The audience gave them a rousing ovation.

"We enjoyed the programme a lot. Performers like Fahmida and others whom we see on the TV screens were now live here. It is marvellous," said Rajeev, a final year student of Fisheries faculty of

BAU. "It was a big programme... undoubtedly. I enjoyed the cultural evening even though I have an exam tomorrow," another student said.

The programme was jointly organised by The Daily Star and Standard Chartered Bank under a yearly contest of lyrics, films and photography styled 'Celebrating Life', which is being held for the third time this year with the theme 'Adanya Bangladesh' (Indomitable Bangladesh).

Termining the event meaningful, especially when it inspires the young people for positive aspects of their lives, BAU Vice Chancellor Prof MA Sattar Mandal said today's youths, who dream of a prosperous Bangladesh, must learn from the achievements of the commoners. BAU works for the masses of the

country and development of agriculture, which is the lifeline of the country's economy. Agriculture has a lot of achievements, he said, adding that when famous artistes select BAU as a venue, it is a matter of pride for the students.

"Such positive things being reflected through Celebrating Life can truly help the students and others to build a better nation."

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said people of the country sometimes forget the fact that they have a lot of achievements, only because of the hard reality that they have to face many problems and hardship.

"There are nations that are not independent like Bangladesh and there are lands not so fertile and arable like ours," he said, adding that Bangladesh is a beautiful country, which is full of greeneries and

rivers. "We are an independent and sovereign nation, and all these are matters of pride," he told the audience. "We must enjoy our lives."

Anam said, "Let's build such a nation of which we can be always proud of, so that none can belittle us."

Bitopi Das Chowdhury, head of corporate affairs of Standard Chartered Bank, said the bank always promotes the traditions and culture of the country where they work and supporting the programme was its part.

Rafi Hossain, coordinator of Celebrating Life, and Nauha Munir Dihan moderated the event.

BAU Proctor Prof Mohammad Shamsuddin, Student Affairs Adviser Prof Dr Mohammad Abul Khayer Chowdhury and deans of different faculties were also present.

## PM unveils big defence purchase plan

Fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missiles, armaments to be procured for Air Force

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday unveiled her government's big defence purchase plan to procure fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missile system, helicopters, air-defence radars and armaments for Bangladesh Air Force soon.

Besides, she said, the government has already approved a development plan for constructing necessary infrastructure at Cox's Bazar for smooth operation of fighter jets and transport aircraft to ensure security of economic activities in the vast maritime territories and relief operation in remote areas to protect people during natural calamity.

The prime minister revealed the plans while addressing the Bangladesh Air Force officers on the occasion of the Air Force's annual exercises titled 'WINTEX-2010' at the BAF main fighter base at Kurmitola inside Dhaka Cantonment.

"Within just one year of assuming office, initiative has been taken to procure fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missile system, helicopter, air-defence radar, and armaments," she said.

The process is also underway to arrange necessary funds for implementing the development plans for the Air Force, she added.

"The budget allocation for the Bangladesh Air Force in the present fiscal year is the biggest in the history of the force," she told the function.

The prime minister also said various welfare projects for the mem-



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina witnesses spectacular flying display of Bangladesh Air Force's (BAF) fighter and transport planes and helicopters at its annual exercises titled 'WINTEX-2010' at the BAF main fighter base at Kurmitola inside Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

bers of the Air Force are under active consideration of the government.

"The present government will take all possible measures to build the Air Force as an up-to-date force by equipping it with modern technology-based war weapons," she added.

Sheikh Hasina said her government is committed to building a modern, knowledge-based air force excelled in training and technology in order to ensure security of the country and its people.

Besides, the government is giving attention to ensuring financial solvency of the members of the Air Force, she said.

"In this regard, our main goal is to increase participation of Air Force members in the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission. I have already talked to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and presented our logical demands in various international forums."

The prime minister said the number of Bangladesh Air Force members in UN Peacekeeping Mission has now gone up to 467, almost double in comparison to the previous year.

Besides, the government is considering sending 100 to 150 more Air Force members to the UN missions. Regarding the MIG-29 Purchase

Case filed against her during the last BNP-Jamaat government, Hasina said the then government had kept the MIG-29 unused for a long time just to put her in trouble.

She urged the Air Force members to know about the real history of the liberation war of 1971 and prepare themselves as confident, skilled and ideal military men.

Earlier, the prime minister witnessed spectacular flying display of BAF fighter and transport planes and helicopters, including MIG-29 fighter plane, at the Kurmitola Base.

During the air-raid exercises code named 'EX-THUNDER', BAF jets showed various modern aero-

batic tactics of air warfare when troops were dropped from helicopter by rappelling while transport aircraft dropped logistics with parachute which is indigenously made by the Bangladesh Air Force, said an ISPR press release.

Earlier, on her arrival at the BAF Base, the Prime Minister was received by Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal SM Ziaur Rahman.

Security Adviser to the Prime Minister Maj Gen (Retd) Tarique Ahmed Siddique, Defence Secretary Khandaker Md Asaduzzaman and Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad were also present.

## US to assist in automation of judiciary

UNB, Dhaka

The United States will assist Bangladesh in bringing automation to the judiciary to help people get their rightful justice within the shortest possible time.

The assurance came from the US Department of Justice when a high-level Bangladesh delegation, led by Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, visited US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia and the US Attorneys Office for the Eastern District of Virginia on Tuesday.

Other members of the delegation include Attorney General Mahubey Alam and Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Dr Atiur Rahman, says a release of the Bangladesh Mission in

Washington.

During the visit, the delegation members also witnessed court proceedings and working of the US courts. The delegation also observed sentencing as well as held post-sentencing conference with Judge Leonie M Brinkema, chief US Federal District Court judge.

The Bangladesh delegation also engaged in an interactive discussion on different aspects of automation in the judiciary and sought US assistance for sharing their experience to help bringing automation in Bangladesh's judiciary.

On March 8, the Bangladesh delegation had meetings with the US Department of Justice and the US Department of Treasury discussing

aspects of the US-Bangladesh mutual legal assistance and strengthening of Bangladesh's financial systems by promoting transparency and accountability.

The US officials highly appreciated the role of financial intelligence unit in BB and observed that its decision to seek membership to Egmont is a sign of international approval and the country's determination to bring greater transparency in the financial system.

The minister shared with the US Officials the workings and strategic vision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government to rid the excesses, inertia and accumulated irregularities in the judiciary and bringing an end to the culture of impunity.

## HEIST AT SANANDA JEWELLERS No headway in recovering gold

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police could not make any headway towards recovering the gold ornaments looted from Sananda Jewellers at Mirpur in the city on Tuesday and arresting the robbers.

Meanwhile, traders in Mirpur area threatened to go on a strike for an indefinite period, as police could neither recover the booty nor arrest the robbers.

Dhananjay Saha, owner of Sananda Jewellers, filed a case with Shah Ali Police Station yesterday, mentioning that the robbers looted 268 tolas of gold from the shop.

Officer-in-Charge Abdul Latif said they were trying to arrest the criminals.

The traders alleged that police always harassed the victim traders to divert the failure of policemen in arresting the robbers and recovering the valuables.

Some traders said that criminal incidents are on the rise in the area but police are not taking any strict measure in this connection.

## NIKO GRAFT CASE AGAINST HASINA Hearing on petition begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started the final hearing on a petition that seeks quashing of proceedings against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the Niko graft case.

The case was filed against Hasina during the last caretaker government's rule.

The HC bench of Justice Md Shamsul Huda and Justice Abu Bakar Siddique yesterday adjourned hearing on the petition, filed by Hasina, until today.

The Anti-Corruption Commission filed the case with Tejgaon Police Station on December 9, 2007, accusing Hasina and six others of causing Tk 13.6 crore loss to the state exchequer and abusing power while awarding contracts of three "abandoned" gas fields in Chhatak, Kamta and Feni to Canadian energy company Niko Resources Ltd during the previous Awami League rule.

Hasina filed the petition with the HC in June in 2008 for quashing proceedings against her in the case.

Following her petition, the HC on July 7, 2008, stayed the proceedings against her and also issued a rule asking the government and the ACC to explain as to why proceedings against her should not be quashed.

During the hearing yesterday, Hasina's counsel barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said the case was filed against Sheikh Hasina with an ulterior motive of politically harassing her, although she did not commit any crime.

The ACC did not maintain due procedures and rules of the ACC Act, 2004 and ACC Rules, 2007 while authorising the filing of cases, he said, adding that the case cannot proceed in the trial court.

ACC counsel advocate Khurshid Alam Khan opposed the petition, saying that the ACC had filed the case following due procedures.

## 3 injured in bomb blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people, including a child and a teenage girl, were injured in a bomb blast at the city's Shaheed Nagar slum yesterday.

The injured were identified as one-and-a-half-year-old Shafiqul, Mitu Akter, 14, and Anki Begum, 30.

The injured were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Injured Mitu said, "I was walking on a lane at the slum at around 12:15pm. Suddenly I heard a huge bang and discovered myself on the ground."

Labagh Police said they had visited the spot but they could not identify people responsible for the blast.

## CHEATING CASE Court summons Padmakuri officials

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued summons asking the chairman and the general secretary of Padmakuri Dance Institute to appear before it on April 8 in connection with a cheating case.

The accused are Md Shahidullah Prince, chairman of the institute, and its general secretary Abul Kashem Sohag.

Metropolitan Magistrate AKM Emdadul Haque passed the order after Shrabonti, a dance artiste and daughter of Sheikh Anisur Rahman of Rupsha in Khulna, filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court against the two yesterday.

In her complaint, Shrabonti said she had participated in a dance competition and secured the first position last year. The Baishakhi TV aired the programme. Following the programme, the Padmakuri announced an award of Tk one lakh for her.

The accused gave Shrabonti a cheque for Tk 85,000 after deducting 15 percent from the principal amount. But the cheque bounced twice after Shrabonti deposited it to the Mercantile Bank in the city on December 17 and 29, 2009.

Later, Shrabonti sent a legal notice to the institute through her lawyer on January 25 asking the accused to pay the money, but to no avail, she said.