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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

HSC exams begin today

Over 7.36 lakh examinees

Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations begin today with a total of 7,36,373 examinees sitting for the exams in 2,037 centres across the country.

This year the number of HSC and its equivalent Alim, Business Management (BM) examinees is around 1.15 lakh more than last year's.

Some 4,00,464 male and 3,35,909 female students of 7,202 educational institutions will appear for the examinations under 10 education boards.

The exams will also be held in five overseas centres in Jeddah, Riyadh, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Tripoli for a total of 146 candidates.

The authorities concerned took necessary measures

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Target 13 low river bridges

River taskforce wants those to be knocked down, rebuilt rightly

A taskforce to save rivers yesterday identified 13 low bridges on rivers around the capital as obstacles to watercraft.

The taskforce would urge the Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) ministry, Roads and Highways Department and Bangladesh Railway, which constructed those bridges, to knock them down and rebuild them with proper clearance.

The bridges are on the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Shitalakkhya and Balu.

The taskforce was reconstituted last year with government officials and civil society members to suggest how to maintain navigability of rivers as well as keep them pollution and encroachment free.

The identified bridges are Mirpur-Gabtolli Bailey Bridge over the Turag, Ashulia Bridge (on Abdullahpur-EPZ Road), Dhaur Bridge-2 over Tongi Canal, Pratyasha (Nolnichala Bailey Bridge), Kamarpara Bridge, Tongi Road Bridge (West), Tongi Road Bridge (East), Tongi Rail Bridge-1 (East), Tongi Rail Bridge-2 (West), Trimukh-Rupganj Bridge on the Balu, Esapur Bailey Bridge, Kayetpara Bridge and Demra Bridge.

"The bridges should have 25 feet of clearance from the highest level

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The photo taken in November shows the Pratyasha Bridge (Nolnichala Bailey Bridge) on the Turag in Ashulia. The taskforce for saving rivers has identified it as having poor clearance for vessels and will recommend its demolition and rebuilding. PHOTO: FILE

Frame rules in 2 months to legalise VoIP

JS body asks telecom ministry

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked the post and telecommunications ministry to formulate a legal framework within two months to legalise VoIP (voice over Internet protocol) business.

"Police and Rab will not be able to stop [illegal] VoIP business. So, we asked the ministry to make it legal," Hasanul Haq Inu, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on post and telecommunications ministry, told reporters after the committee's meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Inu, a Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal lawmaker, said the ministry has assured the committee that it will take steps to formulate laws to legalise the VoIP

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Mojaheed's convenient amnesia

Lawmakers from Dhaka and Narayanganj yesterday urged the government to solve city's persisting water crisis immediately.

If the present situation continues it will incur public wrath, they warned the government at a meeting with LGRD Minister Syed Ashraf Islam at his ministry.

Ashraf, in reply, assured them that

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AL's Dhaka lawmakers send SOS to govt

Say commotion over water, power, gas situation may go out of control; suggest 1 hourly load-shedding, installation of more water pumps

after 45 days the water crisis would go.

The legislators said people might turn violent due to water, power and gas crises.

Ashraf, also the ruling Awami League general secretary, said the government would deploy army personnel from April 1 to assist Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in supplying water from water tankers.

The lawmakers suggested immediate installation of more water pumps in

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POWER, GAS CRISES PM puts blame on past govts

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday blamed the ongoing electricity and gas crises on past BNP and caretaker governments.

"The previous governments did not take any measure to resolve the energy crisis," she said at the inaugural ceremony of BCS Digital Expo-2010 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel in the capital.

The present government added 700 megawatts of electricity to the national grid in the last year and hopes to add 800MW more by year-end, the premier said.

Power generation stood at 1,600MW when Awami League came to power in 1996. It was increased to 4,300MW during the AL government's tenure, said Hasina, also the AL president.

But the two successive governments failed to add even a single megawatt of power to the national grid.

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PM receives IT award

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday received the prestigious 'ASOCIO IT Award' for her contribution to advancing ICT sector in Bangladesh.

Looi Kien Leong, president of Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organisation (ASOCIO) handed the award to the premier at the inaugural ceremony of BCS Digital Expo 2010 at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

ASOCIO is a Tokyo-based organisation working on developing the computing society and industry in the region.

The organisation awarded Hasina for her dynamic

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Denmark to give €75m for water treatment

Denmark will provide an interest free loan of 75 million Euro for constructing a large new water treatment plant at Sayedabad in the capital with a production capacity of 2,25,000 cubic metres (cumec) per day.

An agreement was signed in Dhaka yesterday by Bijon Kumar Baishya, joint secretary of Economic Relations Division (ERD) and Henrik Brink, vice-president of Nordea Bank.

The three-year project will be implemented by Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) on the outskirts of Dhaka.

Danish Grants will assist the monitoring and additional supervision process during implementation of the project, according to a statement of Danish embassy in Dhaka.

It was also expected that the project will improve the public health and create better

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People gather to collect water from a Wasa tanker at Dayaganj in the capital yesterday as the ongoing power shortage intensifies water crisis. PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

MUTINY AT PILKHANA 668 jawans accused in fresh case

A mutiny case was lodged with BDR Special Court-5 yesterday accusing 668 Bangladesh Rifles personnel of 24 Rifle Battalion under Dhaka Sector of the paramilitary force.

The court ordered the prosecution to produce all the accused before it at 11:00am today.

The three-member court headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen Mainul Islam includes two members -- Lt Col AKM Golam Rabbani and Maj Sayeed Hasan Taposh.

During the mutiny at BDR headquarters at Pilkhana in the capital on February 25-26 last year, 911 BDR personnel were present at the 24 Rifle Battalion unit.

According to the case filed yesterday, 668 of them were involved in the mutiny.

Subedar Md Matiur Rahman of 4 Rifle Battalion placed the case before the court bringing specific allegations against the 668 for their involvement in the mutiny.

Though many of these accused were involved in some other crimes including the killing of army officers, they will be tried in the BDR court only on charges of mutiny.

And they will also be tried in civil court for their other offences.

The BDR court ordered arrest of 313 of the alleged mutineers as they are still in service. The other 355 are already in jail since they were arrested in other cases. The court ordered showing

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Tornado lashes Rangamati

1 killed, 50 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

An indigenous woman died and around 50 others including a Buddhist monk were injured, some of them seriously, as a tornado lashed different villages in the remote Sajek union under Baghaichhari upazila of the district Tuesday night.

Around 150 tin-shed and thatched houses were also damaged during the storm.

Most of the houses, which are still under construction after last month's violence at Gongaramukh of Baghaihat, were destroyed as

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SRIMONGOL TREES A belated plea

Petition filed 1 month after HC order and 3,550 trees felled

The attorney general's office filed an appeal petition with the appellate division on Tuesday after more than a month of a High Court directive that allowed cutting down 3,550 trees in Khasia settlement of Nahar Tea Garden in Srimongol of Moulvibazar.

The court will hear the petition after its vacation ends on April 4.

The HC bench passed the order on February 22, following a writ petition filed by a timber trader Salim Uddin Mohalder and Nahar Tea Garden manager Pijush Kanti Bhattacharya.

The order directed the forest department authorities and local administration to allow cutting down 3,550 trees in the Khasia settlement.

Salim embarked on a massive tree felling on March 13 at

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BHOLA-3 BY-POLLS Nurunnabi AL's choice

The ruling Awami League has nominated Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shawon for contesting the April 24 by-polls in Bhola-3 constituency.

The nomination was finalised a couple of days back but it was announced yesterday.

As per the election schedule, the last date of withdrawal of nomination papers is April 8.

The main opposition BNP nominated Maj (ret) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed to contest the poll.

On February 3, the EC declared Bhola-3 parliamentary constituency vacant

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INFRASTRUCTURE, RIVER DREDGING India firms up \$1b soft loan

India has offered 1.75 percent interest rate on \$ 1 billion credit to Bangladesh announced during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to that country in January.

New Delhi last week sent to Dhaka a draft agreement for the credit. The time limit for its repayment is 20 years including a grace period.

Finance ministry officials said the terms and conditions for the credit are as easy as that of the Asian Development Bank. Interest rate of ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources (OCR) stands at London Inter-Bank Offer Rate (LIBOR) plus 0.6 percent. And loan repayment period is 25 years including grace period.

Finance ministry sources said the draft agreement mentions that the loan would be given for transport, communication and river dredging projects.

The ministries concerned have already started preparing projects for utilising the loans. If there is any need for procurements for the projects, the draft agreement provides that those must be purchased from India.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) has sought opinions of the ministries on the draft agreement. Next week, a meeting on the draft will be held with the ministries. If the

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Stabbing was 'exit strategy'

Claims Ashraf Ali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ashraf Ali stabbed his classmate Barsha and her parents to make sure a safe get away, confessed Ashraf at the Detective Branch office in the capital yesterday.

On Saturday, Ashraf stabbed Barsha and her parents Aminur Rahman and Rokhsana Momtaj after holding them hostage for about six hours at their Kalabagan home.

"I was afraid that the hostages would catch and hand

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