

Gap between

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grading system introduced in 2001, showed a tremendous boost with 82.31 percent pass in 10 education boards.

As many as 2,017 schools made 100 percent success and 76,749 students secured GPA-5 (grade point average), while 28 schools got zero pass rate.

And, around 2.31 lakh students failed the exams and most of them are from rural areas, said the board sources.

This year, the education ministry has prepared a list of 20 best performing schools of each board based on the SSC results and other academic standards.

In Dhaka Board, among the top 20 schools only four are outside the capital.

Of the four--Bindu Bashini Govt Boys' Hindu School, Mymensingh Zilla School, Mymensingh Girls' Cadet College and Mirzapur Cadet College--are either cadet colleges or in district towns.

Most of the schools placed on the top chart under Jessore Board are also specialised schools or in district towns. The situation is almost same for the other six general education boards and Madrasa and technical education boards.

Of the top 160 institutions of eight general boards, 72 are state-run secondary schools, where most students are comparatively from well-off families.

Under Dhaka Board, over three lakh examinees of 18 districts and foreign centres took the exams and around 2.54 lakh of them passed.

The pass rate in the capital is 93.35 percent while 77.28 in Mymensingh, 77.42 in Netrokona, 77.84 in Faridpur and 79.92 in Khairpur districts.

Some 24,290 out of 56,118 students got GPA-5 under Dhaka Board and half that number or 13,330 GPA-5 achievers are from Dhaka metropolitan alone. The rest 10,960 are from the other 17 districts and one foreign centre where at least 2.43 lakh students appeared in the exams.

Academics say most schools in rural areas have teacher shortage, especially for English and math. Besides, not all of the teachers received training on creative question method introduced in seven subjects this year.

Moreover, the rural schools have insufficient teachers and most guardians cannot afford private tutors for their children.

Educationalist Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury said the schools in rural areas are being neglected and getting less focus.

"It is not only an education issue; it is also a social and economical problem. The existing social inequality is reflected in the rural areas," he said.

He also said teachers in the rural schools do not feel encouraged to take classes properly and it is never monitored how they give lessons.

"Our education system has already been divided into three streams -- Bangla and English mediums and Madrasa. The social distance and class division would deepen if we fail to reduce the gap between urban and rural education, at least for the Bangla medium stream," heads.

Yunus

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the microfinance institution.

"Considering the issue of keeping Prof Yunus linked with Grameen Bank, the government will offer to appoint him as emeritus member," said Finance Minister Abul Maal Abdul Muhith.

How the emeritus member will make his contribution and what changes, if necessary, should be made to the Grameen Bank ordinance will be finalised through discussion.

"A new chairman has been appointed a few days ago. The government does not want any change right now," said Muhith.

Muhith told BBC that the Board of Directors of Grameen Bank would conduct the process of appointing a new managing director.

The finance minister also said Prof Yunus went to the court to fight legally against his removal from the managing director post. He has resigned following his defeat in the legal battle.

Now a situation has developed for the government to sit with Prof Yunus to discuss the proposal. Muhith said the discussion may focus on overall situation of the institution.

Grameen Bank could not be reached for its immediate reaction to the finance minister's statement, the BBC said.

Trinamool triumphs

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regained power winning an emphatic majority in the 234-member assembly.

In Pudukcherry, Congress lost power to a new outfit formed by a party rebel a few months ago which combined with AIADMK to secure two-thirds majority in assembly.

But the biggest election story was undoubtedly the demolition of CPI (M)-led Left Front after an uninterrupted 34-year rule.

Mamata likened her party's victory to a "second freedom" for the people of West Bengal from "three decades of Communist oppression, exploitation and injustice".

Out of the 294 assembly seats, Trinamool Congress, led by 56-year-old Mamata, and its ally Congress won 226 seats while CPI (M) and its allies were reduced to just 60 from more than 200 seats won in the previous elections.

Trinamool alone got a very comfortable majority in the assembly with 184 seats while Congress secured 42 seats. Others won the remaining eight seats.

Mamata, now India's railway minister, said she would invite Congress to join her coalition government.

Such was the anti-Left sweep in West Bengal that all its top leaders including chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and the state's finance minister Asim Dasgupta bit the dust. Other Marxist stalwarts who lost were industries minister Nirupam Sen and high-profile but controversial Gautam Deb. In Kolkata and several other districts of West Bengal, the Left failed to win even a single seat.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni called Mamata, who was savouring the victory with her aides and supporters at her Kolkata residence. They felicitated her. "Hasina called me and congratulated us on behalf of the people of Bangladesh," Mamata told the media in Kolkata.

"I told her [Hasina] that relations between the two countries have been there since the time of Bangabandhu [Sheikh Mujibur Rahman] and that we will work together..." Mamata said. "I quoted Rabindranath Tagore's 'Amar Sonar Bangla Ami Tomay Bhalobashi' [the national anthem of Bangladesh] and told her that both Bangladesh and West Bengal will flourish," she said.

Mamata said Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Congress chief Sonia Gandhi also congratulated her on her party's poll triumph. "Manmohan told me that he was overwhelmed

Hopes for better

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Hasina was the first foreign head of government to felicitate Mamata soon after it became clear yesterday that her party was heading towards a landslide victory in state assembly polls, and the Trinamool Congress leader reciprocated with equal warmth recalling the age-old ties between "epaar Bangla and opaar Bangla", and citing that Rabindranath Tagore had written the national anthems of both countries.

When Mamata spoke to the media in Kolkata soon after her party's victory yesterday, she made it a point to recall the traditional ties between West Bengal and Bangladesh.

The telephonic talk between Hasina and Mamata was far from the first interaction between them.

The two leaders for the first time met when Mamata went to Dhaka in 1997 to attend Awami League's golden jubilee celebrations, when Hasina was the prime minister for the first time.

Mamata again visited Dhaka and met Hasina in 1998 and the two shared the dais at a seminar.

During her 1998 trip to Dhaka, Mamata sought Hasina's support to India's nuclear test at a time when the US, Japan and some other western countries reacted sharply to New Delhi's action.

On both the occasions, Mamata went to Dhaka as a

by the electoral victory."

In her first remarks to the media after the landmark victory, Mamata said, "It was a victory for democracy, people and 'maa, mati maanush' [mother, soil and people]."

She dedicated her party's win to the people and poets Rabindranath Tagore and Kazi Nazrul Islam.

Outside Mamata's modest tile-roofed home, on a narrow lane in Kalighat of South Kolkata, thousands of jubilant Trinamool Congress supporters gathered blowing conch, beating drums and setting off crackers to celebrate the party's victory.

By contrast, it was a sombre scene at 32 Alimuddin Street, where the CPI(M) state headquarters is located. The place was virtually deserted.

Amidst apprehension of violence, Mamata appealed for peace and asked her party supporters to be restrained and not to fall prey to provocations for untoward incidents.

She said now her top most priority is development of West Bengal and "restoration of peace".

CPI (M) State Secretary Biman Bose said the results were unexpected.

Biman said, "We have grass-roots attachment to the people but they did not speak out and as such we could not assess the situation."

He said, "Yesterday, we had predicted a comfortable win for the Left Front on the basis of analysis...but we have been proved wrong."

"The results were unexpected. But we will cooperate with any pro-people and democratic move by the new government," he said.

He said the Left Front would play the role of a responsible and constructive opposition in the House.

3 workers

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metal pipe used for piling. The pipe came in touch with a live wire drawn from a steel shop adjacent to the under-construction building, witnesses said.

The victims cried out at the moment but none could help as they were standing on wet muddy ground with the metal pipe in hands, said Shamim Fakir, a co-worker.

Some workers rushed to switch off the power supply and found the shop closed. By the time they disconnected the wire, three workers were dead.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) Mohammad Salauddin Khan of Kotwali Police Station said police were investigating whether the electric wire was connected to the power supply in a safe way.

politician as she was not a federal Indian minister.

Then when Hasina visited Delhi in January, 2010, Mamata called on her in a one-on-one meeting at the prime minister's suite in ITC Maurya Sheraton Hotel. At that time, Mamata presented Hasina a cotton sari and some books.

Late Marxist leader Jyoti Basu had a huge goodwill and fan following in Bangladesh and he played a stellar role in working out a Ganges water-sharing treaty between India and Bangladesh in 1996 when Hasina was the prime minister.

There are hopes in India that Mamata will also play a facilitator's role as India and Bangladesh prepare to further strengthen their bilateral ties with some major decisions in the coming months in the run up to Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka later this year.

West Bengal government's views will be given considerable weight as India works out an accord on sharing the waters of Teesta with Bangladesh, and resolves the boundary issue and the thorny subject of exchange of enclaves in adverse possession.

All these major issues are most likely to be solved before the Indian prime minister's visit to Bangladesh, and the federal Indian government will seek West Bengal government's views before taking a final decision, and that is where Mamata's role will be important.

Indigenous

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The victim's mother held Hashem Ali of the area responsible for the killing as he used to stalk and harass her daughter often.

"In the preliminary investigation, police found marks of injuries on her body which indicate the victim was killed after rape," said Abdul Kader, officer-in-charge of Dighinala Police Station.

According to the victim's family and police, the girl went missing since she went out of home Thursday afternoon.

Next morning, neighbours discovered her body in the woods and informed police and the victim's family.

The body was sent to Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said the OC adding that a case will be filed.

Meanwhile, Hill Women's Federation Khagrachhari unit president Madri Chakma in a press release yesterday afternoon condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of the culprit.

Bangladesh

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However, Diarra said they "expect in near future" a new country to have the status of LDC, meaning South Sudan after it is recognised as a country and become a UN member state.

The conference in its new Istanbul Action Plan aims half the number of LDCs to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020. Only three countries managed to graduate so far.

LDCs countries--33 from Africa, 14 from Asia plus Haiti--are defined as those with a per capita income of less than \$745 a year.

The UN-backed conference takes place every two years. France hosted the first two in 1981 and 1990. The third was held in Brussels in 2001.

US cancels DV

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posted in error," a State Department official said, referring to the http://dvlottery.state.gov/ website.

"They did not represent a fair, random selection of entrants as required by US law," he added.

Some 22,000 people, who had already been told that they could go ahead and apply for a coveted visa, have now been told that the results have been voided.

"We sincerely regret any inconvenience or disappointment," the official, who asked to remain anonymous, said.

Set up in 1994, the annual Diversity Immigrant Visa program gives workers from poor countries the chance to travel to the United States on a work visa even if they do not have any relatives or an employer in the country.

The lottery is carried out by an electronic random selection among the millions of applications received every year.

For 2012, at least 100,000 hopefuls were due to be chosen out of the 14.7 million applications, comprising a total of 19.6 million people when family members are included.

The 100,000 then have the right to apply for one of the 50,000 visas which are ultimately granted, with authorities leaving room for those who drop out of the process, or are rejected by immigration officials.

SSC examinee

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house, said Nasiruddin, sub-inspector of Uzirpur Police Station.

Bithika became depressed when she came to know of her failure after the publication of SSC results on Thursday noon, he added.

Bithika's sister Saraswati said all her family members were out of home when the incident happened. They were working in a nearby field to harvest paddy.

In the afternoon, they returned home and found her body hanging from the beam, she added.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy, said Sukumar Roy, officer-in-charge of the police station.

An unnatural death case was filed, he added.

Pakistan to review

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nuclear-armed ally.

Washington did not inform Islamabad that an elite team of Navy SEALs had helicoptered into the garrison town of Abbottabad until the commandos had cleared Pakistani airspace, carrying with them bin Laden's corpse.

The covert May 2 raid has plunged Pakistani politics into turmoil with both President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani facing calls to resign amid growing anti-American sentiment.

Gilani chaired a defence committee meeting Thursday that decided to institute an inter-agency process to clearly define the parameters of our cooperation with the US in counter-terrorism," an official statement said.

This would be done "in accordance with Pakistan's national interests and the aspirations of the people," according to the statement, which condemned "US unilateral action in violation of Pakistan's sovereignty."

Washington is pressing Islamabad to investigate how bin Laden and several wives and children managed to live for five years under

the noses of its military in a town just 40 miles north of the capital.

CIA director Leon Panetta laid bare the mistrust between the allies when he said the United States did not warn Pakistan in advance about the raid because it feared Pakistani officials would have alerted the al-Qaeda chief.

In an interview with Time magazine, Gilani spoke repeatedly of the "trust deficit" between the two nations and explained that as an elected politician he must choose the Pakistani people over good ties with the United States.

"If public opinion is against you, then I cannot resist it to stand with you. I have to go with public opinion," he said.

Addressing parliament on Monday, Gilani warned against further unilateral US strikes on Pakistani soil, but the White House has said that President Barack Obama reserves the right to act again against fugitives in Pakistan.

"When there's a trust deficit," Gilani told Time, "there will be problems in intelligence sharing." Asked why there was a trust deficit, he replied, "It's not from our

side. Ask them."

The United States has provided some \$18 billion in assistance to Pakistan since 9/11 attack. Most has gone to the military, but with Obama's support, Congress approved a five-year, \$7.5 billion aid program in 2009 aimed at building schools, roads and democratic institutions.

Furious US lawmakers are demanding a re-evaluation of relations in the wake of the bin Laden raid, charging that Pakistan is playing a double-game of supporting militants while enjoying a steady stream of money from the heavily indebted United States.

But the Obama administration needs the Pakistani port of Karachi and its roads to supply US forces in landlocked Afghanistan. It also wants to keep US intelligence operatives on the ground in Pakistan and ensure nuclear weapons stay out of the hands of extremists.

Kerry is scheduled to arrive in Pakistan early next week on the highest-level US visit since the killing of bin Laden, attempting to preserve a vital partnership but also keep up pressure over an intelligence probe.

Delay in providing

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for some months or were robbed on their way to Egypt and Tunisia, they reported.

"Many are indebted and are now going through hardship to lead their families," said Shipa Hafiza, director of Gender, Justice, Diversity and Advocacy programme of Brac, which has collected data of nearly 10,000 returnees and assessed their skills and needs.

Khan said there is a possibility of fraudulent claims during the money distribution process. "So, we have decided to provide them the grant through bank cheques."

First the government is computerising the returnees' databank to stop fake claims, the secretary said, adding that the task would take around a month.

Processing other formalities after receiving the money from the World Bank would take over a month to start the distribution, he added.

"I don't think it is delay," Khan said, though he noted the government was not ready to address such a problem and it took time to understand the course of actions the government could do.

It also took time to complete the negotiations with the World Bank too, he said.

Nurul Islam, director at the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), the executing agency for the task, said they are tallying three sets of data maintained separately by the immigration police, flights and BMET to make a unified electronic databank.

On completion of it the government will make a public announcement for the returnees to claim the grant at some booths to be set up in 10-15 places across the

country.

"After verifying authenticity of their claims, we will provide them with tokens with electronic hologram. By this time, we will deliver the money to the banks, which will give pay order to the migrants when they submit the tokens," Islam said.

He added once the computerised databank is ready, the government can also respond to some of the offers from business communities who want to provide them employment opportunities.

"If needed, they will also be trained under the existing skills training programmes," the director said.

Meanwhile, Shipa Hafiza said nearly 10,000 returnees from Libya could receive some sort of support from Brac in 17 districts where the NGO works. The support may be some grant and soft loan, she added.

Blasts in Pak police

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which CNN said also attended the meeting, was not immediately available to comment on the report.

Friday's explosions detonated in northwest Pakistan as newly-trained paramilitary cadets, dressed in civilian clothes, were getting into buses for a 10-day leave, police said.

"This was the first revenge for Osama's martyrdom. Wait for bigger attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan," Pakistani Taliban spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan told AFP by telephone from an undisclosed location.

Under Hakimullah Mehsud, who replaced Baitullah Mehsud as leader of the group after he was killed by a US missile in 2009, the Pakistani Taliban has been seen as increasingly inspired by Al-Qaeda in waging mass-casualty attacks.

The bombers blew themselves up in Shabqadar, outside the biggest Frontier Constabulary (FC) training centre in the northwest, where Taliban and Al-Qaeda-linked militants repeatedly attack security forces.

The town is close to Mohmand, which is in the lawless tribal belt that Washington has branded the headquarters of Al-Qaeda and where CIA drones carry out missile strikes on Taliban and other Islamist militant commanders.

The Pakistani government condemned the attack, as did Britain, pledging support for Islamabad in the fight against violent extremism.

Gul Momin, his leg in plaster, recalled the horror when the explosions turned a festive Friday morning into a bloodbath.

"We had been very happy," he added. "I was loading my bag into the bus when the blast took place. I was seriously injured but wasn't knocked out. I crawled towards a safe place, then I heard another huge blast.

Everybody was lying on the ground and crying. I saw people lying in blood and dying. There were dead bodies and body parts. I can't put it into words."

Bashir Ahmed Bilour, senior minister for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, said 80 people had been killed, including 69 FC men, making it the deadliest attack in Pakistan since July 9, 2010, when bombers killed 105 people in Mohmand.

Doctors in Peshawar's main Lady Reading hospital said they were struggling to save the lives of more than 40 critically wounded paramilitary policemen and had declared a state of emergency to cope with the scale of the casualties.

"Both attacks were suicide attacks. The first suicide bomber came on a motorcycle and detonated his vest among the Frontier Constabulary men," said the police chief of the Charsadda district, Nisar Khan Marwat.

"When other FC people came to the rescue to help their colleagues, the second bomber came on another motorcycle and blew himself up."

Later Friday, a US drone fired two missiles into a vehicle in Pakistan's tribal district of North Waziristan, killing at least three militants in a Taliban and Al-Qaeda stronghold, officials said.

The Taliban last week threatened to attack security forces to avenge bin Laden's killing in a US helicopter raid north of the capital Islamabad.

There has been little public protest in support of bin Laden in a country where more people have been killed in bomb attacks in the past four years than the nearly 3,000 who died in Al-Qaeda's September 11, 2001 strikes on the US.

But under growing domestic pressure to punish Washington for the bin Laden raid, Pakistan's civilian government said

Thursday it would review counter-terrorism cooperation with the United States.

It was unclear if the move was intended as a threat, but it showed the extent of the task facing US Senator John Kerry as he prepares to embark on a mission to shore up badly strained ties with Washington's fractious ally.

Washington did not inform Islamabad that an elite team of Navy SEALs had helicoptered into the garrison town of Abbottabad until the commandos had cleared Pakistani airspace, carrying with them bin Laden's corpse.

Pakistanis have been outraged at the perceived impunity of the US raid, while asking whether their military was too incompetent to know bin Laden was living close to a major forces academy, or, worse, conspired to protect him.

Washington is pressing Islamabad to investigate how bin Laden and several of his wives and children managed to live for five years under the noses of its military in Abbottabad, just 40 miles (65 kilometres) north of the capital.

New footage of the 40-minute raid on the high-walled compound has emerged according to CBS News, which said the SEALs had tiny helmet-mounted cameras.

US officials who saw the footage said commandos fired at bin Laden when he appeared on a third floor landing, but missed and he retreated into a bedroom.

The first SEAL entered the room and pulled aside bin Laden's daughters, while a second commando was confronted by one of his wives who either rushed him or was pushed in his direction, said CBS.

According to the report, that second commando pushed the wife away and fired a round into bin Laden's chest, while a third shot bin Laden in the head.

Transport

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The fare was Tk 3 earlier.

Shaon, a passenger of direct bus service Taronga Plus, who travelled from Shabbagh to Jhigatola, said he had to pay Tk 12 whereas the fare was Tk 8 earlier.

"The sudden hike of bus fare causes us huge sufferings as our income is fixed," said Arif, a resident of Gendaria.

The communications minister said the ministry has to go for an increase in the fare of public transport as the prices of fuels have been increased.

"We will increase the fare adjusting to the price hike after a meeting with the transport leaders on Monday or Tuesday," he said.

Khondokar Rifiquel Hossain Kajol, president of Association of Bus Companies, said they have no other choice except for increasing the bus fare as they will make a huge loss otherwise.

He said anarchy will be created in the transport sector if the government does not increase bus fares within 24 hours. Earlier on March 28, an ultimatum was given to the government to increase the fare by 20 days but nothing was done.

Khondokar Enayeth Hossain, secretary general of Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity and general secretary of Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity, said they are urging bus owners not to increase fares before the government fixes them.

A vested quarter is trying to create anarchy increasing the fare arbitrarily, he said.

Mohammad Hanif Khokon, general secretary of Dhaka Auto Rickshaw Sramik Union, said they have to spend extra Tk 80 for CNG refill every time after the price hike. So, the CNG drivers have to charge more to bear the extra cost.

Earlier with CNG worth Tk 150, we could travel about 150 kilometres and now it would cost us Tk 230," he said.

Khokon said they will hold a protest procession today from Bangladesh Bank to Press Club demanding readjustment of the auto-rickshaw fare, and action to be taken against the owners who charge higher violating the government rules.

Meanwhile, Dhaka District Auto-Rickshaw, Tempo and Mishuk Sramik Union, another union of auto-rickshaw transport workers, demanded readjustment of CNG auto-rickshaw fare.

16 bombs

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went to collect straw for his cows.

The house owner informed the matter to police.

On information, police rushed to the spot at about 8:0