

From 2 to 17

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competence in English due to shortage of qualified teachers at schools and colleges," said Prof Imdadul Haque, member of the admission committee.

At the meeting at the DU senate building, the committee also decided to discontinue the opportunity for students to sit twice for admission tests.

The decision was made to eliminate unequal competition between regular and irregular students, and discourage tutoring at coaching centres, said DU Vice Chancellor Prof AASM Arefin Siddique, who chaired the meeting.

The university this year, for the first time, made elective English mandatory for students wishing to study English. They must obtain 15 marks in elective English section and 20 in general English section to be eligible.

It was done with an aim to enrol students with better aptitude required to pursue higher education in English.

A total of 1,364 students took the test and only Jannatul Ferdous Dola and Shahbaz Amin Bhuiyan got through.

The abysmal performance of applicants triggered criticism from educationists. They attributed the disastrous results to poor quality of teaching at secondary and higher sec-

FAILURE RATE IN ENGLISH (In %)		
UNIT	2012	2013
KHA	56	56
GA	70	76
GHA	37	57

ondary levels.

Most students lack aptitude for learning English and all they care is about getting good marks, they said.

However, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid blamed the test method for poor results, and termed it faulty and unacceptable.

He said the university authorities had intentionally set tougher questions so that only a few students could get through.

This year, around 58 percent of 175,824 applicants in three units -- kha, ga and gha -- failed to secure pass mark in English.

However, the results of previous admission tests were not satisfactory either, as more than half of the admission seekers failed to get pass mark in English in different units.

Prof Arefin told The Daily Star that

12 denied visa

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The PMO officials said the Italian embassy was not at fault.

Getting the prime minister's approval for the media team was delayed as she was not given the list on time. A junior press wing official, who was in the team, placed the list to the PM on October 3 and she instantly approved it, they added.

According to sources, the foreign ministry officials concerned tried their best but the Italian embassy stuck to rules.

But Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque, responding to a question at a press briefing on the PM's trip, said usually those who do not get visas communicate with the ministry. "We don't have any such information."

According to the PMO sources, the Italian embassy refused to accept visa applications of Boishakhi TV Chief Editor and CEO Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul, daily Sangbad Editor Altamash Kabir and Managing Editor Kashem Humayun and senior journalist Abu Hasan Shahriar.

Four other journalists attached to the PM's press wing include a corre-

spondent and a photographer of BSS news agency and two journalists of UNB and bdnews24.com.

Names of the three businessmen could not be known.

The 51-member ASEM is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together the 27 EU members, two other European countries, and the EU with 20 Asian countries and the ASEAN Secretariat.

India is being represented by State Minister for External Affairs VK Singh.

Asked why Hasina is attending the summit when majority of the member states are being represented by ministers or state ministers, Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali said some 20 heads of state/government are participating in the summit.

"It is not possible for all to go all the time," he said at the foreign ministry press conference yesterday.

The foreign minister also said participation in the 10th summit will help Bangladesh appear as a responsible country at the global stage.

Hasina will deliver her speech tomorrow at the plenary session of the summit highlighting Bangladesh's

the applicants, who will fail to enrol in the DU in one academic session, will not get the chance to sit again for test the next year.

Data show that almost half of those who enrol in the DU in an academic year are students of the previous academic session.

This year, a total of 45,053 applicants passed the admission test in four units. Of them, 21,493 passed the HSC exams last year.

Moreover, around 400 seats fall vacant every year in different departments, as many students switch to other departments by taking admission test for a second time. These seats remain vacant for the remaining three years of the graduation course.

Discontinuation of the opportunity for taking the test twice will stop this bad practice, said Arefin.

"Some applicants resort to cheating with the help of coaching centres when they take test for the second time," he said.

This year, 30 applicants were caught with answers in inboxes of their cell phones during DU admission test at different exam centres outside the university. Most of them sat for test for the second time.

Rajib president

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According to the JCD constitution, its central committee is formed for two years.

Declaring committees through issuing press releases has become a common practice for the associated student body of BNP as it could not hold any central council since 1993 due to intra-party conflicts.

JCD sources said Khaleda was very unhappy with the last JCD committee as it failed to wage a strong anti-government movement to foil the January 5 polls.

The party chief in several meetings had expressed her desire to dissolve the committee. Accordingly, she recently met JCD leaders and activists to know their opinion on the new committee.

Detectives find

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far from West Bengal and Assam.

The two women who were arrested from the spot were initially students of the madrasa and later became teachers there. Some of those arrested from Assam also study there.

After the news of the madrasa's link came out, Moulana Siddikulla Chowdhury, chief of Madrasa Samunnay Samity of West Bengal, said, "Such activities are going on in the guise of madrasa and religion. The madrasa was established suddenly and does not bother about Islamic principles. Islam never supports such terrorist activities in the name of religion -- it's forbidden."

Last week, Indian media citing detectives reported that a government probe found that the explosives manufactured in the house were being sent to Bangladesh.

The Indian press also reported that some Bangladeshi JMB militants had links with the blast.

Govt wary

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On financing of militants, the state minister said Bangladesh Bank will provide the national committee with information on any abnormal banking transaction by any individual or organisation.

The intelligence agencies will work based on the information received from the central bank to check financing of militants, he added.

Senior Home Secretary Muzammel Haque Khan, representatives from Bangladesh Bank, Islamic Foundation, and chiefs of law enforcement agencies attended the meeting. **BOMB HOAX** Our correspondent in Chittagong reports: An anonymous caller phoned Manash Kumar Das, executive member of Chittagong District Bar Association, around 9:15am yesterday.

Speaking local dialect, the caller threatened a suicide bomb attack by the JMB at the court building area today (Tuesday), Manash told this newspaper.

"After receiving the threat, we reported the matter to law enforcers for necessary action," said Abdur Rashid, general secretary of the bar association.

Mohiuddin Selim, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station, said they already initiated an investigation to identify the caller.

Six platoons of police have been deployed in the area to avoid any trouble, added the OC.

Police filed a general diary with Kotwali Police Station in this regard.

BCL activists

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organisation did not get the interview card. Riled up, members of our organisation caused the chaos." **Termining the incident** unprecedented, Vice Chancellor Prof Ali Ashraf said yesterday's interviews has been postponed due to the untoward incident.

Asked about taking action against the troublemakers, he said the university proctorial body will look into the matter.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach Faisal Arefin over the phone for his comment.

Charges against

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Mahmud -- are behind bars.

The investigation officer in the charge sheet said the seven NSU students had vowed to kill the "atheist bloggers" after reading Jasimuddin's books and listening to his sermons.

They targeted Rajib "for his blog posts under the nickname Thabababa" and got divided into two - "intel group" to collect his details and track him down and the "execution group" to carry out the murder.

The charge sheet mentioned Jasimuddin as the "instigator" while Rana as the "planner".

5 cops accused of torture in custody

Court orders investigation, registering case

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A Noakhali court yesterday directed the district superintendent of police to registrar a case filed against five policemen in connection with the alleged torture of a garment worker in custody causing him to lose one of his legs.

Abdul Quddus Mia, judge of the Noakhali District and Session Judge's Court, also ordered the SP to investigate the accusations made by the victim's father in the case statement.

The accused are Ashrafal Alam, officer-in-charge of Sonaimuri Police Station; Abdus Samad, who was the OC of the police station when the incident took place; Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, a sub-inspector of the station; Zahid Hasan, OC of Bandar Police Station of Chittagong and its SI Mohammad Asad.

According to the case statement, Sonaimuri police in association with Bandar police arrested Nazrul Islam, a 25-year-old BNP supporter of Sonapur village in Sonaimuri, on September 16 in connection with the murder of local Juba League leader Arif Hossain.

The police that night tried to pressurize him into giving a confessional statement in the murder case but Nazrul refused to do so, said his father Abul Kashem in the case statement.

On request from Nazrul's family, Mahbub Uddin Khokon, former BNP lawmaker from the area, urged the then OC to immediately produce him in the court, the family members said.

The police instead took Nazrul to Majidee Court area of the Noakhali district headquarters around 2:30am the next day, shot him in his left leg and left him in front of the emergency unit of Noakhali Abdul Malek Ukil Medical College Hospital.

On information, Nazrul's relatives went there and admitted him to the hospital. He was later shifted to National Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics Rehabilitation in the capital, where doctors amputated his injured leg to save his life. Since then, Nazrul has been receiving treatment there.

About the allegations and the case, OC of Sonaimuri Police Station Ashrafal said it was a "baseless and unbelievable" case. "No police member of the station was involved in such an incident," he claimed.

However, OC of Bandar Police Station Zahid Hasan said that upon request by Sonaimuri police, he, as per the law, helped them to arrest Nazrul, and that he knew nothing about what had happened after Nazrul was taken from Chittagong.

UNDP removes

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section of an advertisement seeking applications for the post of chief technical adviser under the Electoral Reform Programme of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Bangladesh.

The advertisement stated that the United Nations conducted a review of the on-going electoral assistance provided through the Strengthening Electoral Management in Bangladesh (SEMB) project following the elections. The UN Focal Point for the Electoral Assistance and the SEMB donors suggested reduction of the assistance.

But these statements were not found in the advertisement yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh office of the UNDP issued a press statement on Monday clarifying its stance on the issue.

"Our attention has been drawn to press reports carried by several reputed newspapers of Bangladesh regarding the UNDP administered project, Strengthening Electoral Management in Bangladesh. These reports cited a job advertisement that referred to past parliamentary elections," Country

Director Pauline Tamesis said in the statement.

"I wish to clarify that the text cited in the media does not represent UNDP's position on the 10th parliamentary nor Upazila elections. It seems that the advertisement was published without proper review and approval. This is an error that we regret and we have already taken steps to rectify this mistake. I apologize to our partners for the misunderstanding.

"The UNDP wishes to highlight its long-term commitment to electoral cycle support in Bangladesh. Working with partners and the Election Commission of Bangladesh since 1995 our aim is to assist build an environment for transparent and peaceful elections," she added.

Reasserting the UN body's commitment to supporting the electoral process of Bangladesh, Tamesis said, "We are looking forward to working with the Election Commission beyond the current project's [SEMB's] lifecycle, and will be coordinating closely with the UN Electoral Focal Point on the next phases of support."

2 shot dead 'by police'

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of Jessore Sadar Police Station reached the spot around 11:30pm and detained them along with two others -- Mohsin Ali, 17, and Opu Hossain, 16, said Rakibul.

Detectives stopped at Panchbera Bahadur bus stand and freed Mohsin and Opu, he said, adding that he heard the news of his son's detention on that night from other people sitting at the tea stall.

"Police gave Mohsin and Opu Tk 200 each as bus fare before freeing them and told them that they were taking Hadi and Shohag to the police station," Rakibul claimed.

Next morning, Rakibul came to know that dead bodies of his son and Hadi were found in Jhenidah. He demanded a proper investigation into the incident to unmask the real culprits.

Meanwhile, a relative of one of the released youths said, police cordoned the area off and chased Hadi, Shohag and some others sitting at the tea stall.

They caught Shohag after he crossed a canal in the village and Hadi when he tried to flee the area, said the relative seeking anonymity.

Enamul Hossain, officer-in-charge

of Jessore Sadar Police Station, said the duo were listed criminals and accused in several cases including murder.

Hadi is accused in 11 cases, five of them for murders, while Shohag is accused in four cases, including one for murder, said the OC.

Anwar Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kaliganj Police Station, said on information, police recovered the bodies around 8:30am yesterday from Phulbari area.

Later they sent the bodies to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Both the victims bore marks of bullets on their backs and mouths, police said.

Meanwhile, talking to locals, our Jessore correspondent reports that Hadi was one of the ring leaders of Azgor-Hadi Bahini. The gang is involved in crimes like murder, extortion, robbery, snatching, land grabbing in Sadar and Bagharpara upazila in Jessore and Salikha of Magura.

Shohag, an armed cadre of the gang, actively took part in those crimes, locals said.

They were involved in Awami League politics and carrying out several offences with the blessing of a local influential AL leader.

Govt okays project

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in Rangpur and 34 in Rajshahi districts, according to the project document.

"The spots are really death traps. We don't want unnatural deaths. The number of accidents at these points will come down after the project is implemented," Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told reporters after the meeting.

The government has taken a number of measures to improve road safety, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said at the meeting. As many as 96 people were killed in road accidents during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays. The number of deaths came down to 25 during the vacation of Eid-ul-Azha, he added.

The meeting also approved a Tk-19 crore project for an extension of the mobile library of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra (BSK). Of the amount, the government will contribute Tk 12.51 crore while BSK itself will give Tk 6.53 crore.

The planning minister told report-

ers that BSK would introduce a scheme, under which its members would be able to read books online.

Since 1998, BSK has been running its Book Reading Programme through mobile libraries with the assistance of the government and development partners.

It has a collection of 2.75 lakh books and supplies them to its members at 1,900 spots in 250 upazilas using 46 vans.

Another Tk 397-crore project was okayed, under which flats will be constructed at Azimpur and Motijheel in the capital for government employees.

A revised project of Tk 1,107 crore was also approved at the meeting to set up third and fourth dual gauge tracks on Dhaka-Tongi section of Bangladesh Railway and a dual-gauge double track on Tongi-Joydevpur section with Indian line of credit.

The Ecneec meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair gave a go-ahead to a total of eight projects involving Tk 2,887 crore.

Latif to stay

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On Sunday, Latif was removed from the cabinet and the AL presidium, and his party membership was suspended following his derogatory remarks on hajj, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Tablighi Jamaat in the US late last month. He was made posts, telecommunications and ICT minister after the AL formed government following the January 5 election, and elected a presidium member in the 18th party council held in 2009.

The AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC), the party's highest decision-making forum, will sit on October 24 to finally decide on Latif Siddique's membership in the party, AL office secretary Abdus Sobhan Golap told The Daily Star.

Meanwhile, the AL yesterday served a show-cause notice to Latif asking him to explain in seven days why he would not be expelled from the party.

The notice, signed by AL General Secretary Syed Ashrafal Islam, was sent to Latif's permanent address in Tangail's Kalihati, said Mrinal Kanti Das, deputy office secretary of the AL.

As one of the oldest parties in Southeast Asia, the AL cannot take responsibility for Latif's comments that hurt religious sentiment of people, the notice read.

Soap must, not used

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Dr Mohsin Ali, a nutrition specialist at the Unicef, said washing hands without soap is of no use, and over 90 percent of people in the country do not wash hands with soaps before having meals.

He said studies have found a direct link between poor hygiene practices and malnutrition. 40 percent of 15 million children below five in Bangladesh are underweight, he added.

Among other factors, undernutrition occurs because of recurrent diarrhoea and pneumonia of the children, Ali said on the eve of World Handwashing Day today being observed in Bangladesh and elsewhere in the world.

If children or their caregivers do not wash hands with soaps before meals, it is likely that bacteria or viruses transmit to their bodies and cause infections that finally lead to malnutrition, he added.

"Malnutrition seriously hampers cognitive development of children," said Khairul Islam, country representative of WaterAid, which promotes hygiene, water and sanitation services

among the poor in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has reduced the mortality rate of children under five by 71 percent since 1990, but the situation is bleak in terms of sanitation and child nutrition.

According to the Local Government Division of the LGRD Ministry, the use of sanitary latrine in Bangladesh has gone up to 97 percent now from 33 percent in 2003 when the country first started sanitation programme.

However, Bangladesh National Hygiene Baseline Survey 2014 found only 35 percent schools have handwashing facilities with water and soap, and only one-third of students' hands appeared clean.

Over 80 percent menstruating girls and women use old cloths for menstruation management and less than 25 percent of them wash clothes properly, it said.

About a third of restaurants in the country have soap and water at handwashing locations for staff, but soap is used in only a few instances. The instances of washing hands by food vendors too are very few, the survey says.

All these lead to certain infections

that cause illness and even deaths.

Infections caused by such practices are not known, but Bangladesh Demographic and Health Survey (BDHS)-2011 found diarrhoea accounts for 2 percent and acute respiratory infections like pneumonia account for one-fifth of all under-5 child deaths.

A survey by the World Bank and icddr, b in 2011 calculated that Bangladesh incurs a financial loss of 5.3 percent of its GDP a year due to inadequacy of sanitation and hygiene facilities.

These losses could be greatly reduced as the national hygiene survey 2014 says 99 percent of diarrhoea, 90 percent of dysentery and 51 percent worms can be checked just by providing safe drinking water, sanitation systems and proper washing of hands.

The environmental hazards, mainly air and water pollution, are the major problems in Bangladesh, said Dr Khairul Islam.

"Therefore, we must turn sanitation and hygiene into a social movement to save our children from malnutrition. Otherwise, we as a nation would fail to go forward," Khairul said.