

# JESSORE-BENAPOLE ROAD EXPANSION

# Century-old trees to stay

MOHSIN MILON, Benapole

The government has decided to expand the Jessore-Benapole highway without felling the century-old trees along the road, apparently bowing to locals' demand.

The Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) has informed the Roads and Highway Department's (RHD) Jessore office about its decision taken recently.

"We will expand the road as much as possible without felling any trees," said RTHD Secretary MAN Siddique.

He, however, added that the road would need to be expanded into a four-lane one in future, and there would be no alternative to cutting down the trees for smooth movement of increased number of vehicles.

The government had earlier taken a decision to chop down around 5,000 different species of trees -- rain tree, shishu and koroi -- triggering protests among environmentalists and the common people.

The decision came in the wake of increased traffic movement due to increased import and export through

Benapole, the country's largest land port. Environmentalists and locals said felling of trees would put an adverse impact on the environment.

In support of their demand, the protesters cited the example of road expansion on the Indian side by keeping the old trees, which apparently convinced the government.

RHD sources in Jessore said the Executive Committee of National Economic Council at a meeting in March approved two projects involving over Tk 650 crore for expansion and sustainable development of Jessore-Khulna and Jessore-Benapole highways.

Under the two projects, over 38 kilometres of road from Daratana in Jessore town to Benapole check post was scheduled for renovation.

There are 2,312 rain trees, shishu and koroi trees, 1,187 electric poles and 52 telephone poles on both sides of the highway.

Besides, a 38km stretch of Jessore-Khulna highway from Palbari crossing to Rajhat in Jessore would be renovated.

There are 2,555 rain trees, shishu

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Some of the century-old trees along the Jessore Road (Jessore-Benapole highway). The photo was taken in Jhikargachha area of Jessore recently.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUO

## Water transport workers call off their strike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water transport workers called off their scheduled countrywide indefinite work abstention that was supposed to start at 12:00am today to press home their 21-point demand, including the release of their co-workers in jail.

Shah Alam Bhuiyan, president of Bangladesh Noujan Sramik Federation, told The Daily Star around 10:50pm yesterday that they cancelled their programme following assurances from the government and launch owners that they would meet their demands.

A tri-partite agreement was signed between the federation, the government and the launch owners at the labour department yesterday. The labour secretary was present there, he said.

Around 3:15pm yesterday, Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, general secretary of the federation, said they decided to enforce the work abstention as they did not get any assurance regarding their demands.

On July 12, Shah Alam Bhuiyan at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club announced that they would go for the work abstention if their demands were not met by yesterday.

On that day, Bangladesh Noujan SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

## Poor show in English

FROM PAGE 1

significant fall in the pass rate.

Explaining the new evaluation method, Nahid said chief examiners in consultation with senior examiners set model answers of the questions.

Considering the model answers as the standard, the examiners checked the answer scripts. "This method has been appreciated by everyone."

The measure was taken following a research conducted by the Bangladesh Examination Development Unit on the existing evaluating system. "We have been working for the last three years to develop a standard procedure to evaluate answer scripts."

"Earlier we found that the examiners did not evaluate the answer scripts properly. The usual practice was that

group performed badly. Some 42,393 students sat for the examinations from this group and the pass rate is only 38 percent.

Board Chairman Prof Abdul Khaleque, however, blamed students' poor performance in English only for the fall in overall results.

"I have already asked my officials to look into the other reasons behind the drop. After assessing the reasons, we'll be able to say what went wrong," he said.

The education ministry has already asked the board chairman to inform it of the issues that contributed to the poor results.

### GIRLS DID BETTER

Like this year's SSC exams, girls have done better than boys as their pass rate is 2.28 percentage points higher than

HSC RESULT CHART				
BOARDS	PASS RATE 2017	PASS RATE 2016	GPA-5 2016	GPA-5 2015
DHAKA	69.74	73.53	18,930	28,110
RAJSHAHI	71.30	75.40	5,294	6,073
COMILLA	49.52	64.49	678	1,912
JESSORE	70.02	83.42	2,447	4,586
CHITTAGONG	61.09	64.60	1,391	2,253
BARISAL	70.28	70.13	815	787
SYLHET	72.00	68.59	700	1,330
DINAJPUR	65.44	70.64	2,987	3,899
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>66.84</b>	<b>72.47</b>	<b>33,242</b>	<b>48,950</b>

the listed examiners first collected scripts from the boards, checked those and returned to the boards. There was no monitoring mechanism or any specific rule to check the scripts," Nahid said, elaborating further.

As part of the effort, the government arranged training for the chief examiners who then trained other examiners following the guidelines, he added.

As many as 6.25 lakh boys and 5.38 lakh girls from 8,771 institutions took this year's HSC and its equivalent examinations beginning on April 2. Of them 8.01 lakh students passed.

### POOR PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH

Students performed badly in English, said chairmen of several education boards.

More than 2.17 lakh students failed this subject alone, according to the data provided by the boards.

In Dhaka board, the success rate in this subject came down to 76.66 percent from last year's 86.46 percent. The pass rate in English in Jessore board this year shows a fall of 17 percentage points.

"The questions were comparatively hard in my board and that's why many students failed this subject," Prof Abdul Alim, chairman of the board, told The Daily Star.

"English has always been considered the major factor in results. Many students flunked this subject, pulling down the tally of total students passed," said Prof Mahabubur Rahman, chairman of Dhaka board.

### SHOCKING PERFORMANCE OF COMILLA STUDENTS

A startling low pass rate of students under Comilla board pushed down the overall pass rate. Only 49.53 percent students came out successful causing this board to be at the bottom of the result chart.

A little over 1 lakh students took part in the exams. Only 62 percent of them passed English, according to the data.

"We are examining other options and alternatives that will ensure security," Mordecai said in an interview with Al-Jazeera.

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"This is very encouraging for us that girls are doing well," the minister said.

However, girls lagged behind boys in the context of achieving the highest grade. A total of 20,535 boys secured GPA-5, while 17,434 girls got the highest grade.

### SCIENCE STUDENTS LEAD

As usual, students from the science group under eight general boards did the best with a pass rate of 83.14 percent, followed by 69.65 percent in the business studies group and 58.14 percent in the humanities group.

"Several years ago, the number of students studying science was declining, which was alarming. But the trend has been reversed as we see the number of students studying science is on the rise," Nahid said.

This year 532 institutions saw a cent percent pass rate while no students passed from 72 institutions.

Sylhet board topped the chart in terms of success rate with 72 percent.

The colleges across the country wore a festive look. Students and their parents, who had been tensed for some time, erupted into cheering as soon as they received the results.

Some danced while some took selfies showing victory signs. However, some students were seen breaking down in tears for not getting expected results.

"Failing the examinations does not mean the end of life. Those who have failed take better preparation," Nahid said.

The colleges became affiliated with Dhaka University on February 16.

After visiting Siddiqur, the education minister told reporters that he already informed the PM about the situation regarding the seven colleges.

He added they were taking initiatives to solve the problem.

### STUDENTS' PROTEST FOILED

Chhatra League men foiled the human

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