



## SIR RINGO STARR

The Beatles drummer gets knighthood alongside Barry Gibb

PAGE 8

## 'INSULTING THE JUDICIARY'

Ousted Egyptian president Mohammed Morsi jailed for three years

PAGE 11

## INFLATION WORRY

No relief from high food prices in 2018 thanks to supply shocks

PAGE B1

# Comilla pulls all boards down

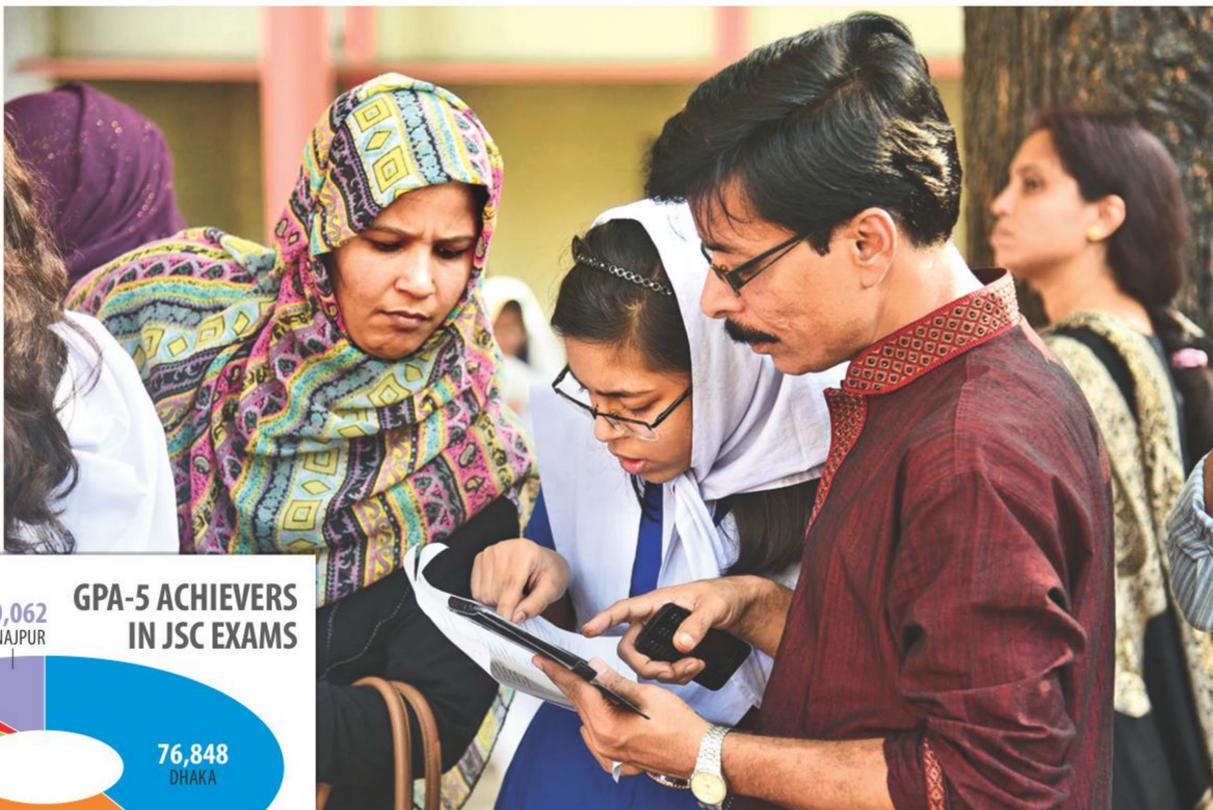
### JSC overall pass rate 6-year low at 83.10pc; poor results in English, maths a major reason

WASIM BIN HABIB and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

After a steady rise in the success rate since its introduction in 2010, the overall JSC examination results this year suffered a significant fall both in terms of the pass rate and the number of highest achievers.

The pass percentage of the Junior School Certificate (JSC) exams under the eight education boards came down to 83.10 percent, a 9.79 percentage points drop from last year's, mainly due to a poor show in Comilla Board and students' dismal performance in English and mathematics.

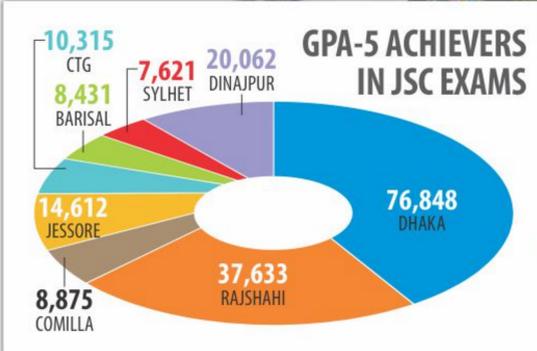
The number of eighth graders achieving the highest grade -- GPA 5 -- also came down, to 1,84,397 from last year's 2,35,059.



A child and her parents looking for her grades on a result sheet at the Dr Khastogir Government Girl's High School in Chittagong. Results of the JSC and PEC exams were published yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

- Comilla JSC pass rate drops 27pc points
- All other boards see lower pass rate
- Primary pass rate also drops to 95.18pc



A sharp fall of around 27 percentage points in the success rate in Comilla Board pushed down the overall pass rate, officials said.

The examinees in three other boards also performed badly in English and maths, contributing to the lower success rate.

The pass rate in the primary terminal exam also hit a six-year low with 95.18 percent kids coming out successful, down from 98.51 percent last year. The number of GPA 5 scorers came down to 2,62,609 from 2,81,898 the previous year.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## Parents wait hours for exam results

### Queries overwhelm Teletalk servers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A number of parents yesterday alleged that they faced a lot of trouble in getting the results of two major public examinations, both online and via text.

They said they could not log on to the website for several hours after the results of primary terminal examination and Junior Secondary Certificate (JSC) examinations were out yesterday noon. They did not get the results even after sending several texts to carrier Teletalk, they added.

A top official of the state-run carrier said Teletalk's preparations were insufficient. The mobile operator was solely responsible for distributing the

SEE PAGE 12 COL 5

## LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

# Year of ballots, fear in mind

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Year 2017 may go down in our political history for unusual calm. We never witnessed such a situation in politics since restoration of democracy in 1990. With this record, the country is welcoming 2018 which is set to appear as an exciting election year with a series of polls, including the most important one, the parliamentary election.

The election buzz will kick off at the beginning of the year through the by-polls to mayoral post in the Dhaka North City Corporation. Elections to five more city corporations -- Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet and Gazipur -- are expected to be held in the middle of the year. Ahead of the national election, which is expected to be held at the end of the year, the mayoral polls may appear as a prestigious battle of ballots between archrivals the Awami League and the BNP.

In the last two years, the government had the upper hand over the entire political situation. There was little street agitation. The hand-picked main opposition in parliament Jatiya Party did not give discomfort to the government. The BNP has been shattered after it boycotted the January 2014 parliamentary election and enforced three-month-long non-stop countrywide

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

# Scams dent good show in economy

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Scams in the banking sector have paled the country's fair economic performance in the outgoing year.

Bangladesh has achieved a record economic growth of 7.28 percent in 2016-17, up from 7.11 percent in the previous fiscal year, according to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics data.

Exports have started bouncing back since October from a sluggish growth for over a year. Imports have been growing at double digits in recent months. Private sector credit growth, which is an important indicator to measure the vibrancy of the economy, grew by six years' high of nearly 19 percent in October.

Also, the government has been

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## BPC won't sell fuel to Biman on credit

### Decision comes as the airline owes it Tk 1,600cr in 8 years

DWAIPAYAN BARUA and MOHAMMAD SUMAN MIAH, Chittagong

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) has decided to stop selling fuel to Biman Bangladesh Airlines on credit from tomorrow as its outstanding dues have hit around Tk 1,600 crore in the last eight years.

Padma Oil Company Limited (POCL), a subsidiary of BPC, supplies aviation fuel to different domestic and foreign airlines. The company has long been selling fuel on credit only to the national flag carrier.

On an average, POCL supplies jet fuel worth Tk 50 crore to the state-owned airliner every month.

According to POCL, the company sold fuel worth Tk 5,501.44 crore to Biman between February 2011 and December 19, 2017 and received total payment of Tk 4,405.3 crore on different occasions.

The arrears against sold fuel stand at Tk 1,096.14 crore, but the interests against the arrears reached Tk 504 crore since Biman failed to pay monthly bills on a regular basis, it alleged.

POCL General Manager (Accounts and Finance) Mohiuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star they have been selling fuel on credit only to Biman under special consideration.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

## A YEAR in SPORT

STAR SPORT DESK

Like the rest of the world, the sporting universe does not stop for a second. But after an eventful year such as 2017, even as we chug forward we take some time to look back, mostly pictorially, on the sporting highlights of the year. Cricket has once again dominated the Bangladeshi consciousness as the most popular sport, but there have been other avenues of triumph and despair. There is also a consideration of the sustainability of our sporting structures and of course, a look back upon the highs and lows of the world of sport in 2017.

Flip to pages 16 and 17 to have a look at our year-end special.

## HILL CUTTING Landslide kills 3 in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Three people, including a father and his son, were killed in a landslide at a hill in Chittagong's Rangunia upazila yesterday afternoon when some workers were cutting the hill.

The dead, Amir Ali, 35, his son Rakibul Hasan Atik, 10, and Md Didar, 30, were from Mohammadpur village in the upazila.

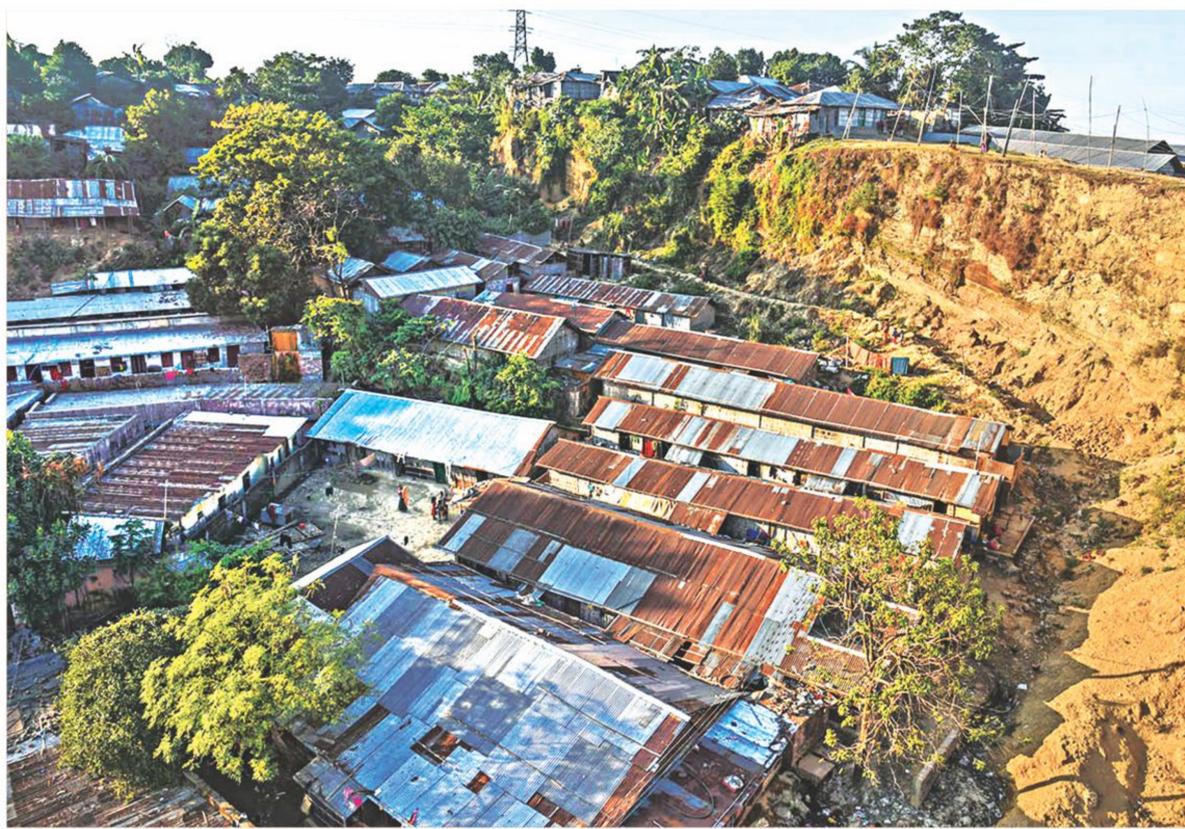
The incident took place in South Rajanagar area of the village around 3:00pm, said Imtiaz Mahmud Bhuinya, officer-in-charge of Rangunia Police Station.

A second grader at a local madrasa, Rakibul's life was cut short as he took lunch for his father.

Talking to The Daily Star, Rajanagar union Chairman Ahmed Sayed Talukdar said at least 10 people were cutting the hill when the tragedy struck.

The three victims were buried under huge chunks of earth while eight other

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Every monsoon people living in the foot of hills die in landslides and the authorities concerned drive some of them away from the dangerous areas. Come autumn, many repopulate the area. They build their homes cutting into hills. The photo was taken in Bayezid area of Chittagong city on Wednesday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

## HILLS IN PORT CITY Vanishing into urban sprawl

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Chittagong

The port city's unique combination of sea, river and hills is going to lose one of the features due to the greed of an influential quarter.

Hill grabbing has recently surpassed all previous records thanks to a lax attitude of the authorities concerned as multistorey buildings, shanties and tin-shed makeshift houses are replacing the hills.

During a visit to Bayezid area on Thursday, it was seen hills as far as eyes can see were being levelled just behind the Gulshan Mosque at Sher Shah Bangla Bazar to create space for highrises and colonies for low income groups.

The grabbing of hills has reached such a level that one might mistake the area as a Rohingya refugee camp.

Residential blocks and colonies had earlier been established cutting down the hills in the areas including Debar Par and Bank Pahar of Bayezid area where people who prefer cheap accommodation mostly take shelter.

Standing at the Bank Pahar Colony, Rejaul Karim, a vendor by profession, told The Daily Star he came to the area from Feni a few days ago.

"I learned about the cheap accommodation here from a relative, who managed a two-room shanty for me at Tk 2,000 a month," he said.

He would have to spend another Tk 100 for electricity, for which nobody has legal connection.

Displaced people usually take refuge in this area, another tenant Mofij observed.

Cable for electricity and pipe for water supply were seen horizontally and haphazardly drawn up in the area. None of the tenants dared to name those who take the rent and bill but hinted at ruling party men.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1