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UPAZILA ELECTION

Turnout in phase-4 only 36pc

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The trend of poor voter turnout continued in the fourth phase of the upazila elections as around 36 percent cast ballots, the lowest of the four phases.

The Election Commission data shows that the turnout in the four phases was also the lowest since 2009.

In the four phases, at least 38 upazilas saw less than 30 percent turnout while it was below 10 percent in two upazilas, shows data provided by SM Asaduzzaman, EC joint secretary and director (public relations).

The turnout was 43.31 percent in the first phase, 41.25 percent in the second phase and 41.41 percent in the third phase. It decreased to 36.50 percent in the fourth phase.

Elections were held in 107 upazilas in the fourth phase.

The EC calculated the turnout, counting the votes cast for chairman posts, excluding the eight upazilas of Rangamati the results of which were yet to reach the commission.

The turnout in the 2009 upazila polls

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Two BRTC buses, used for carrying students of Dhaka University, are caught in a poorly filled trench on a street near the city's Central Shaheed Minar while they were being parked there. The photos were taken around 1:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Four killed, two hurt in road crashes

STAR REPORT

Four persons, including a freedom fighter and two students, were killed and two others injured in three separate road accidents in two districts since Sunday night.

The dead were identified as Freedom Fighter Lutfar Rahman, 70, and Jahidul Islam, 55, from Dinajpur, and Hossain Ali Rana, 16, from Lalmonirhat, and Bibek Mandal, 13, from Dhaka's Khilgaon area.

In Dhaka, Bibek, an eighth grader of a local school, was killed after a pickup van ran over him yesterday afternoon.

Police said that the van hit Bibek from behind while he was commuting on his bicycle on the Demra Link Road in Khilgaon around 5:00pm. Bibek was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where he died two hours later.

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WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS DAY TODAY

The school of joy

MD ASADUZ ZAMAN, JU

While six-year-old Hridoy Khan was growing up, her mother Fatema Begum noticed that he needed special care.

After a series of tests at hospitals, doctors diagnosed him with autism spectrum disorder, much to the shock of the 35-year-old mother.

But Fatema and her husband, a Bangladeshi living in Saudi Arabia, did not give up hope. They kept looking for an appropriate school and treatment centre for their third child.

At the age of six, Hridoy was admitted to Anandashala (abode of joy), a school for children with special needs situated on the campus of Jahangirnagar University.

Speaking to The Daily Star, another mother, Sajeda Siddiqua, shared her experiences with her six-year-old child Safwan Shaheen Ikra, who is also a student at the school.

"Whenever Ikra goes out with his father or me, we hold on tightly to his hands, as we fear that something might trigger erratic behaviour."

She also said, "Doctors have advised us against any aggressive behaviour with him as disagreements may trigger an outburst.

But people around him are not usually empathic towards him and become annoyed with him easily.

"Ikra will turn seven this month, but he is in need of constant care and control. We live in fear that he may just run across a busy street or jump into an elevator."

Seventeen-year-old Farzana Binte Shah Roja has suffered from severe speech impairment along with acute attention deficit hyperactivity problems. She had a tendency to remain silent and isolated.

During a visit to the school, The Daily Star correspondent saw her sitting alone at a corner.

Talking about her, Suraiya Akter, principal of the school, said love and friendly behaviours towards her coupled with counselling brought positive changes in Farzana.

Jahangirnagar University, in association with Centre for Disability and Development (CDD), founded Anandashala in October 2009. The initiative was taken by then VC Prof Sharif Enamul Kabir.

The guardians of the students at the school said they are grateful at the opportunity that the university has given.

Stepping into its tenth year, Anandashala now has 20 students, 9 teachers and 2

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ASSAULTING A BIKER Cop closed as video goes viral

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A traffic sergeant was closed yesterday after a video clip of him assaulting a biker of a ride-hailing service in Hatirjheel area went viral.

Sergeant Sohel Rana Chowdhury of Rampura Traffic Zone was closed to the Deputy Commissioner's office of Traffic East Division.

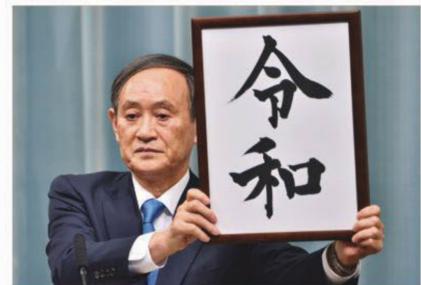
"I have watched the video. He has been closed over the misconduct," AHM Kamruzzaman, deputy commissioner (Traffic East Division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star.

He said he had spoken to the victim over phone and urged him to file a complaint.

Sohel joined as a traffic sergeant in 2011 and in February last, he was

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Japan declares new imperial era 'Reiwa'



REUTERS, Tokyo

Japan yesterday declared the name of its new imperial era when Crown Prince Naruhito becomes emperor on May 1, with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe saying it emphasised traditional values at a turning point in the nation's history.

Crowds watching giant television screens across Tokyo roared and raised their phones to take photos as a somber Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga held up a white placard with the new name - Reiwa - written in two characters in black ink.

The country had been anxiously awaiting the new era name, or "genjo," which is used on coins, calendars, newspapers and in official paperwork, and over time captures a national mood.

The first character is most often used to mean

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TCB COMMODITIES Ramadan sale begins on April 22

BSS, Dhaka

The state-owned Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) will start selling commodities at a subsidised rate across the country on April 22 on the occasion of Ramadan next month.

"The TCB is likely to start selling commodities across the country, including the capital, for Ramadan on April 22 at lower prices compared to those at the retail markets," said M Shekhbaur Rahman, chief

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PRAYER TIMING APRIL 2
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4-40 12-45 4-45 6-21 7-45
JAMAAT 5-15 1-15 5-00 6-24 8-15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

14,988 absent on first day of HSC exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As many as 14,988 candidates were absent from the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and its equivalent examinations and 27 others were expelled on the first day of the exam yesterday.

The number of absent students on the first day this year is higher than that of last year when 13,718 students did not show up. However, the number of expelled students decreased significantly this year from last year's 89.

A total of 1351,505 examinees from 9,081 education institutions are appearing in the exams.

The HSC examinees yesterday sat for Bangla (compulsory) first paper at 10:00am and the examinees under the Madrasa Education Board took Quran Mazid.

The highest number of absentees -- 3,040 -- was reported from the Dhaka Board, while the Barisal Board had the lowest --

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HSC examinees doing their last-minute revisions in front of Willes Little Flower School and College in the city's Kakrail area on the first day of this year's HSC examinations yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

EU's patience running out

Juncker warns Britain on Brexit as MPs hold more votes to chart new path to break political deadlock

AFP, London

British MPs were set to try again to chart a new Brexit course yesterday after rejecting Prime Minister Theresa May's deal for a third time, but the EU warned its patience was wearing thin.

Less than two weeks before Britain risks crashing out of the European Union, MPs will hold a second round of votes on various options to try to break the political deadlock.

But any attempt to move towards closer ties with the EU risks splitting the government, and she might try one last time to get her deal in the coming days.

EU leaders have called an emergency summit on April 10 and warned that unless Britain sets out a plan, it risks cutting ties with its largest trading partner two days later with no deal at all.

"With our British friends we have had a lot of patience, but even patience is running out," European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker told Italian public TV channel Rai 1 on Sunday.

'ILL-DISCIPLINED' CABINET
Britain voted by 52 percent to leave the EU in a 2016 referendum, but the process has been mired in divisions over the terms of the divorce and what kind of future ties to seek.

The political chaos forced May to postpone Britain's original exit day from March 29, but she said it would be "unacceptable" for a further delay beyond European Parliament elections on May 23-26.

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