

## Three bills placed in JS to publish HSC results

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday finalised three bills to publish the results of the HSC and equivalent examinations by January 28.

Now, the bills will be placed before the House.

Workers Party MP Fazle Hossain Badsha presided over the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka in absence of the committee chairman Afsarul Amin, an Awami League lawmaker.

The bills are – Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 2021, Bangladesh Vocational Education Board (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

Earlier in the day, Education Minister Dipu Moni placed the bills in the House and they were sent to the parliamentary standing committee on the education ministry for further assessment and report back to the parliament.

The parliamentary committee was asked to submit its reports on “Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill” within one day while “Vocational Education Board (Amendment) Bill” and

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Rows of colourful planters hang outside this verandah at a house in Mirpur Krirapolli, some with winter flowers in bloom. The pandemic has led to a sharp rise in the popularity of home gardening as a hobby, and the residents of Dhaka are adding some much-needed greenery to the city.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## INTER-DISTRICT BUS DHAKA

# Sites selected for 4 bus terminals around city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bus Route Rationalisation (BRR) Committee yesterday decided on four sites on the periphery of Dhaka to set up bus terminals to stop inter-district buses from entering the city.

The sites are in Batulia at Uttara, Hemayetpur, Baghair at Keraniganj and north Kanchpur, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh told journalists following the 15th meeting of BRR.

A proposal to finalise the four sites for the terminals will be sent to the ministry concerned soon, Taposh said.

Inter-district buses will not be allowed to enter Dhaka after these terminals are built which will lessen the traffic congestion, he added.

The existing inter-city bus terminals will be used as city bus terminals, Taposh also said.

The mayor also said all city buses of the Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route will operate under a single company on a pilot basis from April 1.

Attending the meeting, DNCC Mayor Md Atiqul Islam said, “Thirty-four bus stops will be built on this route and buses will not be allowed to stop anywhere other than the specific places.”

Meanwhile, the DSCC mayor added that Bangladesh Road Transport Authority has been instructed to update within five days the information on the public buses which operate on Ghatarchar-Kanchpur Bridge route.

BRTA was also asked to update information about other city routes within 90 days, he added.

Taposh said they will prepare a guideline to run and form the companies and has already asked Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority to work in this regard, involving all stakeholders.

The committee also asked BRTC to keep all their buses into depots by midnight from February 28, he said.

## Four gas companies have Tk 9,018cr in outstanding bills

### State minister for energy tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The outstanding bills of six gas distribution companies of the country amount to Tk 9,018 crore, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid told parliament yesterday.

In reply to a question from ruling Awami League MP Abdul Latif, the junior minister said the highest amount of outstanding Bills — Tk 6,677 crore remains with Titas Gas.

Besides, the arrears of Bakhrabad Gas Company are Tk 696.61 crore; Kamafuli, Tk 844.95 crore; Jalalabad, Tk 483.32 crore; Panchimanchal, Tk 195.19 crore and Sundarban Gas Company, Tk 120.97 crore, the state minister said in a scripted answer.

In response to another question, Nasrul Hamid highlighted the system loss of Titas Gas in the last 10 years.

According to the state minister, the system loss came down to almost zero in the 2012-13 financial year but increased again.

The highest system loss in Titas Gas in the last 10 years has been in 2018-19 fiscal which was 5.71 percent.

Meanwhile, Industries Minister Nurul Majid Mahmud Humayun told parliament the government did not take any decision on shutting down state-owned sugar mills.

“No sugar mill has been closed down,” he said, replying to a question from Awami League MP Ali Azam of Bhola-2.

There are 15 sugar mills under the Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC). But threshing of sugarcane in six mills has been suspended for the current season, the minister said.

Of these, only one mill — Carew & Co BD Ltd — is a profitable one, he said.

The government is implementing two development projects “BMR of Carew & Co (BD) Ltd (1st revised)” and “Establishment of Effluent Treatment Plants in 14 Sugar Mills” to modernise the sugar mills, Humayun also said.

## Common people unlikely to get vaccine: Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

Slamming the government for not announcing any roadmap for coronavirus vaccine distribution, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday voiced his doubts on whether common people will get the life-saving vaccine.

“We’ve repeatedly talked about unveiling a comprehensive plan and roadmap for vaccine [distribution]. Nothing has been done yet in this regard. So, we’re not sure at all whether the ordinary people will get the vaccine,” he said.

The BNP leader said, “But it’s almost certain that the rich will get it. That’s why we think this government is an anti-people one. It’s been working against the interests of people by snatching their rights.”

Fakhrul made the remarks while inaugurating a free medical camp at BNP’s Nayapaltn central office.

Opposing the government’s move to procure the vaccine from India through Beximco Pharmaceuticals, he said when different countries are giving free vaccine, Awami League is “taking one extra dollar per vaccine dose to ensure a good profit for its own people”.

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## CHATTOGRAM CITY POLLS

# Campaign gathers pace as central leaders join

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

With central leaders from both Awami League (AL) and BNP joining electioneering in support of their mayor candidates, campaign for Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) polls has started to gain momentum.

Although campaigning started on January 8, central leaders from both the parties were yet to join.

Ahmad Hossain, the AL central organising secretary in Chattogram division, was the first central leader of the party to join campaign for AL nominated mayoral candidate Rezaul Karim Chowdhury on January 15.

He attended a views-exchange with party leaders and activists on that day and urged all to be united and work for Rezaul’s victory.

Hossain also warned the councillor candidates, who are contesting the polls

defying party decision, of facing tough action saying that they would not be considered for nomination in any polls in future.

Afterwards, he went to different areas of the city and spoke to locals.

Although AL presidium member Eng Mosharrif Hossain is the main coordinator of CCC polls management committee for AL mayor candidate, he was not seen in the campaigns yet.

According to AL sources, he was primarily engaged in coordination and managing the campaign. They said veteran leaders would not take part in campaigning that much due to the pandemic.

Contacted, Ahmad Hossain said, “More central leaders would join [the campaign] in a day or two,” he said. “Actually, the pandemic has changed the way we conduct campaigns...”

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The sergeant was rushed to hospital with fractures.

## Motorcyclist assaults traffic cop in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A motorcyclist beat up a traffic sergeant with a piece of wood, fracturing the officer’s bones, at Rajshahi city’s Ghora Chatrar checkpoint yesterday.

The sergeant, Sree Bipul Kishore Bhattachariya, was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital with his left elbow, right hand and left collarbone fractured among other injuries, said Golam Ruhul Kuddus, additional deputy commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP).

The incident took place around 12pm when the sergeant saw the motorcyclist riding his vehicle on the footpath and ran to catch the rider, leaving his teammates behind, the RMP spokesperson said.

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## NIKO GRAFT CASE AGAINST KHALEDA

# Hearing on charge framing adjourned till Feb 1

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday adjourned the hearing on charge framing against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and nine others in Niko graft case till February 1.

Judge Sheikh Hafizur Rahman of the Special Judge’s Court-9 of Dhaka passed the order after a petition was filed with the court on behalf of Khaleda Zia, seeking an adjournment of the hearing, advocate Zia Uddin, one of her lawyers, told The Daily Star.

In the petition, the lawyer said Khaleda Zia is sick and did not come out of her residence due to the pandemic. So, the hearing should be adjourned.

The death certificate of former state minister for energy and BNP leader AKM Mosharrif Hossain, also an accused in the case, who died of coronavirus on October 17 last year, was submitted before the court.

Three accused, including Gausuddin Al Mamun, now in jail, were present at the makeshift court of Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj yesterday.

ACC filed the case in December 2007, accusing Khaleda and several others of abusing power to award a gas exploration and extraction deal to Canadian company Niko when she was prime minister between 2001 and 2006.

The anti-graft body pressed charges in May 2008. Two months later, the High Court stayed the case’s proceedings. On June 18 of 2015, the HC cleared way for the trial proceedings to resume and ordered the BNP chief to surrender before the trial court within two months after a copy of the HC verdict reached it.

Former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former acting energy secretary Khandaker Shahidul Islam and Kashem Sharif, vice-president (South Asia) of Niko Resources Bangladesh Ltd, are also accused in the case.



Mujibur Rahman Dilu no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mujibur Rahman Dilu, a freedom fighter and actor, passed away at the capital’s United Hospital early yesterday.

He had been suffering from multiple health problems, including lung infection and pneumonia, said his son Ayon Rahman.

Dilu, who has been away from the limelight for a while, fell critically ill on January 12 and was admitted to the ICU at United Hospital on January 15. Earlier in 2005, he was diagnosed with Guillain-Barre syndrome and fell into a coma.

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## LAKINGME CHAKMA’S DEATH

# Two int’l rights groups demand enquiry into PBI team, public prosecutor

SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) on Saturday demanded divisional enquiry into the Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) team and Cox’s Bazar public prosecutor over negligent handling of Lakingme Chakma’s abduction case.

They also demanded immediate action against those involved in Lakingme’s abduction, forced conversion, child marriage, rape, and instigation for suicide/murder, and an impartial investigation into her death as well as release her autopsy report.

In the statement, they demanded punishment for those involved in forging Lakingme’s birth certificate, her forced conversion, and the marriage of a minor.

They urged Bangladesh government to take the initiative for the safety and care of Lakingme’s baby and ensure security for her family and their proper compensation.

Fourteen-year-old Lakingme was allegedly abducted from her home in Shilkhali Chakmapara of Teknaf on January 5 last year. According to her birth certificate, she was 14 years and 10 months old on that day.

Police on December 10 called Lakingme’s father Lala Aung to visit Cox’s Bazar Sadar Hospital morgue to identify his daughter’s body. Accordingly, the father went to the hospital and identified her.

Law enforcers, however, did not hand him the body on that day, saying that the girl was married to one of her alleged abductors, who managed a “birth certificate” that says she was 18.

Twenty-five days after her mysterious death, Lakingme’s parents received their daughter’s body on January 4 to bury her.

## ‘Spare us the harassment’

### Es-KDS director says he’s charged in 28 false cases; company says they have docs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A former director of KDS Group yesterday claimed that his former employer is harassing him and his family, filing a total of 28 false cases with fabricated and manipulated documents.

Munir Hussain Khan, former director of KY Steel and KYCR Coil Industries, made the allegations in a press briefing at Chattogram press club, after serving nine months in jail in the cases. He came out on bail recently.

According to KDS officials, KDS Group filed these cases alleging that Munir embezzled Tk 600 crore during import of raw materials for their factories, stole a car, shopped for himself and family and travelled abroad with family members using company credit card.

Munir said in his written statement, “The company implicated me and my family members in 28 cases. Although my father, brother and wife never worked for KDS, the company also implicated them in the cases just to harass us.”

“I joined the KDS group in 2007 following request of my friend leaving a decent life in USA, where I was serving as a vice president at a US bank in Florida. I quit KDS in the wake of an argument at a meeting in 2018, and one year later I joined Apollo Steel,” he said, adding that KDS started filing the cases 20 months after he left the company.

“KDS first filed a case against me alleging I stole a car from their office in Chattogram, although I was in Dhaka that day. Police have submitted a final report of the case, as no incident of theft was found,” added Munir.

He also urged the KDS Group to give him and his family members relief from the false cases.

Munir’s father Muazzam Hussain Khan and brother Mehedi Hussain were present at the press conference.

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After this bus broke down in the capital’s busy Matsya Bhaban area yesterday, police rushed to the spot and towed the vehicle in an effort to avert a traffic congestion.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## One-third of rivers in Barishal lost navigability: survey

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Around one-third of 62 rivers in Barishal division has lost navigability, causing suspension of vessel operation in around 460km of 27 waterways, revealed a survey of Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services yesterday.

The survey titled “The feasibility of river management by increasing the navigability of rivers in Barishal division, reducing water logging, restoring wetland ecosystems, increasing irrigation and landing facilities” was presented at a programme organised by Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority at Barishal Circuit House.

Citing the survey, Mizanur Rahman, a river morphologist and research associate at CEGIS, said there was 1,475km waterways in 62 rivers in the division. Of these, 470km of 27 rivers have already lost their navigability.

The study noted that the country’s rivers are filling up due to siltation and river erosion from the upper stream and recommended dredging after conducting a comprehensive survey on its conservation.

The expert recommended 4.2 million cubic metres of capital dredging and 170

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