



Dhaka, Delhi getting ready for PM's India visit this year

PORIMOL PALMA

Dhaka and Delhi have begun preparations for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's visit to India later this year.

This visit is expected to further accelerate the friendship between the two countries that are celebrating the 50 years of diplomatic relationship this year.

Following the Bangladesh-India Friendship Dialogue from February 18-20 in Shimla, Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen will be holding a bilateral meeting with his Indian counterpart Harsh Vardhan Shringla during his two-day visit from tomorrow.

He may also meet Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

According to foreign ministry officials, Dhaka and Delhi will be holding a series of bilateral meetings including the secretary-level talks on water,

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A READER IN THE MAKING... Two-year-old Safrin brimming with excitement after purchasing a book on her first visit to the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela with her mother at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Bangla, English mandatory for 2022 SSC, HSC

In-person classes resume today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As secondary schools and colleges partially resume in-person classes today, education boards have decided that SSC and HSC candidates of 2022 will need to sit for Bangla and English exams besides three optional subjects.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to hold the Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary Certificate exams in mid-June and mid-August respectively.

All the exams will be held with curtailed syllabuses and fewer marks, Professor Gazi Hasan Kamal, chairman of Mymensingh education board, told The Daily Star.

The syllabuses were revised and marks curtailed as schools and colleges were shut down for long due to Covid-19, he said.

Prof Md Moshuazzaman, member of National Curriculum and Textbook Board, said they have already prepared a short syllabus for all subjects and notified all concerned regarding the matter.

Last year, SSC and HSC candidates took the tests only in three optional subjects with a shortened syllabus and the fewer marks, due to the pandemic.

SCHOOLS REOPENING

Only students with two doses of Covid-19 vaccines will be allowed to attend in-person classes, which resume partially today after a month-long closure due to the pandemic. Students with only one dose

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Human brain remains 'SHARP TILL 60'

STAR HEALTH DESK

Contrary to popular belief, a recent study has found that the human brain remains sharp till advanced age.

The study result by researchers of Heidelberg University in Germany is challenging the idea that the human brain's functioning speed declines from the age of 20-30, reports BBC.

The scientists used an online task to estimate the decision-making times of 1.2 million people, aged 10 to 80, according to the study published in Nature Human Behaviour.

The study found that the mental speed of those aged between 30 and 60 remained relatively stable.

However, caution tended to grow with age, the BBC report adds.

The scientists showed participants a series of images and asked them to place them in two categories — good or bad — pressing different buttons to do so.

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Massive leak piles pressure on Swiss banking practices

STAR REPORT

An extraordinary leak from one of the world's iconic private banks, Credit Suisse, has exposed the hidden wealth of clients involved in torture, drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption and other serious crimes.

Among the people listed as holding amounts worth hundreds of millions of dollars in Credit Suisse accounts were King Abdullah II of Jordan and the two sons of the former Egyptian strongman Hosni Mubarak.

The other account holders included sons of former Pakistan intelligence chief Akhtar Abdur Rahman Khan, who helped funnel billions of dollars from the US and other countries to the mujahedeen in Afghanistan in the 1980s and Venezuelan officials ensnared in a long-running corruption scandal.

A human trafficker in the Philippines, a Hong Kong stock exchange boss jailed for bribery, a billionaire who ordered the murder of his Lebanese pop star girlfriend and executives who looted Venezuela's state oil company, as well as corrupt politicians

from Egypt to Ukraine, were unmasked in the leak.

One Vatican-owned account in the data was used to spend €350m (£290m) in an allegedly fraudulent investment in a London property that is at the centre of an ongoing criminal



trial of several defendants, including a cardinal.

A self-described whistleblower leaked data on about 30,000 Credit Suisse clients, collectively holding more than \$100 billion, to the German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung.

The newspaper shared the data with a non-profit journalism group, the Organised Crime and

Corruption Reporting Project, and 46 other news organizations around the world, including The New York Times, Guardian and Le Monde.

The data covers accounts that were open from the

UP member hacked to death in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Criminals hacked a union parishad member to death over leasing of a water body in Jashore's Chowgachha yesterday evening.

Victim Thandu Mia, 48, son of Sirajul Islam of Patibila village, was a member of Patibila Union Parishad, said Saiful Islam Sabuj, officer-in-charge of Chowgachha Police Station.

The criminals hacked Thandu when he was having tea at a stall in a local bazar, leaving him critically injured. He was rushed to Jashore Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead, said locals.

They added that Thandu had an altercation with his rivals several days ago over leasing of a water body named Marzad Baor.

OC Saiful said they already visited the spot.

He added that they were investigating the incident to identify the killers.

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'Unsustainable projects lead to debt traps' Says Jaishankar in a veiled dig at China

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



In an oblique reference to the Chinese way of funding infrastructure projects in other countries, Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has warned of unsustainable projects that can lead to debt traps.

"We have seen countries, including in our own region, being saddled with large debts, we have seen projects which are commercially unsustainable, airports where aircraft doesn't come, harbours where ship doesn't come," he said.

Jaishankar was responding to a question of Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at a panel discussion at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday night. Jaishankar was at the panel along with counterparts from Australia, Japan and France, among others.

The exchange took place at a time when India-China rivalry is high. Besides, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, an informal grouping of the US, Japan, Australia and India, is considered to be countering rising global economic power China in the Indo-Pacific.

There is also a competition between China and India over influence in the South Asian countries.

From the audience, Momen said many

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The seized leaflet

MAHBUB JAMAL ZAHEDI

During the Language Movement in 1952, I was not a member of the Communist Party. I was a member of Youth League, and as a member of the organisation I worked in close collaboration with the Communist Party. Shahidullah Kaiser used to contact the students on behalf of the Communist Party. I had a contact with him.

I was present at the meeting of the All-Party State Language Action Committee held on February 20 at the Awami Muslim League office in Nawabpur. Seeing no possibility of taking any decision in favour of violating section 144, I left the office. I was not present during the voting.

Later, we went to SM Hall and informed students about the decision of the committee. Students asked us to inform the committee they would not abide by the decision.

Next day, the meeting had started already when Mawla and I arrived at the meeting place. During the actual firing, Oli Ahad, Matin and I were all inside Modhur Canteen. From

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Mohammad Totamia selling saplings of flowers, fruits and vegetables on his boat near Khulna's Jaikhana Ghat area. He runs his floating shop throughout the week after bringing in the saplings from Barishal's Banariapara. He earns around Tk 4,000 during the time. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN