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While the city already faces intense traffic jams due to the reopening of schools, students of different institutions blocked Mirpur Road near the Science Laboratory intersection yesterday, demanding half fare for them in buses, creating a huge tailback. This photo was taken around 12:30pm.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Put an end to red-tapism

Planning minister urges officials, as businesses call for conducive trade environment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Businesses yesterday called for policy assistance, policy continuity and corporate tax cuts in the upcoming budget for fiscal 2022-23 to help them thrive in the post-pandemic world.

"We want policy assistance -- please give us the same opportunities as the foreign investors," said Mostofa Kamal, chairman of Meghna Group of Industries at the dialogue, at the dialogue organised by the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce (DCCI), Bangla daily Samakal and TV channel Channel 24.

The foreign investors make profits and repatriate the sum to their home countries.

"But those of us who invest here for the long-term, we face barriers from the regulatory bodies and many government offices. They treat us negatively instead of receiving us positively," he added.

Md. Shafiqul Islam Mohiuddin, a former president of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries, acknowledged harassment faced by businesses at the hands of the regulatory bodies.

"Authoritarian attitude should be changed and policy consistency is very important for a smooth business environment," he said, adding that all players from the sector are treated the same way when just is found to be at fault.

Syed Manzur Elahi, chairman of Apex Group and

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It's unconstitutional

Opposition MPs blast provision to appoint administrators in local govt bodies; Pourashava bill passed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition MPs yesterday opposed the provision to appoint administrators in local government bodies, saying the provision is unconstitutional.

The provision is part of the Local Government (pourashava) (Amendment) Bill, 2022, which was passed in the House after taking voice votes.

The bill aims to ensure local government polls every five years and allows the appointment of a government official or a "suitable person" as an administrator in an expired municipality.

BNP MP Harunur Rashid walked out of the parliament in protest.

In the discussion on the bill, Rashid demanded a clear explanation of the reasons for the appointment of the administrator.

"This amendment is being made to remove the representatives and replace them with the ruling party people," he said, adding that the deputy commissioner and upazila nirbahi officers are now carrying out the party programmes of the Awami League.

The constitution says no unelected person can sit where there is an elected representative, said Jatiya Party MP Pir Fazlur Rahman.

"Why would an unelected person be placed in the local government body?" he said.

Jatiya Party MP Shameem Haider Patwari

Why would an unelected person be placed in the local government body?

Pir Fazlur Rahman
Jatiya Party MP

echoed the same.

In response, LGD Minister Md. Tazul Islam, who placed the bill, said it was logical to make provision for the appointment of administrators.

Some chairmen had stayed in office for more than five years and up to even 15-16 years, taking the scope of a clause in the existing law that stated that the present chairman will remain in the chair until the next election.

To stop this practice, the government has made this amendment to the 2009 law, he said.

With the passing of the bill, pourashava chairmen will be barred from staying in office for more than five years.

After the five-year term, the government would be able to appoint an administrator either from the government services with administrative experience or any other eligible person, according to the new law.

The appointed administrator will remain in the post for a maximum of six months and elections have to be held by this time.

It also changed the name of pourashava member to poura executive officer.

Furthermore, it was decided that the proposed law includes another clause that if any pourashava fails to pay the salaries and the other wages of its officers and employees for 12 months, then the government may abolish its status as a pourashava.

Sinha faces yet another graft case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday filed a case against former chief justice SK Sinha and his brother Ananta Sinha for laundering about Tk 2.35 crore (\$280,000).

Anower Prodhan, ACC's deputy director (Gulshan), filed the case with its integrated district office-1.

According to the case statement, a "burger shop" in Canada's Toronto deposited around Tk 1.65 crore to a US bank account owned by Ananta on different dates between April and June 2018.

Another Tk 50 lakh was deposited in the same account from an Indonesian company during the same period.

With the money, SK Sinha bought a three-storey building in New

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Two river lapwings playing on the Dharla river bank in Kurigram. It is infrequently seen on the river banks and near water bodies. This bird feeds mostly on worms and insects living in sand or mud.

PHOTO COURTESY: TUHIN WADUD

Dhaka turned into a slum

JP MP tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party lawmaker Pir Fazlur Rahman yesterday expressed outrage over horrific tailbacks, air and noise pollution in the capital.

Speaking on a point of order in parliament, he said people are stuck in traffic jams for hours every day.

For this, people are affected financially and their ability to work is decreasing, the lawmaker said.

"We have turned the Dhaka city into a slum through unplanned development. If this situation continues, Dhaka will be a dysfunctional or become a failed city," said Fazlur.

He said Dhaka has become the worst city in terms of noise pollution

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Ward councillor assaults school headmaster

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kusthia

A ward councillor assaulted a secondary school headmaster for not allowing him to keep construction materials on Lahini Secondary School grounds in Kusthia municipality yesterday.

According to sources, the municipality, under the direction of Asadur Rahman Asha, councillor of Ward-21, has been constructing a road next to the school near the Kusthia-Rajbari Highway.

While it kept several construction materials on the school premises, the municipality had also been using its electricity for construction purposes during school hours and was recently barred from using its water pipes.

When Headmaster Nazrul Islam asked Asha to take away the construction materials and not use the school's electricity and water, Asha stormed into his office with some men and assaulted him. They also vandalised the room.

Seeing their headmaster harassed, the students immediately began protesting and put up a barricade on the highway near the school, demanding the councillor's punishment. Locals also joined the protest that lasted from 11:00am to 12:00pm.

Matiar Rahman Majnu, president of the school's managing committee and also the current panel chairman of Kusthia municipality, said a councillor cannot assault someone.

Sabbirul Alam, officer-in-charge of Kusthia Model Police Station, said a police team rushed

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Sense of direction better in rural-dwellers: study

AFP, Paris

People who grew up in the country have a better sense of direction and navigational skills than those raised in cities, a study said Wednesday.



To find out how childhood environment influences navigation ability, scientists looked at how almost 400,000 people from 38 countries played a mobile video game designed for neuroscience research.

Players of the "Sea Hero Quest" game had to navigate a boat to find checkpoints on a map, according to the study published in the Nature journal.

"We found that growing up outside of cities appears to be good for the development of navigational abilities, and this seems to be influenced by the lack of complexity of many street networks in cities," said lead researcher Hugo Spiers of University College London.