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RECORD **EXPORT** Receipts hit \$4.76b

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Grammys 2022 Jon Batiste's "We Are" wins Album of Year



Med Boat Tragedy Nearly 100 die in int'l waters: UN

RAMADAN 3, 1443 HIJRI



World Cup **Best XI**

16 PAGES PLUS LIFE STYLE: TK 12.00

with inclusion

PVT PRIMARY SCHOOLS

14,111 shut down during pandemic

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

Covid-19 has taken a heavy toll on privately run primary schools, resulting in permanent closure of 14,111 of the institutions just in one year as they failed to bear the operational costs, says a government report.

The pandemic also saw a drastic fall in the number of teachers and students in the non-government primary schools, including kindergartens.

The Annual Primary School Census (APSC) 2021 shows the number of teachers declined by 83,268 and students by 14,61,634 in a year since 2020.

The report, prepared by the Directorate of Primary Education, has no data on English-medium schools and Qawmi madrasas. It says the institutions shut down during the pandemic were mostly kindergartens or run

"There needs to be some kind of incentive for the schools that had to stop their **2.16**cr students in 2020

activities. But that should be done after bringing all the institutions under a regulatory framework with a

specific guideline,"

2.01 cr students in 2021 **7.40** lakh teachers in 2020

6.57 lakh teachers in 2021

Rasheda K Choudhury, executive director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), told The Daily Star. Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, chairman of Bangladesh Kindergarten School and College Oikya Parishad, said the situation for kindergartens was grave. "Our estimate

during the pandemic and many teachers lost jobs. He added, "The remaining 40,000 kindergartens are not in good shape either."

shows at least 20,000 kindergartens were closed down

During the pandemic, they have sought financial assistance for teachers, soft loans for owners of kindergartens and waiver of utility bills of the hard-hit schools. "If we get that assistance now, it would help us survive," he added.

In 2020, there were 1,33,002 primary-level educational institutions, including public, private, NGO-run and kindergartens. The figure stood at 1,18,891 last year, according to APSC 2020 and APSC 2021.

According to the reports, there were 14,211 NGOnumber decreased to 3,958 in 2021. There were 29,897 kindergartens in 2020 and 28,193 in 2021.

"Due to the permanent closures, students from these private institutions went to government primary schools," Alamgir Mohammed Monsurul Alam, director general of DPE, told The Daily Star.

The reports say 60.52 percent of all primary school students were enrolled in government institutions in 2020 and that increased to 70.23 percent.

According to the APSC, the number of teachers in all primary schools was 7,40,471 in 2020 and it decreased to 6,57,203 in 2021.

The reason behind this is, a DPE director said, most of the teachers who lost jobs did not get that back or return to the profession.

Rasheda K Choudhury, however, said, "We need a

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RESILIENCE ... Farmers along with their family members try to salvage as many peanuts as they can at a crop field in Burdeo Haor of Sylhet's Companiganj upazila yesterday. Flash floods inundated several hundred hectares of cropland in the region over the last few days. PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Opposition rejects unity govt offer

SRI LANKA SHAKE-UP AMID ECONOMIC CRISIS

Demands president's resignation as protests continue

For the second day in a row, many neighbourhoods in the capital suffered an acute gas crisis yesterday, as the authorities struggled to fix the technical problems that occurred at Bibivana Gas Field in Svlhet on Sundav

City stung by gas

crisis for 2nd day

Bibiyana gas field struggles

to fix the glitches

HELEMUL ALAM

Residents of Mirpur, Pallabi, Lalmatia, Shahjahanpur, Mohammadpur, Tejturi Bazar, Razabazar and Dhanmondi complained of severe gas shortage, and said they had to buy food and iftar items from restaurants.

According to Bangladesh Oil, Gas and Mineral Corporation (Petrobangla), consumers in different city areas have been experiencing shortages or low pressure in gas supply from Sunday following technical glitches at

Officials at Chevron Bangladesh, the operator of Bibiyana Gas Field, said, two of the five gas-processing trains and six of the 26 wells at the gas field faced technical problems around 1:15am on Sunday, reducing the field's gas production to around 800 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd) from 1,250 mmcfd.

One of the two trains was fixed on Sunday night while SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Sri Lanka's opposition yesterday dismissed the president's invitation to join a unity government as "nonsensical" and instead demanded he resign over the country's worsening shortages of food, fuel and medicines.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's overture came as armed troops looked to quell more demonstrations over what the government acknowledges is the country's most severe economic crisis since independence from Britain in

Police fired tear gas and water

cannon to disperse thousands the private home of the prime minister -- the president's elder brother and the head of the family political clan -- in Tangalle, once a bastion of support for the Rajapaksas in the island's south.

The president asked opposition parties represented in parliament to "join the effort to seek solutions to the national crisis," after the late-night resignation of nearly all cabinet ministers to pave the way for a revamped administration.

But the leftist People's Liberation Front (JVP) responded by urging Gotabaya Rakapaksa

and his once popular and powerful family to immediately

step down. "He really must be a lunatic to think that opposition MPs will prop up a government that is crumbling," JVP lawmaker Anura Dissanayake told reporters in Colombo.

The main minority opposition party, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), also dismissed the idea of their joining a Rajapaksa-led administration.

"His offer to reconstitute the cabinet with opposition MPs is nonsensical and infuriates the people who have been demanding his resignation,'

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Biden hopes for stronger Dhaka-Washington ties Writes to Hasina; Momen, Blinken meet in DC

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

US President Joe Biden yesterday expressed his wish to watch the Dhaka Washington ties scale

new heights over the next 50 years based on the solid foundation laid over the past five decades.

The two nations are linked through familial, academic and commercial ties since 1958, when Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman participated in a 30-day exchange programme in the US, he said in a letter

reports BSS Bangladeshis and Americans share the ideals of democracy, equality and respect for human rights that are the foundation for healthy, secure and prosperous societies.

to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to

mark 50 years of bilateral relations,

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky, 4th from left, stands in the town of Bucha, northwest of the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, yesterday. Zelensky said on Sunday the Russian leadership was responsible for civilian killings in Bucha, outside Kyiv, where bodies were found lying in the street after the town was retaken by the Ukrainian army. Story on page 12.

Cop suspended for harassing teacher over wearing 'teep'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid outrage on social media and bevond, Dhaka Metropolitan Police yesterday suspended constable Nazmul Tareque, who was accused of harassing a college teacher for wearing a "teep" on her forehead.

DMP has taken the move hours after its Tejgaon Division identified the constable from CCTV footages and intelligence information, confirmed Md Faruk Hossain, deputy commissioner of DMP, to The Daily Star.

A probe body, comprising additional deputy commissioner of protection unit and assistant commissioner of Tejgaon Division of DMP, was also formed to investigate the incident.

The committee was instructed to submit a report within three working days, according to an order signed by Mostaq Ahmed, deputy commissioner (protection unit) of the DMP.

Earlier on Saturday, Tejgaon College teacher Lata Samaddar filed a general diary with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station saying a policeman harassed

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