

## SSC, HSC tests on all subjects next year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The next year's Secondary School Certificate, Higher Secondary Certificate and its equivalent examinations will be held in all subjects and full marks but on revised abridged syllabuses, authorities said yesterday.

Inter education board coordination committee, in a notification, said SSC, HSC and its equivalent examinations for 2023 will be held as per the revised syllabus prepared by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

According to the notification, signed by coordination committee chief Tapan Kumar Sarkar, examines of SSC and HSC will need to sit for full 100 marks examinations and the duration of the test will be three hours.

The authorities made the decision when SSC examines this year are taking exams on a truncated syllabus and for fewer marks than usual.

The duration of the examinations is also curtailed. This year's exam started on September 15.

This year, SSC candidates are sitting for Bangla, English, Mathematics and a fourth subject, besides the three optional subjects.

They will not need to sit for exams on religion, ICT, Bangladesh and Global Studies and science.

Examinees of this year's HSC exam that are scheduled to begin on November 6, will also need to take the exams on a shortened syllabus and for fewer marks than usual. The duration of the exams will also be curtailed.

HSC candidates will need to sit for Bangla, English, the three optional subjects and a fourth subject. HSC candidates will not need to sit for examinations on ICT subjects. The duration of the all exams will be two hours.

All these measures were taken due to Covid-19 pandemic time losses to education.

In the pre-Covid times, a student had to sit for three-hour examinations to take a 100-mark paper.

Due to the pandemic situation, in 2021, SSC and HSC candidates sat for the tests on only three optional subjects with a shortened syllabus and fewer marks.

In 2021, the SSC examinations were held in November and the HSC tests in December, almost eight months after the scheduled time.

Usually, SSC examinations take place in February and HSC in April.

In 2020, HSC and equivalent tests were not held and students were awarded grade points based on their performance in the previous public exams.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, left, pays her respects as she passes the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II, as it Lies in State inside Westminster Hall at the Palace of Westminster in London yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

### QUEEN ELIZABETH'S FUNERAL

## King Charles hosts world leaders

Britain holds a minute's silence to reflect on 'life and legacy' of the late monarch ahead of grand farewell today

AFP, London

Britain geared up yesterday for the momentous state funeral of Queen Elizabeth II as King Charles III hosted world leaders and ordinary mourners queued for the final hours left to view her coffin.

The first members of the public were already camping out in advance to catch a glimpse of today's grand farewell at Westminster Abbey, which is expected to bring London to a standstill and be watched by billions of viewers worldwide.

"We wanted to have a good spot to see the procession," said Royal Navy veteran Bill Parry, 59, as he waited in camping chairs with two other former servicemen.

"It's not much to ask to sleep outside considering everything the queen did for us: 70 years of duty," he told AFP.

US President Joe Biden paid his last respects to the queen yesterday. Biden, who flew in late Saturday, has said that Elizabeth "defined an era" after she reigned for a record-breaking 70 years leading up

to her death on September 8, aged 96.

After witnessing the sombre scene in parliament's Westminster Hall, Biden, Japan's Emperor Naruhito and other world leaders were due to attend a reception with the late queen's successor, King Charles III.

Australia's anti-monarchy Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who viewed the lying-in-state and met Charles on Saturday, told Sky News Australia that the queen was "a constant reassuring presence".

There was also a private audience at Buckingham Palace for Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern of New Zealand, which like Australia and 12 other Commonwealth realms now counts Charles as its sovereign.

"You could see that it meant a huge amount (to Charles) to have seen the sheer scale and outpouring of people's love and affection for her late Majesty," she told BBC television yesterday.

Commonwealth leaders were among dozens of heads of state and government in attendance, as the country stages its biggest-ever policing operation.



## Ills lie deep in ERD, Planning Commission 300 families 'to be moved'

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Bangladesh's favour or are faithful to the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (commonly known as FIDIC) rules, which are the standard forms of contract for use between employers and contractors on international construction projects.

Unfavourable terms include the lender doing the feasibility study or drawing up the design, the contractor and the consultant being the same and so on.

"This is a conflict of interest," said Cabinet Secretary Khandker Anwarul Islam, who steered many projects such as the Padma Bridge, Karnaphuli tunnel and Dhaka-Ashulia elevated expressway during his time at the bridges division.

As per international contracts and FIDIC rules, whoever proposes the project cannot fund it. Or, if they fund it, they cannot do the feasibility study or be involved in drawing up the design.

If they are the contractor, they cannot be the consultant. The contractor and consultant cannot have any blood, administrative, financial or any form of relationship, according to Khandker.

And yet, many projects have these anomalies.

"Why is this happening time and again in the hands of the ERD? This is a generic issue – there is no need to be an expert to spot these things."

Khandker went on to cite the Padma Bridge project, where there are no such conflicts.

He had engaged proficient legal counsel, who ensured the terms of the contracts were watertight. And all works were awarded through open tender.

It was the same with the Karnaphuli tunnel, Khandker said.

"For the first time, a project of such scale will be completed largely within the scheduled time and cost."

Besides, the public procurement rules also forbid such conflicts of interest.

"How do we overcome these problems?"

He went on to rap the economic

counsellors at Bangladesh missions abroad, whose job it is to ensure that such terms are adhered to at the initial stage.

Khandker also cited the case of the feasibility study for the Dhaka Elevated Expressway. The foreign lender had offered to get it done for \$3.8 billion, but he ended up getting the job done through a top global company for \$1.5 billion.

He went on to advise the ERD officials to take the help of the Central Procurement Technical Unit, where capable people are being recruited, for contract negotiations.

"When contracts are faulty, nothing can be done," Khandker said, while citing a project that was recently approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council to further his point.

The project was for an extension of a road by 1.1km and the additional cost would be about Tk 8,500 crore, which would come to about \$1 billion, he said.

"The Ashulia Expressway is a \$1.4 billion project involving four lanes and two service lanes of 27 kilometres in length. ... there would be a 100-year guarantee from the contractor. How can that project for a road extension cost that much?" he said.

In their effort to fix the problem, the ERD officials said they have placed a proposal for a change in the division's organogram with the addition of a law cell and a financial analyst. Until then, such services would be taken from the market.

Also at the workshop, a Planning Commission official said the implementing agency and line ministries are lacking in ownership and knowledge of the development project proposals (DPPs) that were presented.

In the year that it takes to get the project approved by the Ecneec and get the first tranche of the fund disbursed, a request for revision of the project comes in.

"I cannot accept this. If the project's scope has not changed, cost escalation should not happen," Khandker said, adding that some ministries are very clued in and do their homework well

when drafting their DPPs.

The DPPs should be robust and must mention open tender; there should not be any element of direct procurement. For exemptions, the projects must be forwarded to the economic affairs committee.

The tender design must be robust and the conditions cannot be changed later on, as is practice, necessitating a revision.

"Return the projects – call out the violations. It is the Planning Commission's responsibility. The finance ministry manages the funds and the Planning Commission does the allocation. So, the Planning Commission members have a responsibility here."

He went on to cite the BSCIC Chemical Palli project – later renamed BSCIC Chemical Industrial Park – that was taken up in 2018 as a case of a project where sound judgement on the part of the Planning Commission was completely missing.

The project was supposed to be completed in 2021 but was later extended to 2023.

"That project will not finish in the next 10 years. It is because a cooperative society is the contractor. Did you check the aptitude of the contractor? Did the cooperative society have prior experience in implementing such projects? I once saw a project proposal from a poultry company to build a power plant."

At the workshop, the Planning Commission officials said many line ministries mount pressure on them to accept some proposals for revisions and they oblige.

"That is not the right approach," Khandker said.

He, however, acknowledged that some contractors wield undue influence on the line ministries' decision-making process.

"Once a contractor came into an Ecneec meeting to get his project approved."

Another worrying development is that many ministries have used up their allocation for the medium term and yet they send in proposals for fresh projects.

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The local administration has asked the public representatives and law enforcers to ensure safety of the residents, she added.

Regarding this, Yasmin Parvin Tibriji, deputy commissioner of Bandarban, said the government is giving top priority to the safety of the locals.

"We are taking decisions holding meetings with law enforcers and public representatives," she added.

The BGB presence has already been beefed up at the major border points along Myanmar. Patrolling has also been increased and the BGB members are not allowing outsiders for any movement, according to local sources.

"We are on high alert. Locals have also been asked to stay alert," said Lt Col Faizur Rahman, director (operations) of BGB.

Over the past few weeks, Myanmar military reportedly continued its air and ground assaults against the Arakan Army, an ethnic armed organisation based in Rakhine state.

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experienced it one way or another.

It said things are even graver for female pilots returning from maternity leave.

A Boeing 777-300ER pilot, after her return from maternity leave, was not retrained as required, which virtually benched her. She was paid monthly salaries for two years, but not a single hour of flight could be operated by her as Biman did not retrain her.

Citing another example, the report said a female first officer was verbally abused by a male captain in flight. When the female pilot reported the incident to the Crew Resource Management (CRM) concerned, she was served a show-cause notice instead.

## Agrani Bank guard found dead in Rangpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

A security personnel of Agrani Bank was found dead in Rangpur yesterday.

Shamim Mia, 25, of Ranipukur village in the district's Mithapukur upazila, was on night duty. He was found lying on the floor in the morning, said Ariful Islam, manager of the bank's Rangpur Branch.

Nothing went missing from the bank, he said.

On information, police and fire service men came to the spot and sent the body to Rangpur Medical College Hospital for autopsy, said Hossain Ali, inspector (investigation) of Kotwali Police Station.

The law enforcers did not find injury mark on the body, he added.

## Rapist gets life term

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A man was sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday for raping a physically challenged girl in Rajshahi's Mohonpur upazila seven years ago.

Mohobbat Ali, 28, was also fined with Tk 20,000.

Judge Mohammad Hasanuzzaman of Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal announced the verdict.

On October 4, 2015, Mohabbat abducted the victim while she was returning from a school ground and raped her.

The girl returned home crying and informed her parents.

Her father filed a case with Mohonpur Police Station on the same day.

## Elderly couple killed in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An elderly couple was crushed under the wheels of a speedy bus while crossing the Dhaka-Tangail highway yesterday.

Satendra Modok, 70, and his wife Minoti Rani Modok, 60, were residents of Machhuhata village in Tangail's Bhuanpur upazila.

The duo got down from a passenger bus at Ashkepur Intersection in Tangail Sadar upazila around 3:00pm. As they were crossing the highway, the bus crushed them, leaving them dead on the spot, said Anisur Rahman, sub-inspector of Elega Highway Police Outpost.

## Rohingya man murdered

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A Rohingya man was beaten to death allegedly by a group of criminals at Nayapara refugee camp in Teknaf upazila of Cox's Bazar yesterday.

Mohammad Ilias, 35, fell victim to gang violence and one "Salman Shah Group" might be behind the murder, said Hafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Teknaf Police Station.

Ilias was an inhabitant of the camp's Block-B, he confirmed.

The criminals broke into the victim's house, took him outside, and beat him to death, the police official said.

Borhan Aziz, a resident of Tambru Bazar area.

"If the crops get damaged, what will our family members eat?"

Questioned about this, Mohammad Alam said the families were asked to move but it is not anything permanent. They will be able to return once the situation is normal.

Besides, the family may visit their homes to oversee their cattle in the daytime, depending on the situation, he added.

Apart from locals, Rohingyas living in the camp on no-man's land are passing days in panic.

Dil Mohammed, chairman of the Rohingya camp's management committee, said they were trying to stay in a safer place outside the camp at night in fear of further firing.

"Myanmar is intentionally doing this to kill us. If this continues, we will seek the United Nation's intervention to ensure our safety," he said.

[Our Bandarban correspondent also contributed to this report]

This instilled fear among female cockpit crew members and stopped them from reporting incidents, hurting the safety culture of the airlines, read the report.

The report mentioned an example of how a female first officer's promotion got cancelled, despite everything being in order.

It also mentions a Boeing 777 and Boeing 787 captain who had consistently been overlooked for the promotion to instructor. The pilot eventually left Biman.

In the report, the pilots urged Biman to identify the root causes and people behind this and address the issue.

This correspondent could not reach the chiefs of training and scheduling departments of Biman

for their comments despite repeated attempts over the duration of a week. There were text messages sent to both of them explaining why this correspondent wanted to talk to them. The messages remained unanswered.

This paper is withholding their names too.

CAAB Chairman Air Vice Marshal M Mafidur Rahman told The Daily Star that he has received the allegations.

"I am waiting to see what actions Biman is taking against the persons responsible," he added.

Biman Managing Director and CEO Zahid Hossain said the department concerned of Biman would look into the matter.