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46th BCS written exam postponed amid protests

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Public Service Commission (PSC) yesterday decided to postpone the 46th BCS written examinations following discussions with protesting jobseekers.

Md. Zahirul Islam Bhuiyan, a PSC member, announced in front of the protesters that the scheduled date for the 46th Bangladesh Civil Service written exam (May 8) would be postponed.

Since Thursday, the protesting jobseekers had been staging a hunger strike, which they withdrew following the announcement.

Earlier, with the mediation of LGRD Adviser Asif Mahmud, a discussion was held between the protesting jobseekers and a group of PSC members at the Dhaka University

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Government job seekers blocked Shahbagh intersection around 6:30pm yesterday as part of their ongoing protest, demanding reform of the Public Service Commission. The blockade severely disrupted traffic in the area for more than two hours, causing significant suffering to commuters.

PHOTO: STAR

'Inform the nation where consensus has been reached'
Amir Khasru tells govt

UNB, Dhaka



BNP senior leader Amir Khasru yesterday urged the interim government to promptly unveil an election roadmap to reassure people that the country is moving towards elections and the restoration of democracy.

The suspensions and questions that have arisen among people due to the absence of a specific election roadmap will not bode well for the future of democracy and the electoral process," he said while talking to reporters after a meeting with the Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP) at the BNP Chairperson's office in Gulshan.

As part of BNP's liaison committee's ongoing discussions with like-minded political parties on the next election, Khasru, along with BNP standing committee member Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku and Vice Chairman Barkatullah Bulu, held a meeting with a 10-member BJP delegation led by its Chairman Andalib Rahman Partha.

Khasru said questions remain as to why the issues on which consensus has already been reached are not being presented before the nation.

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Jamaat seeks EU assistance for CCTV at polling centres

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday sought the European Union's assistance in installing CCTV cameras at every polling centre for the upcoming national elections.

The party also informed the EU about its position on maintaining a balance of power between the president and the prime minister, and ensuring that no individual can serve as the PM for more than two terms.

Jamaat Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman conveyed these issues during a courtesy meeting with EU Ambassador Michael Miller at the party's central office.

Asked, Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Ehsanul Mahbub Zubair, who was present at the meeting, said the party had sought EU assistance regarding installation of CCTV cameras at each polling centres in the 13th parliamentary polls.

"The EU team wanted to know about our position about the timing of the national polls. We have informed them that we want polls after completing necessary reforms," he added.

Following the meeting, Jamaat's Nayeb-e-Ameer and former MP Dr Syed

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**TALKS WITH CONSENSUS COMMISSION
Ganosamhati, JSD for constituent assembly**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To avoid legal challenges to constitutional reforms, two Ganatantra Mancha allies -- Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) and Ganosamhati Andolon -- have demanded that the next election be held to form a constituent assembly.

They argued that if fundamental reforms are approved by the people, courts would uphold them, instead of challenging them.

Both parties also endorsed key proposals of the Constitutional Reform Commission, including establishing a National Constitutional Council, limiting a prime minister to two terms, and forming a bicameral parliament.

The demands were raised yesterday during separate dialogues with the National Consensus Commission (NCC).

Ganosamhati Andolon, led by Chief Coordinator Zonayed Saki, participated in the first dialogue from 10:00am to 1:30pm with a 10-member delegation.

Later, JSD's eight-member delegation, led by General Secretary Shahiduddin Mahmud Swapan,

attended a separate session from 3:00pm to 6:00pm.

Explaining the need for a constituent assembly, Saki said through elections for a constituent assembly, people grant a parliament the authority to draft or amend a constitution.

Swapan echoed this, saying, "Comprehensive reforms require a constitutional reform assembly, not just ordinances."

Both parties supported establishing the NCC for constitutional appointments.

"To ensure a balance of power, this is crucial," said Saki, warning that if constitutional appointments remain under government control, "the state and government become indistinguishable."

They also backed limiting any individual to two terms as prime minister. JSD further proposed reducing the tenure of both the prime minister and president to four years.

Regarding Article 70 of the Constitution -- which restricts MPs

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Ganosamhati agreed fully with 138 out of 166 proposals while JSD with 121.

6-POINT DEMAND

Students of polytechnic instt
resumes protests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Polytechnic students staged fresh demonstrations across the country yesterday, demanding urgent action on their six-point demand for reforms in technical education.

In Dhaka, students of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute brought out a procession in the Tejgaon area in the morning, moving through nearby roads before returning to the campus.

At the programme, Mashfik Islam, a movement representative, said similar protests were held across different regions without causing public inconvenience.

In a press release issued last night, students announced that protest processions would continue at polytechnic institutes nationwide.

Meanwhile, students of Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute continued their protest for the seventh consecutive day by locking the administrative building.

Salman Ahmed Tushar, a protester, said administrative buildings across all polytechnic institutes in Rajshahi remained locked and demonstrations would continue until demands were met.

Students of Rajshahi Mohila Polytechnic Institute and the Government Survey Institute also joined the protest.

Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute Principal

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COURT CORNER HC issues rule to curb air pollution

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain as to why the authorities concerned should not be directed to take necessary steps to curb air pollution in Dhaka.

The HC bench of Justice Kazi Zinat Hoque and Justice Aynun Nahar Siddiqua issued the rule.

Secretary to the environment ministry, director general of DoE and CEOs of Dhaka south and north city corporations have been made respondent to the rule, which is returnable in four weeks.

Manir Uddin, a Supreme Court lawyer, sent a letter to the DoE DG seeking steps to take effective measures to curb air pollution in Dhaka.

AUGUST 21 ATTACK SC to hear state appeals on May 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court will hear on May 4 the leave to appeal petitions filed by the state challenging the High Court verdict that acquitted BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman, former state minister Lutfuzzaman Babar and all others earlier convicted in two cases over the August 21 grenade attack in 2004.

A six-member bench of the SC, headed by Md Ashfaqul Islam, fixed the date.

On December 1 last year, the HC acquitted Tarique, Babar and others convicted in the two cases. The state then filed two separate petitions with the SC challenging the HC verdict.

MAGURA RAPE Court starts hearing witness testimonies

STAR REPORT

A Magura court yesterday started hearing testimonies of the witnesses in a case filed over the rape and murder of a child in Magura.

All the four accused -- Hitu Sheikh, father-in-law of the victim's sister; his wife, Jaheda Begum; their son and the victim's brother-in-law, Sajib Sheikh; and Sajib's brother, Ratul Sheikh -- were produced before the court amid tight security.

Judge M Zahid Hasan of the Woman and Child Repression Prevention Tribunal fixed today for the next hearing in the case.

The court recorded depositions of two witnesses, reports UNB.

The eight-year-old girl died at Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka on March 13, seven days after being raped.



Vast stretches of bright red chillies, freshly harvested and laid out to dry, create carpet-like scenes across villages in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila. Farmers use every available open space, from homestead yards to fallow fields, to sun-dry their produce. However, after weeks of drought-like conditions, sudden untimely rain and hailstorms have damaged crops in several areas, raising fears of reduced yields this season. The photo was taken recently.



PHOTO: MD QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Hajj flights set to begin tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hajj flights from Bangladesh will begin early tomorrow, with the maiden flight of Saudia carrying around 420 pilgrims scheduled to depart from Dhaka Airport at approximately 2:15am on Tuesday.

Another hajj flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, carrying the same number of pilgrims, is set to leave Dhaka airport around 3:00am the same day, said Farid Ahmed Majumder, president of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh.

This year, 454 hajj flights will be operated to facilitate the travel of pilgrims, including 234 pre-hajj flights and 220 return flights.

According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, 87,100 pilgrims have registered for hajj from Bangladesh this year. Of them, 5,200 will perform hajj under government management, while 81,900 through private hajj agencies.

Biman will carry half of the total pilgrims, while Saudia and Flynas, two national flag carriers of Saudi Arabia, will transport the rest. Biman General Manager (Public Relations) Bushra Islam said this year, hajj flights will be operated from Dhaka, Chattogram, and Sylhet airports.

From Chattogram, 17 pre-hajj flights and nine return flights will be operated. Similarly, from Sylhet, there will be five pre-hajj flights and eight return flights.