

Online classes for grade XI begin at colleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Colleges across the country have started online classes for the newly-admitted grade XI students from yesterday.

Usually a new academic year for HSC and equivalent courses begins on July 1. But this year online classes started after three months due to the coronavirus situation.

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday inaugurated the online classes from a virtual programme organised by Dhaka College.

The minister congratulated all students and said Covid-19 has created an opportunity for them to have multimodal education system including online classes.

"We are now trying to improve the quality of education," she said. The government does not want an exam centric education rather it wants education through which a student will acquire knowledge and skills as well as improve their mental health, she added.

"We need to overhaul the education system and

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Saudi expatriate workers, anxious to fly back to join their workplace before their visas and work permits expire, blockaded the busy Sonargaon intersection in the capital's Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue yesterday. Many of them have been coming here for days on end to confirm a ticket from the airlines' offices, but in vain.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Bus Route Rationalisation First meeting in six months to focus on Basila-N'ganj route

HELEMUL ALAM

After months of stalling, the Bus Route Rationalisation (BRR) committee -- formed to bring discipline to Dhaka's chaotic bus operations -- is set to sit next week, to set up the first of the six proposed routes stretching from Ghatar Char in Basila to Narayanganj.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) will present a proposal at a meeting of the 10-member committee on October 6, according to sources. DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh will preside over the meeting, scheduled to be held at Nagar Bhaban.

The move will be taken on a pilot basis. The government eventually plans to bring the entire public bus system of Dhaka city and surrounding areas under six companies, according to the plan.

"We have already completed most of the work regarding the route," said public transport expert Dr SM Saleh Uddin.

Currently, there are 15 routes on which buses ply from Ghatar Char to Narayanganj. The proposal aims to bring these 15 routes under three cluster routes. Three sub-companies will be put in charge of these clusters. They will all be under one company, said Saleh Uddin, a member of the committee.

"The route will be discussed in the meeting and a decision may be reached," he said.

The "Bus Route Rationalisation and Operation of Bus Services on Company Basis in Dhaka" initiative was first taken by late mayor Anisul Huq.

The plan looked to bring all buses in the capital under a few companies, each to be provided with permits for their respective routes and made responsible for proper public transport management and minimising congestion.

However, after his death in late 2017, the project lost momentum.

The issue came back to the fore after the 2018 road

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Time to take rape justice seriously

LAW DESK

Incidents of rape have been making headlines on a daily basis for quite a long time now. An alarming increase in the number of this gruesome sexual violence, now requires us to revisit the rape laws in play in Bangladesh and review the entire criminal justice system in this regard as well.

The special law that deals with rape is the Nari O Shishu Nirjaton Daman Ain, 2000 (as amended in 2003). For a woman aged above 14, rape happens, according to Section 9(1) of the Ain, when sexual intercourse takes place without lawful marriage, against the woman's will or by obtaining her consent fraudulently or by putting her in fear. For a woman aged under 14, sexual intercourse itself amounts to rape, and here, consent is immaterial.

Under section 9(2) of the Ain, if in consequence of rape or of any act committed after rape, the woman or the child dies, the man shall be punished with death or with life imprisonment and with fine not exceeding Tk one lakh. If more than one man rape a woman or a child and that woman or child dies or is injured in consequences of that rape, according to section 9(3), each member of the gang/group shall be punished with death or rigorous imprisonment for life and also with fine not exceeding Tk one lakh.

Attempt to rape a woman or child is punishable with imprisonment which may extend to 10 years, but which shall not be less than five years, and fine. Attempt to cause death or hurt after rape, on the other hand, is punishable with imprisonment for life and fine.

The law also provides that if a woman is raped in police custody, each and every person under whose custody the rape was committed, shall be punished for failure to provide safety to the woman in question. The imprisonment may extend to 10 years but not less than five years of rigorous imprisonment, coupled with fine.

The laws seem stringent in terms of providing punishments. However, the stringent laws do not seem to play an effective role in tackling rape as an offence committed on regular basis against women in Bangladesh.

Taslima Yasmin, assistant professor of law at Dhaka University, spoke to The Daily Star on the current situation as well as the legal framework.

She observed that it is high time the policy makers in our country took rape justice seriously. It is essential, according to her, that sexual offences, including rape, are prioritised as an issue, and addressed with utmost care.

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CSO/NGO SECTOR Virtual confce starts tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BD CSO Process, a forum of around 700 civil society organisations and local NGOs, will hold a virtual conference from Tuesday, with 15 international speakers.

The forum discussed the conference, titled "Towards self-esteemed independent CSO/NGO sector", during an online press conference yesterday, according to a press release.

After Tuesday, the event will be held on Thursday and Saturday. Each day's programme will run from 11:30am to 1:30pm, said the release.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief moderator of the forum, said the conference's aim is to re-energise local NGOs and CSOs considering different UN-led summits and agreements.

The 15 prominent CSO/NGO leaders include Roberto Bissio, secretariat of Social Watch, Uruguay; Ignacio Packer, executive director of International Council of Voluntary Agencies, Switzerland; and Dr Hany El-Banna, president of Humanitarian Forum, UK.

Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairperson of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation, will inaugurate the conference.

Leaders of the country's leading networks --

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New Indian envoy arriving in Dhaka today thru' Tripura

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Indian High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh, Vikram Doraiswami, has visited Tripura and a number of connectivity projects between India and Bangladesh before his scheduled arrival to Dhaka today.

The Northeast is "central" to PM Narendra Modi's vision of "stronger, resilient and modern" India, and "Tripura is the gateway of the Northeast", he told reporters after meeting Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Saturday.

That's why he decided to meet Deb, known for being close to the Bangladesh premier and having good ties with Bangladesh, reported Indo-Asian News Service of India.

"As we develop our relationship with Bangladesh, our most important neighbouring country, it is going to be of great value to both the countries if our connectivity, travel, trade and people to people ties grow. To achieve this, Tripura is critical, that's why I am here," Doraiswami said.

Vikram Doraiswami, who succeeds Riva Ganguly Das as the Indian envoy in Bangladesh, on Saturday met Tripura Governor and Chief Minister and discussed various issues involving Bangladesh.

He also visited the under-construction new India-Bangladesh 12.23km railway project along Agartala, and was scheduled to visit several upcoming and under-construction border projects --- Special Economic Zone, Integrated Check Posts, and big bridge over river Feni in southern Tripura's Sabroom, border trade facilities in Belonia and India-Bangladesh Waterway Project in Western Tripura's Sonamura yesterday.

After the meeting, Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb tweeted: "Held a fruitful meeting with India's High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh, Shri @VDoraiswami."

He also said he "extensively discussed various contours of India-Bangladesh relations and how Tripura can contribute towards strengthening the bond between the two nations."

Subsequently, Doraiswami tweeted: "An honour and a privilege to meet Hon CM Biplab Kumar Deb and get his specific and clear guidance for the Mission ahead. Inspired by his strong advocacy of the closest India-

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Crumbling before its inauguration

Cultural activists demand immediate handover of Barishal's Shilpakala Academy

SUSHANTA GHOSH

Cultural activists of Barishal yesterday organised a human chain and rally to protest irregularities in construction of the divisional Shilpakala Academy. They demanded immediate handover of the building.

They gathered in front of Ashwini Kumar Hall, speaking out against delays in construction. Barishal Sangskritik Sangathan Samonoy Parishad organised the programme, and Kajal Ghosh, the organisation's president, presided over the protest.

The speakers said that although foundation stone of the building was laid in 2015, its construction work has not been completed in five years. Besides, the

auditorium's ceiling is currently crumbling. Speakers called for formation of an inquiry committee to inspect all irregularities.

According to Shilpakala Academy sources, in 2015, then cultural minister Asaduzzaman Noor laid foundation for the academy. Construction was supposed to be done within two years. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the academy building on February 8, 2018. But even after these years, construction has not been completed.

The construction company has also stopped related work. Meanwhile, parts of the auditorium's ceiling collapsed several times in the last week of September, claimed District Cultural Officer Hasan Maksud.

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Newly-installed ceiling panels were seen falling apart onto the floor.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

SYLHET-LONDON Biman resumes flight after 9yrs

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Biman Bangladesh Airlines resumed direct flights to London from Sylhet yesterday after nine years.

A flight of Biman's Boeing 787 Dreamliner (BG-001) carrying 238 passengers took off from Sylhet Osmani International Airport around 11:15am yesterday.

Earlier a programme was held on the occasion where Md Mahub Ali, state minister of civil aviation and tourism, was present as chief guest. Biman chairman Sazzadul Hasan and Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh chairman Air Vice Marshall Mafidur Rahman were present as special guests.

Due to the pandemic, there is only one flight a week between Dhaka and London at the moment. From October 25, there will be two -- one from Dhaka every Sunday, and another from Sylhet every Wednesday, officials said.

In 2011, direct flight to London from Sylhet was suspended due to lack of facilities at Sylhet airport.

RAPE OF 12-YR-OLD IN SYLHET 2 held after a month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police yesterday arrested two accused in a case filed for raping a 12-year-old girl of Sardarergaon village of Sylhet Sadar upazila.

The accused are -- Jashim (22) and Ekhlash (20). They were arrested from Sunamganj and Sylhet, said Md Shah Alam, inspector (investigation) of Jalalabad Police Station.

As per the case statement, on September 6, the fifth grader went out of the house to use the restroom. She was kidnapped and raped by one accused with help of another.

Influential locals told the victim's family not to lodge any case, and assured of arranging a village arbitration to settle the matter, alleged the girl's father. He filed a case with Jalalabad Police Station on September 14, accusing the duo.

But since the case was filed, influential locals started

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REOPENING OF JUTE MILLS Cops foil workers' procession, detain 3

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Police foiled a coffin procession, organised by workers demanding reopening of closed state-run jute mills, in Khulna city's Khalishpur area yesterday.

The law enforcers stopped the programme before it started by detaining three of the main organisers -- Ruhul Amin, Sujoy Shuvo and Atif Anik -- in front of Crescent Jute Mill, said the workers.

Of them, Ruhul Amin is coordinator of Jute Mill Protection Workers-Farmers-Students-Janata Oikya Parishad, Atif Anik central president of Biplobi Chhatra

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Cartoonist Kishore wins int'l award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cartoonists Rights Network International (CRNI) has presented its annual "Robert Russell Courage in Cartooning Award" to Ahmed Kabir Kishore, who was arrested under the Digital Security Act in Bangladesh over five months ago.

In an article, the cartoonists' organisation called for his immediate release, total exoneration of all criminal charges against him, and an independent investigation into his treatment as a detainee.

On May 5, a team of Rapid Action Battalion arrested cartoonist Kishore, allegedly for making anti-government posts on Facebook, from the capital Dhaka.

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IN THE PATH OF DARK SHADOW YOU REMAIN THE LIGHTHOUSE FOREVER.



FEROZ ALAM

(Born: April 30, 1956 – Died: October 5, 2019)

On the occasion of **1st Death Anniversary** of Veteran Industrialist, Social Worker and Founding Managing Director of Youth Group **Mr. Feroz Alam**, we seek prayers for his departed soul.

- Chairman, Directors and All Employees of Youth Group and the bereaved family members.