

Virtual courts at districts soon: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government will introduce activities of virtual courts at district level during this coronavirus situation to ensure judicial services for justice seekers.

“During this coronavirus pandemic, it’s tough to conduct court activities. We’ve taken steps for virtual courts. In Keraniganj Jail, courtroom has been prepared. In this way, courtrooms will be established at district level jails so that cases can be run through online. We’re taking steps,” she said.

The prime minister said this while inaugurating the newly-constructed Women Central Jail at Keraniganj as well as an LPG station there from her official residence Gono Bhaban through a videoconference.

She also formally opened 20 newly-constructed fire service stations in different parts of the country and six regional passport offices in six district headquarters.

The premier said steps are being taken to introduce hearing in virtual courts using digital technology to lessen sufferings of justice seekers.

Hasina mentioned that steps have also been taken to publish Bangla translation of the verdicts which are given in English.

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These children were spotted at Hatirjheel, spending a wonderful time playing in the winter sun. With no school for months and only a few playgrounds in the city, they have very limited options for recreation, but there’s no limit to how much fun they have together.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Deradicalisation to eliminate militancy

Rab working to give it an institutional structure; forms committee with academics, religious scholars in ad hoc basis

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Like developed countries, as part of a soft approach to eliminate militancy, Bangladesh is going to start an institutional deradicalisation process.

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has taken steps to form a “special deradicalisation unit” to deal with such issues. The specialised unit will work to bring back those who got involved in extremism into normal life.

Col Tofail Mostafa Sarwar, additional director general (operation) of Rab, disclosed the initiatives of the elite force at a views-exchange meeting yesterday at Rab Headquarters in the capital.

According to the official, a special committee has already been formed consisting of Rab members, academicians and religious scholars in ad hoc basis. Such committees will eventually get an institutional format in the coming days. A draft working plan has also been prepared in this regard, said ADG Tofail.

Rab officials also spoke about the five stages of getting involved in extremism. Primarily, a person becomes a sympathiser, then a supporter and then transforms into an activist in the third stage.

Afterwards that person becomes an extremist and finally a terrorist after taking an oath of allegiance from the leadership of the outfit, they added.

The elite force’s special unit will work towards bringing back people into normalcy through deradicalisation, especially those who are at the first three stages.

Explaining the process, ADG Tofail said they will make certain the sympathisers and supporters realise that if they follow any militant outfit

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BOOKS BRIEFING

Anisul Hoque’s ‘Ma’ marks 100th print run

NABIHA NUSAIBA, Star Books Desk

A programme celebrating the 100th printing of Anisul Haque’s Ma was held at Baatighar Dhaka, Bishwo Sahitya Kendra, on Friday. Organised by Somoy Prokashon, the programme included a book signing event with Anisul Haque, followed by a virtual session that was streamed live on Facebook.

Speakers at the event included Bangla Academy President Shamsuzzaman Khan, author Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, Theatre Director Nasiruddin Yousuff Bachchu, Anisul Hoque himself, and his publisher, Farid Ahmed.

The plot of the novel — the story of the mother of a freedom fighter — is

based on a real life experience, first brought to light when Nasiruddin Yousuff wrote a three-pager for a magazine about it. He later recounted the story to Anisul Hoque, who immediately decided to turn it into a novel.

The novel was first published in 2003. “One cannot read the book for too long at a stretch. It makes you tear up,” said publisher Farid Ahmed, observing that the book has become particularly popular in the last few years. “I have never heard of any other book which has been reprinted for the 100th time, at least in Bangladesh. This milestone reflects our love for our nation and our liberation war.”

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No place for drug addicts in police

IGP says at Rajshahi event

BSS, Rajshahi

Inspector General of Police Dr Benazir Ahmed has categorically said there is no room for drug-addicts in police force.

“We have already started dope testing of the police members to take departmental action against all the drug-addict police and the process will continue. We want to clean the police force,” he said.

The IGP came up with the observation while inaugurating the “Operation Control and Monitoring Centre” of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) along with its Juvenile Digital Database and Hello RMP app on the premises of under-construction RMP Headquarters as chief guest yesterday.

CCTV cameras have been set up at all the important places and crossings in the RMP areas under the operation control centre. Besides, the centre will play a pivotal role towards screening the movement of suspects and criminals as well as identifying them quickly.

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Women farmers deserve proper recognition

Speakers tell DS webinar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a webinar yesterday said ownership of land is the key stumbling block for women’s empowerment in agriculture. In Bangladesh, only 15.8 percent of rural land is owned by women, and only one-fourth of that land is effectively owned by them.

The webinar titled “Women’s contribution in agriculture and access to land: Covid-19 and beyond”, was jointly organised by Association for Land Reforms and Development (ALRD) and The Daily Star.

Keynote speaker Dr Sanjida Aktar, chairperson, Gender Studies Department, University of Dhaka presented the findings of her recent research and said women farmers labelled as an ‘assistant’ or ‘day labourer’, while for similar agricultural

activities men are referred to as ‘farmers’.

According to her, women give more time than men in harvesting and post-production. On average, the women spend five hours a day behind these tasks, while in pre-production and production, livestock rearing and fisheries sector, they are actively engaged alongside men.

According to her research conducted with 200 women farmers and their parents from Rangamati, Dinajpur, Pabna and Sunamganj, women’s activities in crop production, on an average, contribute 48 percent to the family’s finances.

The research also found stark inequality in women’s access to government-led agricultural services and credit in comparison with their male counterparts. In many cases, entitlement to government-

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dug up presumably for development work, this strip from Moghbazar to Nayatola Road in the capital has basically become an open sewer now, with dirty water pooled up and rubble piled on the street. Locals in the area are having to squeeze through a narrow passage no more than a few feet. This photo was taken last week.

North, southwest bearing brunt of cold wave

STAR REPORT

The country’s people especially from northern and southwestern regions are suffering the most due to bone-chilling cold coupled with dense fog.

Public life and road communications have become disrupted due to the ongoing cold wave with yesterday’s lowest temperature 7.8 degree Celsius recorded in Rajshahi.

“Temperature may come down to 6°C at some places amid the ongoing mild to moderate cold wave,” said Omar Faruk, a meteorologist.

“It may continue for the next two to three days. Then temperature may rise for one or two days. Later, it may fall,” he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, a weather bulletin yesterday said, “Mild to moderate cold wave is sweeping over Rangpur division and the regions of Gopalganj, Sreemangal, Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Badalgachhi, Jashore, Chuadanga and Kumarkhali.”

“Night and day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country,” said the bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD)

The 24-hour bulletin was released at 9am yesterday.

Weather may remain dry over the country. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog may occur elsewhere during midnight to morning, the bulletin added.

The weather may see little changes in the next 72 hours, said the bulletin.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on cold wave.

In Thakurgaon and Panchagarh, poor people are suffering the most as they cannot go out for work. Farmers are in fear of incurring losses as their crops are being affected.

“I am fearing that the potato cultivated on my land may be attacked by late blight due to fluctuation of temperature,” said Ahsanur Rahman, a farmer from Choto Balia village in Thakurgaon Sadar upazila.

Another farmer Shahidul Islam of Chut Bathina village said a portion of his Boro seedlings has already been damaged amid severe cold.

In Kurigram and Lalmonirhat, people who are living in the Brahmaputra, Dudhkumar, Teesta and Dharla river basins are the worst sufferers.

Many are seen fighting cold by burning heaps of straw and old tyres. The cattle are covered with jute sacks in sheds.

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11 addl DIGs recommended for DIG posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven additional deputy inspector generals of police have been recommended for promotion to the rank of deputy inspector general yesterday.

The Ministry of Public Administration has sent the recommendation to the senior secretary of public security division of the home ministry to issue a circular in this regard.

The officials are: Habibur Rahman of Khulna Range; Ashrafuzzaman and Basudeb Banik of Dhaka Metropolitan Police; SM Akhtaruzzaman, Haider Ali Khan, Monirul Islam, Ruhul Amin and Mahbubur Rahman Bhuiyan of Police Headquarters; Amena Begum of Chattogram Metropolitan Police; Azad Mia of Gazipur Metropolitan Police and Begum Atika Islam of Rapid Action Battalion.

SEVEN DU-AFFILIATED COLLEGES

Exams may begin in Jan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The seven affiliated colleges of Dhaka University have planned to take their previously suspended examinations from January 14 and honours fourth year exams from January 25.

The probable routine was decided in a meeting chaired by Muhammad Abdul Moyeen, chief co-ordinator of the colleges, at DU campus on Saturday.

“We will hold the exams after acquiring permissions from the Ministry of Education. We will be applying for it soon,” said Professor IK Selim Ullah Khandaker, coordinator of seven colleges and principal of Kabi Nazrul Government College. The decision came following discussions with the Academic Council of DU, he informed.

The exams will be held by maintaining government mandated hygiene and social distancing guidelines, he added.

As per the schedule fixed in the meeting, the suspended exams of Masters 2017, preliminary 2016 and degree special will start from January 14.

Meanwhile, honours fourth-year exams will start from January 25, according to a Facebook status posted on IK Selim Ullah’s profile.

In addition, honours and degree third-year exams will start from the first week of February, he wrote on his Facebook post, while exams for masters 2018 will start from February 25.

Demanding resumption of their exams, students of these colleges had announced a plan to hold a protest in the capital’s Nilkhet area last week. Following this, the college principals met with chief coordinator Abdul Moyeen and requested the protestors not to hold the protest and asked for a week’s time to resolve their issues. After that the principals met again on Saturday and took the decisions regarding the exam dates.

In 2017, the seven colleges -- Dhaka College, Eden Mohila College, Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College, Kabi Nazrul Government College, Begum Badrunnesa Government Mohila College, Mirpur Government Bangla College, and Government Titumir College -- were brought under DU from National University (NU) with the aim to increase the quality of education and reduce session jam.

THREATS ON KUSHTIA SP

Noted citizens call for arrest of miscreants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eleven eminent citizens yesterday demanded arrest of those who misinterpreted Kushtia police superintendent’s recent remarks on sculpture vandalism issue and threatened him, saying his remarks were in support of independent Bangladesh, achieved through the Liberation War.

Instead of being cautious, extremist groups misinterpreted SP Tanvir Arafat’s remarks, they said in a joint statement.

“The reason is nothing but an ill-attempt to divert people’s eyes from the issue of arresting those who were behind the sculpture vandalism incidents,” they said in the statement.

They added that the SP’s speech which went viral on YouTube once again, upholding Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s ideas, and made it clear the core desires of Bangladesh.

They also said a “counter-statement” of Hefazat-e Islam issued against the Kushtia SP’s speech made it clear their stance

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End of the year is a time for many residents of the city to move into new homes, and such pickup vans loaded with disassembled furniture is not uncommon. However, the four moving men standing atop the running vehicle do raise the alarm of a potential accident. The photo was taken recently from Moghbazar Wireless Gate area in the capital.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS