

hello dhaka

Weekly weather forecast for the city	Today	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Low: 29 °C High: 33 °C Cloudy, t-storms, very warm	Low: 30 °C High: 32 °C Overcast, t-storms; humid	Low: 30 °C High: 32 °C Cloudy, thunderstorms; humid	Low: 29 °C High: 31 °C Cloudy, thunderstorms; humid	Low: 29 °C High: 32 °C Cloudy, thunderstorms; humid	Low: 28 °C High: 32 °C Cloudy, thunderstorms; humid	Low: 28 °C High: 31 °C Cloudy, thunderstorms; humid

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## 29 new guests at Dhaka Zoo

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Visitors swarming the Dhaka Zoo at Mirpur to have a look at 29 new inmates from South Africa that arrived Thursday after a long wait.

The zoo is now full of life with a total of 87 new animals from 11 species adding colour to its teeming collection.

Thursday's newcomers include giraffe, zebra, oryx, wildebeest, impala, greater kudu, common elan and many more, joining earlier batches of four kangaroos, eight Arabian horses and donkeys that arrived in end-May and on June 5.

The Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock spent Tk 5.5 crore on the purchase.

The hopping kangaroos were brought from a US breeding centre while the horses and donkeys galloped their way from India. Also as part of the purchase programme, around 50 monkeys were procured from the local market.

Among the new inmates, impala is a reddish African antelope famous for its leaping ability and for having ridged, curved horns in the male.

Greater kudu is a large South African woodland antelope with a brownish, bluish-grey, reddish-brown coat with narrow, white vertical stripes. The male greater kudu has long, spirally curved horns.

The oryx, also belongs to the antelope family, is found in Eastern Africa.

Common elan belongs to the deer family and is found in Alaska, Canada, the United States and the northern part of Europe.

Wildebeest is a very social animal found in the Serengeti Game Reserve in Tanzania and the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya.

This herbivorous animal is famous for its group migration. During July and August every year millions of these wildebeest cross the Mara river from the Serengeti Game Reserve to the Masai Mara. They later come back in October.

In their new home at Dhaka Zoo, the inmates were seen running around the shed and busy making friends with each other.

Dr Aminur Rahman, the newly appointed curator of the zoo, told Star City that the ani-



Cute common elan, top, and kangaroo.



Oryx steals the show.

mals are in good health. "The first day they mostly spent silently in a corner but they are gradually gaining strength and appetite for food," he said.

"We are giving them concentrated packed food and also offering them local vegetables and grass," Dr Aminur added.

They will be under close observation for two weeks. A wide circle of fence has been built around the sheds to keep the visitors at a distance.

The Dhaka Zoo officials said that the mountain zebra, common zebra, impala, oryx, and the wildebeest joined their lone mates at the zoo.

"We only had males from each of these species. Now we have arranged pairs. They will now have partners and be able to procreate," the curator said.

Animal caretakers at different sheds said that after meeting their new mates these animals have started running around the sheds. Earlier they used to remain in the corner.

The splendid lock-necked giraffe, the hopping kangaroo and the colourful oryx have attracted the largest number of crowd. Earlier, the zoo did not have any kangaroo and greater kudu.

The last giraffe of the zoo died in 1997. Four giraffes were bought to fulfil the long-awaited demand of the visitors. The giraffes were found eating leaves from the tall jackfruit tree located inside their shed, cheer-

ing up the visitors.

Supplier of the latest batch James Magill, owner of Zoological Live Animal Suppliers, Johannesburg, and also a wildlife expert arrived with the animals for safe hand-over.

Speaking to this correspondent he said, "Any animal displaced from its original habitat becomes agitated. In this case a long travel and all the hustle and bustle around in the new place are making them stressed."

"It is wise not to have too many visitors around. They need a little while to get used to the new environment," he added.

It is necessary to train and educate the current staff at the zoo so that they can properly take care of the new animals, he stressed.

The zoo already has a manpower shortage but their was no new recruitment to cope with the with new addition. Zoo official said that task of the current staff was reshuffled according to the need of the new inmates.

No new sheds have been built either for the newcomers. Empty sheds were renovated to accommodate the guests. The central zoo in the city currently has around 400 sheds.

After assessing the ration expenses of these animals the officials will request for an increased amount of budget. The yearly budget of Dhaka Zoo is Tk 3.75 crore, said an official, out of which Tk 2.50 crore is spent on feeding the animals.

Established in 1974, the 186-acre Dhaka Zoo attracts around 10,000 visitors every day. The number increases during the weekends.

With the new addition the zoo is currently home to 2,050 animals from 165 species. Of them 58 are mammals including elephant, Royal Bengal Tiger, lion, cheetah, rhinoceros, zebras, different species of monkeys and chimpanzees, hippos and more.

There are 66 species of birds, 13 species of reptiles including snakes and crocodiles and 28 species of fish.

The zoo made its last purchase in the year 2002. Around Tk 50 lakh was then spent on bringing two cheetahs, two zebras, three greater flamingos and two golden pheasants.



Giraffe comes after a decade.



Wildebeest is not so wild.

## DMP has only 13 run-down tow trucks to tackle trouble

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has only 13 run-down tow trucks for handling any trouble with about 10 lakh vehicles in the capital city.

Vehicles going out of order in the middle of the road after an accident or for any other reason often wait for hours for a tow truck but the police cannot help them.

In absence of proper towing service, traffic congestion and public sufferings increase due to damaged or disordered vehicles standing in the busy roads.

The problem becomes acute in the rainy season when vehicles often go out of order in the waterlogged roads, blocking the movement of other vehicles.

Bibek Das, owner of a car, shared his experience with Star City. His car went out of order in the waterlogged Bijoy Sarani recently as water entered the engine.

Bibek said when the car stopped suddenly on the road, he, standing in the dirty water, tried to push it towards the edge of the road to clear way for other

vehicles. In the meantime a long queue of vehicles created a huge congestion behind him.

"I didn't call the police because I know they will not help me promptly and properly," said Bibek adding, "I know the condition DMP tow trucks. My car would be damaged further if a DMP tow truck pulls it. Besides, there is a tow charge."

A traffic sergeant at the spot called a tow truck to clear the road but it was busy at another spot. He said at least 50 vehicles arrive at the spot in every minute and such road-block by disordered vehicles often leads to serious traffic jam.

Car owners said the city must have a proper towing service because of the little road space it has. Moreover, a large number of unfit and faulty vehicles run in the city.

A policeman on duty with a towing car at Farmgate said sometimes traffic situation goes out of control in the rainy days due to large number of disordered cars.

Among the 13 tow trucks, DMP owns only four and the rest are hired from private owners.

Most of these vehicles have crossed their lifespan.

"We cannot tow big vehicles using this old wreckers. Worn out hooks of these tow trucks also damage small vehicles," said a DMP official.

Police tow the vehicles that face an accident or the buses that block roads. For towing once, police collect Tk 1200 for big vehicles and Tk 800 for small vehicles.

Jashim Uddin, joint commissioner of DMP and chief of the traffic wing, said at least 30 types of vehicles are plying the city streets and it is not easy to handle the huge number of vehicles with the available towing service.

He said DMP is trying to procure four small tow trucks from Japan.

A car owner suggested that the towing service should be privatised so that they do not have to depend on the police during emergency.

"If we want to have a proper and easily available towing service, private firms should be involved. This will also reduce cost of removing a car," he said.



A tow truck of DMP.

## Traders stave off electronic cash register

CITY CORRESPONDENT

A divisive policy to enforce the use of electronic cash registers at small and medium retail businesses in the city has been postponed until January next year.

Originally scheduled to go into effect from this July, implementation of the policy was delayed to give the shop owners an extra six months to comply with the authorities' efforts to ensure collection of value added tax (VAT) from the retailers, sources said.

"The delay came in the light of views and protests from the shop owners," said a NBR spokesperson. "They [shop owners] complained that the new policy is being enforced without considering their inconveniences," he said.

The revised schedule will see the National Board of Revenue (NBR) enforce the new policy starting from January next year when grocery stores, restaurants, community centres, beauty salons, sweetmeat stores, fast food outlets, furniture shops, department and general stores will have to use electronic cash registers for everyday transactions.

The decision to mandate electronic cash registers was taken in October last year in a bid to ensure that small and medium enterprises collect VAT properly from their customers and deposit it to the exchequer.

The manual accounting currently used at the retail outlets leaves room for tax evasion by deceiving VAT inspectors and this new system would eliminate

that scope, believe the authorities.

Eventually, the policy would be mandatory for all commercial businesses, sources said adding that non-compliance with the policy would result in fines and even shutting down of the retail outlet under the section 37 of the VAT act.

NBR officials believe that the added six months would be adequate for the shop owners to purchase their cash registers and get acquainted with its uses.

However, not all storeowners seem to agree with this. They fear the new policy will push up their costs.

"Unlike in the western coun-

tries where there are only a handful of distributors and retailers, we have hundreds of thousands of them. Many of these stores are bound to have a hard time to afford electronic cash registers," said Abul Hashem, a grocery store owner at Badda.

Hasnat, a restaurant owner at Uttara, echoed Hashem, saying, "A standard cash register comes at a price of around Tk 40,000 to Tk 50,000. We have to cough up at least around Tk 20,000 for even an inferior quality cash register. So, they [the authorities] should keep in mind that a huge number of small businesses are owned by the less affluent section of the society."

"Not everyone may afford that expense. Small retail outlets should not be subjected to this mandatory requirement," he said adding the authorities should specify in detail which medium and large trades need to maintain cash registers.

However, the NBR officials believe that the retailers have enough time and money to keep cash registers.

"As we decided to enforce electronic cash registers over seven months back, many of the stores are supposed to have cash registers by now," said an NBR official. "Now they have an additional six months for that. I do not understand why they can't

spend around Tk 20,000 [on a register]. It sounds quite reasonable in terms of the money they make."

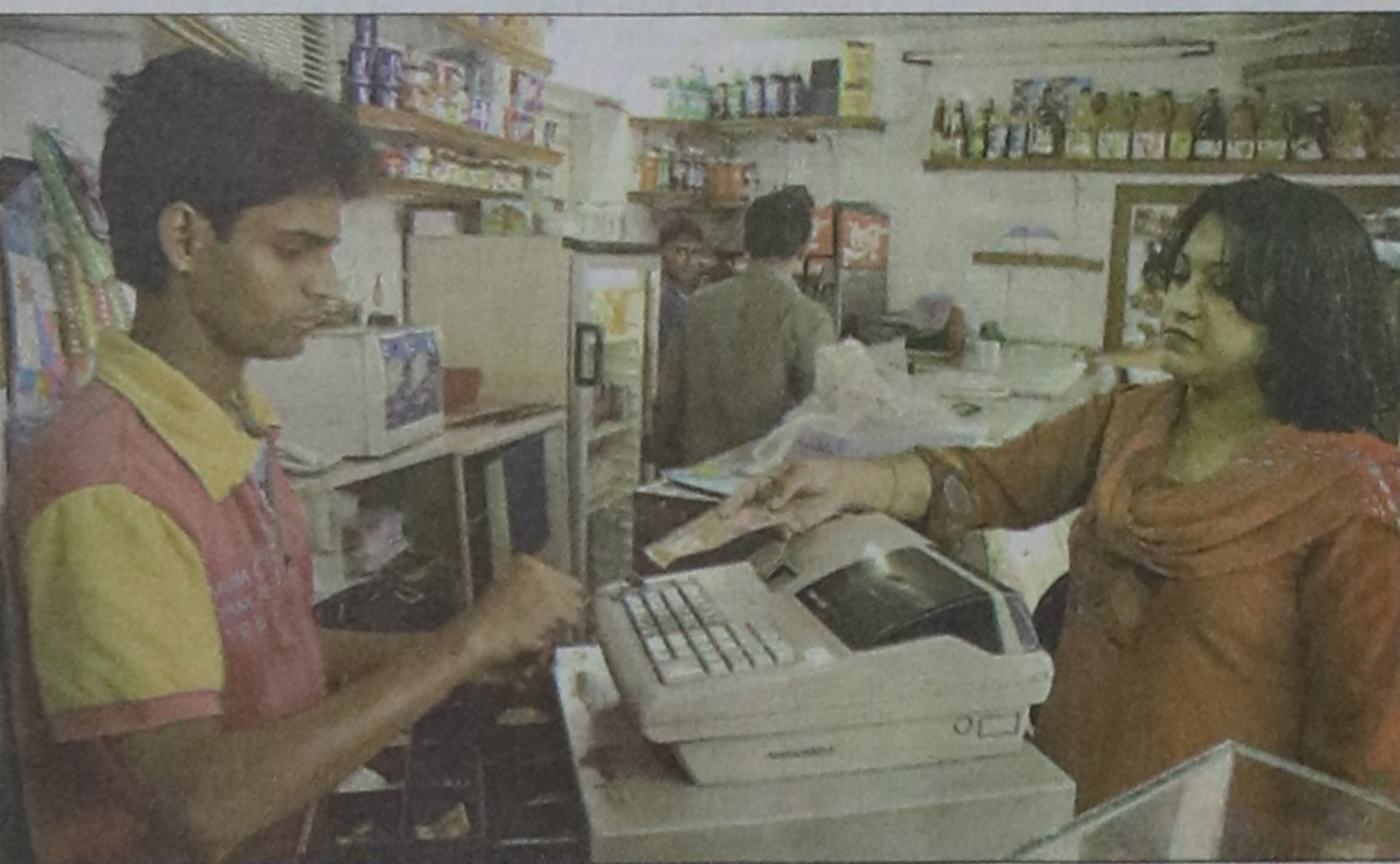
"The fact that there is no import duty or VAT on electronic cash registers, would make things easier for them [retailers]. Also, by the time the policy is enforced, there will be quite a few cash register dealers in the market. Therefore, the price is sure to go down by then," he said.

While there has been a series of protests from many storeowners, a good number of retailers in the city still appear to be unaware about this new scheme. Most of them do not even have the slightest idea what electronic cash registers are, how to operate them or where to buy them.

"It does sound more convenient rather than the usual manual bookkeeping system. But I have no idea how cash registers work or where to get one," said Shankar Chandra Dash, a stationary storeowner at Banani.

According to sources, new trade licences would be issued only to businesses that maintain electronic cash registers in a bid to ensure strict enforcement of the new policy. Existing trade licences would not be renewed unless the applicants start using electronic cash registers.

The NBR has already asked the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to inform all its trade licence holders that the DCC would not renew their trade licences unless they purchase and start using electronic cash registers by January 1, 2008, sources at NBR said.



Electronic cash registers delayed for six months.