



A parrot spreads its wings after being released into nature. Rab, led by its Executive Magistrate Sarwoor Alam, and Wildlife Crime Control Unit of the Forest Department rescued around 400 birds from Tongi during a daylong drive yesterday. The photo was taken around 6pm in Dhaka's Sangsab Bhaban area.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Stop contract-based operation immediately

DRTA again asks bus owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association (DRTA) yesterday once again urged bus owners to abolish the system of daily contracts with drivers and their helpers, in a bid to bring discipline on roads.

Many bus owners rent out their vehicles to drivers on daily contracts. In this system, drivers pay a specific amount to the owner and to maximise profits, they drive recklessly to make as many trips as possible in a day, said Khondaker Enayet Ullah, general secretary of the association, a platform of Dhaka-based transport owners.

This contractual bus operation creates an unhealthy competition, which often results in accidents, he said. "After consultation with different government bodies, we have decided to abolish this system. But some [bus owners] are still following it," he said.

"We won't accept the contract system. You [bus owners] have to stop it immediately," added Enayet. He made the remarks while speaking at an annual general meeting and council session of the association at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in Dhaka.

On August 8 last year, following students' demonstrations for safe roads, the association

decided to abolish the system of contractual bus operation with drivers and their helpers in order to stop the buses racing on city streets.

However, many bus owners continued the contractual operation instead of following the association's direction.

At yesterday's meeting, Enayet urged the city corporations to support their endeavour through setting up some designated ticket counters so that bus owners can manage the trips without conceding loss.

He also called upon transport owners under his association to hold a consultation meeting with transport workers, including drivers and helpers, on a regular basis (every two months) to motivate them to obey traffic rules.

"If we obey traffic rules, we will be able to develop ourselves along with contributing to the country's development," he said.

"We have to admit that we have our own faults, as it is visible. But then, we have to go for corrective measures," he told transport owners.

The transport leader also said it is a fact some drivers drive without licence.

He urged transport owners to help their drivers get valid licences from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority to avoid fines.

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DUCSU POLLS Non-students, outsiders asked to vacate halls

DU CORRESPONDENT

Election schedule for the long-pending Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu) polls is likely to be published at the end of next week or at the beginning of the week after next, chief returning officer Prof SM Mahfuz said yesterday.

He also said it might take them longer to publish the schedule as there are some technical difficulties, like amending the constitution and formulating electoral code of contact.

Meanwhile, hall authorities of DU yesterday asked non-students and outsiders to vacate the halls ahead of the Ducusu polls.

The authorities issued a notice about the matter, after a meeting of the provost standing committee.

As per the decision of the provost standing committee, students who have completed their Masters' final exam are being asked to hand over their documents to vacate their seats, reads the notice.

The authorities also asked resident students to notify them if any non-student or outsider stays at the hall. Action will be taken in such cases following due procedure.

"The notice has been issued to every hall. We will do everything [in our power] to successfully hold the polls," said DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani.

On September 15 last year, after a meeting with representatives of student organisations, the DU VC said the Ducusu polls might be held by March this year.

To hold the polls, the university authorities held several meetings with active student bodies and socio-cultural organisations of DU, and appointed chief returning officer and returning officers in the last few weeks. The last Ducusu polls were held on June 6, 1990. A Supreme Court order delivered on January 6, 2019 mandated the upcoming election.

5 killed, 2 injured in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five persons were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

In Narayanganj, four people were killed and another was injured, after a car fell into a ditch at Taltola area of Sonargaon upazila on the Asian highway in Narayanganj early yesterday, said Imanur Hossain, sub-inspector of Sonargaon Police Station.

The deceased were identified as Shahidullah Moktar, 45, general secretary of Brahmandi union Jubo League; Ripon Miah, 35, a Jubo League activist; Momen Miah, 32, member of Araihazar municipality ward no 9 Awami League; and Raju Miah, 32, driver of the car, reports our correspondent.

The injured Robin Hossain, 38, is a relative of Narayanganj-2 lawmaker Nazrul Islam Babu. He was admitted at a hospital in Dhaka, said SI Imanur.



Four persons were killed after this vehicle skidded off and fell into a ditch beside Asian Highway in Sonargaon upazila yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Around 11am, locals spotted the SUV in a ditch at Taltola area and informed police.

Police and fire service rushed to the spot and recovered the vehicle around

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Biman gets five-star safety rating

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has achieved a five-star safety rating by an international aviation safety rating agency.

Biman achieved five stars out of seven in terms of air safety from Australia-based company airliners.com.

The national flag carrier got three stars for achieving International Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), one star for not being enlisted in the aviation blacklist of European Union, and another star for not having any fatality record in last 10 years.

Biman failed to get the

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'Militant patron' held in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives yesterday claimed to have arrested Rizwan Haroon, a former owner of Lakehead Grammar School who according to police is a patron of blacklisted militant organisation Jama'atul Muslimeen.

A team of Detective Branch (south division) of police arrested Rizwan at 6am in Dhanmondi area. He is a first information report (FIR)-named accused in a case filed under the Anti-Terrorism Act on January 30 last year with Gulshan Police Station, said Masudur Rahman, deputy commissioner (media) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed Rizwan on a five-day remand in the case after police produced him before the court with a plea for 10-day remand.

However, Rizwan's father Haroon Rashid had registered a general diary with Banani Police Station on May 14, 2017 where he alleged that his son was taken away in a black SUV around 5pm on May 11 that year, from in front of their Banani office.

According to a press release sent by DMP yesterday, members of Jama'atul Muslimeen built up English medium schools and

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT Law formulated for all citizens, not just journos: Info minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday said he would work to dispel journalists' concerns over the Digital Security Act.

"The law has been formulated not only for journalists, but for all citizens," he said.

He was addressing a press meet arranged by Dhaka Reporters Unity on its premises in the capital.

The parliament, on September 19 last year, passed the much-debated Digital Security Bill ignoring concerns of journalists and rights defenders and keeping a harsh provision that allows police to search or arrest anyone without a warrant.

Sampadak Parishad (Editors' Council) has been expressing deep disappointment and concerns over the act and also demand-

ing its amendment.

The council members formed a human chain on October 15, 2018 and demanded proper amendments to nine sections of the act within the last session of the 10th parliament for the sake of independent journalism and freedom of expression.

However, no amendment to the act has been made yet.

Addressing yesterday's programme, the minister said the overall welfare of journalists and ensuring media freedom would be his key objectives, reports BSS.

Mahmud said his ministry is prioritising a policy for online media to ensure responsible journalism.

The minister said work is underway to implement the 9th Wage Board for newspaperers and news agencies but some more steps

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Coaching centres to remain closed during SSC exams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday directed authorities of all coaching centres to keep those closed during SSC and equivalent examinations.

The instruction came from a meeting of the National Monitoring and Law Enforcers' Committee of the education ministry, ahead of the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and equivalent examinations.

"All coaching centers of the country will remain closed from January 27 to February 27, during SSC exam," Education Minister Dipu Moni told reporters after the meeting.

The exams are scheduled to begin on February 2. The theoretical parts of the tests will end on February 25, followed by practical tests.

The minister warned of stern actions against those who leak questions. "Question papers will be sent to the centres in a special kind of aluminum packet as part of our effort to check question leak," she added.

The minister also said that only exam centre secretaries will be allowed to use cell phones -- not smartphones -- at the centres.

As in previous exams, all candidates will have to be seated at their respective centres 30 minutes prior to the test. "If someone is late, they will have to provide a valid reason," she added.

The government is taking these measures as the written part of last year's SSC exams

witnessed a spate of question leaks.

Questions of Bangla 1st and 2nd papers, English 1st and 2nd papers, religion and moral studies, general mathematics, physics, chemistry, Bangladesh and global studies, biology and higher mathematics were reportedly leaked at least one hour before the exams began.

Examinees and their guardians said the questions, mostly the multiple choice questions, were leaked and found posted online in several Facebook and WhatsApp groups.

Allegations of question leaks forced the education ministry to form an 11-member committee on February 4, 2018.

On the day, government also announced a bounty of Tk 5 lakh on anyone involved in question leak.

When government efforts failed, on February 15, the High Court for the first time appointed two five-member committees, including a judicial committee, to find those involved in leaking questions.

Law enforcement agencies arrested over 153 people, including at least 10 teachers, for their alleged involvement in question leak and 53 cases were filed in this regard, during and after SSC exams.

Dipu Moni, however, yesterday claimed that all public exams last year happened without any incidents of question leak. She also said that BTSC and information ministry would work on preventing rumours involving question leak.



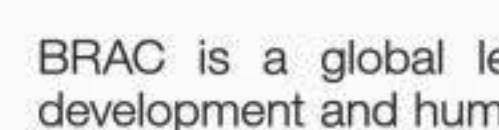
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