

ANIMAL FEED Govt orders stricter monitoring

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Department of Livestock Services (DLS) has ordered all its offices across the country to strictly monitor the quality of poultry and animal feed.

"We have asked all our offices in the country to closely monitor the quality of all types of animal feed," Hiresh Ranjan Bhowmik, DLS director general, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The livestock officials will have to regularly inspect animal and poultry feed and take legal actions if it is of substandard quality or mixed with antibiotics, hormones or any other element harmful for human health, he said.

"There is a general directive for such inspection, but we have ordered them to conduct inspections more strictly now," Hiresh said.

On January 3, the DLS banned import of meat and bone meal (MBM), a

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JU Journalism and Media Studies Department brought out a procession on campus yesterday, celebrating the department's seventh anniversary.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Government sees independent media with suspicion

Says Star editor at Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony at JU



Golam Rahman



Mahfuz Anam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Department of Journalism and Media Studies at Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday conferred "Lifetime Achievement Award 2018" on Professor Golam Rahman and Editor-Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam for their contribution to journalism.

The award marked the seventh founding anniversary of the department.

Golam Rahman, a former professor of Dhaka University, was honoured for "pioneering journalism education in Bangladesh" while Mahfuz Anam, "for his unparalleled contribution to Bangladeshi media over the past three decades".

According to the award citation, Prof Rahman invested his valued expertise in state institutions including Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) as

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'Want a corruption-free BRTA'

Quader gives same directives seven years apart

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Obaidul Quader took charge of Communication Ministry, now Road Transport and Bridges Ministry, on December 5, 2011 and at a programme at BRTA headquarters on December 27 that year, ordered to put a stop to activities of "brokers" in the organisation.

Quader has been at the helm of the ministry for over seven years and yesterday he gave the same directives at the same place.

"BRTA has a weakness -- presence of brokers in and outside its offices. How can they [brokers] work if they have no connection with the insiders? This influence of brokers must be stopped," Quader said.

The minister was speaking at a views-exchange meeting with officials of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) at its headquarters in the capital. BRTA Chairman Moshiar Rahman and other top officials were present at the meeting.

A section of unscrupulous BRTA offi-

cials and staff maintain an unholy nexus with the brokers and make people suffer when trying to obtain driving licences and vehicle registrations.

Quader, on several occasions, made surprise visits to BRTA offices and caught brokers red-handed. That, however, has not managed to stop brokers over the years. Mobile courts of BRTA sentenced five brokers to different jail terms on Tuesday.

Yesterday, Quader said, "I'm telling all the officials present here that I don't want to see brokers when visiting BRTA offices."

He said these middlemen are tarnishing the image of BRTA.

"I'm not taking any commission. Why will I take the blame then?" he said, adding, "If any paper publishes news on corruption in BRTA, I, as a minister, can't avoid responsibility, even though I'm not a part of it."

"Those officials who are tainting BRTA's image better change their ways. Otherwise, legal actions would be taken," the minister warned.

'CORRUPTION-FREE BRTA'

Quader once again vowed to make BRTA corruption-free yesterday, over seven years after he said that the organisation had become "synonymous to corruption".

After a surprise visit to BRTA's Mirpur office on July 10, 2012, Quader told some officials, "You have turned the BRTA office into a corrupted place by looting people's money."

"I have resolved 45 percent of irregularities from here, but the remaining discrepancies still grip the sector. A nexus of brokers, security officers and some BRTA officials are involved in the irregularities," Quader had said.

Yesterday, the minister said, "I have conducted drives on many occasions. As a result, the situation [at BRTA offices, including in Mirpur] has improved to a large extent."

"However, there are still problems," he added.

"We want to fulfill our electoral pledge.

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145,000 Rohingya children going to Unicef's learning centres

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

More than 145,000 Rohingya children -- living in Cox's Bazar camps -- are now going to Unicef-supported learning centres, as a new school year begins.

Following a huge effort from the humanitarian community to construct a network of around 1,600 learning centres throughout the camps -- providing education to children who fled violence in Myanmar, attention is now turning to reach out to others who still lack access.

The aim is to eventually reach 260,000 children this year through an extended network of 2,500 learning centres run by 5,000 teachers and Rohingya volunteers, according to a press release of Unicef yesterday.

"The scale of the Rohingya refugee crisis demanded a rapid response," said Edouard Beigbeder, Unicef representative in Bangladesh. "But we were only able to respond to immediate needs and could not reach every child. This year we are scaling up services to reach more children, while focusing on improving the quality of education each child receives."

The drive to construct more learning centres is part

of a far-reaching and comprehensive set of initiatives announced by Unicef to increase access to quality education for children living in the camps.

"I've been coming to class for almost a month now," said Minara, 11, who studied till class four in Myanmar, but dropped out after arriving in Bangladesh because the learning centres she attended were muddy and too hot.

"It's nice here," she said as she surveyed the new classroom in Kutupalong camp run by Unicef partner CODEC. "It doesn't have a muddy floor."

Motalab, 12, who is blind, is one of about 600 children with disabilities identified to attend school. Last year his teacher convinced his mother to allow him to attend class. Since returning to class his mood has visibly brightened, he is more outgoing and says he enjoys poetry.

The quality of education in the camps is also being improved through expanded learning modules and lesson plans. New and existing teachers are participating in development training programmes.

"Many children have suffered gunshot wounds and extreme violence, restricting their mobility and access to services."

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Trucks entering the capital through Gabtoli around 9:30am yesterday although they were supposed to stop doing so by 8am. Inset, such vehicles being fined for violating the rule.

Brac receives SAFA award for annual report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac has won the "South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) Award 2018" for its best presented annual report in the non-governmental organisation (NGO) category, said a statement yesterday.

Tushar Bhowmik, director of Brac's finance department, received the award at a ceremony in Pune, India on Tuesday.

SAFA, an apex body of Saarc, selected the organisation for the award based on an assessment of its transparency, accountability and good governance.

Last year, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) awarded Brac for its annual report. ICAB then sent the report to compete with the annual reports of NGOs and NOPs from other Saarc countries.

Brawl between BCL men and fraud recruiting agency

Both parties arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leaders and activists, including its Paltan Thana unit president and vice-president, were arrested on Tuesday and taken into remand yesterday, allegedly for assaulting policemen when they tried to stop a brawl between two parties at an office in Paltan area on Tuesday.

In a case filed by Paltan police, the BCL men were taken into a one-day remand each.

Meanwhile involving the same incident, seven people, including the owner of a recruiting agency "Biswas Trade International", were sent to jail in another case filed over fraudulence and embezzlement of money by promising government jobs.

Metropolitan Magistrate Sadbir Yasir Ahsan Chowdhury passed the orders after Paltan Police Station sub-inspectors Jahangir Hossain and Kazi Ashraf Haque produced them before the court in the afternoon.

The BCL men are: Sheikh Nazmul Hossain Miron, president of Paltan Thana unit; Wahidul Islam, vice-president of the unit; and activists Arif, Sheikh Rahim, Rasel,

Shah Alam Chanchal, Arif Hossain, Kawsar Ahmed Saif and Moazzem.

The other arrestees are: Owner of Biswas Trade International BM Aslam Hossain alias Tuhin, Mehedi Hassan, Jewel, Shariful Islam, Sohel Talukder and Samrat -- all hailing from Gopalganj and Shakhawat Hossain from Faridpur.

On Tuesday afternoon, the BCL men went to the office of Biswas Trade International in Paltan's Azad Center to recover money from Tuhin, who allegedly embezzled money from BCL leader Ahsan Tusher, vice-president of the student organisation's private university unit. Tuhin supposedly promised jobs to Tusher's relatives.

When the two parties engaged in a brawl, police on information went to the spot and saw the accused vandalising the office.

"As police intercepted, they attacked Constable Saiful Islam, tore his uniform and started beating him up. At one point, Miron attempted to stab him but missed," read the case statement, adding that the knife was seized from Miron.

Later additional forces joined the police team and arrested the accused. The police constable and two Ansar men were injured in the incident, according to the case statement.

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AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK CASE SC upholds bail of two former police chiefs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former inspectors general of police (IGP) Shahudul Haque and Ashraful Huda's six months' bail, granted by the High Court (HC) in August 21 grenade attack case, was yesterday upheld by the Supreme Court (SC).

Both Shahudul and Ashraful had been convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment each in two charges of the case.

After the HC granted them bail on January 21, Advocate Md Arshadur Rauf, a lawyer for both Shahudul and Ashraful, had told this correspondent that the HC granted bail to both his clients as they already served more than 14 months of their jailtime.

Yesterday, the chamber judge of the SC Appellate Division, Justice Md Nuruzzaman, passed "no order" on two separate petitions filed by the government,

seeking a stay on the bail orders by HC.

Deputy Attorney General Masud Hasan Chowdhury Parag told The Daily Star that the "no order" by the SC chamber judge means that the bail orders granted to both Shahudul and Ashraful by the HC will remain in force.

The duo can now be released from jail, unless they are arrested in any other case, he also said.

After Shahudul and Ashraful filed appeals against the lower court's verdict against them in the August 21 grenade attack case, the HC granted six months' bail to each of them on January 21.

On October 10 last year, a Dhaka court sentenced 19 persons to death and 19 others to life imprisonment in connection with the case for killing at least 24 people and

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Grabbed forest land to be recovered, announces minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Md Shahab Uddin yesterday announced that the government will soon recover illegally grabbed land that originally belong to the Forest Department.

He also announced undertaking an initiative to calculate the actual number of tigers in the Sundarbans in order to take necessary steps for conservation of the national animal.

The minister made the announcements at a meeting with the officials of the Forest Department at its office in Dhaka's Aagraon.

"We will find a proper picture of how much land has been illegally grabbed. And then, we will take steps to recover those as soon as possible," said Shahab Uddin.

He urged the department officials to play the role of a safeguard to conserve the country's forest resources and implement projects properly.

The minister said there is a confusion about how many

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