

Pay no heed to rumours

Dipu Moni urges HSC candidates

UNB, Dhaka

Education Minister Dipu Moni has assured Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinees that questions will not be leaked this time.

"Fraudsters spread rumours to swindle people. Don't pay attention to rumours and make immoral transactions," she told a programme at Chandrakona Rajlakkhi High School in Sherpur's Nakla upazila.

HSC and equivalent examinations are scheduled to start from tomorrow. The government has decided to shut down coaching centres across Bangladesh during the entire length of the written examination from April 1 to May 6.

"Strict action will be taken against anyone involved in illegal activities during the examinations," the minister warned. "Law enforcement agencies will remain vigilant."



Two locals repair their boat in preparation for the coming months, in Aktapara village of Sunamganj. As the rainy season approaches, the utility of boats increases in low-lying areas -- for commuting, fishing, or transporting paddy. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: DWOHA CHOWDHURY

NEWS IN brief

Books for underprivileged children

CITY DESK

With an aim to help underprivileged children, North South University Social Services Club (NSUSSC) organised "Amar Pathshala" last Thursday.

The event took place at Doyel School, a school for underprivileged children, located in the capital's Rayer Bazar area. Books and stationary items were distributed among 200 children. A team of 50 members of NSUSSC facilitated the event, said a press release.

Small initiatives can bring a change and make the children self-reliant to achieve targets in their future, said the organisers.

Prof Fyzennessa's death anniversary today

CITY DESK

Today is the 15th death anniversary of eminent educator Prof Noorunnahar Fyzennessa.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at Dr Noorun Nahar Fyzennessa Preprimary School in Dhamrai, said a press release.

Fyzennessa was the first female member of Dhaka University syndicate, first female member of Pay Commission; and president of Dhaka Mahila Parishad. She was also a Fulbright scholar and a faculty member of London University.



135 BCS cadres accorded reception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

It is the duty of civil servants to serve people as mentioned in the country's constitution, speakers said at a reception in Rajshahi yesterday.

The reception was accorded to 135 newly-appointed officers of Bangladesh Civil Service (37th batch) at a city hotel. Rajshahi divisional chapter of Career Forum organised the event.

Around 100 meritorious university students were also given reception at the ceremony.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Nazrul Islam chaired the event, where city Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton attended as chief guest.

Samar Kumar Pal, career forum's president; Prof M Saidur Rahman, former Rajshahi University vice chancellor and former high commissioner to United Kingdom; Shahadat Hossain, joint district judge of Bogura; Saidur Rahman, additional secretary to the cabinet division, among others, addressed the event.

Bangladesh makes 26 pledges to UN Peacekeeping operations

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh has made 26 pledges to the United Nations Peacekeeping operations at the 2019 United Nations Peacekeeping Ministerial meeting on Friday.

"To meet the UN requirements, Bangladesh has pledged 26 Peacekeeping Capability Readiness System (PCRS) components, including nine from Army, six from Navy, three from Air Force and eight from police," said State Minister for Foreign Affairs Md Shahrir Alam.

In addition, Bangladesh has also pledged a unit for operational-level Unmanned Aerial Surveillance (UAS), in partnership with the United States, the state minister added.

"We have also demonstrated our commitment by contributing to the norms setting part of peacekeeping, including through our

active participation in Action for Peacekeeping Agenda and in other parallel processes like C-34", he also said.

Referring to the atrocity committed against civilians during the Liberation War, Shahrir Alam said, "We have endorsed the Kigali Principles on Protection of Civilians (PoC) and incorporated a strong and comprehensive PoC component in our peacekeeping training with in-built demonstration and tabletop exercises."

He also mentioned the "zero tolerance" policy taken by Bangladesh towards sexual exploitation and abuse in UN Peacekeeping and reaffirmed the country's commitment for increasing number of female peacekeepers to achieve the target set by UN.

The state minister said Bangladesh has been supportive to

Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda of the UN since the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325.

"We are currently developing a national action plan to empower women in playing their natural role as peacemakers," he added.

Shahrir Alam stressed on the importance of adequate resources and critical enablers to ensure safety, security and performances of the peacekeepers.

He enumerated Bangladesh's recent supplies of modern vehicles and other peacekeeping equipments in several UN missions.

The state minister also highlighted on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's commitment to UN's Peacekeeping operation and the vision of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman for a peaceful world.

USAID launches project to improve maternal care in Manikganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The MaMoni Maternal and Newborn Care

Strengthening Project, an initiative by USAID to provide quality healthcare and prevent death of mothers and newborns, was launched in Manikganj yesterday.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in Satoria upazila of Manikganj.

Speaking as chief guest, Health and Family Welfare Minister Zahid Maleque highlighted the importance of improving facility-based services for mothers and newborns, and called for greater attention to ensuring its quality in all public and private health facilities.

USAID Bangladesh Mission Director Derrick Brown, a special guest at the event, talked about the MaMoni project and its focus on improved quality of care.

Save the Children Bangladesh Country Director Mark Pierce emphasised on the achievements of MaMoni and termed it one of the biggest health sector and flagship projects of Save the Children.

Empowering female students with peace-building, leadership

UN Women, Brac CPJ conclude project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rahat Ara Risti despised the start of her academic year at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) because of unwelcoming gestures and glares she faced from senior students, especially males. With time, she discovered that she was only complaining about the campus environment instead of doing anything about it.

So when the opportunity came, Risti seized it to become a changemaker, as UN Women Bangladesh and the Centre for Peace and Justice (CPJ) of Brac University, undertook a project in June last year to give female students training in entrepreneurship, leadership and peace building.

CPJ implemented the project with BRUR and Jatiya Kabi Kazi Nazrul Islam University (JKNIU).

The organisation brought down the curtain on the project yesterday through a "National colloquium on empowering young women: Promoting peaceful cohesive and prosperous Bangladesh" at Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

Three hundred female students from various departments of the public universities took part in a series of three-day training sessions at Brac Learning Centres in Rangpur and Mymensingh between October 2018 and February this year.

Having received an understanding of entrepreneurship skills and businesses relevant to social issues, they proposed business plans. Of the proposals, four groups won seed funds to turn their thoughts into actions.

Risti belongs to one of the groups that came up with the concept of "Songshoptok", that she said would be instrumental in fighting sexual harassment and violence on campus. The group will organise seminars, workshops and training to inspire confidence in female students. It has set three targets to achieve -- gender parity, reduction of discrimination and a friendly educational environment with peace and justice.

Another winning group is about to launch a campus-based magazine, Break Through, at BRUR to encourage and aware women by publishing articles on success stories of women, harassment, discrimination and women-centric research findings.

In a unique initiative, the CPJ opened peace cafés at the institutions for female students to nurture "innovative

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Singer Khurshid Alam hurt in road accident

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

Eminent singer Khurshid Alam was flown to Dhaka yesterday, hours after he was injured when a truck hit his private car on Dhaka-Rangpur highway in Bogura town in the early hours.

The 74-year-old Ekushey Padak laureate was flown to Dhaka in an air ambulance from Bogura at 2:10pm, his brother Sarowar Islam Mamun told The Daily Star.

Alam was admitted to Green Life Medical College and Hospital around 4:30pm, said an official of the hospital.

"He is now in a VIP cabin, undergoing treatment under Dr Moinul Ahsan," he added.

Earlier, Alam was treated at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital in Bogura.

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Eminent singer Khurshid Alam in the air ambulance which flew him to Dhaka yesterday. Inset, his car after a truck hit its side, leaving Alam injured.

PHOTOS: STAR

Barishal Univ VC apologises to students

UNB, Barishal

Barishal University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Imamul Haque has expressed grief for his recent "offensive comment".

In a press statement signed by university public relations officer Faisal Ahmed on Friday, the VC said his recent remark was misunderstood by students.

"Unambiguously, I want to say that I didn't call the students 'razakarer bachcha'... I only said if anyone tries to foil any programme on Independence Day, he or she would be razakarer bachcha," he said.

"Even then, I apologise if any of my students got hurt by the statement, and I seek cooperation from them in running the university's academic activities smoothly as before," he said.

On Tuesday, students started demonstrations claiming that the VC arranged an Independence Day programme on campus without inviting students, and when they protested this action, he called them "razakarer bachcha" (children of Pak collaborators).

Later on Thursday, authorities shut down the university for an indefinite period amid protests.

According to the notice, the university would remain closed for an indefinite period from March 28 for the sake of security of its students, teachers, staff as well as

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A new 'weapon' of free speech

Meme fest ends at KU

KU CORRESPONDENT

Khulna University yesterday concluded its three-day meme festival, with the motto "shattering dimensions through sarcasm." The festival began on Thursday.

The Intra University Meme Fest 2019 was organised by 35mm -- the KU film club.

The event's theme was to portray the new age of social satirism through memes that have the uncanny ability to articulate messages to broad audience, said the organisers.

The event's meme exhibition and film screening drew a large number of visitors.

On the closing day, an open mic session was held on the topic "meme as a weapon of free speech".

Kuet engineering students get a taste of IT entrepreneurship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A daylong seminar was held at Distance Learning Theatre of Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (Kuet) yesterday on "Engineers' Path to Entrepreneurship Utilising IT Incubator". It was a networking opportunity for students who aspire to work in the IT industry.

Computer Science and Technology department of Kuet organised the seminar with the assistance of Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA).

Speakers at the event said it is important to create leadership in IT sector in Bangladesh. Kuet has been successfully producing good engineers for decades who are well known for their skill, capacity and integrity both locally and internationally. Following that legacy, it is high time that Kuet students with technologically advanced knowledge joined the path of leadership and entrepreneurship in Bangladesh, they said.

Kuet VC Dr Quazi Sazzad Hossain was present as the chief guest while Prof Dr Mohiuddin Ahmad was a special guest.

Safiqul Islam, project director of Hi-Tech Park, and Prof Md Aminul Haque Akhand spoke, among others, in the seminar. ASM Abdul Motin, chairman of GRAM Limited, and Md Miftah Uddin, CEO of Ubirix Inc, presented papers at the event.



The Aga Khan Academy Dhaka

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