

# Every upazila will have fire station: home boss

*Fire Service and Civil Defence Week begins*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is constantly working to increase the capacity of fire service, and it has already taken steps to set up fire stations in all upazilas, said Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday.

The minister said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave direction to set up fire stations in all upazilas, which is being implemented in phases.

“So far, there are 436 fire stations across the country, and authorities will set up some 129 new ones by 2021. Besides, there are also plans to set up 11 more modern model fire stations in industrial areas of Gazipur, Narayanganj, Dhaka and Chattogram,” he said.

Along with it, three separate projects are underway to set up 155 stations across the country, he further said, adding that there would be around 720 stations after implementing the plans.

He made the remarks while inaugurating Fire Service and Civil Defence Week-2020 via video conference from the ministry yesterday.

Home Ministry Security Service Division Secretary Md Shahiduzzaman and Director General of Fire Service and Civil Defence Brigadier General Md Sazzad Hussain also joined the video conference.

Asaduzzaman said the government is also working to increase the workforce of fire service. In 2009, the total workforce under Fire Service and Civil Defence was only 6,175, but has risen to 13,100.

The government is moving to reform the organogram of the service to increase its workforce to more than 25,000, the minister said.

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The area around Dhaka Medical College Hospital typically gets a lot of footfall as countless people visit the hospital daily. However, little space remains for pedestrians in such a busy area as hawkers have encroached nearly two-thirds of the footpath in front of DMCH.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## NOT WEARING MASKS 87 fined in Dhaka by district admin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities yesterday fined 87 people Tk 21,500 in a total of 85 cases for not using face masks in and outside Dhaka city.

Fifteen mobile courts of the district administration also distributed 1,600 masks among poor people in different areas and conducted awareness programmes, says a press release.

The courts conducted the drives and awareness programmes in five upazilas of Dhaka and Judge court, CMM court, Bahadur Shah park, Secretariat, Motijheel, Jigatola, Khilkhet, Press Club and Jatrabari areas in the capital.

A man named Mizan, who was fined Tk 200 in secretariat area around 2pm, told The Daily Star that he forgot to take a mask while leaving home.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on November 18 said though the intensity of Covid-19 pandemic has declined slightly in the country, it is likely to increase in the upcoming winter. She was replying to lawmakers’ queries in parliament during

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A motorcyclist and his pillion stop a car that hit their bike and was driving away in the capital’s Farmgate. While they engaged in a heated exchange, the bike and some items they were carrying lay in the middle of the street. According to a recent report, over a thousand people died in motorcycle accidents in the country this year till October. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## CHARGE FRAMING AGAINST MATIUR BFUJ leaders express concern

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of a faction of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) yesterday expressed concern on the framing of charges against five people, including Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman.

A court framed charges in a case filed over the tragic death of college student Naimul Abrar Rahat. BFUJ president M Abdullah and General Secretary Nurul Amin Rokon said in a statement that despite the absence of Prothom Alo editor and him having no direct involvement with the death of Naimul Abrar, the issuance of arrest warrants have raised questions.

“This is part of a series of attempts to block the path of independent journalism,” said the statement.

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## ACC to get digital forensic lab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To improve investigation capacity and ensure accuracy, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is going to set up a digital forensic lab.

The contracted firm has already supplied all necessary equipment for the lab, and they are being installed, according to a report of the anti-graft watchdog.

Yesterday at an evaluation meeting, ACC Director General AKM Sohel pointed out various activities of the information technology department before the commission.

In reply to a question, an ACC director said, “Once the lab starts functioning, we’ll be able to detect forged documents and signatures.”

Pointing out a limitation of ACC’s drive against bribery, he said there were instances of recipients of bribes getting away with the crime.

“They used to say they don’t know where the money came from and would get away without punishment from the court, terming the whole incident as conspiracy,” he continued.

“But we’ll be able to detect fingerprints using

forensic tests, and recipients of bribes won’t get a chance to escape,” he added.

“Not only documents, ACC will also be able to examine voices of telephone conversations. This will help us identify the accused,” the officer said.

Earlier, the commission was dependent on other agencies for such verification.

Hev said they are establishing the forensic lab with support from the US’s FBI and India’s CBI.

In the report, Sohel said the creation of investigation and prosecution management software is almost done. Through the software, the commission will be able to monitor the status of enquiry, investigation and prosecution.

According to the report, over 70 officers and staffers have been infected with coronavirus and three died. Nonetheless, the commission is carrying out activities using technology.

Setting up local area network for smooth communication among its headquarters, divisional and district offices is almost done, said Sohel.

Between March and October this year, ACC has so far scrutinised 7,270 complaints. Of these, over 400 have been selected for enquiry, he added.

# Only one-third of RMG workers use sanitary napkins

*Finds SANEM study*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recent survey on family planning and menstrual health on garments workers in Bangladesh found only 34 percent of women garment workers use sanitary napkins during menstruation, while 44 percent still use clean clothes instead.

It also found that three percent of them use no measures of the sort during their periods, while two percent use toilet tissues on days they have heavy flow.

Among those female garment workers to whom family planning was applicable (i.e. they were married, of reproductive age and ability), 71 percent reported employing active family planning strategies.

Fifty-two percent reported using some kind of contraceptive pill, while 30 percent used some kind of contraceptive injection.

Only nine percent were found using a condom, while one percent was found using an intrauterine device. Permanent surgery, or implant was each used by less than one percent of applicable female respondents.

The study was conducted by South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM) and Microfinance Opportunities (MFO). The researchers asked women respondents specific questions about their family planning strategies and menstrual health.

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# Six youths held on rape charges in capital

*Police claim to have detained them ‘within hours’*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday arrested six persons in connection with a rape case in the capital’s Kalyanpur area.

The arrestees are Raihan alias Nayeem, Imon Hossain, Md Imran, Joy Mia, Abu Sayeed, and Al Amin. They are all aged between 18 and 20, police said.

They were made accused in a rape case filed with Mirpur Police Station by the victim’s family yesterday.

Law enforcers claimed they detained the six within hours, by 3am yesterday, after the incident took place near House Building Research Institute in Kalyanpur between 8:35pm and 9:20pm on Wednesday.

According to a police release provided to media during a press conference at Mirpur Police Station yesterday, the victim, a garment worker aged 18, met Raihan and Joy around 8pm Wednesday near a foot-over bridge in Darus Salam area.

At one point, Raihan held her mouth shut and took her to a place near the House Building Research Institute under Mirpur Police Station. Other suspects joined them there. Raihan and Imon raped the victim,

while other accused were present there during the incident, said the release.

Officer-in-Charge Mustazirur Rahman of Mirpur Police Station said they will produce the accused before a court today.

The OC said they conducted a drive after receiving a complaint over the incident and first detained Raihan form Darus Salam area. Police later apprehended others based on information gleaned from Raihan.

Police also sent the victim to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for forensic test, said the OC.

The victim’s father, a street vendor, told The Daily Star Raihan is a relative of the family and that his daughter used to have friendly relations with the accused.

He claimed that after his daughter described the incident to family members upon returning home on Wednesday night, they went to Raihan’s house for justice.

Despite hearing everything, Raihan’s family reportedly refused to take any step, and instead rebuked father of the victim.

He said later they informed police about the incident, demanding justice for her daughter.



With the arrival of winter comes the need for blankets, and the demand for comfy and colourful ones are reaching the sky. To meet this, mobile retailers are stocking up their vans and hitting the road, like this trader operating around the capital’s Central Shaheed Minar area. This photo was taken last week.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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BYTES

## TikTok, Google Maps, Zoom and Instagram rolling out important upgrades

EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

**MORE TIKTOK PARENTAL CONTROL. YEP, THAT EXISTS.**

TikTok is now allowing parents more privacy and nanny options over what content their ward will view. Parents can now restrict who will see the videos uploaded by their children. This is much like the friends-only post viewing option on Facebook. They will also be able to manage search options such as hashtags used to search restricted or inappropriate content. There’s been just too much of #babukhaiso.

This is in addition to the existing ability to turn off or limit direct messages. It comes after the \$5.7 million TikTok paid to settle children’s safety issues faced by the predecessor Musid.ly.

**INSTAGRAM ROLLING OUT KEYWORD SEARCH**

Users in six English speaking countries can now search using keywords. Bangladesh, not yet. Previously, search options were restricted to hashtags or accounts limiting the actual variety of content showing up. While the update sounds promising, so far the machine learning has not caught up to better curate content that has not been tagged. This will roll out elsewhere but for now, users in Bangladesh have to still rely on #challengingtimes for relief on, well, challenging times. On a side note, I’m kind of disappointed that #challengingtimes has not yielded a single watch related image from BD. You will know if you follow your

memes.

**ZOOMBOMBERS: TIME TO KILL THEM DEAD**

The new term is coined for people who invade zoom meetings to disrupt the flow of often serious discussions. They show dubious content to either ruin or in some cases, spice up meetings and classes. Now Zoom is allowing temporary pauses in meetings to help kick these invaders out and report them.

Simply click the security icon and select ‘Suspend Participant Activities’ effectively shutting down the Zoombomber.

**GOOGLE MAPS TO PROVIDE NEW OVERLAY FOR COVID**

This will come with details and numbers on infected cases in particular areas provided by local authorities. I can sense you raising eyebrows at the last two words. Maps will also provide crowd density information on public transport allowing you to decide whether or not you want to avoid certain places. Great for social distancing. Just remember, Farmgate in Dhaka will always be red or a deeper shade of red.

The US is getting early access to the Google Assistant driving mode. Released on some Android devices, the features include telephony options to be accessible straight from maps without having to navigate different screens as well as having messages read out.

*For queries, mail to ronnyraza@thedailystar.net*