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SHAH CEMENT

Schools may close again if COVID-19 cases rise

Says PM, orders edu ministry to ensure everyone's access to online lessons

UNB, Dhaka

It will not be possible to keep schools open in case the number of Covid cases rises again, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said yesterday.

It has been noticed that the outbreak surges after winter, she said.

"Since it will not be possible to keep schools open in case of a fresh outbreak of Covid-19, you'll have to take measures to ensure the access of online teaching to every house," she said, addressing the education ministry.

She then urged guardians to assist students with online education.

The PM was virtually addressing an event, unveiling the results of Secondary School Certificate and its equivalent exams and inaugurating the distribution of free textbooks among school students for the academic year of 2022.

The PM also directed the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to be sincere so that all the students get inoculated.



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Workers of Khalishpur Jute Mill lining up at the sub-post office in Khulna's Khalishpur area to mail letters to the prime minister yesterday. In the letters, the workers asked for her intervention so that they get their arrears and other dues accumulated between 2015 and 2020, and their jute mill reopens.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

DU, Gulshan, Banani off-limits after 8:00pm

No outdoor New Year's Eve celebrations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Outsiders will be barred from entering the Dhaka University campus, Banani, Gulshan, Baridhara and Hatirheel areas after 8:00pm tonight.

Md Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said this at a briefing at the DMP Media Centre yesterday.

Those who are not from the DU, Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara areas are discouraged to visit those areas for security reasons, he said.

"However, the residents will be allowed to enter or exit upon identification."

The DMP chief said no one will be able to hold any gathering or programme in Hatirheel area after 6:00pm today and no one will be allowed to park any vehicle there.

No bar in the capital will remain open after 6:00pm today, Shafiqul said.

Officials said police in Dhaka have banned all kinds of outdoor events on the New Year's Eve, but there is no bar on indoor parties. People are allowed to arrange programmes in hotels on their own on a limited scale.

"Many people organise functions on roofs. We will discourage this as it creates disturbance in the neighborhoods," the DMP chief told reporters.

He urged the city dwellers to refrain from setting off fireworks as it "frightens people and create problems for patients and the elderly."

Restaurants will have to get clearance from the DMP to arrange events on the New Year's Eve,

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6 members of trafficking gang held

They lured girls with promise of film industry jobs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion has arrested six members of a gang that has trafficked around 100 young women to India after luring them with various promises on social media.

The gang mainly targeted girls and women from poor and lower middle-income families and promised them jobs in films, or employment in markets, superstores and beauty parlours in India, said Rab.

Once they took the victims to the neighbouring country, they confined the young women to "safe homes" where the gang members tortured them physically and mentally and forced them into prostitution under threat of death, said Rab-4 Commanding Officer Mozammel Haque.

The gang have trafficked around 100 girls and women to India in the last few years, claimed Rab.

A Rab team raided Darussalam area in the capital's Mirpur late on Wednesday night and made the arrests after a victim's

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Evening Courses at Public Univs UGC wants an end to it

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The University Grants Commission has said in its latest annual report that it wants closure of evening, weekend and executive courses at public universities as they negatively impact universities' image.

UGC officials said these courses were not regulated and were being operated for commercial purposes.

In the report the UGC also recommended greater consistency in tuition and other fees of private universities.

It also suggested preparing a blended education model that combines online and in-person classes and changing the exam process in line with the hybrid model.

In its "Annual Report 2020", the UGC has made a set of recommendations, including increasing budgetary allocation for higher education.

It said that at least two percent of the national budget should be allocated for higher education by 2022 and six percent by 2030.

The government currently allocates 0.87 percent of the national budget for higher education.

A delegation of UGC led by Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah submitted the report to President Abdul Hamid at the Bangabhaban yesterday evening and made a set of recommendations, UGC Member Prof Muhammed Alamgir told The Daily Star.

RECOMMENDATIONS

"Many public universities are running evening, weekend and executive courses for graduation and post-graduation courses. It is important to close these courses as it is hampering the character of universities and damaging their image," the annual report said.

It, however, said universities can run diploma, short courses and vocational training, after taking approval from UGC and following specific policies.

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EU for arms embargo on Myanmar

AFP, Brussels

The European Union yesterday called for an international arms embargo on Myanmar's junta and for toughening its own sanctions following last week's massacre of more than 30 people.

The killings took place on Christmas Eve in eastern Kayah state, where pro-democracy rebels have been fighting the military, which took over the government from the democratically elected administration in February.

The EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said "the appalling act of violence perpetrated by the military regime" on civilians and humanitarian workers underlined the "urgent need" to hold the junta accountable.

"In view of the escalating violence in Myanmar, increased international preventive action is required, including an arms

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Humans landing on Mars in 10 years!



INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Elon Musk has predicted that SpaceX will land humans on Mars within the next ten years.

The SpaceX CEO made the comments talking to podcaster Lex Fridman. Mr Fridman asked Musk for an estimation of how long it would take to reach the Red Planet, to which Musk replied: "Best case is about five years, worst case 10 years."

The estimate is based, Musk said, on factors such as "engineering" the SpaceX Starship that would take humans there. He also claimed that "Starship is the most complex and advanced rocket that's ever been made."

He continued: "The fundamental optimization of Starship is minimizing the cost per ton to orbit and ultimately cost per ton to the surface of Mars."

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The north shivers

STAR REPORT

People in the northern region of the country have been suffering immensely due to bone-chilling cold.

Strong winds and light rainfall yesterday caused the temperature to drop even further, disrupting lives of locals, especially those who belong to low-income groups.

A government bulletin said weather may remain mostly dry with a partly-cloudy sky. Light to moderate fog may occur at places across the country from midnight to morning.

The bulletin of Bangladesh Meteorological Department was released at 6:00pm last evening for 24 hours.

Temperatures at night may fall throughout the country, while it may remain unchanged during the day, it added.

The lowest temperature yesterday was 11.5 degrees Celsius in Chattogram's Sitakunda, while the highest was 29 degrees Celsius in both Sitakunda and Feni.

Asked how the same

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A flock of whimbrels pictured mid-flight in the Sundarbans. Widely found in the coastal and mangrove regions, the large shore bird has a crescent-shaped bill, which is why its genus name is Numenius or "new moon" in Greek.

PHOTO: ALA UDDIN MOHAMMAD

Star HEALTHLINE

Lead poisoning RAVAGING A NATION

DR MAHFUZ RAHMAN

In the eighth five-year plan, the government has set a target of raising GDP. After reaching the goal by 2024, the second perspective plan, i.e. Vision-2041, is being prepared to achieve the target of becoming a middle-income country by 2031 and a developed country by 2041. Research shows that lead pollution in recent times has led to a deficit in the country's GDP -- more than 2.5 times of the net foreign assistance. Lead exposure pollutes



Hyginex Instant hand sanitizer

BEACON Pharmaceuticals Limited

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