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2-day school weekend from next year

Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Educational institutions might have a two-day weekend from next year, Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

She added that they were also considering beginning the two-day weekend rule sooner than that, in a bid to save energy.

"From next year, there will be five days [of school] in line with the new curriculum," she told reporters at Chandpur Circuit House.

The upcoming curriculum, to be implemented in phases from January 2023, proposed a two-day weekend.

However, many private schools in the capital already have two days – Fridays and Saturdays – set as weekends, while all government schools enforce a one-day weekend.

Dipu Moni said that they want to rearrange classes in a way that five days of school would be sufficient for all students.

She added that many initiatives have been taken up to save electricity, as the "whole world is facing an energy crisis".

"Having five days of school is now under consideration. If we can do that, it would be a good opportunity to help save energy. However, we haven't taken a final decision in this regard."

She said that with this initiative, the number of vehicles plying the roads just to pick up and drop off school

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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Aman seedlings being planted in a hurry and at full swing in Kalikabati village of Khulna's Dacope upazila yesterday. Farmers had been worried that Aman yield would be poor this year due to a lack of rain for at least half the monsoon season. However, when rains began a couple of days ago, they didn't waste any time and began planting as many seedlings as possible. They even hired extra help for them to do so.

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All five- to 11-yr-olds to get Covid shots

Says health minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All children aged five to 11 will get Covid-19 vaccines during the upcoming inoculation campaign set to start on August 25, Health Minister Zahid Maleque said yesterday.

"There are around 2.20 crore children aged 5-11 years. Each of them will receive the vaccine no matter where they are in the country," he told reporters at an event marking the National Mourning Day at the National Cancer Research Institute and Hospital in the capital.

On August 11, 16 schoolchildren received the Pfizer vaccine for the age range as a trial in Dhaka.

Health officials said the mass inoculation campaign will start on August 25, initially in 12 city corporations, and then expanded nationwide as per the availability of vaccines.

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Myanmar court jails Suu Kyi for six years

AFP, Yangon

A Myanmar junta court jailed Aung San Suu Kyi for six years for corruption yesterday, a source close to the case said, taking the ousted leader's prison time to 17 years.

Suu Kyi, 77, has been detained since the generals toppled her government in a coup on February 1 last year, ending the Southeast Asian country's brief period of democracy.

She has since been hit with a series of charges, including violating the official secrets act, corruption and electoral fraud. She faces decades in jail if convicted on all counts.

Suu Kyi was sentenced to "six years imprisonment under four anti-corruption charges", said the source, who requested anonymity because they are not authorised to speak to the media.

She appeared in good health and did not make any statement following her latest sentencing, the source added.

A junta spokesman could not be reached for comment. The latest sentence handed to Suu Kyi is an "affront to justice and rule of law", the United States said.

The Nobel laureate has already been sentenced to 11 years in jail for corruption, incitement against the military, breaching Covid-19 rules and breaking a telecommunications law.

Journalists have been barred from attending the court hearings and Suu Kyi's lawyers have been banned from speaking to the media.

The coup sparked widespread protests and unrest, and renewed fighting with established ethnic rebel groups.

Dozens of "People's Defence Forces" have also sprung up to fight the junta and have surprised the military with their effectiveness, analysts say.

According to a local monitoring group, the crackdown has left more than 2,000 civilians dead and seen some 17,000 arrested.

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Romania labour market opening up

JAMIL MAHMUD

Romania has emerged as a destination for Bangladeshi migrant workers.

There is high demand for foreign workers in the European Union member state, and Bangladesh's overseas employment ministry last month gave permission to Asia Continental Group, a recruitment agency, to send 1,255 workers for two companies in Romania.

The "employment permit" issued to the agency on July 12 mentions that men and women will be recruited by the companies as cleaners, chauffeurs, locksmiths, welders, marine pipefitters, electricians, nurses, IT engineers, civil engineers, etc.

Romania Insider, a news site, reports that a consular mission of Romania granted 5,400 work visas to Bangladeshis between April and July.

Lokman Shah, proprietor of Asia Continental Group, said Romania's demand for migrant workers is nearly four times higher than the 1,255 approved by the ministry.

The monthly salary of the workers will range between \$400 and \$1,200. They will be employed initially for two to three years, and the job contracts are renewable.

The work and living conditions in the country will be good, Lokman said.

However, the Bangladeshi

authorities should try to make sure the workers do not attempt to illegally migrate to another country from Romania, he said.

According to the recent media reports, several Bangladeshis were arrested while they were trying to illegally migrate to other European countries from Romania.

Romania Insider also reports that there were 84,936 foreign

employees in Romania by the end of June.

The largest source of migrant workers in Romania is Turkey while Nepal and Moldova are other major sources, it added.

In recent years, Bangladesh has been trying to expand its labour market to Europe. In February this year, Bangladesh signed a memorandum of understanding

with Greece. As per the agreement, 4,000 Bangladeshis are expected to be hired each year by farms in Greece.

Imran Ahmad, overseas employment minister, met Romanian Ambassador to Bangladesh Daniela Mariana Sezonov Tane in March and discussed several areas of overseas employment cooperation.

The ministry has set each worker's migration cost at a maximum of Tk 4.22 lakh, reads the employment permit issued to Asia Continental Group.

The agency has started to submit workers' passports to Romanian authorities, Lokman said, adding that the workers were expected to start flying to Romania in a couple of months.



Armour-plated small dinosaur unearthed

REUTERS, Buenos Aires



Paleontologists heralded the discovery of a previously unknown small armored dinosaur in southern Argentina, a creature that likely walked upright on its back legs roaming a then-steamy landscape about 100 million years ago.

The Cretaceous Period dinosaur, named Jakapil kaniukura, would have been well-protected with rows of bony disk-shaped armor along its neck and back and down to its tail, they said.

It measured about 5 feet (1.5 meters) long and weighed only 9 to 15 pounds (4-7 kg), similar to an average house cat.

Its fossilized remains were dug up over the past decade near a dam in Patagonia in Rio Negro province's La Buitrera paleontological zone. The scientists described Jakapil in a study published in the journal Scientific Reports.

The scientists said Jakapil marks a first-of-its-kind discovery of an armored dinosaur from the Cretaceous in South America. It is part of the thyreophoran dinosaur group that includes the likes of Stegosaurus, known for its bony back plates and spiky tail, and tank-like Ankylosaurus, covered in armor and wielding a club-like tail.

Lead paleontologist Sebastian Apestegui and his colleagues found a partial skeleton of Jakapil along with 15 tooth fragments featuring a leaf-like shape, similar to iguana teeth.

Jakapil resembles a primitive form of

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SUED UNDER DSA Youth lands in jail for 'threatening' PM on TikTok

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A youth landed in jail in a Digital Security Act case yesterday, hours after he was detained by police in Sylhet's Beanibazar upazila over threatening Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's life and making derogatory comments about her in a TikTok video.

The accused, Md Mohi Uddin Manna, 25, runs a tea stall in Mollapur village in Beanibazar. He hails from Muchegul village in Moulvibazar's Barlekha upazila.

Incensed by the recent fuel price hike, Mohi Uddin uploaded the video on

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An out-of-order traffic light in the capital's Gulistan. Almost all the traffic lights in the area are non-functional. Even though a lot of money is spent on upgrading the traffic system, including signal lights, traffic is still controlled manually in the country. Meanwhile, the signals remain unused and ultimately stop working. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

50 hurt as two BCL factions clash in Barguna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

At least 50 activists and leaders were injured during a clash between two BCL factions in Barguna yesterday.

According to police, a rally by Barguna district BCL, led by its president Rezaul Kabir and general secretary Taushifur Rahman Imran, was on its way to the district Shilpakala Academy as part of its national mourning day programme.

When it reached around 12:00pm, activists of another faction started throwing brickbats at them from the building, triggering the clash.

SM Tarek Rahman, additional superintendent of police in Barguna, said that when police went to the scene to bring the situation under control, they were also attacked with brick chips.

"We had charge batons to disperse the two groups."

District BCL President Rezaul Kabir said, "When we took our rally to the Shilpakala Academy, another group suddenly started attacking us from the roof of the building. Later, police came and removed us from

there." During the clash, a few motorcycles and an ASP's car were vandalised.

Police later raided the Shilpakala Academy and Launch Ghat areas, and recovered sticks and sharp weapons.



Sabuj Molla, vice-president of the running committee, who was an aspirant for the president post, said, "We were on the second floor of the building. Then suddenly some activists came there and threw brickbats at us. Police then came and kicked us out of the building."

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