

New year, new curriculum

Says Dipu Moni

UNB, Dhaka

New curriculum will be introduced for primary, secondary and higher secondary level students from next year, Education Minister Dipu Moni said yesterday.

"The government formulated the new curriculum keeping in mind the labour market at home and abroad. Education from primary to higher secondary level will see a major transformation. As per the plan, the new curriculum will be introduced next year," she said.

The education minister revealed this information while speaking at a discussion marking Victory Day at Anima Chowdhury Auditorium in Natore district town.

Textbooks will be handed over to the students in the new year amid all obstacles, she said.

Termining the opposition political parties including

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Even in this modern age, some prefer grinding spices in the good old way with shilpatas (a stone slab with a stone grinder). To meet such demands, shilpata carvers work all day to make these traditional grinding tools. Depending on size, they are then sold between Tk 300 and Tk 500. This photo was taken in Keraniganj's Ambagicha area recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Fourth Covid shot campaign begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special campaign for administering the fourth Covid-19 vaccine dose started yesterday.

Ahmedul Kabir, director general of the Directorate General of Health Services, launched the campaign at Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka.

On the first day, a total of NNNN elderly and priority group people received their fourth doses from around 1,000 permanent centres across the country, according to a DGHS press release.

Only Pfizer vaccines are being used in the campaign.

The priority group people include -- frontliners, pregnant women, immunocompromised people and citizens aged 18 and above suffering from chronic diseases will be given the vaccine during the campaign.

The frontliners include -- freedom fighters, staffers of

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Peaceful CHT for a peaceful Bangladesh

Say speakers at rally demanding full implementation of accord

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Peace cannot be ensured in Bangladesh unless the Chattogram Hill Tracts (CHT) are in peace, said speakers at a rally yesterday.

Full implementation of the CHT accord can bring peace for the hill-tracts people, and for all citizens too, they added.

They were addressing the rally at Shahbagh after participating in a mass procession that started from Jatiya Shaheed Minar on the occasion of 25 years of CHT accord's signing (December 2, 1997).

The accord was signed between the government and Parbatya Chattogram Jana Sanghaty Samity (PCJSS).

The demonstrations were arranged as part of a combined movement for full implementation of the accord. Different political parties, and social- and human-rights organisations from the hill tracts and plain land participated.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers Party of Bangladesh, said the responsibility of implementing the accord not only lies with the CHT people but also with all Bangladeshis.

"We are witnessing the consequence of not implementing the accord. Armed groups, created with special assistance of influential quarters involved in militant activities, started militant training. Those militants hinder our peace and development inside

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'Help us stay afloat'

Private airlines meet JS body, demand reduced jet fuel price, charges

RASHIDUL HASAN

Top officials of the country's three private airlines yesterday placed a five-point demand before a parliamentary watchdog to keep the air operators afloat.

The points include reducing jet fuel price and charges imposed by the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).

Authorities of the airlines made the demand at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on civil aviation and tourism ministry at Sangsad Bhaban.

On behalf of them, Aviation Operators Association of Bangladesh (AOAB), undersigned by its secretary general Mofizur Rahman and vice-president Abdullah Al Mamun, placed a written proposal describing various challenges for which the private airlines are struggling for survival.

About the high price of jet fuel, AOAB said the country's private airlines are on the verge of going extinct due to the high price. Spending on jet fuel amounts to around 50 percent of an airline's operational cost.

"Besides, 30 to 40 percent more is spent on jet fuel for operating domestic flights in Bangladesh, when compared to the average international spending," it adds.

Mofizur Rahman, also managing director of Novoair, said they are bound to buy jet fuel only from Padma Oil. Different airlines could buy jet fuel from sellers of their choice if the buying process was open.

"Airlines are not affordable due to the high jet fuel price. Therefore, passengers on different routes have gone down significantly," he also said.

According to sources, in the last 26 months, Padma Oil Company Limited increased the price of jet fuel 17 times. The company raised the price by 170 percent during this period.

About high aeronautical and non-aeronautical charges of CAAB, Mofizur said, airlines are struggling for survival due to the sky-high surcharge rate imposed by the regulatory authority.

The annual surcharge rate is 72 percent. Due to this, airlines have no chance to turn around, once they fall into debt.

In Bangladesh, airlines have to pay aeronautical, landing and parking charges at high rates, when

ISSUES
» High operational cost
» Jet fuel can only be bought from Padma Oil
» Sky-high surcharge rate
» Costly imports, high duties
» Unfair competition between Biman, private airlines
DEMANDS
» Reduce jet fuel price
» Bring down charges imposed by CAAB
» Make buying process of jet fuel open

compared to similar charges in different countries of the region, sources at different private operators told The Daily Star.

The airlines of India pay no landing and parking fees for aircraft with 80 or fewer seats.

Aeronautical and non-aeronautical charges in Bangladesh are seven times higher than those of neighbouring country India, added the source.

AOAB also mentioned costly imports and high duties for which airlines are having a hard time.

Besides, spare parts of airlines are being imported through letter of credit, which is not acceptable anywhere in the world at present, it also said.

Sources said an airline needs to import hundreds of spare parts for rectification and overhaul. Sometimes, it takes months to obtain permission for importing.

Costly imports and delays are other reasons behind the struggling private airline business, AOAB said.

In most cases, an airline has to pay duties at high

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83pc female workers don't report abuse

Finds study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eighty-three percent of women workers in Dhaka Export Processing Zone are reluctant to file any complaint on sexual harassments they face at workplaces and payment issues, fearing it would cost their jobs.

A study done by Karmajibi Nari revealed the data in a seminar held at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

The study titled "Women Workers and Labour Standard of Dhaka Export Processing Zone: Creating Space for Women Workers of DEPZ to Share Their Struggle" was conducted from 2021 to June 2022.

Around 90 percent of the women workers don't have any idea about the safety committee, anti-harassment committee or workers welfare association in DEPZ, the study reads, while others believe such bodies mostly work on behalf of the factory owners.

"As many as 83.4 percent of women, who at any stage of their service life experienced either sexual harassment, payment delay or maternal leave issues, did not lodge any complaint apprehending they would lose their job once they seek any remedy," said Farhana Afrin Tithi, one of the researchers who took part in the study.

Around 90 percent of the women workers don't have any idea about the safety committee, anti-harassment committee or workers welfare association in DEPZ, the study reads, while others believe such bodies mostly work on behalf of the factory owners.

Taking part in the seminar, Shirin Akther, member of Parliamentary Standing Committee,

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DENGUE FEVER

1 dead, 108 hospitalised in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least one dengue patient died and 108 were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

According to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), the death toll has risen to 272.

The total number of dengue patients stands at 61,629.

A total of 60,777 patients have been released from hospitals so far, while 580 patients are still undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, experts continue to urge authorities to take extensive measures to tackle the situation.



PRAYER TIMING
DECEMBER 21

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:25	12:45	3:45	5:24	7:00
JAMAAT 6:00	1:15	4:00	5:27	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Climate change a human rights concern: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Civil-society organisations yesterday urged policymakers to adopt a separate policy to protect the human rights of climate-affected communities.

They made the call at an event titled, "CSOs Call on Human Rights Day 2022: Respect, Promote and Consider Human Rights in all Climate Actions".

The event was held at the capital's Jatiya Press Club. The programme was organised by the Centre for Participatory Research and Development (CRPD).

Shamsuddoha, executive director of CRPD, said CRPD in its research and investigation saw that climate change is creating obstacles for affected communities to access food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care and education.

Above all, the communities are being deprived of the right to live a quality life.

"Human rights of women who are financially weak or physically challenged are mostly violated," he added. Shamsuddoha urged authorities to create a separate policy, which will treat the sufferings of climate victims as human-rights violations.

Khodeja Sultana Lopa, country director of Diakonia, said there is no longer any debate about climate change being a human-rights concern.

However, more research should be conducted on the issue of human-rights violation to minimise the loss and damage at the grassroots, she added.

Shahnawaz Whara from Regional Climate and Resilient Advocacy Manager at Practical Action and project coordinator of CRPD, spoke, among others.

It's all a big 'stunt' to mislead people

Says Quader on BNP's reform plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday termed the BNP's 27-point state reform proposal nothing but a "stunt" to mislead people of the country.

He said through these points it is not possible to mobilise public opinion and people will not be misled.

Quader came up with the remark at a meeting marking the party's 22nd national council at party president Sheikh Hasina's Dhanmondi office.

The AL general secretary referred to the BNP's proposal for state reform as "laughable".

He also said Bangladesh is a wonder to the rest of the world. "Compared to the country's situation 14 years ago, Bangladesh's development scenario has changed significantly," he added.

He said, "The country they (BNP leaders) nearly destroyed has been repaired by Sheikh Hasina's skillful leadership by building Digital Bangladesh. We are now moving forward with the goal of creating Smart Bangladesh in 2040."

Quader further said, "We don't steal democracy and votes. They (BNP) did these things... and this is not new for them."



AL's attempt to shift blame won't work

Says Khandaker Mosharraf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Responding to the Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader's comment criticising BNP's state reform proposals, BNP standing committee member Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain said the ruling party wants to shift blame to others.

"Awami League earned a bad name as it destroyed the country's judiciary and democratic structures. But now they [AL] are saying that the state was collapsed during BNP's regime. People will not believe such an attempt to shift the blame to others," he said.

Mosharraf made the remark while addressing a human chain programme in front of the party's Nayapatan headquarters, organised to demand the release of party leaders and activists.

Mosharraf said the government arrested opposition men to foil the December 10 rally in Dhaka but all their attempts went in vain.

Amanullah Aman, convener of Dhaka North city unit BNP, said no election would be held in the country under a partisan government. Mohila Dal organised the human chain where its president Afroza Abbas demanded immediate and unconditional release of those detained.



TRADER MURDER

PBI gets 8th date to finish probe against ex-MP Awal

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked PBI to submit by January 25, 2023 the probe report on further investigation into the case filed against former lawmaker MA Awal and 14 others over the killing of trader Md Shahinuddin in May last year.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Tariqul Islam passed the order after Md Monir Hossain, an inspector of Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) and also the case's investigation officer, failed to submit any report by yesterday.

With this, PBI took eight dates to complete further probe into the case.

On May 12 this year, another Dhaka court ordered PBI for further investigation after Aklima Begum, mother of the victim, filed a no-confidence petition, rejecting the initial probe report.