

Boi Mela to kick off Feb 1 after 3 years

Last minute preparations underway at venues

DIPAN NANDY

In the last two years, Amar Ekushey Boi Mela has been marred by fears, delays, and uncertainties caused by the pandemic. However, Bangla Academy hopes that this year's book fair will return to its former glory with life getting back on track.

Bangla Academy has decided to hold this year's Boi Mela from February 1, the usual date, after three long years, sending a message to bookworms that this edition will be a special one for them.

The 2022 edition was held between February 15 to March 28 with strict Covid-19 restrictions in place, as the country was coming off fresh from the enforced lockdown due to Covid-19 in the first two weeks of February. In 2021, it started on March 18 due to the pandemic and also ended early -- on April 12, instead of April 14 -- due to a countrywide lockdown.

Although the fair starts on February 1 every year, the tradition was first broken in 2020 because of the Dhaka City Corporation elections. That year, the event started on February 2.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be present in person and inaugurate this year's book fair on February 1. As the event is knocking at the door, Bangla Academy and publishing houses are currently busy with last minute preparations. The construction of stages and book stalls are going on in full swing at the premises of Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan.

This year, 858 stalls and 38 pavilions of 609

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Last-minute preparations are underway for this year's Ekushey Boi Mela at the Suhrawardy Udyan. After three years, the largest congregation of bookworms will kick off on February 1. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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War, sanction must not affect food

Agriculture minister urges developed countries at Berlin conference

UNB, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister Abdur Razzaque has urged developed countries to keep food and agricultural products out of the purview of wars and sanctions.

Developed countries should be more responsible and proactive in ensuring global food security, the minister said at the 15th Berlin Agriculture Ministers Conference in Germany on Saturday.

Bangladesh is a victim of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war, he said, adding that as a result of this war, price of fertiliser has quadrupled, and price of food grains has increased significantly -- impacting food security.

"I call upon the developed world to take flexible, unbureaucratic,

2nd phase of Ijtema ends with prayer for peace

STAR REPORT

Tens of thousands of Muslims raised their hands seeking forgiveness and blessings for mankind as the second phase of Biswa Ijtema on the banks of Turag concluded yesterday with the final supplication -- Akheri Munajat.

Yusuf bin Saad Kandhalvi, the eldest son of Maulana Saad Kandhalvi of Delhi, conducted the final prayers, which lasted for 29 minutes starting from 12:16pm. The gathering of devotees of all ages spilled onto the adjacent roads during the prayer. A pin-drop silence prevailed in the virtual sea of humanity, with the prayers being offered through loudspeakers.



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Many people joined the prayers from rooftops of vehicles and buildings, from open fields and from nearby houses and roads.

Devotees who could not reach the venue joined the prayers through cell phones and electronic media. The first phase of the Ijtema ended on January 15.

Religious scholars from home and abroad also delivered sermons on Islamic philosophy in light of the holy Quran and Hadith.

Since yesterday morning, devotees from the surrounding areas started gathering at the venue in

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DU regular master's now open for all

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

From now on, students who have completed their bachelor's from Bangladeshi universities will be able to enrol into the regular master's programmes of Dhaka University.

The students will be able to enrol in any academic year of their choice, regardless of when they completed their bachelor's.

But only students who have passed bachelor's with a CGPA of 3.25 will be able to apply for the DU master's programmes, said a recent syndicate-approved admission guideline.

Students will also need to meet the minimum requirements for SSC and HSC results set for the DU admission test for undergraduate degrees.

And these aspirants will have to sit for a 100-mark written and viva test for empty seats available following the admission process DU students face.

Talking to The Daily Star, DU Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman said, "We are allowing students who have completed bachelor's from other public and UGC-approved universities to create lifelong learning opportunities for all and ensure inclusiveness."

Private universities are also approved by UGC, so students who have completed their undergraduate programmes will be eligible, he added. "Students will get the scope to study the subjects of their choice through this."

Currently, only students who have graduated from DU get the opportunity to pursue a master's, that too in only their respective departments.



- ### AT A GLANCE
- Students with bachelor's from any Bangladeshi univ eligible
 - They can enrol in any academic year of choice; min required CGPA 3.25
 - Aspirants will have to sit for 100-mark written, viva test
 - DU students can also enrol in different dept's master's courses
 - Students with bachelor's degrees from overseas univs can also enrol

Some seats in master's programmes remain vacant since all regular students do not enrol after graduation. The fees for master's would remain the same for both outsiders and former DU students, said Prof Sitesh Chandra Bachar, dean of DU's pharmacy faculty.

There are 6,270 master's seats at DU's 83 departments and 13 institutes. A large number of seats remain vacant, as many drop out to go abroad or join jobs.

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2,605 posts vacant in govt medical colleges

Health minister tells parliament

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Health Minister Zahid Maleque told parliament yesterday that there are 2,605 posts vacant in government medical colleges in the country, against approved cadre posts of 5,589.

He made the comment while replying to a query from a ruling Awami League lawmaker.

The minister said teachers are not appointed directly in the medical colleges. The medical officers are appointed subject-wise as lecturers.

Responding to another question from AL MP Didarul Alam, he said about twice the number of patients are currently receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, which has a bed-capacity of 2,600.

"The government has planned to raise the number of beds at DMCH to 5,000 to ensure better service," the minister said.

Responding to another query, he said the number of HIV patients currently detected in the country is 9,708. Of them, 6,075 are under treatment.

UTTARA GIRDER ACCIDENT

Chinese company gives families Tk 1.4cr compensation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chinese company that was found responsible for the accident at Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Line-3 project site in August last year paid Tk 1.4 crore to the victims' families as compensation.

Three families received compensation around one and a half months ago, following negotiation between the company and family members, said Shafiqul Islam, managing director of Dhaka Bus Rapid Transit Company.

Five people, including two children, were crushed to death when a crane toppled over, making a box girder segment fall on a car on Dhaka Mymensingh highway in the capital's Uttara on August 15 last year.

A probe committee, led by Neelima Akhter, additional secretary of the road transport and highways division, held Chinese contractor China Gezhouba Group Co Ltd responsible for negligence.

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8 hospitalised with dengue in 24 hours

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least eight dengue patients were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new figure, the total number of dengue cases rose to 475, while the total number of deaths this year stands at six, according to the Directorate General of Health Services.

Meanwhile, 65 patients are being treated and 403 have been released from hospitals so far.

Experts have urged authorities concerned to conduct extensive drives identifying clusters of Aedes mosquitoes since the beginning of the lean period.



A woman stares in horror as she stands drastically close to a moving bus while crossing the road. Despite the fact that there's a footover bridge just a few yards away, time and time again pedestrians choose to cross roads in such a dangerous manner, putting their lives on the line just to save a few seconds. This photo was taken in the capital's Shyamoli area yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

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