

No recruitment at city corporations in 8 years

DSCC, DNCC grapple with manpower crisis as many posts vacant; officials unhappy with new service rules

HELEMUL ALAM and MATHEWS CHIRAN

While the two Dhaka city corporations often get flak for delay in development and other works or lacking in implementation of plans, a lot of those criticisms would sound rather harsh when one considers that there have been no new recruitment to the city corporations in over eight years -- since Dhaka City Corporation was split in two in 2011 -- and a large number of posts remain vacant.

	Total number of posts	Vacant posts	Percentage of vacant posts
DNCC	1,858	1,101	59.6%
DSCC	2,422	684	28.2%

SOURCE: DSCC, DNCC

According to officials, 1,101 posts out of 1,858 in Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) are vacant, while 684 out of 2,422 approved posts remain unoccupied in Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC).

Since the inception of the two city corporations, there had been no recruitment policy. As per officials, the undivided city corporation used to recruit employees under the 1989 service policy.

DNCC Secretary Rabindra Sree Barua said, "DNCC and DSCC are working with the manpower they inherited from the undivided Dhaka City Corporation. It is difficult for us to work with this limited number of employees."

The Dhaka South City Corporation Employment Service Rules-2019 -- and its counterpart for DNCC -- were approved in September last year.

"We could not recruit any new manpower as we did not have a recruitment policy, but the government has passed a policy recently," Barua told this newspaper, adding that they have been instructed by the Local Government Division to recruit manpower in accordance with revenue.

About the new service rules, DSCC Mayor Sayeed Khokon said they have some observations about it, and would share those with the ministry concerned.

However, he also said that by this time, they will continue the recruitment process to fill up the posts, following the new employment rules.

However, the new service rules have caused frustration among officials and employees, as the rules did not increase the number of posts, rather decreased them in many cases, complained officials, preferring not to be named.

Wishing anonymity, a DSCC official said, "We can't provide necessary civic services due to manpower shortage. Our officials and staffers are now holding multiple posts due to the crisis, and as a result cannot focus on ensuring quality service."

Officials holding additional posts are not getting extra pay accordingly, he lamented.

He also said in the new service rules, the posts of departmental heads are reserved

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PHOTO OF THE DAY

RASHED SHUMON



A group of women taking a boat from Mohakhali to Korail. Each person pays Tk 10 to commute to home after work or during break hours. This photo was taken recently.

WOMEN'S UNPAID CARE WORK

Change of mindset imperative: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Undervaluing women's unpaid care work is directly linked to poverty, domestic violence and is a barrier to women's empowerment, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Mentioning that the reason for this undervaluing is embedded deep in social structure, attitude and everyday practices, they stressed on rearranging infrastructure for reducing and redistributing the time and effort women put into unpaid care work at home.

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh organised the dialogue at Brac Centre in Dhaka, said a press release. The focus of the dialogue was: Addressing unpaid care work for women's empowerment and implementation of SDGs.

Moderated by Shaheen Anam, executive director of MJF, members of national and international NGOs, UN organisations, CSOs, research institutes and academicians attended the discussion. Banasree Mitra Neogi, gender advisor of MJF, presented a keynote speech at the event.

Speakers mentioned that there is no specific information on women's domestic work except the "Time Use Survey 2012" by Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

The BBS study showed that on average men spend 5 percent while women spend 25.8 percent of their time on domestic work.

Another study titled "Estimating women's contribution to the economy 2015" revealed that on an average, a woman works about 7.7 hours on non-SNA (System of National Account) activities on a typical day.

In his concluding speech, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of CPD and convener of the Citizen's Platform for SDGs, Bangladesh highlighted the importance of changing mindset, which is important to address and recognise women's unaccounted work.

"It is the unaccounted work of women that underpins society's well-being, social development and economic growth," he said.

Dr Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies; Dr Tania Haque, Professor of the Department of Women and Gender Studies, Dr Salma Akhter, Professor of the Department of Sociology and Dr MM Akash, Professor of the Department of Economics at Dhaka University also spoke at the session.

Huge risk of dengue outbreak this year

Experts warn, suggest early mosquito control efforts

HELEMUL ALAM

As authorities concerned have failed to take any visible effective measure so far to control Aedes mosquito outside Dhaka, there is a huge risk of dengue outbreak this year.

Experts suggested to take immediate steps to control Aedes mosquito population so that the nation doesn't face another catastrophe this year.

According to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 101,354 dengue cases were reported last year, of which 49,544 were outside Dhaka. The number of deaths was 156.

Entomologist Dr Manzur Chowdhury, former president of Geological Society of Bangladesh, said as there was early rain this year, a survey should be carried out within a few days in areas where there were significant number of dengue patients last year.

"It is important to pay more attention to rural areas as healthcare facilities are inadequate there," he said.

Prof Kabirul Bashar, an entomologist of Jahangirnagar University said Aedes albopictus being a vector in rural areas is a serious concern, considering its management method is different.

Local administration, under the leadership of deputy commissioners, will have to be proactive, and they will need necessary training, he said.

"As presence of dengue virus as well as Aedes mosquito was detected outside Dhaka, there remains a huge risk of dengue [outbreak]," said Prof Meerjady Sabrina Flora, director of Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

She said if breeding source control activities are not undertaken properly, the

risk will remain high. Health and local government ministries have been working on the issue, she added.

"We have held a meeting with mayors of different Pourasava outside Dhaka and urged them to strengthen mosquito control activities in their areas," she said, adding that mayors are aware of the risk but it is challenging for them as they did not carry out these activities on a large scale earlier.

"We have been working on an integrated vector management guideline and its first draft has already been prepared," she further added.

Additional Secretary of Local Government Division Sohrab Hossain said they will hold follow-up meeting on Integrated Vector Management (IVM) plan this month.

Sohrab said they are instructing district and upazila level administrations to carry out anti-mosquito drives and cleaning activities round the year.

Kabir Mahmood, deputy commissioner of Pabna, said they held many awareness programmes last year for mosquito control.

"We are preparing to start an awareness campaign shortly. We are also publishing advertisement in different media outlets," said Kabir.

AKM Mahbubur Rahman, mayor of Bogura, said they will take different mosquito control measures starting early this year.

"We will start awareness programme as well as anti-mosquito drive shortly. Garbage management will also be carried out," he said.

A survey by IEDCR recently found the presence of Aedes albopictus outside Dhaka.

Aedes albopictus, also called Asian tiger mosquito, is a small, dark mosquito with

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'Rape incidents rising because of impunity'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A culture of impunity is leading to recurrence of incidents of rape and sexual violence against women in the country, said different socio-cultural, professional and rights organisations yesterday, expressing deep concerns over Sunday's rape of a Dhaka University student.

They also demanded immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the rapist.

In separate statements, the organisations also sought steps for proper treatment and safety of the victim.

In a statement, Dhaka University Teachers' Association said, "We are noticing with grave concern that rape is becoming a social disease. Rape is rampant in the society due to the leniency of law enforcers, prolonged trial process and lack of exemplary punishment to the rapists because of improper investigation."

"We have to raise our voice now to root the menace out. Otherwise, it will become an epidemic which will cause long-term damage for the nation," it added.

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad said, "We have long been noticing that school, college and university students and working women are constantly being subjected to rape, gang rape, murder after rape and sexual assault."

At times, family members and students are being attacked for protesting these incidents. As a result, the safety of women, students and girls is severely hampered and their free movement is being affected, it added.

The Parishad requested Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take prompt action to ensure speedy trial, adopting a zero-tolerance policy in cases of rape, murder after rape and sexual assault.

Holding a human chain in front of Raju Memorial Sculpture, the organisation urged all to wage a social movement against the crime.

Rights body Ain o Salish Kendra said, "Increasing violence against women has become one of the major concerns in our national life."

The achievements in women's rights and empowerment are constantly fading due to incidents of rape, torture and other violence against women, it added.

It is undoubtedly the weakness of the state that it cannot ensure a safe and conducive environment for women, ASK said, demanding justice for the DU student.

Sammilito Samajik Andolon said incidents of sexual assault and rape are going on unabated.

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Writ petition seeks deferral of city polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer has filed a writ petition with the High Court seeking a directive on the Election Commission to defer the date (January 30) of Dhaka city corporation elections, as Saraswati Puja is also on that day.

Advocate Ashoke Kumar Ghosh submitted the petition before the HC on Sunday, requesting the court to order the EC to defer the election date and hold the polls in the first week of February.

In the petition, Ghosh said that Saraswati Puja, one of the major religious festivals of the Hindu community, will be held at almost all academic institutions across the country on January 29 and January 30.

Polling centres will be set up at the institutions for holding the election. As a result, observance of the puja will be hampered, he mentioned in the petition.

Ghosh told reporters that the HC may hold hearing on the writ petition any day this week.

On December 22, 2019, the Election Commission announced that the elections to the Dhaka south and north city corporations will be held on January 30.



A pick-up truck carrying bamboo nearly double its length almost bumps into another vehicle while making its way to Rugganj's Sultana Kamal bridge. This is kind of reckless behaviour is not uncommon, especially in the outskirts of Dhaka.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

The Daily Star
21st 'O' & 'A' Level
Awards Presentation Ceremony, 2018-2019

Announcement for 'O' & 'A' Level
Private Candidates and Schools

Private Candidates
 Private candidates who fulfill the criteria described below are requested to register their names at The Daily Star office for inclusion as awardees. The criteria to be fulfilled are as follows:

Criteria for 'O' Level
 Minimum 6 (six) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Criteria for 'A' Level
 Minimum 3 (three) 'A' grades in two consecutive sittings from **May/June 2018 to May/June 2019** for Edexcel and **May/June 2018 to October/November 2019** for Cambridge.

Eligible candidates are requested to contact The Daily Star, (64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), with their original results certificates and a photocopy and 2 (two) passport-size photographs in person by 20th January 2020, anytime between 11:00 am to 5:00 pm (Except Fridays and Saturdays). Please do contact +8801786111100, before coming to The Daily Star office.

Schools
 Any school that has students meeting the above criteria but has not been contacted by The Daily Star (i.e. has not been informed of the first scheduled meeting through regular post, email or phone) is requested to contact The Daily Star (64-65, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Level-5, Dhaka-1215), on the aforementioned dates and times or email at a.level.tb@gmail.com by 31st January 2020, with:

- The name of the school, phone number and name of a responsible representative and a valid email address that is checked regularly.

The schools are also requested to promptly prepare a list of the candidates meeting the above criteria, the number of 'A'/'A+' grades achieved by each candidate, and photocopies of results certificates for each candidate.

No registration will be allowed or accepted after 5:00 pm of 31st January 2020.

NOTE: If you know of any private candidate(s) or school(s) that may be unaware of this, please pass on the above information to them so that we may include them in this ceremony.

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