

# The Daily Star

COMMITTED TO  
People's Right to Know

REGD. No. DA 781 • VOL. XII No. 223 • DHAKA TUESDAY DECEMBER 31, 2002 •

## Govt to fill 25pc vacant posts on contract

### No PSC scrutiny for freshers in health, education

**SHAHRIAR KARIM**

The cabinet yesterday decided on speedy recruitment of freshers to fill up 25 per cent of vacant posts in health and education cadres bypassing the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The new recruits will be appointed on a five-year contract.

The ministries and departments concerned will arrange a 500-mark 'special examination' to fill up the 25 per cent vacant posts, highly placed sources said.

The health and education ministries together have about 40,000 vacancies, which means there will be about 10,000 fresh recruitment under the special arrangement, according to sources.

There will be no bar on new recruits to appear in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examinations and should any of them come out successful in the BCS they will be absorbed in regular cadre service, the sources added.

"In fact, the new recruits will be encouraged to appear in the BCS examinations to be absorbed in the cadre service," said a source in the cabinet.

A cabinet meeting held at Prime Minister's Office with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair endorsed a secretarial committee recommendations which suggested amendments to the recruitment rules and systems for speedy appointments to all vacant posts.

Cabinet Secretary Dr Saadat Husain placed the committee recommendations and the cabinet approved some major recommendations.

There are 1,57,523 posts remained vacant in different ministries and government departments against total approved posts of 9,98,709.

"Basically doctors and other manpower in hospitals and teachers in schools and colleges will be appointed through this special arrangement only on a five-year contract," a highly placed source said.

"As the normal process of recruitment through BCS exams under the PSC is lengthy, the cabinet decided go for a special arrangement for speedy recruitment," another source said.

The secretarial committee in its recommendations also suggested some major changes in the relevant laws, rules and regulations and systems, vestments.

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## A RIVER RAVAGED



PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Workers head-lift sand on the bank of the Turag on the outskirts of the capital yesterday. The authorities almost turn a deaf ear to the encroachment on the riverbank despite many wake-up calls.

## Tight security to check New Year nuisance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security has been beefed up countrywide to avert any untoward incident in the capital and elsewhere during New Year celebrations.

This time around, the army will be on duty along with the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, the police and different intelligence agencies.

In the city, some 3,000 police and BDR personnel will be stationed at 84 points with dog squads and mounted policemen. Policewomen will also be deployed in certain areas. Besides, the plainclothes policemen will also be on duty.

"In fact, the force will keep vigil on every possible gathering after

evening," said Dhaka Metropolitan Commissioner Mohammad Abdul Quyum.

Special attention will be given to the diplomatic enclaves, he said. "A deputy commissioner will coordinate several police teams deployed in these areas."

Sources said recent powerful explosions at cinema halls in Sakhira and Mymensingh have prompted the authorities to go for additional security measures.

As in previous years, the largest New Year gathering is expected at the Teachers Students Centre of Dhaka University.

The university administration has taken elaborate measures to

avert any untoward incident.

Like other countries, people of Bangladesh welcome near-year through various ways. In Dhaka, people from all ages will gather at TSC of the Dhaka University to welcome the new-year. The capital will turn into a city of joy soon after one minute past 12.

The Dhaka University authorities have taken elaborate measures to avert any untoward incident on the campus.

Women will not be allowed to enter the campus after nine o'clock tonight and provosts and house tutors will be on guard in the respective halls of residence from 11:00pm

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## Degree exams start today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The degree (pass) and subsidiary examinations under the National University begin today countrywide amid tight security.

Some 340,000 examinees sit for their exams at 611 centres under six divisions over the next two months. English first paper exam is scheduled to be held today at 10:30am.

The university authorities have decided to take stern action in case of any kind of unfair means, against the backdrop of scandals in various public examinations.

To prevent unfair means, the NU authorities have formed about 700 centre-based vigilance teams comprising officials of local administration and teachers from different universities and colleges, said Prof.

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## Hill district councils expire today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Tenure of executive bodies of the three Hill District Councils (HDCs), the highest local bodies of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), will expire today unless there is further extension, sources said.

Rangamati HDC chairman Dr Maniklal Dewan and public relations officer Arunendu Tripura couldn't tell anything about the extension yesterday evening. Sources however indicated that a decision in this regard could be taken at a high-level meeting at the CHT affairs ministry last night.

Earlier, the High Court extended

tenure of the HDCs for six months, a process that has been going on since 1996 following a writ petition by some HDC members in favour of elections to the 33-member autonomous bodies founded during the Ershad regime.

The HDCs held their first elections on June 25, 1989. However, no further elections were held since then although they were supposed to have been held every three years as mandated by the HDC charter.

Over the years, subsequent governments have not taken any initiative to hold elections to the three HDCs and have appointed their own men to different positions

of the autonomous bodies. In 1996, some members of Rangamati and Bandarban HDCs filed a writ petition with the High Court against such reconstitution. Since then, the government has been repeatedly extending the tenure of the executive bodies through the High Court.

Of the 33 departments of the government that are supposed to be transferred to the HDC, only 14 have so far been transferred while three others are in the process of being transferred.

Meanwhile, PCJSS (Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity) chairman Jyorindra Bodhipriya

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## New-look army as female cadets join the march

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Army will put on a new look with the commissioning of 20 women cadets after today's passing-out ceremony at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA).

Bangladesh is next to India and Sri Lanka in South Asia to have recruited women officers for the army.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to review the president's parade marking the commissioning of both male and female cadets of the 47th BMA long course at Bhatiari in Chittagong.

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PHOTO: STAR

GOODBYE TO POLLUTERS: Today is the last day for two-stroke auto-rickshaws as the government banned the three-wheelers in the city from January 1 to stave off severe air pollution.

## Last day for polluters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two-stroke autorickshaws and autotempos go off the city roads tomorrow, as the government ban on the polluters take effect.

The Traffic Department of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) will deploy 64 mobile and stationary units of policemen to ensure none of the 6,575 two-stroke three-wheelers, exempted from the September 1 ban, takes to the streets.

Thousands of two-stroke vehicles, believed to be one of the main sources of air pollution, are operating in the city, exposing the city dwellers to a dangerous kind of lead pollution. The gaseous smoke emitted from two-stroke engines has turned the city into a veritable 'gas chamber'.

A persistent campaign in the media, protests from the general public, High Court rulings, and the determination of the policymakers will, at long last, ensure ousting of the polluters. The government will

now have to clamp down on thousands of buses, trucks and other vehicles with faulty engines emitting black smokes.

Minister for Environment and Forest Shahjahan Siraj has reiterated that eventually the entire stock of two-stroke vehicles will be banned.

To reduce lead pollution, the government first imposed a ban on import of lead-mix petrol in 1999, which instantly improved the city's air quality, the Department of Environment (DoE) claimed.

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) filed a public interest litigation with the High Court in 1995 for establishing the citizens' right to breathe fresh air.

The High Court passed an order,

which included eight directives, to different ministries and departments on March 27, 2002 to make the city air clean.

Following the High Court order, the government launched the first phase of banning the unfit two-stroke vehicles from the city roads on September 1. In that phase a total of 12,500 two-stroke autorickshaws were made to go off the roads. But according to the autorickshaw owners and the drivers association, more than 20,000 autorickshaws were sent off.

In September, the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) issued special permissions to 6,575 two-stroke vehicles to ply the city roads up to December 31.

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## Little progress on new education policy

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The proposed education policy by the four-party coalition government has seen little progress so far.

Last week of October, the cabinet gave the education ministry a go-ahead to produce a new education policy and the ministry proposed a committee more than two months later.

Bangladesh has seen half a dozen education policies and such efforts, starting with the Quadrat-e-Khuda Commission, since its independence. But none was implemented.

Even several reports have not been made public, probably, nor are they available in official archives.

It took the Awami League government several years to produce the Education Policy 2000.

The education ministry has proposed formation of a 23-member committee headed by Professor Moniruzzaman Miah, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, to lay out a national education policy, a key ministry official said.

The committee will upgrade and incorporate various aspects in the proposed policy, he said.

"The ministry is likely to include more members in the committee," State Minister for Education ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon told The Daily Star.

"I have proposed inclusion of

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## Bahauddin Nasim's detention illegal

### HC orders immediate release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared the detention order of Awami League leader AFM Bahauddin Nasim illegal and asked the government to release him if not wanted in any other case.

The vacation bench of Justice Hamidul Huq and Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury delivered the verdict after hearing both sides.

Bahauddin, who was the assistant private secretary to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, is now detained in Rangpur jail under the Special Powers Act. He has been in jail for the last 10 months.

Bahauddin was arrested on February 27 under Section 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) from Zia International Airport, prior to his departure for the United States.

Next day, the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka placed him on a five-day remand. The chief metropolitan magistrate also instructed the police to produce Bahauddin before the court after the remand.

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## Joint forces drive more people away from Comilla airport land

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Comilla

The eviction drive by joint forces from defence ministry lands near Comilla airport continued for the third consecutive day yesterday.

So far at least 20,000 people of Rajapara, South Choumohoni, Thomson Bridge, Ashrafpur and Dhulipara areas have become homeless. Several hundred of them are spending nights under the sky.

Many of them could not even remove their movable properties.

At least two persons have been killed and several others injured in the drive. They are Jamal Hossain, a HSC examinee of Comilla Government Commerce College and Abdul Kuddus of Gobindapur village. They were killed in two incidents of wall collapse when structures were bulldozed.

The military airport was con-

structed during World War II on acquired lands. As the airport was abandoned after the war, illegal occupants built more than 2,000 residential buildings, business establishments and shops in and around the area.

Local parliament member Monirul Huq Chowdhury informed the issue to Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, minister in-charge of the district.

He earlier sought the prime minister's intervention to stop the eviction.

Meanwhile, the district unit of Bangladesh Khetmajur Union in a statement yesterday condemned the eviction.

It is a 'serious violation of human rights and an irresponsible behaviour' it said and urged the government to stop the eviction and rehabilitate the evicted people.