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Mohan Kumar, joint secretary of the External Affairs Ministry of India, speaks at a press conference at State Guesthouse 'Meghna' in the city at the end of the 3rd meeting of Bangladesh-India Joint Boundary Working Group yesterday. On his right is Akhtar Ahmed, joint secretary (political) of the home ministry.

## EC relaxes recruitment criteria

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registration officers (RO) can recruit any person, who works for any government or non-government organisation that receives government allocation, as assistant official if he is considered competent for the task, said officials at the EC Secretariat.

Besides, an RO can recruit an assistant official for a voter area where only two or three hundred voters live although the earlier circular directed to recruit an official for an area where the number of voters is 600 to 700.

"The policy has been relaxed considering the prevailing difficulties to recruit the manpower on the basis of the voter areas and the ongoing strike by the non-government schoolteachers," said a senior EC official.

"The recruitment of the assistant officials will have to be finalised through consulting the Election

Commission Secretariat if it is necessary to bring massive changes into the directives of the policy," said sources quoting a circular issued by the EC Secretariat yesterday.

July 20 is the deadline for completing the recruitment of the assistant officials, but with only three days left, it is now uncertain whether the recruitment will be completed by the time as the schoolteachers have kept expressing their unwillingness to do the job.

Talking to reporters at his office yesterday, the Secretary of the EC Secretariat Abdur Rashid Sarkar, however, expressed hope for completing the recruitment in time.

Regarding the recruitment, he personally communicated with at least 10 deputy commissioners, who were appointed as coordinators for the task, he said, adding, "None of them told me about any

problem about the ongoing recruitment."

Relaxing the earlier directives on the criteria for the recruitment of the assistant officials, the EC Secretariat said two assistant officials can be appointed for a voter area where the number of voters does not exceed 900 to 1000.

The earlier directive had said two assistant officials could be appointed only when the number of voters exceeds 1300 to 1400 in a voter area.

The new circular, however, did not mention anything about the

qualifications of the assistant officials to be recruited for updating the voter list.

The earlier circular that mentioned a set of conditions for recruitment of the assistant officials had imposed bar on recruiting for the purpose people who have direct or indirect link with any political party.

In case of appointment, it instructed giving priority to the persons earlier engaged in preparing the voter list.

As the government schoolteachers expressed unwillingness to do the task and non-government schoolteachers are observing

strike, the EC Secretariat directed the field level officials to recruit assistant officials from the officials of family planning directorate and agriculture ministry.

In another circular issued by the EC Secretariat, six division-level committees headed by the divisional commissioners were formed to coordinate the task of updating the voter list.

Besides, ten coordination committees headed by zonal executive officers of the Dhaka City Corporation were formed for the task in the capital.



Prof. Muazzem Hossain gives away a prize to a student of Silverdale Preparatory and Girls' High School at a reception for the meritorious students who achieved GPA 5 in the SSC examinations this year. The reception ceremony was held on the school premises in the city recently.