

More women joining security services

WAHIDA MITU

More and more women are coming forward to work as security guards. They are seen at a wide range of businesses and organisations in the capital including shopping complexes, parks, movie theatres, hospitals and offices.

The job of security guards seems to have opened up a new avenue for women. Unlike garment factory jobs where long hours do not allow women to have any personal or social life, security guard jobs have a better trade-off for women. Women can pick their convenient time for work since the work is usually split into 6 to 8-hour shifts.

Aklima, 30, has been working as a security guard for two years now. Her family members did not encourage her to join the service when she showed her interest in the job. "But when my family noticed that with this job I get spare time at home for doing household

chores, they realised that this job is better than a garment factory job. We get to spend more time with our families since the work allows us to pick a convenient shift."

Bashundhara City is one of the leading shopping malls in the city where a large number of the security personnel are women. TIM Latiful Husain, resident director of Bashundhara City, said the majority of the visitors of the mall are women. "As a result, we have to have female security staff to handle situations such as catching a female shoplifter. Sometimes our female security personnel have to provide urgent assistance to a female shopper when she suddenly falls sick."

Moyna, 22, used to work as a tailor in a tailoring shop. But most time of the year she had no work as the demand was very low. This made her decide to get a job at a security service provider. It has been three years since she started working as a security guard.

Another female security guard working in a government hospital is Moni, 27. She has been there for four years. She makes sure patients do not flee the hospital before being officially cleared off, newborn babies do not get stolen and keep the premises off limits for brokers that try to talk the patients into going to other hospitals or clinics.

All female guards appreciated the understanding and positive attitude towards them by the visitors at their workplace.

"Most of the times the visitors are very considerate and cooperative with us. This makes our job easier and helps us immensely to serve them better," said Moni.

Literacy is a must if one wants to be a security guard. However, the level of education and range of age required by a security service provider depends on its clients needs.

Most employers look for guards who did not pass the SSC. Generally, the range of

age required for the job is from 18 to 35 years, said a high official of a leading security service provider requesting anonymity.

Since most women are not interested or able to work overtime, many security service providers are trying to attract more women to the job by paying them more than their male counterparts.

The security service providers usually give a crash course to the new recruits explaining their job responsibilities before deploying them to their posts at different places in the city.

Aarong is one of the large companies that ensure security of female shoppers with female guards provided by private security service providers. Around 200 female guards are at work at Aarong stores all over the city, said our sources. Bashundhara city employs its in-house female security guards where 30 women had been trained by the Bashundhara City mall authorities to better serve its needs.



Female members of the security guards at Bashundhara shopping mall at work.

UNSAFE AND DANGEROUS



Window cleaners in a city high-rise risk their lives working totally unprotected at a height of 15-storey hanging from two thin ropes. No safety measure is in work in case they slip or fall from the height. This practice is quite normal and the workers are also unaware of the potential dangers. This kind of labourers usually does not have any insurance coverage.

Dhaka wears different look

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Mirpur section 1 and 10 confirmed this and said besides paying the police "a weekly fee" for each shop, they have been paying the local commissioners' men. The amount of "weekly fee" varies from area to area. Many of them pay daily while others pay weekly.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakhya (Rajuk) in collaboration with police and members of the armed forces started the eviction drive from Wednesday.

The drive has already evicted hundreds of illegal shops and structures across the city without any resistance and the authorities are yet to decide how long it will continue.

On sustainability of the drive, Sadeque Hossain Khoka, mayor of Dhaka told Star City that sustainability of such drives would be uncertain without strengthening the local government. "Although the recent eviction drive is being led by the armed forces, but I can not say how long this will sustain."

He said DCC had conducted lots of eviction drives before, but without ensuring follow up

and monitoring capability, those initiatives failed to keep the sidewalks and open spaces free. The encroachers returned just after the drives were over. The encroachers always return when the situation is favourable again.

Abdul Karim, secretary of the ministry of home said the situation will be reviewed time to time and the ministry will try its best to take steps for sustaining the achievements form these drives.

Another top official at home ministry said the achievements would sustain under caretaker government, but later it would depend on the political will of the elected government. "The vendors evicted from the footpaths of course will find alternative means for their income if no way is left for them to get back. These excuses should be the factor to allow illegal shops on footpaths and open spaces of the city."

He said also said footpaths and roads should not allowed to be the illegal source of income of influential people and political commitment on this issue is required for a long term solution.

Unfit vehicles keep

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source of air pollution as only the diesel-run vehicles contribute about 60 per cent of poisonous particles in the air, a survey of the AQMP says.

AQMP surveys reveal that at least 70 per cent of the diesel-run vehicles, mainly buses and trucks, emit toxic particles beyond the permissible limit.

Faulty and unfit vehicles that emit carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulate matter (SPM) 10 and particulate matter (PM) 2.5 are the most poisonous among the toxic particles available in the air of Dhaka, said an official of AQMP.

Dr FM Siddique, a professor of medicine at Dhaka Medical College, said such particles affect the human cardiac and respiratory systems, nose, throat and ear.

"Inhaling particulate matters even for a short time may cause serious negative effect on a healthy body," said Dr Siddique. Inhaling these

particulate matters can also reduce life expectancy and working capability, he observed.

Among the particles -- SPM, PM 10 and 2.5 are the most dangerous as they hit blood directly and can cause even cancer. Mainly children and aged people suffer from cough, asthma, bronchitis and other diseases for other particles in the air, said doctors.

Koji Shimada, professor of economics at Ritsumeikan University in Japan, and Murshid Akter, lecturer of economics at Edward College in Pabna, jointly conducted a study on the health and economic effects of air pollution in Dhaka between 2002 and 2004.

The study found if annual concentration of particulate matter 10 could be reduced to the permissible limit, approximately 1,210 premature deaths in the city could be avoided.

The researchers converted the benefit to monetary terms as \$97 million, said Murshid.

Unskilled nurses

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teachers and seven deputed teachers. BSc students are deputed here to do the course after doing diploma and three years in service.

In the last 28 years, the total number of nurses passed from this college is 1,176; among them 639 obtained BSc Nursing and 537 in BSc PNS course. Both are two-year course but normally students take five years to complete the course because of lack in coping capability.

For the dearth of good students sometimes the authority has to take students with lower marks. There is also a shortage of teaching staff. The college has the capacity to take up 125 students each year but this capacity is not properly utilised for the lack of quality admission seekers.

When the production capacity of this institute is 125 per year, only 28 students passed in the last batch passed from this college. Among them, 15 obtained BSc Nursing and 13 BSc PNS degree.

Therefore, this college remains grossly underutilised.

Azizun Nahar, principal, Nursing College, put emphasis on 'Direct BSc' course, where students will be admitted after doing HSC. At present, diploma nurses with lower marks in SSC are getting admitted and this system contributes to the slide in skill of nurses.

"Our main problem is the diploma nurses we take here cannot cope with the course, which is very standard and the medium is English. One effective step to solve this problem is introducing 'Direct BSc'. Under the present system, those who are doing better in SSC exam are not coming for a diploma course in nursing. So when we take diploma nurses we find most of them incapable to cope with their job. We need students with GPA 4 or 5 in SSC but we get those even with GPA 2.5," said the principal with regret.

"We cannot fill up all 125 seats because we do not get students who can meet our criteria [diploma plus three years in service]. On average we take 60 to 80 students. But still we do not want to compromise with quality students," she said.

"There is a good chance of BSc nurses getting jobs in big private hospitals with a salary range of Tk 30,000 to 40,000. But there is a misconception in our society about nursing profession, which should be eradicated through awareness building. Only then we can expect good students," she said.

health,busservices,airlines&traintiming

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital 9008919, 8051618	8311721-25
Apollo Hospitals Dhaka 9891680-4, 01713046684/85 Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000	Islami Bank Hospital 9333739
Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital 9118202, 8115843	Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital 8828855, 8827575
Central Hospital 9660015-19,	Labaid Cardiac Hospital 8610793-8
China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd 8913674	Marie Stopes Clinic 8821874
Dhaka Medical College Hospital 8626812-16	Medinova Medical Services Ltd 8620353,
Gana Shasthyo Kendra 8617208, 8617383, 8620178,	Monowara Hospital 8318135, 8319802
Greenland Hospital 8912663	Pangu Hospital 9112150, 9113041
Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992	PG Hospital (BSMMU) 9614545-9, 9612550-4
Holy Family Hospital	Rashmono General Hospital 8317606, 9557354, 8317819

BLOOD BANK

Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank 9116563
Modern Clinic & Blood Center 9883948
Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College 9668690

BUS SERVICES

Drooti 8014563
Eagle Paribahan 7101504
Green Line Paribahan 9339623, 9342580, 8353005
Hanif Enterprise 9120116
Keya Paribahan 7101894, 7101250, 9121280
Modern Enterprise 9123743
Neptune A/C Coach Service 7101945, 7101951, 9123092
Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd 9334152, 8316766, 8126293
Shoukhin Paribahan 8014397, 9001796
Silk Line 7102461
Shyamoli Paribahan 9333803

AIRLINES

lines	Druk Air 9862243, 9892862,
Aeroflot 9559930, 9559111, Fax: 9563787	Emirates 9892801, 9885574-75
Air India 8617783, 8611929, Fax: 9670591	GMG Airlines 8825845-9, Airport Office: 8960404, 8915699, Fax: 8826115
Biman Bangladesh Airlines 8917400-19 9560151, 9559610 Airport Office: 8917400, Fax:8913005	Gulf Air 9130123-5, Airport Office: 8914573
British Airways 8815111, Fax: 8815346,	Indian Airlines Ltd 9555915, 9557813,
Cathay Pacific 9557117, Fax: 9562667	Kuwait Airways 9115182, 9118829

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am	Reaches Chittagong at 1:55 pm
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:55 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:40 am	Reaches Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 6:40 am
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am	Reaches Bahadurabad at 1:05 pm
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm	Reaches Bahadurabad at 11:15
Apakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm	Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am
Agni Beena Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm	Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128 Shilpakala Academy- 8614673 Bangla Academy- 8619550 Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602 Ford Foundation- 8116133 Alliance Francaise- 8611557 Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9 British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7 Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604 Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6 Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2 The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314 Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412 Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4