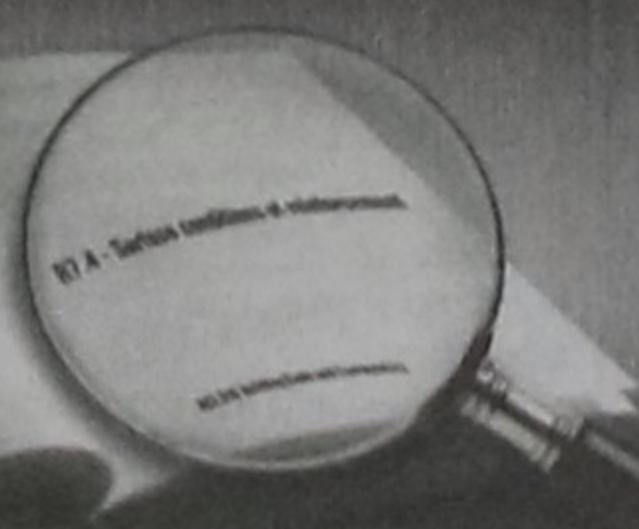


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Nurse hiring to start finally

Cabinet discusses today a proposal for recruiting 2,639 senior nurses in govt hospitals

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

After six years of virtual embargo, the health ministry is finally sending a proposal to the cabinet today for appointment of 2,639 senior staff nurses against equal number of vacant posts in public hospitals.

Though this recruitment of nurses is to be made on the basis of seniority and merit to end stalemate at the public hospitals, the initiative would hardly help improve availability of nurses as the present requirement for them would be more than double.

Now around 12,000 nurses are serving at over 550 public hospitals and health complexes.

Sources say the government's estimate of vacant posts for nurses is outdated due to excessive number of patients at the public

hospitals. Though the doctor-nurse ratio should be 1:4, the situation is quite opposite in the country for the last few years as there is one nurse for four doctors!

The issue became more serious in the last six years as the government stopped the nurse recruitment process when it decided to follow the 1979 Nurses Recruitment Rule instead of recruiting the graduate and diploma nurses directly on the basis of their seniority and merit.

Till 2003, public hospitals have directly recruited graduate or diploma nurses on the basis of seniority and merit and in fact the 1979 rule was never followed, sources say.

The 1979 Nurses Recruitment Rule says that in order to be recruited, the graduate or

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River grabbing still going on

Govt tells HC in its report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Encroachment, earth-filling and building of illegal structures continue at different points of Buriganga, Turag, and Balu rivers defying the High Court directives, says a government report.

The deputy commissioner of Gazipur submitted the report to the High Court yesterday. The report also says people are dumping sewage and garbage into the rivers contributing to their pollution.

However, the government has taken steps to stop the illegal activities, the district administration informed the court.

Earlier this year, river encroachment and construction of unauthorised structures on rivers were declared illegal in an HC verdict.

Besides, the HC in separate orders directed the government to take measures to stop the illegal activities in order to save the rivers.

The HC in June directed deputy commissioners of Dhaka, Gazipur, Narayanganj and Munshiganj, and other officials including Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority chairman to demarcate Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakkhya rivers through survey, and place a report to the court by November 30.

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Tremor jolts Ctg region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mild earthquake, measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale, jolted the port city Chittagong and Bandarban last night.

The epicenter of the tremor was 245 km away from Agargaon Seismic Centre in Dhaka to the South East, said met office in Dhaka.

There was no immediate report of damage or casualties in the quake that shook Bangladesh at 9:41pm. It created panic among the people of the two districts.

Our Bandarban correspondent adds: a huge panic was created among the people of Bandarban after the earthquake hit the district.

Earlier on Friday midnight, another tremor, measuring 3.7 on the Richter scale, jolted different parts of Bandarban.

Judge shortage in lower courts

Appointment to 400 vacant posts delayed for changes in rules for freedom fighters' children

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Judicial work is being greatly hampered as the government has not yet filled up the vacant posts of over 400 lower court judges.

The government is delaying the appointments as it couldn't amend the recruitment rules to introduce 30 percent quota for the children of freedom fighters in line with its initiative taken in October last.

Law ministry officials said the ministry had drafted the amendment of the recruitment rules and sent it to the establishment ministry for approval on November 24. The amendments are expected to be approved within this month.

After approval, the law ministry will issue a gazette notification on the amendment under which the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission will select the candidates through holding tests and examinations, they said.

The whole process may take about one year, the sources noted.

This means the country will have to wait for another year to fill up the 400 plus vacant posts.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Cyclone turns into deep depression

May cross Tamil Nadu this noon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cyclonic storm Ward hovering over the Bay of Bengal has weakened slightly and turned into a deep depression.

Now it is likely to move in a west-southwesterly direction and cross south Tamil Nadu coast around noon today, said a Met office bulletin yesterday.

The storm was centred around 1,770 km south-southwest of Chittagong Port, 1,700 km south-southwest of Cox's Bazar and 1,650 km south-southwest of Mongla Port around 1:00pm yesterday, said the bulletin.

Maximum sustained wind within 48 km of the depression centre had a speed of about 50 km per hour and it rose to 60 kph in gusts or squalls.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

HC to get 1,057 'crossfire' record 2 rights bodies ready for submission at hearing today

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

Over 1,000 people have been killed in law enforcers' custody in the names of "crossfire", "encounter" or "gunfight" in violation of human rights since formation of Rapid Action Battalion in 2004, the country's two leading human rights organisations said yesterday.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) will present the data before the High Court that will hold hearing today on the suo-moto ruling on extra-judicial killings in custody.

The two organisations as parties in this case will fight a legal battle at the HC to put a stop to extra-judicial killings, which the government denies vehemently.

They will produce documents and arguments before the court seeking its decisions and guidelines for stopping extra-judicial killings and trial of the people responsible.

Barrister Saifur Rashid, counsel for ASK, told The Daily Star yesterday that the organisation had found that 1,057 people fell victim to extra-judicial killings since formation of Rab.

He said the organisation has conducted inquiries into 20 incidents of extra-judicial killings including those of two

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Rebels shot dead after surrender

Says ex-army chief of Sri Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lankan troops shot dead surrendering Tamil Tiger leaders on the orders of the defence secretary, the former army chief who is now running for president said yesterday.

General Sarath Fonseka said Gotabhaya Rajapakse -- the brother of the current president -- instructed field commanders not to take prisoners in the days before the Tamil Tiger separatists were defeated in May.

"Gotabhaya Rajapakse spoke directly with

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(commander) Shavendra Silva and told him not to accommodate any surrendering LTTE leaders and that they must all be killed," Fonseka told reporters at a meeting of opposition parties.

Fonseka said he was away in China and was unaware that Rajapakse was giving direct orders to officers in the field during the final stages of battle against the Tigers, officially known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam.

He said he only learnt after the war that

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"

Jailbreak frees 31 prisoners in Philippines

AP, Manila

Scores of suspected Islamic militants knocked down a concrete wall and barged into a jail in the volatile southern Philippines yesterday, freeing 31 inmates in a nighttime attack that sparked a gunbattle in which two people were killed, officials said.

Vice Governor Al Rasheed Sakahalul of Basilan island said 70 heavily armed men cut through padlocks with boltcutters after using a sledgehammer to destroy the wall at the provincial jail in Isabela city to free several detained Muslim guerrillas. Other inmates also dashed to freedom, he said.

The daring assault sparked a brief clash that killed one attacker and a jail guard. The attackers and prisoners fled in several vehicles toward Basilan's jungle-covered mountainous heartland, Sakahalul said.

At least 31 inmates escaped, including suspected militants from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a large Muslim rebel group engaged in peace talks with the government, and the smaller but more violent Abu Sayyaf group, which has been linked to al-Qaeda, regional military commander Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino said.

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