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OSDs to get specific tasks

Govt wants to engage them in project implementation

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

To implement development projects fast and monitor their progress, the government is thinking about engaging Officers on Special Duty (OSD), who are considered to be in a state of punishment.

Officers on Special Duty have no work apart from signing the attendance register every day and collecting their pay cheque every month.

During a meeting of the Superior Selection Board with Cabinet Secretary Musharrif Hossain Bhuiyan in the chair early December, the idea of utilising the OSDs was discussed elaborately. Sources said a proposal is likely to be sent from the Ministry of Public Administration to the prime minister soon.

If the government high-ups do decide to utilise the OSDs, the idle civil servants will be posted to different ministries and

will have the job of monitoring and implementing projects.

A large portion of the development projects taken up by the government remain unimplemented as the secretaries and other officials concerned are busy with other duties. They hardly have enough time to look into proper implementation of projects.

An official of the public administration ministry said every year about 200 to 400 high officials are made or kept as OSDs. As of December 27, 2011, a total of 251 officials between the ranks of senior assistant secretary and secretary are OSDs.

Of them, three are secretaries, 34 are additional secretaries, 113 joint secretaries and 73 deputy secretaries. The rest are senior assistant secretaries.

The official said civil servants are made OSDs mainly for two reasons--they get

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People of all walks of life attend the funeral of Samson H Chowdhury at the Kakrail Catholic Church in the capital yesterday. Thousands more were outside unable to get into the overcrowded church. *Inset*, mourning son and daughter of the legendary industrialist.

BNP'S REACTION PM's speech extremely fallacious

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday termed the prime minister's address to the nation on Thursday "extremely fallacious" and said it was done to mislead people to cling to power.

The main opposition said the huge defeat of the ruling Awami League-backed mayoral candidate in Comilla City Corporation elections on Thursday and the defeat of its candidate Shamim Osman to independent candidate Selina Hayat Ivy in Narayanganj City polls reflected people's "no confidence" in the government.

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Errant employers put expatriates in trouble

Around 10,000 Bangladeshi workers in KSA face uncertainty

PORIMOL PALMA

Nearly 10,000 Bangladeshis have been left stranded in Saudi Arabia for the last few months, as they could not renew residence permit for their employers' failure to pay premiums to a Saudi government organisation.

Saudi authorities are not allowing them to leave the kingdom, switch jobs or renew job contracts.

The migrant workers ran into trouble after their employers had defaulted on paying premiums to the General Organization for Social Insurance (GOSI) for years in violation of the GOSI law.

Saudi authorities froze bank accounts of several hundred companies for breaching the law, said the workers quoting GOSI officials.

Bangladesh embassy officials in Riyadh said they were aware of the matter but didn't have any specific information on Bangladeshi workers, who now face the problem.

According to the kingdom's rules, Saudi companies have to pay 2 percent of foreign workers' salaries as premium for GOSI. A law has been in place for long to ensure that. But the authorities moved to enforce it strictly as part of implementation of a policy "Nitaqat" since September

last year.

The policy calls for better regulation of foreign workers and it also makes it mandatory for Saudi companies to recruit 20 to 30 percent Saudis. During implementation of the policy, it was found that many companies had been defaulting on premiums.

Saudi Arabia, employing around 20 lakh Bangladeshis, significantly reduced the recruitment quota for Bangladeshi workers since early 2007. It also put restriction on switching jobs.

"The problem arose in recent

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Dhaka, Delhi can turn S Asia into a business hub

India keen to award Bangladesh 'most preferred nation' status for border trade

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India is keen on awarding Bangladesh the status of the "most preferred nation for trade across the border" and will work to ensure capital flows to the country for business, a senior Indian minister said yesterday.

Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said India and Bangladesh can join hands in making this part of the world "a hub of business activities" when bilateral relations between the countries is in the best shape.

He said it is the duty of New Delhi to give access to goods and services from Dhaka since India's economy is many times bigger than the other. "It is India's responsibility to ensure that capital flows from India to

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COMILLA MAYOR-ELECT Sakku won't join BNP with 'conditions'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Comilla mayor-elect Monirul Haque Sakku yesterday said he has declined to rejoin BNP accepting any conditions.

"I have been contacted by some top [BNP] leaders to join the party soon, even tomorrow. I also want it to serve the people, but not accepting any condition," said Sakku, who had resigned as the joint secretary general of Comilla district (south) BNP to contest the January 5 polls his party boycotted.

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The construction of Bahaddarhat flyover in Chittagong has closed the road to traffic while people are left to wait patiently for the slow-paced work to end. The photo was taken on Tuesday.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Suicide blast kills 25 in Damascus

REUTERS, Amman

A suicide bomber killed about 25 people and wounded 46 in Damascus yesterday, Syria's state news agency Sana said, in the third such attack in the Syrian capital in a month.

The blast occurred two days before an Arab League committee was due to discuss an initial report of Arab observers who are checking Syria's compliance with an Arab plan to halt President Bashar al-Assad's crackdown on unrest.

Syrian state television showed body parts, bloodstains and broken glass from the blast in the central Maidan district, along with people shouting that this was the work of "terrorists." Several riot police shields could be seen in a wrecked bus, which was among several damaged vehicles.

"Immediate information indicates that a suicide terrorist blew himself up at a traffic light in the Maidan neighbourhood," state television said. "There are

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Another cold spell next week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The homeless and the poor are likely to suffer again as the meteorological department forecast two more cold waves across northern and central parts of the country.

"Out of the two cold waves, the first one,

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Fighting graft needs change in political culture: TIB

UNB, Dhaka

It is quite impossible to check corruption in Bangladesh if the country's current political culture cannot be changed, said executive director of Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB) Dr Iftekharuzzaman.

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Second border haat waits for opening

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

More than four months into building structures for Dolura border haat on Sunamganj-Meghalaya frontier, the authorities are yet to fix a time to open it.

Momtaz Uddin, additional district magistrate and chief of the five-member committee for management of the haat, told this correspondent yesterday that they were yet to draw up a schedule for inauguration of the haat.

A high-level meeting would be held to discuss the border haat management in the capital next week, he added.

Sources told The Daily Star, considering the poor response to the first border haat launched in Kurigram, the government was considering some changes in the rules.

A process is underway to expand the five-kilometre area for the haat to 10km. Besides, the number of items allowed for

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PRAYER TIMING January 7

Azan	Jamaat
Fajr 5-30	6-05
Zohr 12-45	1-15
Asr 4-00	4-15
Maghrib 5-30	5-35
Esha 7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

We deeply mourn the death of

Mr. Samson H Chowdhury
Chairman of Square Group
on the 5th December, 2012

He was one of the Founder Director of our Company

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