

## WATER DEVELOPMENT BOARD

# Govt plans to upgrade it

Non-engineers irked at draft law that 'deprives' them of cadre posts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is looking to upgrade the Bangladesh Water Development Board to the Directorate of Water Resources in which non-engineers will not be absorbed as cadres, said officials from the general category.

With an aim to conserve and better manage the country's water resources, the government formulated a draft law -- the Bangladesh Water Resources Development and Management Act 2019 -- and uploaded it to the Ministry of Water Resource's website on December 1, seeking public opinion on the draft.

In an initial response, several serving non-engineers (general category officials) said that although they would have to play an important role in the new directorate, they were being deprived from the upgradation process.

The first draft, uploaded on the website on November 28, stated that both the general officials and engineers would be absorbed as cadres.

But within three days, a new draft was uploaded, which said the non-engineer general category first class government officers (grade nine) were excluded.

"If the provision for general cadre is not mentioned in the draft law, then we would not be considered while officials of the board are absorbed as cadres," said an official working under

WDB, wishing anonymity.

"But different general category officials working with the WDB play an important role and have the qualifications to be absorbed as cadres."

Apart from engineers, professionals like agriculturalists, soil scientists, geologists, economists, environmentalists, fisheries experts, accountants have been working ever since the formation of WDB.

A candidate has to have the same qualification as a Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) applicant for those first-class posts and they get appointment under the ninth grade.

"Being absorbed as a cadre is not about getting monetary benefits, but rather about dignity," the official added.

As per Section 7(a) of the draft law, the new directorate will have jurisdiction over the construction of dams, barrages and other structures for river management, flood protection and drought control.

It will also be responsible for dredging of the rivers and canals, irrigation, fish cultivation, conservation of aquatic animals, afforestation for conservation of wildlife, protecting human habitations and establishments from river erosions and protection of the environment and ecology.

Section 7 (b) mentions other activities of the directorate, including

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## Long way to go

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"Primary school teachers seriously lack quality and motivation to give proper lessons in the classroom. In many primary schools, teachers handle overcrowded classrooms," said noted educationist Prof Siddiqur Rahman.

DPE conducted the survey on 28,402 students of class-III from 1,417 schools and 24,145 class-V students from 1,446 schools across the country last year.

For the Bangla assessment, students were asked to identify, interpret, and synthesise information showing their understanding of literary texts and their competence in spelling.

For maths, students were tested on their understanding of number properties and concepts, and units of measurement, among others.

The survey said learners who did not achieve the desired level of competence are still at the early stages of development as per the curriculum standards of their respective grades. They have not acquired sufficient knowledge and skills to be considered minimally successful in their curriculum demands, it said.

The NSA found that 38 percent of class-III students have proficiency in Bangla with only nine percent at the advanced level. In class-V, 36 percent of students in the same subject achieved proficiency and only eight percent were at the advanced level.

The picture was similarly poor in maths with 25 percent of class-III students having proficiency in maths and nine percent at the advanced level. Among class-V students, 24 percent had basic proficiency and only eight percent were at the advanced level in the same subject.

There are around 1.73 crore students at 1,34,147 primary schools, according to the latest DPE data.

"These findings show there is a question mark over the quality of primary education," said Enamul Hoque, deputy director of Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE).

He pointed out that teachers do not follow the teaching-learning process as prescribed in the curriculum. Moreover, many teachers are not qualified and motivated enough.

"In many cases, the number of students in a classroom is so large that a teacher cannot pay attention to individual learners. So, there is no special intervention for slow learners," he said.

A lack of teachers is another big

problem, he said.

Another DPE report found teacher shortage and absenteeism as further barriers to ensuring quality education.

According to the DPE's Sector Performance Report 2017, 79 government primary schools had only one teacher while 721 such schools had two teachers. Some 7,764 schools were running with three teachers and 22,527 schools with four teachers, it said.

"A policy intervention is needed to ensure at least four teachers in a school. Otherwise, it is not possible to deliver quality education," said the report.

As per the report, 6,546 government primary schools have only one and 2,809 have two classrooms, which hampers teaching and learning.

A 2015 CAMPE survey report found that 12.7 of government primary school teachers were absent on the day of the school visit in 2014.

Prof Siddiqur Rahman, also one of the chief consultants of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board that developed the existing curriculum, said it is the responsibility of the government to provide adequate number of teachers and arrange other facilities for a proper teaching-learning environment in classrooms.

The government needs to ensure proper monitoring of the academic atmosphere in primary schools, he suggested, stressing on developing the standard of classroom teaching-learning methods.

Primary and Mass Education Secretary Akram-Al-Hossain said the government is taking different steps to ensure quality education at the primary level.

"We are trying to identify weaker students to improve their education standard. We are also listing schools that are lagging behind in terms of students' performance like reading, writing and mathematical abilities," he said.

He admitted that classroom learning is still problematic as a teacher, in some cases, needs to take care of 100 students in a class.

Currently, 18,500 teaching positions are now lying vacant, said the secretary, adding that a shortage of teachers is a barrier to achieving competency.

"We are in the process of recruiting teachers. We are also planning to give special training to the teachers," he said.



Students bring out a procession on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, protesting the attack on Ducusu Vice President Nurul Haque Nur and his followers. They also demanded the resignation of Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani for his "inaction".

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## Two Moncho leaders detained

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secretary of DU BCL.

Mamun took admission in the university's political science department in 2010-11 academic session, while Turjo in Bangla department in 2013-14 session.

No case was filed over the attack as of filing this report at 11:45pm last night.

Around 12:30pm yesterday, some 500 students, including activists of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Adhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad and different left-leaning student organisations, took out a procession under the banner of "Student Unity Against Violence" on the campus to protest the attack.

The procession, brought out from TSC area, ended in front of the proctor's office after parading through the streets on the campus.

Speaking at a rally at the base of Raju Memorial Sculpture later, students demanded the proctor's resignation for his "inaction" in Sunday's incident.

"A proctor who could not save his students from criminals has no right to hold that post. He must resign immediately," said Akhter Hossen, social service affairs secretary of Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducusu).

Chhatra Federation President Jahid Shujan said, "The attack was carried out at a time when Abrar's blood has not dried yet. The Dhaka University authorities are yet to take any action against the two who threw two students from the roof of Ducusu building."

Abrar, a second-year Buet student, was beaten to death inside a dormitory of the university by some Chhatra League men in October.

On Sunday, activists of a faction of Muktijuddho Moncho, mostly comprised of Chhatra League men, beat up and injured Nur, storming into his office at the Ducusu building.

At least 27 of Nur's supporters were injured in the attack.

The Moncho, claimed to be comprised of freedom fighters'

children, was founded in October last year to counter the anti-quota demonstrations led by Nur and other quota reformist leaders.

THE INJURED

The condition of Tuhin Farabi, a private university student injured in Sunday's attack, improved yesterday and he was taken off life support at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

He was still kept at the intensive care unit, the hospital's director, Brig Gen AKM Nasir Uddin, told this newspaper.

Five injured, including Nur, were being treated at the hospital and a nine-member medical board was formed for their treatment, he added.

The other three injured are joint convenors of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad Faruk Hasan, APM Suel, and Nur's brother Aminur.

CCTV FOOTAGE MISSING  
Meanwhile, footage of CCTVs installed at different points of the Ducusu building had been missing since Sunday's attack.

There are nine CCTV cameras in and around the building and the footage was recorded at the room of Ducusu Administrative Officer Abul Kalam Azad.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Azad said the monitor and the computer at his room had been stolen.

He said after Nur and the others came under attack, he rushed his higher authorities to inform them about it. When he returned, he saw the lock of his room broken and the monitor and computer missing, he said.

Speaking at the rally yesterday, Akhtar, also a joint convener of Bangladesh Sadharan Chhatra Odhikar Sangrakkhan Parishad, which spearheaded the quota reform movement, demanded that the footage be showed to all.

PROBE BODY

The Dhaka University authorities yesterday formed a six-member committee to investigate Sunday's

incident. Arts Faculty Dean Prof Abu Md Delwar Hossain would lead the panel.

The other members include Shamsunnahar Hall Provost Prof Supriya Saha, Senate members Prof Ashim Sarker, Md Mizanur Rahman, Sir P.J. Hartog International Hall Provost Prof Md Mohiuddin and Assistant Proctor Prof Md Mainul Karim.

The committee was asked to submit its report along with recommendations within six working days, said a press release from the university's Public Relation Office.

"An unwanted and unfortunate incident took place in Ducusu Building and Madhur Canteen area around 12:30pm on Sunday," the release said, adding that the committee was asked to find out those involved in the incident.

PM'S INSTRUCTION

Talking to reporters at his office, Obaidul Quader said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave a "clear instruction" to take action against the attackers.

He also said AL presidium member Jahangir Kabir Nanak visited the injured at the DMCH on Sunday night as per the instruction of the prime minister.

Legal action would be taken against those involved in the attack, added Quader, who is the road transport and bridges minister.

Asked about the Muktijuddho Moncho activists who carried out the attack, he said he talked to the home minister and told him to take action against them.

He said the incident was embarrassing for the party.

## Wins for Dhaka

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picking up four wickets for 37 after having elected to field first. Right-arm pacer Kamrul returned figures of two for 23 in three overs but it was Pakistani pacer Irfan who kept things tight at the other end, giving away just 12 runs in three overs without any wicket. For Khulna, Shamsur Rahman top-scored with a 46-ball 55 in the middle to help Khulna's cause.

In chase of the modest total, Rajshahi were solid at the top as the two openers -- Liton Das and Afif Hossain -- gave them a decent start. Afif fell in the ninth over after a 75-run opening stand while Liton picked up his first fifty of the tournament before being dismissed in the 12th over for a 44-ball 58. Russell smashed an unbeaten 19-ball 28 to help his side get over the line with 12 balls to spare.

In the day's first game, Mahedi's incredible figures of two for nine helped Dhaka restrict Cumilla to a challenging 160 for three before the all-rounder played a brilliant 29-ball 59-run knock to help Dhaka edge past Cumilla with a ball to spare.

## COLD-RELATED ILLNESS

## Number of patients goes up in 6 dists

Mercury rising

STAR REPORT

The season's first cold wave seems to have started weakening since yesterday, but the number of patients affected by cold-related diseases have been increasing.

However, meteorologists forecasted that the temperature may again start to fall later this week.

"The temperature is rising and the cold wave is weakening in different parts of the country, but the cold didn't reduce that much due to the wind," said Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik, a meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

"The rising trend will continue in the next couple of days. But there is a possibility of light rain between Wednesday and Thursday. Then, the temperature will again start to fall from Friday," he added.

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## 6-year-old raped by cousin

STAR REPORT

A six-year-old girl was raped by her 23-year-old cousin in Panchagarh Sadar upazila on Sunday.

The girl was initially admitted to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital as her condition deteriorated.

Umme Humaira, medical officer at Panchagarh Sadar Hospital, said they had found physical evidence of rape on the girl's body.

Victim's mother filed a case with Panchagarh Police Station on the same night accusing the perpetrator, said Abu Akkas Ahmed, officer-in-charge of the police station.

We are trying to arrest the accused, the OC said, adding that they had detained the father of the accused for interrogation.

Victim's mother told reporters that her daughter was playing around their house in the afternoon.

Noticing that the girl was alone, the cousin, who lives in an adjacent house, lured the girl with biscuits and took her to a nearby bamboo thicket where he raped her, the mother said.

Later, the girl returned home and told everything to her mother.

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## 'GUNFIGHT' WITH COPS

## 'Drug dealer' killed in Noakhali

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A suspected drug dealer was killed in a "gunfight" with police in Noakhali's Chatkhil upazila early yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Monir Hossain, 36, a resident of Parkot area in the upazila.

Monir was accused in at least 16 cases filed with different police stations, said police.

Three policemen were injured during the "gunfight", said Anwarul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Chatkhil Police Station.

Police arrested Monir from the upazila on Sunday evening and conducted a raid in Hatpukuria area to recover hidden arms and drugs, said the OC.

When they reached the spot, Monir's associate opened fire on police, forcing them to fire back that triggered a "gunfight", the OC said.

Later, police found a bullet-injured Monir lying on the ground and took him to Noakhali General Hospital where doctors declared him dead, he said.

Police recovered a firearm, four bullets and 50 yaba tablets from the spot, said the OC.

## 8 land in jail for trespassing thru' Meherpur border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A court in Meherpur has sent eight people to jail for trespassing into the country from India without any documents.

Police arrested Robiul Islam Bepari, 20, Shakil Hawladar, 21, Serajul Munshi, 25, Azizul Sardar, 23, Shimul Dash, 30, Sumon Hossain, 20, Ripon Sarder, 28, and Manik Hossain Mollah, 23, in Anandabas area of the town around 4:55pm on Sunday.

Upon information that eight people had entered Bangladesh from India in the afternoon, police raided the area and arrested them, said Officer-in-Charge Abdul Hashem of Mujibnagar Police Station.

During primary interrogation, the arrested confessed to going to India several years ago and entering into Bangladesh crossing the border in Meherpur, said the OC, adding that none of them could produce passports or any other travel documents.

The law enforcers produced them before the chief judicial magistrate court in Meherpur in the night. They were sent to jail around 8:30pm.



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Founder, BRAC and BRAC Bank  
(1936-2019)

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## BJP concedes

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and the JMM-led opposition alliance for their surprise win and offered them his "best wishes in serving the state".

The result is crucial because three phases of voting were held amid nationwide protests against the government's new citizenship law.

More than 20 people have died in 10 days of clashes sparked by the law, which critics see as anti-Muslim, reports BBC.

Raghubar Das was also trailing in Jharkhand - a seat that he has been winning since 1995 - against his own party rebel Saryu Rai. No chief minister of the state has ever won consecutive polls.

"There may have been some polarisation in a seat or two... there may also be some anti-incumbency, but we are very confident that once the final result is out, you will see that the BJP will form the government. We are very confident of that," he had asserted.

Das was predicted by exit polls and analysts to face a difficult fight

in Jharkhand, where his own party members were resentful of his style of functioning.

He is the first non-tribal chief minister to complete a full term in the state that has seen eight since 2000, when the state was carved out of Bihar.

But he has been blamed for eroding the BJP's advantage in Jharkhand, which the party has mostly ruled in the past 19 years of the state's existence, reports NDTV.

Das is accused of sidelining important leaders like Arjun Munda, who was the BJP's tribal face. He also neglected the BJP's alliance partner, the All Jharkhand Students Union's (AJSU) of Sudesh Mahto.

His style of administration was also criticised and caused resentment within the party. He was known to lose his temper easily and was never seen to carry party workers along.

BJP failed to form the government in Maharashtra state last month after falling out with its regional ally, Shiv Sena.