



Dhaka woke up to another chilly winter morning yesterday. This photo was taken at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Lower court to get 200 new assistant judges

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government has taken an initiative to appoint 100 assistant judges to lower courts, in addition to another 100 whose appointments are now under process.

After the appointments of the 200 new assistant judges, the rate of case disposal by lower courts will improve, and the huge backlog of pending cases -- and the sufferings it brings to litigants -- will ease, Supreme Court Spokesman Md Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

He said there are now a total of 1,822 judges discharging duties at the lower courts across the country, and they are burdened with around 31 lakh cases.

The law ministry -- through a requisition letter -- recently asked Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission (BJSC) authorities to select qualified candidates for the appointment of 100 assistant judges, through holding necessary examinations, BJSC sources told this correspondent.

When this correspondent tried to

contact secretary to the BJSC Syed Zahed Mansur over this issue on December 23, one of his staffers said the secretary was not interested to talk to the media.

Meanwhile, the judicial service commission is now holding written tests of 1,473 candidates -- who have qualified in the preliminary test -- for 100 posts of the assistant judges as per the previous requisition from the government.

The written test will be finished on December 29. After the result is published, viva voce and medical tests of the qualified candidates will be held.

After selecting the qualified candidates, the commission will recommend the government to appoint them to the post of assistant judges.

Then the government will conduct police verification of selected candidates, after which the president will give appointments to the final qualified candidates, BJSC sources said.

The sources, however, could not

say specifically how much time will be required to complete these processes.

BJSC will decide when to start examinations for selecting qualified candidates for the posts of the new 100 assistant judges, after completion of oral and medical tests of candidates who would qualify in the ongoing written test, according to sources.

Sources said judicial officials are appointed only at the entry level to the post of assistant judges, while the other tiers of lower court judges are filled through promotions.

A total of 1,742 candidates have been qualified so far in the BJSC tests since its formation in 2007.

Previously, executive magistrates who qualified in the Bangladesh Civil Service (BSC) examinations had discharged the judicial functions.

These executive magistrates were absorbed into administrative posts after the separation of magistracy through the separation of judiciary from the executive on November 1, 2007, sources added.

Oikyafront announces

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chamber. Earlier, Jatiya Oikyafront -- led by Dr Kamal Hossain -- held an emergency meeting at his office to work out the alliance's programmes to mark the anniversary of the December 30 national polls.

The rally will be held in front of the National Press Club around 2pm on the

day, Rob said.

Responding to a query, Oikyafront leader Mahmudur Rahman Manna cautioned, "We will go for more programmes if the rally on Monday faces any opposition."

Addressing the press conference, Dr Kamal said they would strengthen their unity to ensure people's voting rights and to make the country's elections meaningful.

Increase profit margin

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the success, farmers are deprived of benefits reaped through growth," said Biswas.

He urged the government to stop neglecting farmers and to build a strong stockpiling system at the union level.

He also recommended that the government introduce crop insurance and

monitoring system to stop harassment of farmers when taking loans.

In his proposal, Biswas said the government should initiate coordinated programmes to encourage youths to get involved in agriculture.

Among others, former lawmaker Chhabi Biswas also spoke.

City polls coinciding

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the goddess of learning, to mark the advent of spring.

Traditionally, children are introduced to lessons on Saraswati Puja. This ritual is called "haatekhor". Toddlers are usually given a slate and chalk to scribble with.

This year, the Hindu community will observe Saraswati Puja across the country on January 30 amid much enthusiasm and

festivity.

"Hindu voters as well as those assigned in duties at the polling centres will be deprived of the celebration," the press release said, adding that the celebration arrangement will also be hampered in schools and colleges as those would be used as polling centres.

Considering the situation, they demanded rescheduling of the election date.

Dhaka, Beijing discuss ways

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repatriation, Myanmar has been spreading propaganda and falsehood claiming that Bangladesh is "unwilling" to cooperate, said an official in Dhaka, wishing to remain unnamed.

Bangladesh, China and Myanmar are in discussion to encourage the commencement of the Rohingya repatriation process. One is the establishment of a tripartite joint working mechanism, directly led by the ambassadors of China and Myanmar to Bangladesh and DG of Myanmar Wing of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. The joint working mechanism is aimed at delving into technical and operational difficulties in the repatriation process through "candid and frequent" discussions, said the Chinese embassy in Dhaka.

It said a common ground has been successfully identified during the first meeting of the joint working mechanism.

Bangladesh has been hosting over 1.1 million Rohingyas, most of whom entered Cox's Bazar since August 25, 2017 amid military crackdown on Rohingyas in Rakhine State.

Not a single Rohingya was repatriated over the last two years due to Myanmar's "failure" to build confidence among Rohingyas and lack of a conducive environment in Rakhine State, officials in Dhaka said.

Bangladesh has so far handed over names of over 1 lakh Rohingyas to Myanmar authorities for verification and subsequently is expediting their repatriation efforts, but Myanmar is yet to take back its nationals from Bangladesh, according to the foreign ministry.

The 3,450 Rohingyas who have been verified by Bangladesh and Myanmar, Hindu Rohingyas and those living along the "zero-line" are prioritised groups for early repatriation, the Chinese embassy said.

'Winter BBQ Carnival' at The Raintree Dhaka



CITY DESK

This winter, The Raintree Dhaka brings a range of barbecue items for everyone to enjoy under their recently launched "Winter BBQ Carnival" offer, says a press release.

Guests will be able to avail the all-you-can-eat offer from Thursday to Saturday. The Raintree is located at Plot 9, Road 27, Block K, Banani.

Further information can be availed by calling 029859104.

EC Mahbub's

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list with photographs. In line with that, the list was updated and many reforms were made in the election process," he said.

Hasan Mahmud said the reform in the election procedure is an ongoing process. "The reform can take place at any moment as per the need of time. Once people used to vote by raising their hands. Later, ballot papers were introduced. Now people are casting votes through electronic voting machines (EVMs)," he added.

Replying to a query, he said, "I don't think his [Talukdar] comments could hamper normalcy at the Election Commission. But I think he had tried to draw attention by making such comments at different times."

Welcoming BNP's decision to participate in the two Dhaka city corporation polls, the minister said all the city corporation elections were held neutrally and transparently under the AL government.

He said many BNP candidates were elected in city corporation polls, defeating [candidates of] AL and other parties. "It was only possible as the Election Commission is performing their duties neutrally and freely," he added.

The minister said BNP's allegations are nothing new. "They make such allegations before all elections. But I firmly believe that the two city corporation polls will be held in a free, fair and peaceful manner," said Hasan Mahmud, the newly-elected joint general secretary of AL.

Replying to a query about the programmes of Jatiya Oikyafront, he said the alliance took part in the last general election and some of their candidates were elected. "The lawmakers also took oath and joined the parliament. They are enjoying all facilities as lawmakers. I think they are deceiving themselves by raising questions about the election," he said.

The December 30 election strengthened democracy in the country, he added.

Speakers for taking initiatives to foster blue economy

UNB, Dhaka

Speakers at a seminar have emphasised national and international initiatives and cooperation of development partners to foster the blue economy plan of Bangladesh.

The seminar on "Coastal communities in fostering the sectors of blue economy in the south-western region of Bangladesh" was held at Khulna Naval Base on Tuesday.

Bangladesh Institute of Maritime Research and Development (BIMRAD) arranged the seminar where livelihood of the coastal communities, economic dimensions of the coastal region, ecosystem of the Sundarbans and prospects of Sundarbans-centric tourism and initiatives to foster the blue economy plan of Bangladesh were discussed.

During the daylong event, three professors of Khulna University -- Dr Selina Ahmed of Sociology discipline, Dr Md Wasiul Islam and Dr Nazmus Sadath of Forestry and Wood Technology discipline -- and executive director of "An Organization for Socio Economic Development" (AOSED) participated as keynote speakers.

Stakeholders of different sectors of blue economy, officers of Bangladesh Navy and Coast Guard, academicians

and maritime scholars, representatives of government and private organisations, business community, coastal and forest communities, entrepreneurs, journalists as well as students participated in the seminar.

The participants gathered information concerning coastal livelihood, constraints and prospects of economic activities in the region from the keynote speeches and discussion sessions among the participants.

Two different sessions were conducted during the seminar to exchange views and learn about the challenges of the coastal community from journalists and concerned stakeholders in the south-western region of Bangladesh.

In the afternoon session of the seminar, former Chief of the Naval Staff, Bangladesh Navy and Chairman of BIMRAD Admiral Nizamuddin Ahmed (ret'd) gave a vote of thanks to the chief guest, keynote speakers, naval officers and distinguished guests for their participation.

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Khulna University and BIMRAD at the end of the seminar to establish cooperation, conduct research and capacity building activities for the development of blue economy initiatives and Delta Plan 2100 of Bangladesh.

Death anniv of Habibur Rahman Bir Bikram today

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Today is the 21st death anniversary of Habibur Rahman Bir Bikram, alias



Jahajmara Habib.

Freedom fighters of Kaderia Bahini led by Habibur destroyed two Pakistani warships near the confluence of Jamuna and Dhaleswari rivers at Sirajkandi in Bhupur on August 10, 1971. They also seized a huge amount of arms and ammunition from the enemy vessels before destroying those.

The operation brought him the name Jahajmara Habib. He died on December 27, 1998.

'Stand by people'

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timely manner to increase their efficiency.

Sheikh Hasina said with modern training facilities and well-trained officials, the present air force is not like it was a decade ago; it is now totally different in terms of infrastructural, strategic and technological capabilities.

On occasion of the passing-out parade, the prime minister handed over the "Sword of Honour" award, trophies and badges among the graduating officer cadets for their outstanding performance and successful completion of the training course.

A total of 104 cadets were commissioned to the air force yesterday.

Road accidents

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He died on the spot from the force of the collision, Ataur Added.

In Cumilla, two different road accidents killed two people, reports our Cumilla correspondent.

At Debidwar on Cumilla-Sylhet highway, a young man named Abul Hossain was killed after being hit by a speeding bus yesterday evening, Debidwar Police Station confirmed.

At Thomson Bridge area, Amir Hossain (45) was killed by a motorcycle. Critically injured, he was taken to a local hospital, which referred him to Dhaka for better treatment. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to Dhaka, Cumilla Sadar South Police Station said.



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Vacancy Announcement
PKSF has been implementing "The World Bank" funded project titled 'Sustainable Enterprise Project (SEP)' since August 2018. The objective of the project is to increase adaptation of environmentally sustainable practices by targeted microenterprises following business cluster development approach.
PKSF hereby invites applications from the suitable candidates for the recruitment of the following position under the SEP project.

SL	Name of the post with number	Consolidated Monthly salary (BDT)
1	Procurement Specialist- 01	210,000/-

The employee will be recruited initially for one year with an opportunity for performance based annual renewal during the project period. Interested candidates who fulfill the requirement should apply online by 15 January 2020. For details Terms of Reference (ToR) and instructions to apply please visit PKSF website: www.pksf-bd.org.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. PKSF is an equal opportunity employer. PKSF reserves the right to cancel this recruitment process without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Golam Touhid
Deputy Managing Director