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201 officials promoted to joint secys

73 police officers also elevated to rank of DIG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has promoted 201 officials from the post of deputy secretary to joint secretary. A notification, signed by Ziauddin Chowdhury, deputy secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration, was issued to this effect yesterday.

Since the fall of the Awami League government, "politically sidelined" officers have been gathering at the Secretariat almost every day to put pressure on the interim government to promote them.

According to sources, among these officers, some were politically sidelined, while others were overlooked due to their poor track records.

Earlier on August 13, 117 government officials were elevated to the rank of deputy secretary from the post of senior assistant secretary or its equivalent.

The promotions that these officers received are retroactive, meaning that they take effect from the date they became eligible. This also means these officers are entitled to retrospective financial benefits.

According to the notification, the promoted officers can submit their joining letters to the public administration ministry in person or by e-mail.

If an officer's place of employment has changed from the one specified in the promotion order, the officer in

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People demonstrate at Kantaban in the capital yesterday demanding an end to the trade of animals at pet shops there. The Animal Welfare Foundation organised the protest.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Govt mulls formation of mass media commission

Says info adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Adviser Nahid Islam



yesterday said the government is contemplating forming an independent mass-media commission to ensure freedom of the press.

"We will take steps on preparing a framework in consultation with the journalist community," Nahid told reporters at his secretariat office.

Certain laws will be amended, if needed, after discussing the matter with journalists, he added.

Expressing his frustration over Bangladesh's position in the World Press Freedom Index, he said, "Freedom

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AL GOVT OUSTER 626 took shelter in cantonments

Says ISPR; seven of them still there

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Army provided shelter to 626 people of many professions, including politicians and law enforcers, in cantonments during the recent political upheaval.

The Inter-Services Public Relations Directorate (ISPR) disclosed the information in a press release yesterday.

According to the release, the law and order situation across the country deteriorated drastically following the ouster of the Awami League government on August 5.

"Fearing for their lives, citizens, including some political figures, sought shelter in the cantonments," it reads.

A total of 626 people, including 24 political personalities, five judges, 19 civil administration officials, 28 police officers, 487 policemen of different positions, 12 people of various professions including officials of public universities, and 51 families (wives and children) took shelter in different cantonments, the release reads.

The ISPR further stated that 615 people had already left the cantonment on their own initiative as the situation improved. So far, four of the sheltered people have been handed over to law enforcement agencies following the proper legal process based on the allegations or cases brought against them.

"At present, seven people are staying in the cantonment. All the information has been given to the concerned ministry on behalf of the army," the release reads.

The Bangladesh Army is working with neutrality and professionalism to improve law and order and to prevent extrajudicial activities to uphold the rule of law.

The ISPR also requested everyone not to pay heed to rumours and to show patience and a cooperative attitude.

Bangladesh Army will always be by the side of the people and is committed to upholding the law of the country, the release added.

Israel launches fresh strikes across Gaza

25 more Palestinians killed; Blinken heads to ME for 10th time to push for truce

REUTERS, Cairo

Israeli strikes killed 25 people in Gaza yesterday, including six children, Palestinian health authorities said, ahead of a visit to the region by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to try to push forward ceasefire talks.

The children and their mother were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a house

in the central town of Deir Al-Balah, health officials said. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

The Israeli military said it destroyed rocket launchers used to hit Israel from the southern city of Khan Younis, the scene of intense fighting in recent weeks, and killed 20 Palestinian fighters.

Diplomatic efforts to halt the Israel-Hamas conflict and secure a deal to return hostages held in Gaza have intensified in recent days. Talks mediated by the US, Egypt and Qatar are set to continue this week in Cairo, following a two-day meeting in Doha last week.

Blinken is making his 10th trip to the region since the offensive began days after the United States put forward bridging proposals that the mediating countries believe would close gaps between the warring parties.

There has been increased urgency to reach a ceasefire deal amid fears of a regional escalation. Iran has threatened to retaliate against Israel after the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31.

The health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said yesterday that at least 40,099 people have been killed in the Palestinian territory. The toll includes 25 deaths over the past 24 hours, according to ministry figures.

Ten months after the offensive began, Palestinians in Gaza are living in constant desperation to find a safe place. "There is nothing left to us but the sea," said Tamer Al-Burai, who lives in Deir Al-Balah with several extended family members.

- Hardly any safe place for Palestinians in Gaza
- Ceasefire talks set to continue this week in Cairo
- Death toll in Gaza rises to 40,099

32 OCs of DMP transferred outside Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The officers-in-charge of 32 police stations under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), who hold the rank of police inspectors (unarmed), have been transferred to various police units outside Dhaka.

This transfer order was issued by Additional Inspector General of Police (administration) Kamrul Ahsan from the Police Headquarters yesterday.

Three days after the mass uprising of students and citizens that led to the resignation and departure of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, DMP Commissioner Habibur Rahman was first attached to the police headquarters and later sent into forced retirement.

On August 12, a notification from the police headquarters said 18 inspectors from the DMP were transferred. The next day, seven officers of deputy commissioner rank from the DMP were assigned to new posts.

With the transfer of 32 OCs yesterday, the officers-in-charge of 50 police stations under the DMP have now been transferred.

6 more cases filed against Hasina

Several ex-ministers, AL MPs also made accused

STAR REPORT

Six more murder cases were filed yesterday against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, several of her cabinet members, ex-Awami League lawmakers, leaders and activists of the party, and police officials.

Three of them were lodged in Dhaka while one each was filed in Rangpur, Joypurhat, and Natore.

With this, Hasina, who resigned and fled the country amid an uprising on August 5, is now facing 15 cases, including 12 for murder, one for abduction, and two for committing crimes against humanity and genocide.

Last night, Kamrul Hasan, father of Khaled Saifullah, who was shot dead at Azimpur in the capital on July 18 during the quota reform protests, lodged a case with Lalbagh Police Station against 91 named people, including Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan, AL General Secretary and former road transport and bridges minister Obaidul Quader, and 100-150 unnamed others.

Hasina and 12 others were also sued over the deaths of two students - Kobi Nazrul Government College student Iqram Hossain Kawser and Government Shaheed Suhrawardy College student Omar Faruque - at Sutrapur on July 19 during the violence centring the quota reform protests.

Kawser's mother Nasrin Begum filed the case with a Dhaka court.

Former DB chief Harunor Rashid, former DMP commissioner Habibur Rahman, Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Fazole Noor Taposh, and former DMP joint commissioner Biplob Kumar Sarkar are among the named accused.

The court directed the officer-in-charge of Sutrapur Police Station to register the complaint as first information report (FIR).

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Two children, woman killed in landslide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

A woman and two children of a family died when a landslide crushed their house in Pekua upazila of Cox's Bazar early yesterday.

The tragic incident occurred around 5:00am in the Segunbagicha area of Jarulbonia under the upazila's Shilkhali union, police said.

The deceased Mamtaj Begum, 45, her daughter Moina Akhtar, 12, and her grandson Md Toha, 8, lived at the foot of a hill in the Segunbagicha area.

Pounded by heavy downpours for the past several days, the saturated hillside gave way and collapsed their house, burying it under a large chunk of mud.

"Although local residents rushed to help after hearing the family's cries for help, they could not rescue them. Later in the morning, when the Upazila administration and fire service personnel arrived at the scene, they recovered the bodies of the mother and her daughters," said Pekua Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Md Saiful Islam.

He also said people living in the risky hilly areas are being evacuated.



Medical professionals take part in a candle light vigil as they protest against the rape and murder of a doctor in India's West Bengal state, in Chandigarh yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

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India SC takes up doctor's rape-murder case

Some doctors continue strike

AGENCIES

India's Supreme Court, on its own, has taken up the rape-murder case of the Kolkata doctor that has shocked the country and thrown the medical fraternity in a turmoil. A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud will hear the matter tomorrow.

The top court's move came as some junior doctors remained off the job yesterday, demanding swift justice for the murder incident, despite the end of a 24-hour strike called by the country's biggest association of doctors, reports Reuters.

The case is already being heard by the Calcutta High Court, which, during a hearing last week, ordered that the probe be transferred to the Central Bureau of Investigation or CBI, overriding Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's ultimatum to the state police.

If the police were unable to solve the case by Sunday (yesterday), the CBI will take over, she had said.

The case went to the High Court after the woman's parents, and a few others, unhappy with the police investigation, filed an appeal. The court made its displeasure with the police and the administration clear, reports NDTV online.