

Fire stations to be built in 32 upazilas

Says home adviser
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Affairs Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury (ret'd) yesterday said initiatives will soon be taken to build fire service stations in 32 upazilas across the country.

"Currently, there are no fire service stations in 32 upazilas in the country. Fire service stations will be built in the upazilas as soon as possible," he said.

He said this while speaking to journalists after visiting the Fire Service and Civil Defence (FSCD) headquarters in the capital.

He said a place has been allotted in Munshiganj's Gazaria for building a training academy for the fire service.

The home adviser also assured that the issue of increasing the risk allowance for the officials and employees of the fire service department will be considered.



The DND canal along the Dhaka-Chattogram highway in Fatullah has been encroached upon by shops and different settlements. Such encroachment of waterbodies keeps going unabated in different parts of the country, causing severe environmental and waterlogging issues. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Drives against teen gangs strengthened

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Md Mainul Islam has directed all unit heads to strengthen ongoing special drives against various crimes -- including robbery, extortion, drug trafficking, and illegal activities -- being committed by "teenage gangs".

They have also been directed to help enhance traffic management.

The IGP provided these directives in a special message yesterday, according to a media release issued by the Media and Public Relations wing of Police Headquarters.

The special drive has been underway since October 18 and is also working towards finding people who attacked protesters during the anti-discrimination movement, the release says.

As of October 27, over 200 robbers, extortionists, and criminals have been arrested through these drives.

Also, six listed criminals, 1,140 individuals involved in attacks on the anti-discrimination student movement, 1,144 persons related to narcotics, and 55 illegal weapon holders have also been apprehended.

Combing operations are being conducted under these drives in crime-prone areas. In addition to permanent police checkpoints, temporary ones have been established.

Teen gangs, top criminals behind mugging surge

Say law enforcers on Mohammadpur; Dhanmondi residents too in fear

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Teen gang members and top-listed criminals were behind the rise of mugging, theft, and robbery incidents in the capital's Mohammadpur.

Even a group of people were involved in selling machetes and knives to the culprits.

The law enforcers disclosed the findings yesterday, following the arrest of 34 individuals, including members of teen gangs, in 24 hours till Sunday night.

"We have managed to arrest 34 in the last 24 hours. Among them, 22 were arrested during a joint drive with the army. They were shown arrested in previously filed cases," Hafziur Rahman, Inspector (investigation) of the Mohammadpur Police Station told The Daily Star.

The 22 were arrested from Dhaka Udyan, Chand Udyan, and Geneva Camp during the joint drive, said a press release by Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR).

Rubul Kabir Khan, deputy commissioner of the Tejgaon Division Police, said they have arrested two blacksmiths on the charge of selling machetes to teen gang members.

Law enforcers recovered 40 machetes from the arrestees.

"We have already increased joint drive, block raid, check posts, and patrolling in Mohammadpur

to prevent criminal activities. Strict legal action will be taken against the patrons of the teen gang members," he said at a media briefing yesterday.

During a visit yesterday, this newspaper found two temporary police outposts set up inside the Geneva Camp to maintain law and order.

There are 20 police members in each outpost, sources said.

Dhanmondi residents claimed that they are already passing days in fear, as mugging incidents, similar to those in Mohammadpur, also took place in the Dhanmondi area over the last couple of weeks.

Referring to the four recent killing incidents in the Geneva camp, DC Ruhul Kabir said those incidents occurred centring asserting dominance of drug traders.

"We are collecting information and conducting operations," he added.

On Saturday night, the joint

operations arrested 45 suspects and seized nine sharp weapons.

Meanwhile, the Ramna Division of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) also increased vigilance.

A high official of the Ramna Division said, "We are fearing that the teen gang members and muggers may change locations and focus on Dhanmondi due to continuous drives in Mohammadpur."

Meanwhile, Dhanmondi residents claimed that they are already passing days in fear, as mugging incidents, similar to those in Mohammadpur, also took place in the Dhanmondi area over the last couple of weeks.

Law enforcers even failed to detect criminals, they added.

For instance, on October 19 around 7:00pm, four unidentified people wearing helmets snatched away Tk 50 lakh from an individual by firing gunshots from road 8/A of the area.

The victim Rasel Ali is the manager of a money exchange institute.

A case was filed with Dhanmondi Police Station a day later.

But police have yet to trace any criminals or the snatched money. Md Masud Alam, deputy commissioner of Ramna Division Police, admitted the fact and said they are working tirelessly.

"Some incidents may have

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

LEGALITY OF ARTICLE 70 HC defers hearing of petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday deferred the hearing on a writ petition challenging the legality of Article 70 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, which mandates the cancellation of a lawmaker's membership for voting against the political party that nominated them.

The deferment order was issued by the bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice Debasish Roy Chowdhury after petitioner Advocate Md Eunus Ali Akond was unable to produce a certified copy of the 2018 HC verdict that had dismissed a similar petition he filed challenging Article 70.

Akond said he would obtain the certified copy of the 2017 verdict and present it to the HC bench.

On October 23, Akond, a Supreme Court lawyer, filed the latest petition with the HC, arguing that Article 70 should be scrapped as it contradicts democratic principles.

He cited a 2017 observation by an Appellate Division bench, led by then Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, which said Article 70 conflicted with constitutional provisions.

On August 18, 2018, an HC bench had dismissed a similar petition filed by him.

COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE Govt to create 14,000 posts

BAHARAM KHAN and AHMED DEEPTO

The interim government is moving to approve the creation of around 14,000 temporary posts at the community level in the health sector to strengthen the workforce at the grassroots.

This proposal comes after two authorities of the government responded to a request from the health services division to create 19,388 posts within the community healthcare facilities.

The proposal is slated for review at the meeting of secretaries' committee on administrative improvement with Cabinet Secretary Dr Sheikh Abdur Roshid in the chair, according to sources from the health services division.

The Finance Division (Implementation) has already outlined and fixed the pay scale for 13,949 posts. Both the Ministry of Public Administration and the Finance Division, have agreed to create the posts on a temporary basis within the organisational structure of Community Clinic Health Support Trust.

Additionally, the upcoming secretaries' committee meeting will also review a proposal for 172 new posts, both temporary and permanent, for different government authorities including ministries, divisions and institutes.

Meanwhile, other government agencies are also preparing to create new posts. The Ministry of Labour and Employment plans to establish 16 temporary posts, while the Posts and Telecommunications Division is set to create 38 temporary posts.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Volker Turk in town to discuss rights situation

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk is set to arrive in Dhaka today to discuss the updates on Bangladesh's human rights situation in the aftermath of the political changeover.

The possibility of opening an office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) here will also be discussed.

During the two day visit, he is scheduled to hold meetings with Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, Foreign Affairs Adviser Md Touhid Hossain, Law Adviser Prof Asif Nazrul, Home Adviser Lt Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, as well as a group of students from the University of Dhaka.

Turk is arriving in Dhaka days after the completion of a visit by the UN Fact-Finding Mission that investigated the human rights violations and abuses in the context of the July-August uprising.

The five-member mission will submit a report and put forward recommendations for the Bangladesh authorities to hold those responsible accountable.

"Volker Turk is likely to take stock of the progress in terms of human rights in Bangladesh after the political changeover," an official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told The Daily Star recently.

A UN official said the United Nations does not care about which regime is in power, adding that the rights violations and abuses that have taken place since the fall of Awami League will also come under the purview of Turk's visit.

"There were incidences of mob justice, and there are questions about those," the official added.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Need global unity to address climate change

Says Rizwana

BSS, Dhaka

Environment, Forest and Climate Change Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday stressed the need for global unity in addressing climate change.

"It's time that developed nations uphold their commitments to support the most affected countries," she said while speaking as the Chief guest at the COP29 reception hosted by the European Union in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Rizwana highlighted the disproportionate climate challenges faced by vulnerable nations.

"Bangladesh, despite contributing minimally to global emissions, bears one of the highest burdens of climate impacts. We need equitable solutions that recognise the realities of nations on the frontlines of climate change," she said.

The adviser said Bangladesh's resilience must be matched with robust, sustainable support

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Admission policy for non-govt schools published

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Ministry of Education yesterday published an admission policy for non-government schools at the secondary, lower secondary, and attached primary levels.

Student selection and admission in these schools for the 2025 academic year, slated to begin on January 1 and conclude on December 31, will be conducted through a digital lottery system.

The Secondary and Higher Education Division issued the policy, specifying that students may be admitted to entry-level classes till ninth grade, depending on seat availability, with a maximum of 55 students allowed per section.

In Dhaka-based MPO-affiliated institutions, the maximum admission fee is capped at Tk 5,000, while partially MPO-affiliated institutions may charge up to Tk 8,000, and English-version schools are permitted to charge up to Tk 10,000. Development fees in Dhaka-based institutions are limited to Tk 3,000.

Meanwhile, some 40 percent seats in non-government schools within Dhaka metropolitan areas will be reserved for students residing in respective localities, while five percent seats will be allocated under the freedom fighter quota.

As per the National Education Policy 2010, children aged 6 and older are eligible for admission. However, eligible students must be between 5 and 7 years old as of January 1 and December 31 of the entry year, and their ages must be verified through an attested copy of their online birth certificate, submitted with the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1



Four men push a cart carrying steel rods on the Buriganga Second Bridge in Old Dhaka's Badamtali area, defying rules, as slow-moving vehicles are banned from operating on the bridge. While the plying of such vehicles can cause traffic congestions on the bridge, carrying steel rods openly in this manner can also pose risks of accidents. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN