

Another major reshuffle in police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of another major reshuffle in the police service, 64 officers, from the ranks of deputy inspector general (DIG) to the superintendent of police (SP), have been transferred and attached to different police units across the country.

According to two separate notifications issued by the home ministry yesterday, 48 officials have been transferred to different police units, while 16 have been transferred but have not been assigned duty.

Being transferred and attached to different police units without any assigned duty means being made Officers on Special Duty (OSD), according to insiders.

The DIG of Police Staff College, Nazmur Karim Khan, has been made the commissioner of Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP), according to the ministry notification signed by Abu Sayed, deputy secretary of the home ministry.

Earlier on October 24, the former GMP commissioner, Khandaker Rafiqul Islam, was promoted to the post of additional IGP and made the chief of the Special Branch of police. Since then, the post remained vacant.

Meanwhile, the other 47 officials were transferred to different police units like Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Special Branch, in-service training centre, tourist police, and Criminal Investigation Department.

In a separate ministry notification, also signed by Deputy Secretary Abu Sayed, one DIG, six additional DIGs, and nine SPs have been attached to different offices.

An SP rank officer, attached to a range DIG's office in Chattogram, said, wishing to remain unnamed, "I was neither involved in crimes, nor are there any allegations against me, but still I have been made OSD. This is all because I was posted as an SP during the last government tenure."



The North South Road in front of Suritola Government Primary School in Old Dhaka's Siddique Bazar area is littered with trash from nearby shops and homes. Such mindless dumping of garbage is not only polluting the environment but also blocking the footpath. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Not sure

FROM PAGE 12

died at a city hospital. On September 19, his mother, Sufia Begum, filed a murder case with a Dhaka court against 57 people, including one Sheikh Bashir Uddin Bhuiyan.

The court then directed the officer-in-charge (OC) of Rampura Police Station to register it as a first information report (FIR).

Complainant Sufia told Prothom Alo that the AL, Jubo League, BCL, and the police were responsible.

She, however, could not say who the accused were or who named the accused in the case.

Sheikh Bashir Uddin Bhuiyan is the 49th named accused on a list of 57. He has been identified as an Awami League leader. His father's name has been mentioned as Sheikh Akij Uddin Bhuiyan.

The FIR mentions former lawmaker from Jashore-1 Sheikh Afil Uddin Bhuiyan as accused number 48.

According to the parliament website, Sk Afil Uddin was the AL lawmaker of Jashore-1. Sk Afil Uddin is the brother of Sk Bashir Uddin.

The case also accuses former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal president Hasanul Haq Inu, former inspector general of police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun, and former lawmaker Saifuzzaman Shekhor, among others.

Rampura Police Station OC Aatur Rahman Akonda said, "I'm looking into the matter. I had earlier talked to the complainant. But I didn't talk to her about this particular matter."

Marooned for months

FROM PAGE 1

However, at least 300 villages of Jashore's Abhaynagar, Manirampur and Keshabpur; Khulna's Dumuria and Phultala; and Satkhira's Sadar and Tala upazilas are now facing severe waterlogging following heavy rains in August, affecting at least 10 lakh people.

Meanwhile, over 200 schools in these areas have been inundated, depriving thousands of children from education over the past two months.

The farmers too faced their share of losses.

"All the farmers in the region, including myself, have lost their Aman crops ... Owners of all fish enclosures lost their fish.

"If this continues even for a few more days, all the people of the region will have to be completely dependent on relief," Ranjit said.

He added that most of the people have already sold their livestock and other valuables just to survive.

The situation was this severe in 2007 and then 2016. "Other years, it wasn't as bad and long-lasting as there was less rain.

"Our fate depends on rains. If there are heavy rains in a year, our whole area goes under water."

As this correspondent ventured further into the village, he found all the homes, schools, croplands and fish enclosures on both sides of the road underwater.

In the neighbouring village of Hatgachha in Manirampur upazila, Chandana Mandal approached the correspondent and asked him to write her name down for relief. "No one is bothered about giving us any relief.

"We only received 10kg of rice in the last two months ... I initially stayed in my house when the waterlogging began. But in a few days, my house, made of mud, collapsed. We had to make a makeshift hut on the road."

SCHOOLS AND HOMES

A total of 236 educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and madrasas – 66 in Khulna, 115 in Jashore, and 54 in Satkhira – have been affected by the waterlogging.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Sanjit Kumar Biswas, headmaster of Hatgachha Secondary School, said the school has been under water for two months and the students have not been able to attend classes the whole

time.

Khandakar Ruhul Amin, divisional deputy director of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education in Khulna region, said the heads of the affected educational institutions have been instructed to find nearby places on higher grounds with the help of locals to hold exams.

In Abhaynagar's Sundali union, 21 of the 25 villages are completely under water, said Union Parishad Chairman Vikash Roy Kapil. The 19 educational institutions in the union have all been closed.

"Many people have had to leave their homes and find shelter elsewhere."

Sana Abdul Mannan, chairman of the upazila's Cholisia union, said his union was the worst affected and lamented the lack of government help.

MM Abul Kalam Azad, chairman of Tentulia union parishad in Satkhira's Tala upazila, said all 17 villages in his union are affected, and 11 of them have been inundated for over two months.

"With the current drainage situation, this water won't recede even in the next two months."

Abu Bakar lives in Shirashuni village of the upazila's Sobhashini union, where the borders of all three districts meet.

"In the 65 years of my life, I've never seen waterlogging lasting so long in my area. Earlier, it would happen a few kilometres away from my village. The problem has now reached us."

Gazi Abdul Hamid, joint convener of the water drainage movement committee, said the Bhabadah sluice gate, which does not work and lacks the drainage capability, is a death trap.

"We demand urgent initiation of the TRM; the quick repair of the Aamdanga canal [near Noapara of Jashore's Abhaynagar upazila]; and legal action against local representatives, ministers and other government officials who were involved in corruption when projects to curb the waterlogging were initiated."

TRM SYSTEM

Since the constructions of polders (a network of embankments and sluice gates along riverbanks) in the 1960s, the sediment that river water carries in during high tide has been

accumulating on the riverbeds.

TRM is supposed to temporarily reverse the process.

Under the TRM, a canal, which connects a river and a beel, is dredged to allow the river water to flow into the beel so that the sediment is carried in and the low-lying area is elevated, while some of it is later carried back into the sea during low tide.

Ranjit said the construction of dams and polders has obstructed the natural river water flow in the region.

"The waterlogging in Bhabadah is nature's revenge. Farmers in the southwestern region have a centuries-old indigenous innovation called 'Jowaradhar' [now called Tidal River Management]. Building a dam enclosing three sides of a floodplain adjacent to the main river, while leaving a portion of the embankment

to flow into the floodplain.

"This way, the height of the area would gradually rise as sediments coming in with high tide would be deposited. During low tide, the water would return to the sea, maintaining the river's navigation and preventing waterlogging. The implementation of the TRM is imperative for Bhabadah."

Experts from CEGIS first came to know about the system from the locals of Bhabadah in 1997-1998 when they visited the area for research purposes. After an assessment, they recommended TRM.

Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) first implemented it in Kedaria beel from 2001-2005 and then in Khukhsia beel from 2006-2012.

It was later supposed to implement TRM in Jashore's Beel Kapalia but could not due to protests by shrimp farmers. The system has since been completely removed from Jashore.

In Satkhira, they implemented it in Beel Pakhimara temporarily from 2015-2021.

THE SOLUTION?

Gouranga Nandy, chairman of the Centre for Environment and Participatory Research, a non-government organisation in Khulna, said it is not possible to restore the flow of the Mathabhanga, Bhairab and Kobadak rivers, as the upstream has been illegally grabbed and the lower parts of the rivers were severed from the river network years ago.

"To restore the tidal flows of these

rivers, the government needs to implement the TRM system."

However, the WDB installed water pumps at the Bhabadah sluice gate on the Teka river as a solution, which has proven to be ineffective due to the negligible amount of water being pumped out.

Farukh Ahmed, who operates those pumps, said nine out of 10 pumps run every day – four of them have diameters of 32 inches, while the others are of six inches.

"We operate the pumps round the clock. But this year, there is too much water to pump out."

Palash Kumar Banerjee, executive engineer of Jashore WDB, said the pumps have not helped as the rains have been heavy this monsoon.

However, apart from water being pumped out, he said, there are excavation works going on in over 2.1km of the Hori river in Jashore to help the drainage.

ATM Shamsul Alam, director of the socio-economic institution division of CEGIS, said, "The TRM showed success in all beels [when it was implemented earlier]". The CEGIS made a rotational chart of 40 beels in which the implementation of the TRM would resolve the waterlogging issue.

"The southern part of the country is an active delta and its land is still under the process of formation... This process was interrupted by the polders, resulting in such waterlogging events."

Asked, Syeda Rizwana Hasan, adviser of the environment ministry, said the situation in Bhabadah has been worsening every day.

"We need to do two things first – dredge the [Hori] river in the lower estuary and then dredge the Aamdanga canal.

"We've already sent five dredgers to start work on the river. We've also consulted with the locals to develop a plan to resolve the problem. I'll visit Bhabadah soon and take necessary measures."

Locals said if 35km of the riverbed, from the Bhabadah sluice gate to Kulbari in Dumuria upazila's Kharnia union, is dredged, complete water drainage will be possible.

(Our Khulna Correspondent contributed to this report.)

embankments are broken, preventing water from draining out."

He warned that if the waterlogging continues in Khulna division's three districts, Boro farming will be impossible this season.

Md Rafiqul Islam, additional director of the DAE in Khulna, said efforts were underway to address the waterlogging problem.

"Twenty-five water pumps of BADC are pumping floodwater into rivers to ease waterlogging. Fifteen more water pumps will be installed soon to expedite the work. Freeing the area from waterlogging is crucial," he said.

Samoren Biswas, assistant deputy director (crop) of the DAE in Jashore, said they expanded Boro farming in the Bhabadah area over the last few years.

"The situation this year is worse, with all the arable land under water. Floodwaters have also inundated many residential areas.

"If the water recedes within the next three weeks, growers will be able to farm Boro paddy. Otherwise, around 28,000 hectares in Jashore may remain uncultivated this season," he told The Daily Star.

Bridge this year, full benefits

FROM PAGE 1

The existing trains take longer to reach their destinations and often run behind schedule due to line maintenance work and accidents.

A train has to travel an extra 112km to go to Bogura from Sirajganj as the existing line goes through Iswardi-Santahar-Kahalu.

To solve all these problems, three separate projects involving Tk 36,611.26 crores were taken up.

The government took up a project in January 2016 to construct the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Railway Bridge over the Jamuna.

The dual-gauge double-track bridge is being built some 300 metres upstream of the Bangabandhu Bridge, which has a single rail line.

Japan is funding 72 percent of the cost as soft loans. Two Japanese joint-venture firms are building the bridge.

Speaking to The Daily Star on November 4, Project Director Al Fatah Md Masudur said 96 percent work of the project has been done, and all civil work would be completed by December 22.

"So, the bridge would be ready for opening in late December. The government will make the final decision on the date," he said.

The Joydebpur-Ishwardi double line project, taken up in November 2018, was supposed to be completed by December 2024 under a government-to-government initiative between Bangladesh and China.

The BR completed cost negotiations with a Chinese company. But China, in March 2021, declined to finance the project citing "lack of in-depth preliminary work and insufficient feasibility study".

The government then turned to Japan, which agreed to a loan for the project. In October last year, BR took up a separate project, involving Tk 146 crores, to draw up a detailed design and prepare bidding documents.

After completing the detailed design and hiring contractors, BR hopes to start construction work by mid-2026,

Govt must stop

FROM PAGE 1

given by the students and citizens, we will not accept them.

"Students will not let this go unquestioned... We want to know whose prescriptions are being followed to rehabilitate Awami allies," he added.

He said those who had ties to the fascists over the last 16 years have no place in post-2024 Bangladesh. "We overthrow fascist Hasina not to keep her legacy."

Arif Sohel, a coordinator of the movement, said, "Without talking to the students, an adviser known to have supported fascists was appointed. We don't understand how this could happen, and we demand an explanation."

"We trusted the government, but now we see that it is ignoring the collective aspirations of the students and the people. If this continues, it won't take us long to establish a new government."

Movement coordinator Mahin Sarker said, "If there is no reflection of our views, we will show them the red card. Accomplices of fascists must be removed immediately."

Rifat Rashid, another coordinator, said they would not hesitate to remove the advisory council, like the way they removed Hasina, if advisers are appointed ignoring the mandate given by the people and the students.

Movement coordinator Tariqul Islam said the advisers seemed to have become a part of the system itself when they were meant to bring reforms.

Coordinator Abdul Kader said they would ensure that the spirit of the uprising is upheld and that the supreme sacrifices of the martyred do not go in vain.

Abdul Hannan Masud, another coordinator, demanded the government ensure advisers face the media every week to provide a clear picture of his or

a BR official said, adding that it would take at least three years or up to June 2029 to install the line.

Replying to a question, the official said opening the Bangabandhu Railway Bridge will give some respite as it would reduce travel time a little.

The bridge, with its single line, has weight and speed restrictions for trains.

"But if we want to get the full benefit of the bridge, we have to complete both the projects," he said.

BR, in October 2018, took up a project to cut short the distance between Dhaka and Bogura to 212km from the existing 324km.

Under a Tk 5,579.70 crore project, an 86.51km dual gauge rail line from Shaheed M Mansur Ali Station in Sirajganj to Bogura will be built. The project was supposed to be done by June 2023.

But BR has only been able to complete updating the feasibility study and detailed design, while the process to acquire 960 acres is just half done.

It is estimated that the project cost would be around Tk 8,500 crores, said Project Director Monirul Islam Firoz.

As the cost will rise, they would need \$300 million more in loan from India, he said, adding that they have already sought the Indian approval.

"We hope to start physical work of the project by late 2025 or early 2026, if everything goes well," he said, adding that they would need three years to complete the job.

At the moment BR runs about 40 trains a day via the road/rail bridge. Once all three projects are complete, it will be able to run 88 trains a day.

BR Director General Sarder Sahadat Ali said opening of the bridge will save around 40 minutes as it takes around one hour to cross the Bangabandhu Bridge and its east and west stations.

"But it's true that we will not get the full benefits of the bridge until these two projects are completed," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said they were trying to expedite the two projects.

her ministry.

Sarjis Alam, a coordinator of the student movement, also criticised the selection of new advisers on his Facebook page Sunday night.

Ashrefa Khatun, another coordinator of the movement, wrote on her Facebook page that many of the coordinators were in the dark about the appointments of new advisers.

In Jashore, movement leaders and activists held a protest rally around 11:30pm on Sunday demanding removal of Bashir.

In front of Chattogram Press Club yesterday afternoon, police detained five youths when they, under the banner of "Iowhidi Janata", attempted to hold a human chain protesting the appointments of Bashir and Farooki, reports our staff correspondent in Chattogram.

Hasnat took to Facebook last night to protest the arrests. He said, "Making arrests from protests against the appointment of Bashir and Farooki is a mockery to the extreme. These are hypocrites. Don't try to become Hasina. We cared little for Hasina, toppled her. What have you become?"

The Jatiya Nagorik Committee in a press release yesterday said, "We feel that important state decisions, including the appointment of advisers, are not being made in a proper and participatory way and based on consultation with stakeholders of the mass uprising."

"Talking decisions without considering the opinions and suggestions of the stakeholders is inconsistent with the aspirations of the July uprising."

Meanwhile, Hefazat-e-Islam in a statement yesterday raised question over the appointment of Farooki and wanted to know the logic behind his inclusion in the government.

Around 50,000 farmers at risk of missing

FROM PAGE 1

The floodwaters have submerged around 20,000 hectares of agricultural land in Khulna's Dumuria and Phultala upazilas, with 11,000 hectares in Dumuria alone, according to DAE data.

Md Inshad Ibne Amin, Dumuria upazila agriculture officer, said Boro season usually starts between the last week of November and the second week of December.

"We need to drain the water from the arable land soon to make it cultivable."

At least 60 beels (water bodies) across 10 upazilas in Khulna, Jashore, and Satkhira remain submerged, as water cannot recede due to heavy siltation in local rivers like the Mukteshwari, Teka, Sri, Hori, Soilmari, and Salta. The region experienced heavy flooding in late August, affecting around 14 lakh people.

According to the DAE, around 35,000 farmers in Jashore's Bhabadah area farm Boro crop on about 25,000 hectares.

Subhash Sarkar, another local grower, said he too will not be able to farm Boro paddy this year if the water does not recede within the next two weeks.

The floodwaters have yet to recede. Motiar Rahman, a UP member of Tetulia Union Parishad under Satkhira's Tala upazila, said he relies on Boro farming on his four and a half bighas of land in Shirasuni village to support his seven-member family. For the rest of the year, the land is used for fish farming.

"Normally, after saving enough rice for my family, I sell 20-25 maunds of paddy to help cover our expenses. But next year, I may have to buy rice for the whole year," he said.

Pravash Biswas, a farmer from Sujatpur village in Jashore's Manirampur upazila, said his two bighas of land are currently flooded.

"Last year, I harvested about seven maunds of Boro paddy, which helped me support my four-member family partially.

"If we can't grow rice this year, we will face a tough time getting enough food," he added.

ABM Shafiqul Islam, president of the Water Committee in Khulna, said all the 11 rivers in Dumuria upazila are almost dead due to the accumulation of silt.

"Moreover, many sluice gates on the