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DISRUPTING OFFICE WORK

Govt employees can be punished within 8 days

Recommends draft amendment to Government Service Act-2018

BAHARAM KHAN

The interim government has moved to amend the Government Service Act-2018 to allow swift disciplinary action against its employees who will be found guilty of disrupting official activities.

The accused employees can be suspended, removed from service or demoted with only eight-day show-cause notices. The notices would be served in two phases – first in a maximum of five days and second in three days, according to the proposed amendment.

The public administration ministry has prepared the draft amendment in the wake of disruptions in civil administration since the July-August mass uprising. The home ministry also requested the amendment.

Five senior officials from the public administration and home ministries with knowledge of the draft confirmed the development to The Daily Star.

In the existing act or rules, there is no provision to mete out swift punishment to the public servants for major or minor offences. They can be punished if found guilty in a lengthy investigation process, said public administration experts.

They spoke to The Daily Star off the record as the matter is sensitive.

The draft amendment will be placed before the cabinet once it gets the go-ahead from Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus, who has kept the public administration ministry under his watch.

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However, the act permits the government to retire public servants without explanation once they complete 25 years in service.

The civil administration went through a period of disorder after the fall of the Awami League government on August 5 last year. A number of cadre officials demonstrated for promotion and other personal benefits by skipping work.

Processions were brought out at the Secretariat in Dhaka almost every day, while scuffles were also reported. Even the offices of secretaries of different ministries were locked up.

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Dhaka North City Corporation workers using excavators to demolish illegal structures during an eviction drive along Haikka Canal in Mohammadpur's Katasur area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Pile pressure on Myanmar for Rohingya return

Yunus urges Qatar
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said Qatar can use its good offices to exert pressure on Myanmar for starting repatriation of Rohingyas without any further delay.

Given the renewed international geopolitical and geostrategic scenario, Qatar can strongly express their solidarity to resolve the issue and be proactive to engage the OIC countries to raise more funds and impose pressure on the international community to advocate for the repatriation of the Rohingyas, he said.

Prof Yunus made the comments at a roundtable discussion on "Social and Environmental Challenges around Forcibly Displaced Populations: The Case of the Rohingyas".

He is on a four-day visit to Qatar to attend Earthna Summit 2025.

Qatar Foundation Chief Executive Officer Sheikha Hind bint Hamad Al Thani, also the sister of Qatar emir and the host

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Poverty may worsen: World Bank

'Political tensions over polls likely to affect economic recovery'

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh is confronting a potential rise in poverty and inequality as stubborn inflation, job losses and a slowing economy erode household welfare, according to a World Bank report.

The national poverty rate is projected to rise to 22.9 percent in 2025, up from 18.7 percent in 2022, while the share of people living in extreme poverty – those earning below \$2.15 a day – is expected to nearly double to 9.3 percent and push an additional 3 million people into this group. However, the poverty rate is forecast to ease in 2026.

GDP growth forecast lowered to 3.3% for FY25

An additional 3m people may go into extreme poverty

Export growth may slow due to global trade disruptions

"High inflation and job losses have strained economic welfare, particularly for low-income households who spend a larger share of their income on

essential goods," the World Bank said in its Bangladesh Development Update released yesterday.

Nearly 4 percent of workers lost their jobs in the second half of 2024, while wages fell by 2 percent for low-skilled workers and 0.5 percent for high-skilled workers.

Bangladesh's labour force is showing signs of distress. The labour force participation rate declined to 59.2 percent from 60.9 percent, driven largely by a sharp fall in female participation, which dropped from 41.6 percent to 38.9 percent. The number of employed fell by 1.6 million.

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Battery-run rickshaw drivers throwing brick chunks at police during clashes in the Outer Signal area of Chandgaon in Chattogram yesterday. The drivers blocked the street during a demonstration against the seizure of their vehicles and alleged police harassment.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

KASHMIR TERROR ATTACK India blames Pakistan, downgrades ties

Expels diplomats, suspends Indus water treaty, tells Pakistanis to leave India

STAR REPORT

India announced a raft of measures to downgrade its ties with Pakistan yesterday, a day after suspected militants killed 26 men at a tourist destination in Kashmir in the worst attack on civilians in the country in nearly two decades.

Indian Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri told a media briefing that the cross-border linkages of the attack had been "brought out" at a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, after which it was decided to act against Pakistan.

He said New Delhi would suspend with immediate effect the bilateral treaty of 1960 on the sharing of the trans-border Indus river.

"The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and

Pakistan convenes security committee after Indian measures

Tourists flee India-administered Kashmir after 26 killed

'Resistance Front' claims responsibility

Modi cuts short Saudi visit to attend security cabinet meet



BNP seeks reform, not revenge
Says Tarique

UNB, Rangpur

BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said his party does not want to take revenge on their oppressors, but wants to implement its 31-point reform proposal, aimed at serving the interests of people.

"For the last 15-16 years since 1/11, you all endured unspeakable torture and abuse. You were subjected to false cases, and you were oppressed by the police or by autocrats and

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