



UN chief Antonio Guterres

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CIVIL SERVICE

Frustration as retirees rehired for key posts

BAHARAM KHAN

Contractual appointments to senior administrative posts are impeding promotions of eligible officials to secretary-level positions, fuelling discontent within the civil administration, say bureaucrats.

At least 20 of the 70 secretaries in the civil service are working on a contractual basis. Among them, around 10 are senior secretaries holding the most crucial positions in the bureaucracy.

Over the past 14 months, 12 secretaries and senior secretaries have been appointed on contract to key administrative positions. The posts of cabinet secretary, principal secretary, public administration secretary, and home secretary are currently held by contractual appointees who retained nearly a decade ago.

Cabinet Secretary Sheikh Abdur Rashid had a 15-year gap from regular service. He had retired in 2016 after being made an officer on special duty (OSD) in 2009.

Principal Secretary M Siraz Uddin Miah; Public Administration Secretary Ehsanul Hoque; Home Secretary Nasimul Ghani; Women and Children Affairs Secretary Momtaz Ahmad; and Planning Commission members MA Akmal Hossain and Mokhlesur Rahman were also appointed on contract after long breaks from regular service – ranging from eight to 10 years. All six were made OSD in 2009.

According to administrative officials, contractual appointments are widely resented in bureaucracy, as they obstruct the upward mobility of career officials. For instance, if a secretary is appointed on contract, it deprives three to four officials of important postings.

However, the government had no other options available but to reappoint experienced officers on a contractual basis after the July uprising, a member of the Advisory Council told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

Explaining the decision, he said, "The government did not want to retain those who held key positions during the previous administration. On the other hand, there was not enough time to promote the officers who had been overlooked back then and appoint them as secretaries. So, at the beginning, contractual appointments were the only option."

"However, at this stage, the number of contractual appointments should gradually be reduced, and qualified officers from the regular service should be promoted to secretary positions," he observed.

AKM Abdul Awal Majumder, a former secretary and a researcher of public administration, said, "When a secretary is appointed on contract, it effectively closes the door of opportunity for several deserving officers."

He further said contract-based appointments should be avoided except for technical positions or under special circumstances.

Former NBR chairman Badiur Rahman said, "Even if the government offers contractual appointments, retired officials should refuse such offers, considering that the practice disrupts the natural progression of the civil service."

"Those who lobby for contractual appointments do not fall under the category of good officers," he added.

Firoz Mia, a public administration expert and ex-additional secretary, said previous governments never made contractual appointments to fill top four or five positions in the civil administration.

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DISCONTENT IN BUREAUCRACY

- Resentment grows among officers waiting for promotion
- 20 of 70 secretaries working on contract
- Govt says such appointments necessary after July uprising

RISKY BUSINESS... Every morning, a floating fish market springs up along the railway tracks in the capital's Karwan Bazar. With trains speeding through every 10-15 minutes, both buyers and sellers remain on constant alert, ready to get out of the way at any moment to avoid serious injury. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

REVISED BUDGET Non-development spending to rise again

Interest payments, subsidies push expenses up; new bank recapitalisation may add pressure

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Non-development expenditure is set to rise again in the revised budget for the current fiscal year mainly due to higher costs on interest payments and subsidies.

Capital support for a new state-owned bank and possible implementation of the Pay Commission's recommendations are also likely to add pressure.

The Finance Division, Economic Relations Division, and agriculture ministry together spent Tk 54,571 crore, about 55 percent of total expenditure, during the first quarter of FY2024-25, mainly on interest and subsidies.

Of this, Tk 31,952 crore, or nearly one-third of the total, went to interest payments alone.

Against this backdrop, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed is scheduled to hold a meeting on November 10 to review the economy and prepare the revised budget.

With national elections planned for mid-February, the government aims to finalise the

SPENDING BY MINISTRIES AND DIVISIONS

JULY-SEPT FY26

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Finance Division | Tk 40,917cr |
| Agriculture Ministry | Tk 7,496cr |
| Economic Relations Div | Tk 6,159cr |
| Education Ministry | Tk 8,478cr |
| Primary Edu Ministry | Tk 4,283cr |
| Defence Ministry | Tk 5,659cr |
| Public Security Div | Tk 4,657cr |
| Food Ministry | Tk 5,803cr |
| Others | Tk 21,512cr |
| TOTAL | Tk 104,964cr |

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Govt trying to
delay polls over
July charter issue

Says Fakhrul; presses for
referendum on election day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has created a situation over the implementation of the July charter to delay the national election, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

He called the move "unfortunate", given BNP's all-out support for the interim government.

He said some political parties are conspiring to disrupt the election process by raising referendum demand before the polls.

"We want to make it very clear that if a referendum is to be held, it must take place on the election day. The national election must be held in February 2026. Otherwise, the people of Bangladesh will not accept it," Fakhrul said at a rally in the party's central office in Nayapaltan.

The event was organised by the BNP to observe the "National Revolution and Solidarity Day." Eight political parties, including Jamaat-e-Islami, have demanded a

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On the occasion of National Revolution and Solidarity Day, BNP leaders and activists brought out a massive procession from the capital's Nayapaltan yesterday afternoon. They marched through Shantinagar, Malibagh, Mouchak, Moghbazar, and Bangla Motor before concluding their programme at the Sonargaon intersection.

PHOTO: STAR

Six held over
Sarwar killing,
other crimes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Rapid Action Battalion has arrested six people for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sarwar Hossain Babla and other crimes in Chattogram.

The suspects are Ishtiaque Chowdhury alias Ovi, Mohammad Joni, Mahmudul Hoque Zaki, Mohammad Arman Ali, Mohammad Alauddin, and Mohammad Helal.

Of them, Alauddin and Helal are accused of shooting Sarwar to death and injuring Ershad Ullah, BNP's candidate for Chattogram-8 constituency, in the port city's Bayezid Bostami area on Wednesday during an election campaign.

In a separate incident, Ishtiaque, Zaki and Joni opened fire on five BNP activists in an area under Raozan Police Station on Wednesday night, according to the statement of a case filed over the incident.

Arman stands accused of firing bullets at auto rickshaw driver Mohammad Idris in the Bayezid Bostami area on Thursday.

Speaking to The Daily Star yesterday, Mozaffar Hossain, senior assistant director of Rab-7, said, "Our team arrested the six suspects overnight from various areas. They are linked to the

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Independent
probe sought
after Jahanara's
allegations

ABDULLAH AL MEHDY



Former Bangladesh women's cricket team skipper Jahanara Alam's recent allegations of sexual harassment against members of the team have rocked the country's sporting fraternity, who have called for an independent inquiry and a strong response against the alleged perpetrators if proven guilty.

Jahanara, who has taken a break from cricket citing mental health issues and is currently living in Australia, bared her soul in a YouTube channel on Thursday, alleging that former women's team manager and selector Manjurul Islam and late Towhid Mahmud, former in-charge of the board's women's department, harassed her in the national team setup.

Just a few days earlier, the pacer had spoken to a national daily about grouping, favoritism and abusive

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