

DU move to promote 200 officials draws flak

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University (DU) administration has initiated a move to promote more than 200 assistant registrars and equivalent officials – a step that has triggered concerns over possible violations of the university's existing promotion rules.

According to the University Employees Recruitment and Promotion Policy-2020, only one-third of the total sanctioned posts of assistant registrar can be promoted to the rank of deputy registrar each year.

However, sources at the Registrar Building said the current initiative seeks to promote 207 officials, far exceeding the permissible limit.

Officials

familiar with the matter said under the policy, only 21 assistant registrars or equivalent officers are eligible for promotion annually. At the DU Registrar's Office, there are 12 sanctioned assistant registrar posts, of which one-third, or four officials, may be promoted each year. Outside the Registrar's Office, there are 51 equivalent posts, making 17 officials eligible annually.

Despite this ceiling, the administration has moved ahead with a large scale promotion plan.

Following the political changeover in 2024, the Registrar's Office invited applications for promotion in February 2025. Officials said many employees were deprived of promotion during the Awami League regime, which prompted the current initiative.

Although steps were taken to draft a new promotion policy, it has yet to be implemented. In the meantime, a syndicate meeting held on February 1, chaired by Vice-Chancellor Prof



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Tea worker found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Police recovered the body of a tea worker with his hands and feet tied from a tea garden in Kamalganj upazila of Moulvibazar yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Ratan Shuvo Kar, 28, a worker at Champara Tea Garden under Islampur union, said Kamalganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Abdul Awal.

Locals spotted the body around 10:00am and alerted police.

Locals said the body bore visible injury marks and was found bloodied. Some residents suspected that Ratan may have been killed elsewhere and the body later dumped in the garden.

Ratan's elder brother, Laxman Kar, said the family had been searching for him since the previous night.

"This [yesterday] morning, we were informed that his body was lying in the garden. We went there and identified him. We do not know why he was killed," he said.

The body was sent to Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital for autopsy. Police said an investigation is underway.



Under army supervision, a drill was held at Bell's Park ground in Barishal city to deal with emergency situations during today's national election and referendum. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Long walks, long wait for Rangamati voters

RIKORS CHAKMA, Rangamati

Voters in remote areas of Rangamati face daunting journeys to cast their ballots, with many forced to walk for hours or even stay overnight near polling centres, in some cases a day before voting, due to long distances and a lack of transport.

The problem is most acute in Baghaichhari, Barkal, Belaichhari and Juraichhari upazilas, where polling stations are located far from scattered hill villages, according to locals and election officials.

In several areas, voters must walk four to five hours to reach a polling centre, discouraging turnout and adding to the hardship of participating in the election.

According to the district election office, Rangamati has 20 polling stations classified as remote—six in Baghaichhari, two in Barkal, seven in Juraichhari and five in Belaichhari.

Election materials and officials are transported to and from these centres by helicopter.

More than 30,000 voters are registered at these polling stations. Jaupui Thang Tripura, headman of Sealdai Mouza in Sajek union of Baghaichhari, the district's largest upazila, told The Daily Star that walking is the only option for most voters in remote areas.

"It takes a full day to reach the polling station and another day to vote and return," he said. "People have to go a day before the election and spend the night nearby."

Pratmani Chakma of the Hagra Kijing area in Sajek described the journey as exhausting and demoralising.

"We leave around 6:00am and reach the polling station around 10:00am or 11:00am," she said. "Even after all that effort to vote, no one checks on us afterwards."

remains a major challenge in the district.

According to the returning officer's office, 161 of Rangamati's 213 polling stations have no mobile network or internet access, while 36 centres have no electricity.

Rangamati Returning Officer and



Sometimes I wonder whether it is worth going through such hardship."

Shanti Kumar Chakma, a resident of Moidong union in Juraichhari, said voters often return home late at night after voting.

"If someone is delayed, they may have to spend the night on the way and return home the next day," he said.

Transporting election logistics also

Deputy Commissioner Nazma Ashrafi said the lack of connectivity makes communication with election officials and the transmission of results difficult.

"To address this, we have decided to transmit results using the wireless systems of the security forces stationed at those centres," she said. "For the 36 centres without electricity, upazila nirbahi officers have been instructed to arrange temporary alternative power supplies."



Teesta plan takes centre stage in river basin seats

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

The long-stalled Teesta Mega Plan has once again emerged as a central election issue for hundreds of thousands of voters across 10 Teesta river basin constituencies in five northern districts – Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha and Nilphamari.

Candidates from nearly all political parties contesting three seats in Lalmonirhat, three in Kurigram, two in Rangpur, and one each in Nilphamari and Gaibandha have pledged to implement the plan in their election manifestos.

BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami candidates, in particular, have placed the project at the top of their agendas, stepping up campaign activities in river-adjacent char areas to court Teesta riverbank voters.

At election rallies in Rangpur and Nilphamari, BNP Chairperson Tarique Rahman said, "If BNP comes to power, the Teesta Mega Plan will be implemented."



Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Dr Shafiqur Rahman made a similar pledge at rallies across Rangpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari, saying, "If Jamaat comes to power, work on the Teesta Mega Plan will be started first of all."

Repeated promises over the years, however, have left many riverbank residents deeply sceptical. For them, the Teesta Mega Plan has become a familiar election refrain that fades once polls are over.

Farmer Mohir Uddin, 70, of Char Gokunda in Lalmonirhat Sadar, said politicians have repeatedly deceived them. "The interim government also deceived us. It announced that work on the Teesta Mega Plan would begin in January 2026, but it did not happen," he said.

Monwara Begum, 58, an agricultural labourer from Char Gobordhan in Aditmari upazila, said erosion by the Teesta has cost her family their land and home. "We have been hearing stories of saving the Teesta for 20 years, but no one has done anything," she said.

Jamaat candidate Firoz Hayder Lavlu of Lalmonirhat-2 said implementation of the plan is a "clear commitment" of his party.

NCP candidate Akhtar Hossen from Rangpur-4 (Kaunia-Pirgachha) said, "I am a son of the Teesta shoal. No one knows the suffering and pain surrounding the Teesta more than I do. If an II-party alliance government is formed, the Teesta Mega Plan will be implemented on a priority basis. This is my election commitment."

BNP candidate Asadul Habib Dulu of Lalmonirhat-3 said, "If BNP comes to power with the people's mandate, the Teesta Mega Plan will be implemented. This is both my party's promise and my election manifesto."

Six killed, 17 hurt in road accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and at least 17 others injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday and the day before, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Sherpur, two people – including an assistant presiding officer assigned to the 13th National Parliamentary Election – were killed and three others injured when a mini-truck collided head-on with a CNG-run auto-rickshaw in Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased were identified as Roknuzzaman Rukon, 31, a junior instructor at Sherpur Polytechnic Institute, and Mahfuza Khatun, 19, a resident of Katlamari village in Madarganj upazila of Jamalpur.

Rukon, from Sarishabari in Jamalpur, had been appointed assistant presiding officer at Madhabpur Government Primary School centre, confirmed Sherpur Sadar Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sohel Rana.

Quoting locals, the OC said the accident occurred on the Sherpur-Jamalpur regional highway at Shimultoli, injuring five auto-rickshaw passengers. They were rushed to Sherpur General Hospital, where doctors declared the two dead. The three others are undergoing treatment there.

In Bagerhat, two men were killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between a human haulier and a truck on the Khulna-Mongla highway at Chulkaithi

Chaltetola in Sadar upazila on Tuesday. Kader Khan, 27, of Goaler Math village in Mongla, and Lablu Molla, 30, of Doarjara village, died on the spot.

The injured were taken to Khulna Medical College Hospital. Police seized the vehicles, said Katakhal Highway Police Station OC Md Zafar Ahmed.

In Faridpur, two passengers were killed and at least 11 others injured when a bus overturned on the Dhaka-Khulna highway



PHOTO: STAR

The damaged bus after it overturned at Suadi village in Faridpur yesterday.

near a filling station at Suadi village in Bhangra upazila yesterday.

Police said the identities of the deceased could not be known immediately.

Bhangra Fire Service said the bus, operating under the Narail Express line, was travelling from Dhaka to Narail with a full load of passengers. "Two passengers died on the spot. The injured were taken to Bhangra Upazila Health Complex," he said.



A farmer struggles to find enough water to bathe his buffalo in a receding stretch of the Padma. In Rajshahi's Paba upazila, the once-mighty river has withered into a landscape of vast chars and barren sandbanks.

PHOTO: AZAHAR UDDIN