

July 15, 2006

New organogram makes ACC dysfunctional

Fate of 50 pc screened Bac employees uncertain

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) organogram prepared by the government has rendered the commission dysfunctional as it does not allow appointment of at least 50 per cent staff of the abolished Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) screened by the ACC.

The ACC, created in 2004, screened 743 former employees of the now-defunct bureau last year and sought government clearance for its organisational structure with 1,376 posts.

But in May, the government unilaterally finalised an organogram of 650 posts and by June the National Implementation Committee on Administrative

Reforms (Nisar), chaired by the prime minister, approved it.

The 743 former Bac officials have been drawing salaries from the ACC ever since their screening. But with the approval of the new structure, the ACC now does not know what to do with these unaccommodated Bac employees.

The ACC received the papers on the new organogram on July 4 but it could not make a single appointment under the new structure as of yesterday due to this problem. "We have held four to five meetings discussing how we can resolve this crisis but found no solution," said an ACC official.

"The approved structure does not allow any appointment from the 743 [former Bac] staff to more than

100 top posts," he said, adding, "We will have to fill these posts either by fresh appointments or by bringing officials from the administration on deputation."

"The same problem persists for 100 such posts at the mid-level," he said.

Besides, the ACC does not have any rule for appointments. It had drafted a set of appointment rules and forwarded it to the president through the government for approval, but the government returned it earlier this year, asking the ACC to revise it.

Meanwhile, a chaotic situation is prevailing at the ACC due to the new structure. According to the government-approved organogram, the ACC has 76 posts

of assistant director for which it screened 33 former Bac officials. Now the ACC will have to recruit 43 more to fill the posts.

The ACC screened 65 officials for the post of assistant inspector. But the new structure has only two assistant inspectors and 28 field officers with similar status, which has left the commission with 35 surplus officials.

Similarly, the ACC screened 318 constables, but the new structure has only 108 posts for them. Ironically, these constables, who enjoyed the rank of third class employees at the Bac, have now been demoted to the rank of fourth class employees.

The salary structure of assistant

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A Kurdistan Airlines plane sits on the tarmac while flames rise from the fuel tanks at the Beirut International Airport after an Israeli air strike.

PHOTO: AFP

Japanese FM to visit Dhaka July 24-25

REZAUL KARIM

A warm welcome awaits the Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso who will be visiting Dhaka on July 24-25 at the invitation of Foreign Minister M Moshed Khan.

Officials here said Japan and Bangladesh have maintained and developed close and friendly relations in a wide range of fields and the upcoming visit of the Japanese foreign minister will further strengthen the cooperation between the two countries.

They said the visit of Taro Aso, who is an aspirant for the premiership in Japan, bears special significance as he is coming to visit Bangladesh at the end of the tenure of the BNP-led government. The election in Japan is likely to be held in September this year.

During his brief stay in

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Zia's three colleagues dispute allegations against Muzaffer

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Colleagues of late president Ziaur Rahman yesterday disputed the allegations levelled at Prof Muzaffer Ahmad by two senior ministers and said the TIB chairman had resigned from the Zia government due to a difference of opinion.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad got a lot of flak from the ruling party high-ups after the anti-graft watchdog launched its latest corruption index on July 5 where the local government, rural development (LGRD) and cooperatives ministry topped the list of corrupt ministries.

Taking part in an unscheduled

debate in parliament on July 9, a number of senior ministers came down heavily on the TIB chairman for the report titled Corruption Database 2005.

Mannan Bhuiyan said, "Professor Muzaffer was a minister of Ziaur Rahman's cabinet but was sacked for corruption."

Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain echoed his colleague's view and joined in blasting Prof Muzaffer.

At a press conference on July 10, the LGRD and cooperatives minister reiterated the allegation and said his ministry will sue TIB if it does not withdraw the report.

Muzaffer Ahmad denied the

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8 bombs found in Faridpur, Satkhira

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight bombs were found in Faridpur town and a bordering village under Kolaroa upazila of Satkhira yesterday and on Thursday night.

In Faridpur, police yesterday recovered three bombs from City College premises where Minister for Food and Disaster Management Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf was scheduled to address a meeting as the chief guest at 4:00pm, according to a correspondent.

The meeting was organised to accord reception to the students who secured GPA-5 in this year's SSC Examinations from different schools of the district.

Police said they found three bombs near the dais while conducting routine check at around

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Boundary talks with India from tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh-India Joint Boundary Working Group will meet in Dhaka July 16-17.

The joint secretary-level working group will discuss the longstanding issues of demarcating 6.5-km border, exchange of enclaves and territories in adverse possession, and construction of boundary pillars.

The Bangladesh delegation will be led by Joint Secretary (Political) of the Ministry of Home Affairs Akhtar Ahmed while the Indian side by Joint Secretary of Indian External Affairs Ministry Mohan Kumar.

Dhaka is pressing for the implementation of the Bangladesh-India Land Boundary Agreement signed on May 16, 1974 by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indira Gandhi.

Although the Bangladesh government ratified the agreement

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Israel widens Beirut bombing campaign

Airport, power supplies bombed, death toll rises to 62

REUTERS, Beirut

Israel struck Beirut airport again yesterday and bombed Lebanese roads, power supplies and communication networks in a widening campaign after Hezbollah guerrillas seized two Israeli soldiers and killed eight.

Hizbollah, which wants to trade its captives for prisoners held in Israel, has showered rockets across the frontier in its fiercest bombardment since 1996 when Israel launched a 17-day blitz against southern Lebanon and Hizbollah.

Israeli aircraft fired two rockets

into a runway at Beirut's international airport, witnesses and security sources said.

The airport has been shut since Israel, which ended its 20-year occupation of southern Lebanon in 2000, bombed its runways on Thursday. Four planes of Lebanon's Middle East Airlines had taken off empty for Amman shortly before the raid.

Israeli warplanes blasted the main Beirut-Damascus highway overnight, tightening an air, sea and land blockade of Lebanon, and bombed targets in Beirut's teeming Shia Muslim suburbs, killing five

people and wounding 40, security sources said.

Their deaths brought to 62 the number of people, almost all civilians, killed in Lebanon since Israel's campaign began.

The Israeli military said Hizbollah had fired more than 130 missiles into Israel in 48 hours, killing four civilians and wounding over 100. It said Hizbollah's main security compound in southern Beirut had been among targets hit on Friday. Reuters reporters said they could see no sign of damage at the site.

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PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Indiscriminate felling of trees in the Sundarbans poses a threat to the ecology of the mangrove forest. Tree felling multiples during the fishing season as fishermen use the timber to build makeshift houses.

Oil prices hit record highs above \$78

AFP, Singapore

Oil prices hit record highs above 78 dollars in Asian hours yesterday, continuing to test uncharted territory as Israel's offensive in Lebanon and the Iran nuclear issue sparked fears of a wider Middle East conflict, dealers said.

They said oil now looked set to break 80 dollars soon, with the upcoming September contract already quoted at above 79 dollars as the market tightens on a series of geo-political concerns from the Middle East to North Korea.

The figure of 100 dollars was also being mentioned as a distinct possibility. That would put oil back level on a relative basis with prices during the "oil shocks" of the 1970s which plunged the Western economies into recession.

At 2:10 pm (0615 GMT), New

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Security major concern for 52pc SMEs in 7 dists

Effective policy, access to bank finance must to develop rural economy, seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Security is a major concern for 52 percent of the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in seven districts in the country and each of them spends nearly Tk 500 a month on an average on security purpose, says a study.

"Of the SMEs, 17.4 percent have major concern about theft and robbery, 16.1 percent over extortion, 13.3 percent about inefficiency of guards and 6.3 percent over indifferent policing," said Dr Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participation Research Centre (PPRC), present-

ing the study at a seminar in the city yesterday.

The SMEs have very limited bank finance, which is only around 10 percent, while self-finance remains the major source of their financial contributing 76.5 percent of fixed capital and 51.8 percent of working capital, he explained.

To obtain a trade licence, average formal expense is Tk 319 while informal expense is Tk 89, and local government bodies are quicker to issue licences than central government agencies. And 31.3 percent SMEs assess regulatory burden to be a major problem that includes corruption, harassment and exces-

sive tax assessment, Zillur said.

The study covered 490 business enterprises in Rajshahi, Sylhet, Rangpur, Bogra, Faridpur, Jessore and Comilla.

The PPRC, a think-tank, and Catalyst, a body for promoting SMEs, jointly organised the seminar on 'Local Business Dynamics: Ground Realities and Policy Challenges'.

Renowned economist Prof Wahiduddin Mahmud, also former advisor to caretaker government, was in the chair while Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, principal secretary to the Prime Minister,

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Mob beats up 4 taking them for robbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat up four people taking them for robbers when they went to the Mirpur house of a manpower-recruiting agency broker to ask for returning the deposited money yesterday.

The victims are Kamaluddin, 24, and his friends Almas Miah, 52, Abdus Samad, 25 and Ripon, 22.

Broker Mohammad Ripon took Tk 40,000 from Kamaluddin two months ago promising him to send to a Middle East country.

Being suspicious of Mohammad Ripon's dilly-dallying, Kamal accompanied by his friends went to his house on Mirpur Mazar

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'SHOOTOUT' WITH RAB IN PABNA

Top outlaw Kamrul, aide Jhunu killed

A CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Two top leaders of Purba Bangla Communist Party (PBCP) Lalpataka faction, including its chief, were killed in a shootout between Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the outlaws' cohorts in Pabna early yesterday.

The dead were identified as PBCP Lalpataka chief adviser Kamrul Islam alias Kamrul Master, 55, and operations commander Md Abdul Latif alias Jhunu Master, 40.

Rab-12 sources in Pabna said they had arrested Jhunu Master at Mirpur in Dhaka on Thursday. Following his statement, the Rab members also arrested Kamrul Master at Goran of Khilgaon in the capital the same day.

Upon their information, the Rab members took the two to Tebunia in Pabna sadar upazila yesterday to recover hidden firearms and arrest other outlaws, Rab sources said.

But as soon as the law enforcers reached Tebunia Shahapur area at about 3:30am, the PBCP outlaws ambushed the Rab team, who also returned fire.

Kamrul and Jhunu got hit with

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Kamrul Master

MUGGING

Dipu, Azad on fresh remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged muggers—Dipu and Azad—were again placed on a three-day remand yesterday on expiry of their six days' remand.

On Sunday, a gang of five muggers shot two officials of Bonny Apparel Ltd and snatched Tk 9 lakh from them in Malibagh area. Police with the help of locals chased the muggers and caught three of them named Dipu, Azad and Biltu, while two others managed to flee.

Dipu, Azad and Biltu were severely beaten up by a mob. Biltu later succumbed to his injuries.

Police said the gang was also involved in other criminal activities.

Abul Khair, investigation officer (IO) of Khilgaon Police Station, told The Daily Star yesterday that Azad had admitted to his involvement in the Sunday's mugging. He said Dipu denied his involvement in the mugging and is still giving contradictory statements.

Police claimed to have seized

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Announcement

Today's edition of The Daily Star includes a four-page supplement on the Citizens' Dialogue on 'National Election 2007' held in Jessore on May 13 on Pages 25, 26, 27 & 28.



Regional dialogue in Rangpur today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel i are jointly organising their eighth Regional Dialogue on "National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development" to be held in Rangpur at 9:00am today.

Eminent academics and professionals, development and cultural activists, public representatives and political leaders and other civil society representatives of Rangpur will speak at the dialogue.

The distinguished members of the 'Nagorik Committee 2006' who are preparing a Vision Paper for Bangladesh will also be present in the meeting to receive public feedback.

Quality education cannot be ensured with poor pay

Academicians tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academicians yesterday emphasised the need to raise teachers' salaries and other benefits as it is very important to attract brilliant and talented people in the primary teaching profession to ensure quality education to all.

At a roundtable in the National Press Club yesterday, they said ensuring quality in the primary education would not be possible without making the primary school teaching jobs more attractive.

"How can we expect quality education from teachers who get poor salary? Bright and meritorious students are not eager to have a career in the teaching profession

because they get better paying jobs elsewhere," said Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former president of Dhaka University Teachers' Association while addressing the meeting.

"To improve the quality of primary education, the teachers have to think about various effective ways of teaching to improve the students' understanding. Only meritorious and talented people can do it well," he added.

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) Sub-committee on Education and Human Development organised the roundtable on 'Problem of Primary Education and Steps Required'.

Nurul Islam Nahid, education and human development secretary of AL, said national development

would not be possible without introducing better quality education.

"Primary education is the first stage in making good citizens because people learn the most at the primary stage," he said while presenting the keynote speech.

AK Azad Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, said good teachers are required for improved education quality. "Quality teachers will not come to the teaching profession without getting better salaries," he said while addressing the meeting.

Prof Kazi Faruque, chief coordinator and convener of Jatiya Shikkhak Karmachari Front, said talented people do not take

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