

## APPOINTMENT OF 36 JOB SEEKERS

## Jhenidah CS office accused of taking Tk 1cr bribes

Three lawmakers lodge complaints with JS committee

HOSSAIN SERAJ, back from Jhenidah

Alleged graft by Jhenidah civil surgeon's office in appointing people to 36 posts and written complaint to the parliamentary committee against the CS by three ruling party MPs in this regard is now a talk of the town.

The CS's comment to newsmen, statements of job seekers and an opposition lawmaker, and complaint by ruling party lawmakers have confounded the people.

Questions are being raised whether the CS was solely responsible for the alleged corruption.

Sources in Jhenidah civil surgeon's office said 15,556 candidates had applied for the 36 vacant posts in the health sector in the district. These included nine vacant posts of health assistant, one store keeper, two junior mechanics, two MLSSs, five gardeners, five night guards, five cooks, six sweepers and one 'dome' (person who takes care of dead bodies before and after autopsy).

Appointment letters were issued to the 36 'qualified' jobseekers in last week of July after their viva-voce in the

first week of the same month, official sources said.

This correspondent talked to some guardians of the jobseekers, who accused the CS office of taking bribe.

"My son Shahid Sheikh was an applicant for the post of a night guard. The civil surgeon demanded Tk 2 lakh for appointing him to the post. As I could not pay the money, Shahid was not appointed though I am a freedom fighter", alleged Babar Ali of Mahamaya village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila.

Badshah Mia of Pabahati village in Jhenidah Sadar upazila also alleged that Tk 3 lakh was demanded for his son's appointment. Another candidate claimed that he paid Tk 2 lakh for the job of a gardener but his money is yet to be refunded although he was not appointed.

When asked, CS Dr Goalm Hossain at first avoided making any comment. He then angrily said, "Go to MPs and ask them."

After a while, he said in a lighter voice, "I was not the only authority in appointing the employees. I just discharged my duties, higher authorities have finalised the appointments."

He declined to say anything more.

Ruling party lawmaker Master Shahidul Islam on July 27 submitted a written complaint to the parliamentary committee on the ministry of health and family welfare, alleging corruption by the CS in the appointments.

The complaint was counter-signed by Shahiduzzaman Beltu, lawmaker from Jhenidah-4 constituency and Moshir Rahman, lawmaker from Jhenidah-2.

Moshir Rahman is also the chairman of the parliamentary committee.

In his complaint, MP Shahidul called the CS a corrupt official and accused him of realising over Tk one crore while appointing people in the posts and demanded his dismissal from service.

But sources in Jhenidah claimed that not only the CS, but ruling party lawmakers were also involved in the whole process.

Talking to this correspondent opposition lawmaker from Jhenidah-1 Abdul Hai said, "I can not specify any ruling party lawmaker's involvement in the corruption but allegations have it that some of them in connivance with the CS took money from the jobseekers."

When contacted, lawmaker

Shahiduzzaman Beltu accused the CS of bribery. He however would not rule out the probability of involvement of 'any one of the lawmakers'.

"But note that nobody from my constituency was appointed. The posts were filled up by candidates from outside my constituency", he said.

Beltu further said he was ignorant about the whole process of appointments.

On contact over cell phone, Master Shahidul Islam MP threw counter-questions and asked, "How do you think that an MP can take bribe for appointing poor people in his constituency?"

"I have no comment at the moment, because written allegation has already been submitted against the CS which is now under investigation", he said.

Contacted, Moshir Rahman said he should not make any comment before investigation. He said a parliamentary team will probe the allegation and it will record statements of the lawmakers and the civil surgeon.



Although winter is months away, farmers are busy producing saplings of early varieties of the seasonal vegetables in Munshiganj to get better prices.

PHOTO: STAR

## PSTU Vice-chancellor removed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Patuakhali Science and Technology University (PSTU) Vice-chancellor Prof Dr Wahid-uz-Zaman was removed yesterday.

The PSTU Chancellor's order in this regard reached the university yesterday, sources said.

Prof. Dr. Abdul Latif has been appointed new VC of the university. Earlier, the University Grants Commission (UGC) stopped 2nd, 3rd and 4th installments of yearly development allotment of Tk 7 crore for the university due to the VC's alleged corruption.

The fund disbursement was stopped after an audit team submitted its 9-point objections against VC Prof Wahid-Uz-Zaman including financial irregularities involving Tk 53,90,414.

The irregularities included Tk 4.73 lakh expenditure without any voucher, Tk 8.02 lakh excess expenditure as house rent, Tk 3.30 lakh for purchase of cell phones, Tk 2.88 lakh excess payments as festivals bonus, Tk 2.28 for repair of vehicles, Tk 24.90 as advance payments, Tk 34,353 as VAT and Tk 1.14 lakh payments in the name of allowances.

## Another election, fresh pledge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

The villagers solved their problem, at least for the time being, as political leaders flouted their promises.

This time are waiting to see whether the prime minister's pledge comes true.

People of Nilphamari Sadar and Kishoreganj upazilas have long been demanding construction of a bridge on Charalkatha river.

Before every national election, political leaders came and promised

to construct a bridge if they are voted to power. The people voted them, hoping for a bridge, but their dream remained unfulfilled.

Finding no way, local people collected over 5000 bamboos and other materials few months back and built a 750-foot long bamboo bridge voluntarily. At least 3000 people worked for a month for it.

Chairman of Chapra Union Parishad in Sadar upazila, Khalilur Rahman claimed it to be the longest such bridge in the country.

Nilphamari Deputy Commissioner Rabin Nath Roy Chowdhury while inaugurating the bridge praised the local people's initiative.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia addressing a public meeting at Saidpur stadium on August 17 said a pucca bridge will be constructed on Charalkatha river if her party is elected again in the coming election.



PHOTO: STAR

The 750-foot bamboo bridge built on Charalkatha river in Nilphamari by local people as pledges made by political leaders before earlier elections were not fulfilled.

## Rift in Magura AL widens

Rival factions hold separate programmes marking Aug 15

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

Intra-party rift in Magura district Awami League (AL) widened yesterday as two rival factions brought out separate processions and held discussion meetings in the town in observance of Bangabandhu's death anniversary.

A large number of policemen were deployed to staff off any untoward incident.

One faction held its programmes at the local press club auditorium, which was attended by district AL president Altaf Hossain, general secretary and lawmaker from Magura-1 constituency Prof MS Akbar, senior vice-president Tanzil Hossain Khan, organising secretary Shafiquzzaman Bachchu and joint secretary of Swachhshabok League Sajedur Rahman Sangram.

The other faction held its programme at the same time at Sayed Ator Ali Public Library auditorium, about 200 yards away.

Former lawmaker from Magura-2 constituency and vice-president of district AL Biren Shikder, joint secretary Abu Nasir Bablu, former upazila chairman Rostam Ali, acting president of Magura paura AL Sirajul Islam, general secretary Md Baki Imam, joint convener of district Jubo League Kamruzzaman Pintu and joint convener of district Swachhshabok League Rana Amir Osman, among others attended the programmes.

One faction of the party is led by Md. Altaf Hossain and the other by local lawmaker MSAKbar.

Internal feud in the party surfaced in January 2004, when two rival groups clashed during party councils at several upazilas and unions as both wanted their men in leadership at different levels.

At least 14 incidents of clash took place between the two factions in last

two years. Council of district AL was also postponed four times due to internal feud, party sources said.

The long-awaited council was however held in April last year where names of eight persons were announced for eight posts including that of president and general secretary.

The dispute between Altaf and Akbar was temporarily buried after they were made president and general secretary of the district committee.

But their failure to form a full-fledged committee gave rise to another group led by district AL vice-president and former lawmaker Biren

Shikder and joint secretary Abu Nasir Bablu.

Party insiders alleged, because of lack of a full-fledged committee is yet to be formed, many dedicated leaders distanced themselves from organisational activities.

By this time, municipality chairman Abdul Gafur who was made joint secretary No. 2 quit AL and joined BNP, alleging indiscipline in the party. The infighting in district AL has spread to its front organisations.

On contact, district AL president Altaf Hossain denied intra-party feud and claimed that vested quarters and agents of 4-party alliance are trying to

tarnish the image of the party through holding programmes separately.

But joint secretary of district AL Abu Nasir Bablu refuting Altaf's allegation said, "We have been compelled to hold separate programmes as Magura district AL has now been turned into a pocket organisation of some people".

Its general secretary MS Akbar MP is the brother-in-law of Altaf Hossain and organising secretary Shafiquzzaman Bachchu is his (Altaf Hossain) son-in-law.

## NETRAKONA-1 BNP man seeks ticket saying party MP 'unpopular'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

A BNP leader has called party lawmaker from Netrakona-1 constituency (Durgapur, Kalmakanda upazilas) 'inefficient and unpopular' and declared his candidature from the area in next parliamentary election.

Abdul Wahab, former convener of Kalmakanda upazila BNP, at the press conference at Netakona Press Club Friday evening alleged lawmaker from Netrakona-1 MA Karim Abbasi has lost popularity due to his 'inefficiency and autocratic behaviour'. He did not do any development work in the area during his tenure, which has isolated him from the people, he said.

A large number of BNP activists and supporters of Wahab were present at the press conference, held Friday evening.

A former president of Netrakona University College unit of Chhatra Shibir in 1977-78, Wahab joined BNP in 1995 in presence of party chief Khaleda Zia.

Wahab bitterly criticised Karim Abbasi for what he called not fulfilling aspirations of local people and defaming BNP in the area and urged party chairperson Khaleda Zia to nominate him in the next election to restore the party image. BNP will definitely lose the seat if Abbasi is nominated by the four-party alliance, he claimed.

Wahab declared that he is the 'fittest person' to get nomination to contest from Netrakona-1 constituency. He also claimed that party workers in the two upazilas will support his candidature.

Karim Abbasi was elected twice from Netrakona-1 with BNP tickets - in 1991 and 2001 by defeating Awami League candidate Jalaluddin Talukder. He was whip of BNP in parliament during 1991-1996.

When contacted, MA Karim Abbasi MP said, "Abdul Wahab is a cheat and corrupt person. He is not a well wisher of BNP."

"I have done many development works in Durgapur and Kalmakanda upazilas and I am still popular in my constituency" MA Karim claimed.

## Case finally filed against 27 Bhaluka militants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Four of the 27 alleged Islamist militants - Muhibullah, Abul Hossain, Omar Faruque, and Ibrahim - arrested from Bhaluka earlier this month were produced in a court in Mymensingh yesterday after their 7-day remand.

The court sent them to jail as police did not seek their fresh remand.

A case was filed against the 27 militants including Mufti Abdur Rouf on Friday, 25 days after their arrest from Bhaluka.

The case was filed with Bhaluka Police Station under Arms and Explosive Substances Act by Sub-inspector (SI) Rabiul Islam. Rabiul is also the investigation officer (IO) of the case.

On information, Police and Rab in separate drives on August 2 arrested the



Mufti Abdur Rouf

27 alleged Islamist militants including Mufti Abdur Rouf, a top leader of outlawed militant organisation Tanjim, from Jamayatul Islamia Darul Ulum Qawmi Madrasa at Jibontala village in hilly areas of Bhaluka.

Nuruddin Haider, founder of the madrasa was also arrested on charge of extortion.

Of the 28 men, 11 were placed on remand for varying terms. Mufti Abdur Rouf along with Tofazzal Hossen, Kamruzzaman Kamal, and Mahmudul Hassan were interrogated by the Joint Interrogation Cell in Dhaka.

All the 28 alleged militants are now in Mymensingh jail. Four of them including Mufti Abdur Rouf, sent to different jails, were also brought back to Mymensingh jail, police said.

Filing of the case was delayed as opinion of Public Prosecutor (PP) and report of explosives experts were needed, our Tangail correspondent reported quoting SI Rabiul.

## Shelter for 'repressed' AL men in Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The district Awami League (AL) has opened a 'camp' and a 'gruel kitchen' at the district town for about 200 party activists who fled homes in outlying areas allegedly due to repression by ruling party men.

The arrangements have been

made on the homestead of district AL secretary Zahedul Alam, AL leaders said at a press conference here yesterday, held at Samrak League office at Pankhaiya Para in the town.

The leaders claimed that at least 78 party activists were injured in attacks by ruling party men and 12 of them are now being treated at Chittagong Medical College Hospital

for critical injuries.

They are Ramgarh union BNP vice-president Nurulla, Khedachhara AL activist and freedom fighter Mohiuddin, Matiranga Jubo League secretary Joyнал Abedin and AL activists Rani Begum and Bajendra Tripura, Khagrachhari College Chhatra League secretary Arifur Rahman, joint secretary Helal Uddin and activist AI Amin, paura BCL vice-president Iqbal Bahar, secretary of Khulna Chakma, Monghloru Marna of Mohalchhari and Samar Jyoti Chakma of Dighinala.

They alleged that at least 32 AL activists in different areas of the district have stopped business after their shops were looted allegedly by local BNP men.

The press conference was addressed by Khagrachhari AL president Zatindra Lal Tripura, general secretary Zahedul Alam. Other leaders of district AL and its front organisations were also present.

After the press conference, journalist visits the 'camp' and talked to some of the AL men taking shelter there.

Later on the day, AL leaders submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner Humayun Kabir demanding security of AL activists, formation of a committee to probe the alleged repression, arrest of the culprits and withdrawal of false cases against them.



PHOTO: STAR

Some of the Awami League activists who fled homes in different areas of Khagrachhari taking meal at a 'camp' opened by the party in the district town.

## FEAR OF RETALIATORY ATTACKS BY OUTLAWS

## Police put on high alert in south-western region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

All police stations, outposts and temporary camps in Khulna metropolitan city and 16 other districts of south-western region were put on 'high alert' from Friday midnight in apprehension of subversive activities by outlaws and Islamic militants.

In a suspected retaliatory attack, outlaws on Friday killed four police men in Naogaon in Rajshahi.

Intelligence agencies have information that extremists and Islamic militants have planned to kill political leaders and attack key installations in south-western region within next 2-3 weeks, highly placed police sources

said. Fugitive extremists and Islamic militants visited Khulna city several times in last one month in guise and held secret meetings to plan subversive activities, sources claimed.

They said drug addicts and jobless youngsters have been recruited to carry out bomb attacks on some political leaders and important places.

Outlawed Janajuddho and M-L factions of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) sent messages to different regional newspapers through cell and land phones early this month expressing their vows to retaliate killing of party men in

'crossfire'.

Friday's killings in Noagaon was a likely revenge attack for death of 11 outlaws in pabna shootout on August 17, sources said.

The sources said a group of Islamic militants have been staying in the Sundarbans for two weeks. They have strongholds in different madrasas situated in the remote areas of Khulna and Bagerhat districts.

Meanwhile, silent extortion is going on in Khulna city. Many well-to-do people are passing days in panic after getting phone calls in the name of Janajuddho founder Tapan Malitha for illegal toll varying from Tk one to 10

lakh for 'treatment' of cadres of outlawed parties 'injured in encounters with Rab and police'.

In last two months as many as 40 people including Vice Chancellor of Khulna University, doctors, teachers, two journalists and businessmen received telephone calls for money or to face death.

Both the KMP Commissioner and the DIG of Khulna are still hopeful to track down extortionists at any cost. These are not being done by outlaws alone, they said in an oblique reference to cadres of political parties who also demand toll.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leaders and activists staging a token hunger strike in Cox's Bazar yesterday demanding trial of culprits of the August 27 grenade attack on a party rally in Dhaka in 2004.