

Dhaka Wasa MD's reappointment questionable: TIB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh yesterday termed the appointment and reappointment of the present managing director (MD) of Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority "questionable", calling upon to conduct a neutral audit to this end.

After a controversial appointment in 2009, the present Wasa managing director has been serving the post in questionable way for five consecutive terms for the last 11 years, TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said in a media statement.

"It could be known through media reports and other authentic sources that rules and regulations have been violated on each occasion of renewing his appointment," said Iftekharuzzaman.

The TIB executive director said allegation against the Wasa managing director's reappointment also came to light in TIB's report "Dhaka Wasa: Challenges of Good Governance and Way Forward."

He urged to follow due procedure and transparency to appoint someone qualified and experienced in the relevant field as the next Wasa managing director, before the present MD's extended term ends on October 14 this year.

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Scenes of a jam-packed Dhaka with vehicles of all shapes and sizes on the road and flyover, bring back flashbacks of a pre-coronavirus city where unbearable traffic was an everyday nuisance. This photo was taken yesterday at Moghbazar flyover, where traffic was heavy on a monsoon Monday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Nasir or a new face?

Port city abuzz over new administrator of CCC; current council expires Aug 5

ARUN BIKASH DEB, Ctg

The tenure of the incumbent council of Chattogram City Corporation will expire on August 5 and the government is going to employ an administrator to run the CCC during the interim period until an election is held to elect a new body.

Meanwhile, this administrative appointment is creating a lot of buzz in the port city as many are curious to know who will be the administrator -- incumbent mayor AJM Nasir Uddin, whose tenure also expires with the present council, or someone new?

Awami League insiders said the probability of employing the incumbent mayor as an administrator is very slim.

Nasir is not in the good books of the party high command, which also reflected in the mayoral candidate nomination in the postponed polls of CCC, AL leaders in Chattogram said, wishing anonymity.

On February 15, the ruling AL nominated Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, joint general secretary of the party's Chattogram city unit, instead of the incumbent mayor. The CCC polls was scheduled to be held on March 29.

Meanwhile, supporters of Nasir expected that he might be kept as an administrator during the interim period due to the ongoing pandemic situation and since he has experience in running the CCC.

"We have formally informed the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives that in the present situation, it will not be possible to hold the polls before the tenure of present council expires," said Mohammad Hasanuzzaman, regional director (Chattogram) of the Election Commission.

"Now the ministry will decide whether a new administrator will be employed or the incumbent mayor will discharge duties until the election is held," he added.

Contacted, local government expert Dr Tofail Ahmed said there is no clear instruction in regard to what will happen if the polls cannot be held.

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Major focus on mosquito control, waste management

DNCC sets Tk 4,506.75cr budget for FY 2020-21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) mayor yesterday placed a Tk 4,506.75 crore budget for 2020-21 fiscal year, giving priority to mosquito control and garbage management activities.

The budget is Tk 1,449.51 crore higher than that of last fiscal. It was placed at the second board meeting yesterday -- held at a community centre in Mirpur -- and was approved by the board members unanimously.

However, like other years, the DNCC mayor, Atiqul Islam, did not hold any press conference after the approval of the budget, rather he is planning to hold it later, said an official of the DNCC.

In the budget, DNCC has allocated Tk 70 crore for activities to control the mosquito problem, which was Tk 49.30 crore in the last fiscal. Mayor Atiqul also kept Tk 100

crore for garbage management work, which was Tk 86 crore in the last fiscal.

He increased his development expenditure, considering the expansion of DNCC areas and kept Tk 3,660 crore in the current fiscal -- Tk 1,324.26 crore higher than the last fiscal.

Of the money for development activities, Tk 599.15 crore will come from DNCC's own sources and government fund, while Tk 3,010.85 crore will come through different foreign funded projects.

Apart from these, Tk 50 crore will also come from government's special allocations. Of the expenditure, the highest Tk 286 crore will be spent on road and traffic infrastructure development and maintenance which was Tk 363 crore in the last fiscal.

DNCC also kept Tk 4.25 crore for graveyard, cremation ground development

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WAR CRIMINAL MUEEN IN UK Nirmul Committee slams 'audacious' lawsuit, hails Patel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday congratulated UK Home Secretary Priti Patel for branding Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin -- a British Muslim leader facing the death penalty in Bangladesh for alleged war crimes -- a war criminal.

In a press statement, leaders of the committee -- working to ensure justice for atrocities committed during the Liberation War -- condemned Mueen's "audacious" act of filing a lawsuit against the Home Secretary over the remark.

"After the victory in the Liberation War, a notification was published in the national dailies to hold Chowdhury Mueen Uddin, the mastermind behind killing of intellectuals. Based on the testimony of eyewitnesses and victims in the tribunal, he was sentenced to death for the murder of 16 intellectuals including Prof Munier Chowdhury and Prof Mofazzal Haider Chowdhury, but the sentence could not be executed since Mueen was in Britain," reads the statement.

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Development at cost of heritage

City authorities knocking down century-old boundary wall of Rajshahi College to revamp road



PHOTO: ANWAR ALI

Experts say demolishing this wall would tarnish the authenticity of the whole site, which was built following Palladian architecture, and ruin its aesthetics.

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

To expand a street and install drainage, Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) is tearing down the boundary wall of Rajshahi College, which is a 147-year-old heritage site built following colonial-era architecture.

The college authority verbally allowed the corporation to carry out development work, ignoring the rule of taking necessary approval from the education ministry before giving away its land, officials concerned said.

"No one should be allowed to tear down any part of the college for any reason. Its destruction will be unacceptable and illegal, and will tarnish the heritage's authenticity," said Nurul Kabir, associate professor of archaeology at Jahangirnagar University (JU).

Built in 1873, the college bears evidence of the colonial era's Palladian architecture that was blended with the vernacular architecture of Bengal, Nurul explained while talking to The Daily Star.

RCC Mayor AHM Khairuzzaman Liton said the corporation has no intention of destroying the city's heritage, rather they want to protect them.

"The street, which is a vital pathway for the city, needs expansion due to increasing traffic and for pedestrians' safety. We will build a new wall just like the original," he said, adding that they did not involve

any archaeological expert, but senior architects for reconstruction.

RCC Executive Engineer Golam Morshed, who is overseeing the development work, said the corporation is spending Tk 2.5 crore for this work, under the "30 Ward Development and Road Expansion Project".

According to their plan, the corporation would build a 500-metre concrete boundary wall to replace the original, and a drain will be installed near the wall.

After construction, the corporation would destroy the old boundary wall. Then the 40-foot street would be expanded to 60-feet, with four lanes, footpaths on both sides and an island in the middle.

"Our priority is to build footpaths for college students, as they are essential for safety. We consulted the principal during the project's commencement three years ago," he said.

After visiting the site, this correspondent saw labourers already installing drainage and constructing a concrete wall behind the original. A pillar of the original wall was damaged due to workers putting pressure on it. An old dining room of the college hostel was destroyed.

The labourers said they were instructed to destroy the original wall when construction ends.

Prof Habibur Rahman, the college's

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FARMERS BANK SCAM

ACC to sue Chisty, son, four others

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has decided to file a case against Mahbubul Haque Chisty, former chairman and audit body chief of now-defunct Farmers Bank, his son and four others for misappropriating about Tk 63 crore.

ACC in its inquiry has found that misusing his power Chisty in collaboration with each other misappropriated the money.

The other accused in the case are -- his son Rashedul Haque Chisty, former executive vice president of the bank Mohammad Jahangir Alam Majumdar, Al-Faruk Bags Limited's managing director Redwanul Kabir Chowdhury, its chairman Chowdhury Al-Faruk and director Nimmi Kabir Chowdhury.

The commission will soon file the case, according to the anti-graft watchdog's Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

Farmers Bank has been renamed as Padma Bank as the troubled lender looks to sweep the gross irregularities and loan scams under the carpet and get an image makeover.

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93pc of child labourers couldn't find regular work due to Covid-19

Says survey report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nearly 93 percent of child workers based in the capital have failed to find work on a regular basis during the pandemic, a survey has found.

Among the 194 child labourers surveyed, 71 said they could not find any work, while 109 children reported being unable to find regular work.

Meanwhile 49.5 percent had to switch to begging to earn a living, said the survey undertaken by Action for Social Development during the first week of July. Its findings were released yesterday.

A further 46 child workers contacted, outside of the original sample size, reported having to move back to the village having lost all scope for work.

Before the pandemic hit, some 21.6 of the respondents earned Tk 4,000 to 6,000, but since then, that number has decreased more than half, to stand at 9.8 per cent.

Around 32.6 percent of the children surveyed said they had not received any help from the government.

Only about half of the children in the sample were found to have access to masks. However, three-fourths reported washing their hands with soap and water after they come back home, and 20 percent said they wash themselves at the end of the day.

ASD's executive director Jamil H Chowdhury stated, "As more families descend into poverty, we will be seeing more children entering the labour market, or take up begging. They will also fall victim to underage marriage."

In addition, a lot of private or NGO initiatives that were in place to give these children an education have completely stopped, cutting them off from any form of schooling, he said.

4 members of 'dope gang' held in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) yesterday claimed to have arrested four members of a "dope gang" that allegedly looted valuables from people by feeding them sedatives.

The arrestees are Md Masud (25), Md Mamun alias Sattar (35), Md Sumon alias Musa (26) and Md Sumon (36).

A CID team arrested the four while conducting drives in the capital's Bir Uttom Rafikul Islam Avenue and Merul Badda areas on Sunday, said Mohammad Kamrujjaman, special superintendent (Dhaka-south) of CID.

The team also seized a private car, a machete, a knife, rope, towel, sleeping pills and toxic ointment from them, he said while addressing a briefing at the CID Headquarters yesterday.

Implement RCC laws to protect public health

Demand Rajshahi residents at Shujan's demonstration

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi residents formed a human chain and staged a rally at the city's Alupatty intersection yesterday, to press a five-point demand including protection of people's health and implementation of the Rajshahi City Corporation Act to that end.

Under the banner of Rajshahi chapter of Shushashoner Jonno Nagorik, the demonstrators also sought resumption of Rajshahi Sadar Hospital.

Speakers at the rally said apart from different development activities for improving civic amenities, the city corporation has the responsibility to protect the city dwellers' health. But the corporation remains busy mostly with development activities and reluctant to other issues.

They said the sections from 80 to 84 of the RCC Act of 1987 clearly states that the corporation would establish a hospital for treating patients of different infectious diseases and take up steps to control those.

They demanded that the corporation establish health centres, maternities, promote family planning and set up welfare centres for women and children in the city as per the law.

Their demands included taking steps for health education and development of public health, setting up required number of hospitals and dispensaries for providing healthcare to people, establishing primary medical treatment centres, and promoting associations for providing healthcare and health education.

Local leaders of Shujan attended the demonstration.



People hang around and sit on the lakeside behind the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, although a signboard says it is restricted area and sitting here is prohibited. This photo was taken last weekend.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

REVIEW PETITION OF AZHARUL

Hearing after regular functions resume

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will hold hearing on the review petition of war criminal ATM Azharul Islam when its regular functions will resume after the ongoing closure.

A virtual bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain came up with the decision yesterday after Attorney General Mahbubey Alam prayed for fixing a date for hearing the review petition.

Azharul filed the petition with the SC on Sunday, seeking review of its verdict that upheld his death penalty for his involvement in genocide and crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971. He submitted a 23-page review petition containing 14 grounds for seeking reconsideration of the apex court's judgement through his lawyers Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain and Advocate Shishir Manir.

The SC on October 31 last year upheld his death sentence.

A four-member bench, headed by chief

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