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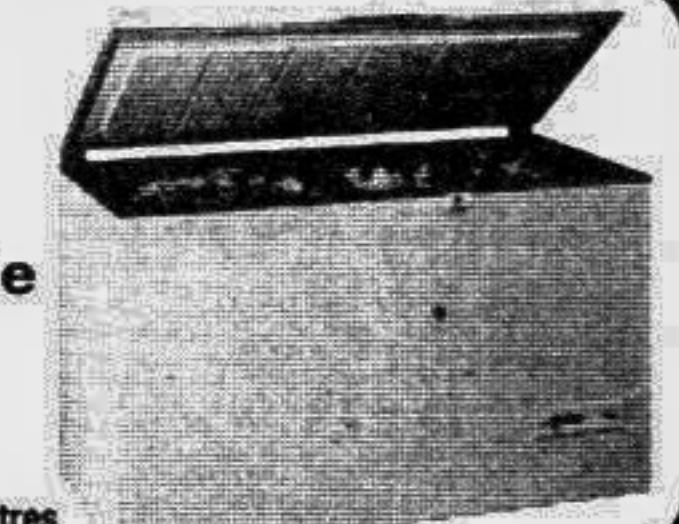
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Down to Earth Tardy Movement of Office Files

By A S M Nurunnabi

There has been a lot of talks about administrative reforms. Yet one thing needs remedial actions without delay. Some years ago, an uncommon graffiti appeared on walls in many areas of the city bearing the slogan, which translated into English somewhat reads like — Extorting money by pointing a pistol and holding back office file to get money are same crime. Normally the walls of city streets bear mostly slogans of political nature, but the abovementioned graffiti seemed different in character, reflecting in reality a prevailing aspect of deplorable decline in office discipline.

Many observers think the slogan still contains some elements of truth. While a terrorist extorts money threatening to use force, the picture is different with a public functionary who realises money in secret by holding back a file. The slogan seems to convey the message that the later category of persons may also be regarded as mastans (muslemen) wearing a "white collar."

The prevailing idea which carries some elements of grievance is that if you have any business to get done at any government department or ministry, you need to have a lot of patience and perseverance, besides the capacity for cajoling and flattery combined with the unavoidable necessity for paying what is called 'grease money' to the wheel of bureaucracy. In the common view, the all-

important factor is greasing the palms of the persons concerned with the disposal of the private party's business.

So far as the Bangladesh Secretariat is concerned, it is gathered that in the Secretariat instructions, there are specific guidelines for keeping a file for examination with definite time limits for the different tiers of the administration. The guidelines also indicate a system for submitting periodic returns of pending files to higher authorities. It is hard to find any department or ministry where any such guidelines are followed with due regularity.

These instructions framed in most cases in earlier times, may appear unrealistic in some cases in view of large increase of workload. In such cases, there is obviously need for revising such instructions. But none can deny that the present state of things seems to give unfettered latitude to the dealing officials at various levels to hold back a file for as long as he chooses, unless pressured by quarters at higher levels to set the file moving or there is a *quid pro quo* arrangement to facilitate its movement.

Observers feel that in view of the large-scale public complaints of excessive delay in disposal of files at different levels, a revised time frame in the light of present-day realities should be drawn up specifying the time-limit for dealing with a file at each level of hierarchy. Once that time-table is adopted,

the supervising officials should make it a point to strictly enforce it.

If under any exceptional circumstances, a departure from the prescribed time-limit becomes necessary, a periodic list of such pending cases should be regularly placed before the head of the office so that it may be possible to keep track of them for their expeditious disposal at a later stage. If any government organisation, on account of its special nature of functions, needs extended time-limits for disposal of business at different levels, such provisions may be made in the written instructions, which should not be violated in the interest of proper discipline of that organisation.

Observers believe that only in this way the present ominous trend of delay either intentionally caused or otherwise in the disposal of government business can be suitably checked.

The chaotic situation has raised a vital issue. The accumulation of such large volumes of office files is not only inconsistent with our need for fast pace in technological advancement in the present age, but also detrimental to the cause of economic progress of our country. When the present ethos of slow processing and disposal of official business joins with forces of chaos and confusion created in the wilderness of accumulated office files, there is cause for anxiety that development of the country in many sectors may suffer.



Abahani's Ghanaian recruit Charles Ghansha Benin (second from left) is exultant after grabbing the equaliser for his team against the Mohammedans during the Premier Division football league showdown at Bangabandhu National Stadium yesterday.

— Star photo by Anisur Rahman

Move to reexcavate Chaktai canal

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Aug 6: After three years of silence, the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) has at long last started preparing a project proposal for re-excavation and renovation of Chaktai Khal (Chaktai canal) — the backbone of the port city's drainage system.

The project plan aimed at renovation of the canal at a cost of Tk 16 crore is likely to be submitted to the relevant ministry for approval within a week or two," said a high official of CCC.

Under the project, the 4935-metre long Chaktai Khal is to be re-excavated and brick-soled with slit-traps at regular intervals while around four kilometres of the canal are to be renovated with 'retaining walls' (protective walls) on both sides.

Half-day hartal called on Aug 12 in Rajshahi

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Aug 6: Rajshahi Committee for Resistance to Transfer of O&M Division (RCRTO&MD) has called a half-day hartal in the city on Aug 12 to protest shifting of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Division-2 of BPWD from Rajshahi.

The committee also threw a five-day agitation programme. It will lay siege to the office of the Chief Engineer of BPWD Rajshahi Division for the whole day on Aug 8 and 9, observe 30 minutes' hartal in the city everyday on Aug 8, 9 and 10, barricade the stadium rail-road crossing and finally observe half-day hartal in the city on Aug 12.

The decision was taken at a general meeting organised by the RCRTO&MD and attended by the leaders of the political, social, cultural and business community yesterday.

The meeting was addressed by the City Mayor, Mizanur Rahman Minu, Jatiya Party city unit general secretary Mushtaque Ahmed Labu, CPB district unit general secretary Enamul Huque, Ward Commissioner Sajjad Hossain, Juba Dal district unit convenor Mosaddeq Hossain Bulbul and PWD Contractors' Association general secretary Jamal Khan.

RCRTO&MD president Shafiqul Islam Bulu presided the meeting.

Admission of 150 RMC students cancelled

From Our Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, Aug 6: Rajshahi Medical College authorities cancelled admission of about 150 students of first year MBBS (40th batch).

The students had been absent from classes without prior permission from the authorities.

The Academic Council of the college in an emergency meeting last night observed their auto-convocation as a violation of academic rule.

The AC with the acting-principal Prof. A B Siddique in the chair decided that the students would have to take readmission by depositing a fee of Tk 50.00 by Aug 10.

Besides, each student will have to pay a fine of Tk 1000 in addition to the readmission fee after Aug 10, the AC decided.

EPB Textile Cell

From Page 1

Razzaque further said that there was no pending work since the present system was introduced in the last week of July. All papers and documents are released at the end of the day. "We have expedited our service for the benefit of garment exporters," BGMEA was informed before introduction of this system and it agreed to it, he added.

The DG denied that none was being allowed to enter the office, saying those having urgent need can 'come to me and get immediate service.' Besides, there is a reception room outside the gate from where any one can telephone an official, he said.

But the commercial officers waiting outside the gate said they cannot go to the DG for everything. Other high officials of the Cell hardly respond to telephone calls, they alleged.

Asked why the commercial officers oppose the system, the DG said, "this is because earlier they used to take Tk 300 to 500 every day from their offices as EPB expenditure but now that has been stopped."

A leader of BGMEA, when contacted, supported the present system. He, however, did not want to be named.

Recently some garments factories exported apparels forging visa and quota documents, he mentioned.

Arrest those who attacked house of Jahanara: BNP

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan has condemned 'bomb attack' on the residence of party Vice Chairman Jahanara Begum in the city on Thursday and demanded immediate arrest of those involved.

In a statement yesterday, he said miscreants made bomb attacks twice and also set fire to the residence of the BNP leader but police were yet to arrest them.

Bhuiyan alleged that the motive behind the attack was to kill Jahanara and said the incident clearly proved that there was no security of life of any individual in the country.

An 'anarchic situation' has been prevailing in the country since the Awami League came to power. BNP leaders and activists are frequently becoming victims of repression, torture, killing and false cases during the misrule of this government, he added.

Meanwhile, Pabna district BNP organising secretary and district Jubadal convenor Kamal Hasan Milton and local leaders Rashidul Islam Babu and Wahiduzzaman Dulal, who were released on bail recently, met the BNP secretary general at 29 Minto Road in the city yesterday.

Bhuiyan appreciated their role in the current anti-government agitation and advised them to organise the party and its front organisations down to village level.

Coastal areas of Midnapore flooded

MIDNAPORE, Aug 6: A large part of the coastal areas of Midnapore district was submerged following torrential rains since Wednesday affecting about 7000 people, district officials said here yesterday, referring to PTI.

Egra, Panipuri and Patashpur were the most-affected areas while Rangamagar, Digha and Contai were also water-logged, the sources said quoting preliminary reports arrived from the area.

Many mud-houses also collapsed. Classes of several schools and colleges had to be suspended due to the rain.

East Asia counts dead, braces for more floods

HONG KONG, Aug 6: East Asia today braced for more devastating floods, while still counting the dead from a week of ferocious storms which killed hundreds as they brought landslides and blanketed the region with water, reports AFP.

South Korea was also on the alert for stray landmines and artillery shells washed away by floods, with the military warning vacationers to beware as a new typhoon bears down on the country.

Meanwhile, victims of this week's floods in South Korea have threatened to sue the government for failing to prevent the disaster which killed up to 64.

Some 40 people were killed and a further 24 were feared dead following five days of torrential rain this week which sparked devastating floods and

Protein that guards body against skin cancer

WASHINGTON, Aug 6: Sun-damaged skin cells that could become cancerous are killed by a special protein produced in sunburned skin, according to a new US study, reports AP.

Researchers at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center report in the Journal Science that sunburned skin cells make a cell-killing protein called Fas that guards the body against skin cancer by killing genetically-flawed skin cells.

"Our finding is the first to identify a protein that is a natural defense against skin cancer development," said Lauri Owen-Schaub, an associate professor at M.D. Anderson. She said the discovery could lead to new therapies to treat skin cancer so far to collect the data.

Jaisingshani said if government initiated action at this point of time when the election process was on, it would give a wrong impression that this was being done under political consideration.

The court was hearing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) seeking recovery of the dues from late premier Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar, P V Narasimha Rao and H D Deve Gowda for using the IAF planes for personal purposes.

The petition filed by Advocate B L Wadhera alleged that Rs 5.92 crore were due on Chandra Shekhar, Rs 5.52 crore on Rao, Rs 1.86 crore on Rajiv Gandhi and Rs 26.46 lakh on Deve Gowda.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen Friday put his government on high alert amid warnings more areas could be struck by floods that have so far drowned up to eight children and left thousands homeless.

In the Philippines, the death toll from flood and landslides spawned by days of torrential rain rose to 90, with another 36 listed as missing, reports and officials said from Pyongyong.

In China, where officials late Thursday put the toll in this summer's flooding at 725, water on the swollen Yangtze river had begun to drop from

Using IAF planes to recover dues from 4 Indian PMs

No coercive steps now to recover dues from 4 Indian PMs

NEW DELHI, Aug 6: The centre today told the Delhi High Court that as elections have been announced it would not use any coercive measures at this stage to recover over Rs 13.57 crore due from four former prime ministers for using Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft for their personal use, reports PTI.

At this stage when the elections have been announced, the government does not propose to take any coercive measures as it will be construed in different manner at different quarter by different people, Solicitor General S B Jaisingshani told a division bench comprising Justice Arun Kumar and Justice D K Jain while seeking more time to furnish details on steps taken to recover the dues.

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problems.

Rahman said the Federation wants to sit with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to find a solution to their demands.

Transport union sources said there are about 165 registered transport unions in the country. Of them, 93 bus unions and 11 truck unions are affiliated with the Federation.

Transport union sources

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Ministry of Science and Technology
Bangladesh Secretariat, Room-903
Floor-9, Building-6, Dhaka-1000

R&D Proposals for Financial Support Under Special Allocation for Science and Technology

Research proposals in prescribed form are invited from researchers/scientists/technologists of established R&D Organisations/Universities/Institutions of Bangladesh for financial support under special allocation from the Ministry of Science and Technology for the financial year 1999-2000. The Programmes (detail of which described in the Guidelines) are:

1. Capacity Utilisation Programmes
- 1.1 Research Contract
- 1.2 Coordinated Research
2. Capacity Build-up/Capacity Institutionalisation Programmes
3. Study Contract Programmes
4. Supplementary Support Programmes

2. **Area of Research:** Agriculture/Medical Science/Environment/Science/Marine Science/Microbial and Industrial/Basic Sciences/Others (to mention).

3. **Guidelines for Different Programmes Under Special Allocation for Science and Technology** will be available in the office of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission/Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research/BANSDOC/Bangladesh Computer Council/National Museum of Science and Technology/Dhaka University/Rajshahi University/Chittagong University/Jahangirnagar University/Khulna University/Shajalal University of Science and Technology, Sylhet/BUET/Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh/Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (Ex-IPGMR)/Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University (IPSA).

4. Researchers/Scientists/Technologists of those (para 3 above) and other institutions may obtain, on request, copies of **Guidelines/Terms & Conditions/Prescribed Form** (Annexure-A/B/C/D/E) from the above institutions.

5. Researchers under the special allocation for the financial year 1997-98 who have not submitted project completion report should not apply.

6. Researchers under the special allocation for the financial year 1998-99 who have just started their programmes should not apply (if the programme/project continuation is a necessary in which case a progress report through prescribed format must be submitted).

7. Pursuant to Clause 25 of Terms and Conditions of the Special Allocation for Science and Technology of the Guidelines, any (previous/this etc) invitation for proposal and subsequent (if any) relevant advertisement/letter in this regard must be integral part of the Guidelines.

8. **The last date for submission of proposal** [(a) Annexure-A/B/C/D/E duly filled in & signed 10 (ten) sets and (b) pages 1 through 7 of the Guidelines signed by the Project Director (Chief Scientific Investigator) (one) set for different programmes/projects, at the above address, is 31 August 1999.