

VCs & pro-VCs of most varsities to be replaced

ABUL KALAM AZAD

The BNP government plans to bring changes to all the important positions of different universities, particularly to the post of vice-chancellors and pro-vice-chancellors, in addition to changes in the administration, sources said.

It has decided to change the incumbent VCs and pro-VCs of the country's 11 universities on the ground that all of them have been appointed by the Awami League government on political considerations. They are likely to be replaced by those who are loyal to the BNP, the sources added.

The government has already started putting pressure on the incumbent VCs through teachers inclined to the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami to step down. At the same time, the BNP is also using its front organisation Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jamaat-supported Islami Chhatra Shibir to step up the pressure on them.

However, the government intends not to remove or change the VCs directly, said a Dhaka University teacher who aspires to become the next VC. "Rather, the government is being tactful to avoid public criticism," he noted adding that it would sustain pressure on the VCs from various quarters so that they themselves step aside.

selves step aside.

Vice-chancellor of Islamic University (IU), Kushtia Prof. Lutfar Rahman resigned on Saturday in the face of tremendous pressure from the BNP- and Jamaat-leaning teachers. He cited the prevailing abnormal atmosphere on the campus and personal consideration as reasons for his resignation.

Sources said all the VCs of the IU had to leave office before completing their terms so far in the face of immense pressure by political parties.

Prof. Lutfar Rahman was appointed VC of the IU on October 19 last year for a three-year term by the Awami League government. After the new government took over, teachers of the BNP-backed Zia Parisad and Jamaat-backed Green Forum gave an ultimatum to the VC to step down by October 30 and urged the IU Chancellor Prime Minister Khaleida Zia to appoint a new VC.

Sources said teachers loyal to the BNP and Jamaat are now busy lobbying with the decision-making body of the government to obtain the topmost post of the university.

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A Northern Alliance soldier looks at the cloud of smoke rising up over Taliban positions following bombing by B-52 planes yesterday, in the village of Bagram, about 25 kms north of Kabul.

AL govt imported 4500 small firearms in last 3 years, JS told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The immediate past Awami League government had imported 4,500 small firearms of various types in last three financial years, of which 2,949 were supplied to licence holders.

A total of 11,63,275 rounds of ammunition were also imported through the commerce ministry during the period.

This was revealed during a written question-answer session at the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday. The question was asked by Prof Zaynal Abedin Hazari (VP Jaonal) of BNP to Commerce Minister Amir Khasru Mahmood Chowdhury, now attending the WTO conference in Doha.

A list containing the names of persons among whom the firearms were supplied was tabled at the

House. According to the list, former ministers, parliament members, bureaucrats, police officers, Union Parishad chairmen, businessmen, defence officers, judges of lower courts, several student leaders, sons and wives of several ministers were given the firearms which included shotguns, pistols and revolvers of various types.

Several former ministers and their relatives were given firearms licenses. The list also included names of several former BNP MPs.

Former home minister Mohammad Nasim and his son Tanvir Shakil Joy, state minister for textile AKM Jahangir and his wife Selina Hossain, Suranjit Sengupta, parliament affairs advisor to former prime minister, law minister Abdul Matin Khasru, state minister

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Bush praises Pak efforts, promises more aid

Musharraf sees 'new era' in ties with US

AFP, United Nations

President George W Bush on Saturday declared that Pakistan's efforts in the US-led war on terrorism were bringing the nation back into the global fold and brandished over one billion dollars in US aid as an additional reward.

"Pakistan's efforts against terror are benefiting the entire world and linking Pakistan more closely with the world," Bush said during a joint press conference with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf.

As Bush declared that the US assistance and debt relief would abet that process, Musharraf vowed to "remain committed" to the

campaign and declared he saw the "dawn of a new era" in bilateral relations.

Both leaders discouraged the Northern Alliance battling Afghanistan's ruling Taliban from capturing Kabul because that would imperil the power-sharing arrangement they said would best suit the country after the Taliban is ousted.

"We will encourage our friends to head south... but not into the city of Kabul itself," said Bush. "We believe we can accomplish our military missions by that strategy."

"I agree with the president totally," said Musharraf, who worried that if the city is taken there would be a repeat of the "atrocities,

killings and mayhem" that occurred after Soviet troops were driven out a decade ago.

Bush also said he was not sure whether to believe bin Laden's claim in an interview with a Pakistani newspaper Saturday that he had nuclear and chemical weapons but said the statement was "all the more reason" to hunt him down.

"I don't know what to believe about him, except that he wants to hurt Americans. I suspect he now wants to hurt the people of Pakistan," the US president said.

"Those kinds of statements he utters reinforces the coalition's efforts to bring him to justice," he said. "All the more reason for us to pursue him diligently and to get him and that's what we're going to do."

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is in "safe hands," President Musharraf said Saturday, rejecting concern that its weapons could fall under the control of terrorists or radical Islamic groups.

"Our strategic assets are very well guarded and in very safe hands," Musharraf said in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly in which he also expressed concern at civilian casualties in Afghanistan.

He said Pakistan had instituted an elaborate nuclear command and control mechanism "for iron-clad custodial controls to ensure the safety and security of all our assets."

Meanwhile, the Washington Post reported yesterday that Musharraf ordered an emergency redeployment of the country's nuclear arsenal following the start of the US-led military campaign in Afghanistan.

The Pakistani President made

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Disposal of toxic waste kills fishes in Gulshan lake

STAR REPORT

Fishes in the Gulshan-Baridhara lake are dying due to the severe pollution of the lake water caused by the indiscriminate dumping of sewage and toxic waste into the lake for long.

Fish cultivators on Friday morning found hundreds of dead fish floating on the lake. The lake owned by RAJUK has been leased to Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation for cultivation of fish.

Sewage as well as industrial waste from a number of licensed and unlicensed industries of Badda area in the city seeps directly into the lake at different points. Two shoe factories, where raw leather is also processed, were found near Badda Bazar. Chemical waste from these factories flow directly into the lake. There are also a large number of makeshift toilets at the Badda end of the lake.

Experts say it is likely that a good volume of the

chemical and toxic waste from Tejgaon industrial area is also disposed of into the lake. Sources say that industries at Tejgaon, Badda and Mohakhali dispose of 12,000 cubic metres of untreated waste everyday.

Such indiscriminate death of fishes can occur when the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water falls below the normal amount of 6 milligram per litre, according to the experts. Toxic elements reduce the ratio of dissolved oxygen in water. This condition deteriorates further during the dry season.

"Usually, sewage will not cause death of fishes on such a large scale unless the sewage is toxic," a WASA official said. Referring to the case of Buriganga river, he said similar is the case at many points of river due to the indiscriminate dumping of toxic elements onto the river by factories in the Hazaribagh industrial area.

Indiscriminate disposal of sewage from Baridhara also contributes to the pollution of the Gulshan

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Future projects & programmes BNP to form bodies for feedback from party units, people

REZAUL KARIM

BNP has decided to form subject-wise party committees to get feedback from party units so that its election commitments and people's hopes are reflected in government decisions.

"We have decided to form the committees to get feedback, opinion and suggestions from party men and people to keep the administration close to the commonman," a

senior BNP leader told this correspondent yesterday.

The decision has been taken as governments in the country usually depend heavily on bureaucrats and donor agencies in formulating projects and programmes that many a times do not reflect people's hopes and aspirations, he said.

After formation of the committees, the party will organise seminars and symposia to gather public opinion on vital national and local issues. Party leaders will prepare recommendations through elaborate discussions in the party forum and send those to the party central committee. Those will be put forward to ministers concerned and appropriate levels for implementation, he said.

Besides, the BNP central committee will soon send letters to its district and thana committees to prepare lists of commitments made

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US President George W Bush (R) holds a joint press conference with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf (L) at Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York yesterday.

Frequent transfers frustrate cops

SHAIKH NAZRUL ISLAM

Frustration has gripped the rank and file in the police department following frequent and "indiscriminate" transfers over the last six months, sources said.

A series of transfers and changes in the police department took place at the fag end of the immediate past Awami League government. It also brought about major changes in different tries of the police administration before leaving office in July last.

The caretaker government after taking office on July 15 also made a large scale reshuffle to hold the eight parliamentary elections in a free and fair manner. It changed or transferred Officers-in-Charge (OCs) of all the police stations in the country.

It also transferred 28 Superintendents of Police (SPs) and the Director General of NSI in August.

The BNP government on Thursday transferred 301 police officials of the ranks of Additional Deputy Commissioner to Sub-Inspector (SI). The government earlier transferred 15 police inspectors to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Two senior police officials have also been sent on forced retirement by the BNP government.

Sources in the police administration said the government is planning more transfers and forced retirements in next few days.

They said police officials yet to be transferred are passing days amid

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Revenue earning falls short of target

RAFIQ HASAN

Revenue earning of the government fell short of the target by Tk 445 crore in the first four months of the current financial year (2001-2002), according to sources in the National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The earning stood Tk 5425 crore in July-October against the target of Tk 5,870 crore for the period.

The main reason of the shortfall is declining imports because of economic recession in the country, the sources said.

Against a target of Tk 3352 crore from customs duty on imports, the earning was Tk 2960 crore.

Earning from VAT (Value Added Tax) also declined. It was Tk 1557 crore against a target of 1558 crore.

TK 860 crore was collected as

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NCTB taking steps to meet deadline

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is on course to meet the deadline for publication and distribution of textbooks for academic session 2002, sources in the board said.

"All necessary steps have been taken for printing and distribution of board textbooks in time and some printers have started printing books for primary level students last week," a senior official at the NCTB, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star last night.

He said papers for printing of 4.73 crore books for primary level students and about two crore for secondary level students are now in the board storehouse.

However, the pace at which

papers are being supplied from the board's storehouse is sluggish and the sources put it down to the ban on plying of trucks in the city during daytime.

The education ministry is likely to sit with the police today to devise ways on how to expedite the disbursement of papers for printing of the textbooks.

The board will be required to supply about 8.5 tonnes of paper for printing of about 6.73 crore textbooks for the academic year 2002.

According to the NCTB, 335 printers have been chosen to print nearly two crore copies of 60 textbooks for the secondary level students while 149 printers have

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MP manhandled by mob in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A ruling party lawmaker was manhandled and at least 15 people were injured when angry people put up a road barricade and swooped on stranded passengers after one person was run over by a bus at Panchilia in Sirajganj on Dhaka-Dinajpur highway yesterday.

The mob also damaged the car of

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PARC report being examined

SHEHAB AHMED

A high level committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary is examining the report of the Public Administration Reforms Commission (PARC).

The committee was formed by the government recently to prepare a summary of the PARC report containing recommendations for

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