

6 senior asst secys attached to DC's offices

UNB, Dhaka

In an unprecedented move the Ministry of Establishment has attached six senior assistant secretaries enjoying status of deputy secretary to Deputy Commissioner offices in six districts.

Of the officers, three were formerly attached to the past prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The Ministry of Establishment in a circular on Sunday ordered the placing of RAM Obaidul Mukhtar Chowdhury, deputy secretary of Sports Directorate and ex-PS to former prime minister Sheikh Hasina, to the DC office of Kurigram.

Former PM's APS Ibrahim Hossain Khan, Deputy Director, Primary Education Directorate, has been attached to the Barguna DC's office.

Former PM Sheikh Hasina's Deputy Press Secretary Abu Alam Md Shahid Khan, who has been OSD since 1997 following a case, was attached to Jharkati DC office.

Abul Kalam Azad, Sr Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of Establishment, Mohammad Mainuddin Abdullah, Sr Assistant Secretary of Establishment, and Begum Rebeka Sultana, Sr Assistant Secretary of the Ministry of LGRD, have been attached with the DC offices of Panchagarh, Pirojpur and Sunamganj respectively.

One of the transferred officers said senior assistant secretaries enjoying the rank of deputy secretary cannot be attached to DC offices to help the district administration in development work.

He said BCS (Admn) cadre and composition are defined in the rules along with posts and number, and there were no such posts at the district level in development schemes for such senior officers.

"This move has been taken just to harass us. This action is purely politically motivated," he said, adding: "Officers who served as PS and APS under Khaleda Zia during 1991-96 period were not given such postings."

Trade accord

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in the city from Doha yesterday both the ministers agreed to establish contacts at official levels to further strengthen economic links between the two countries.

Khasru told the Indian Commerce Minister that both Bangladesh and India would gain from enhanced economic co-operation. In this regard he mentioned the new government's keenness to strengthen existing economic ties with India.

Saying that strengthening of economic relations between the two countries depend critically on political will, the minister expressed the hope that India would show the necessary political willingness to this end.

Procedural impediments should not be allowed to get into the way of strengthening economic ties between the two neighbours, Khasru said adding that private sectors in both countries are willing to move ahead to forge mutually beneficial trade links.

The Indian Commerce Minister expressed his eagerness to engage consultations with Bangladesh to work out modalities for future cooperation in trade and commerce.

IPRC decrece

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measure, they said.

Male and female students at the university are now scared to contact each other, sources said.

Dr. ABM Siddiqur Rahman, an associate professor of the Department of Dawa and Islamic Studies at the IU, is the president of the committee and it is him who masterminded the move, the sources added.

Dr. Rahman, when contacted by The Daily Star, said the initiative was taken to prevent moral degradation of the students.

Dr. Moslem Uddin, registrar of the IU, said he had no idea about how such an announcement was made.

Earlier on October 23, the committee activists assaulted a student of English literature inside a university bus while he was talking with a female student, who happened to be his cousin.

They also attacked some 20 pairs of male and female students during the Ekushey Mela on the campus last February.

President visits military HQs

UNB, Dhaka

President Shahabuddin Ahmed who is also the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces yesterday visited the military headquarters and placed a wreath at the altar of Shikha Onirban inside Dhaka Cantonment.

He stood in silence for some time before the military memorial in respect after placing the wreath.

The armed forces accorded a farewell guard of honour to the outgoing President at "Choppers Den" in the Cantonment. Chief of Army Staff Lt General Harun Ar-Rashid, Chief of Naval Staff Rear Admiral Abu Taher and Chief of Air Staff Air Vice Marshal M Rafiqul Islam were present at the time.

Earlier the President visited the headquarters of the Air Force, Navy and Army and talked to the senior officials regarding their role and discipline in the forces. He appreciated the role of armed forces in times of natural disaster in the past and said they had also performed a commendable job in maintaining law and order during the general elections in 1991, 1996 and 2001.

The president reminded the officials that they are members of a "disciplined force and the people have great confidence in the discharge of their duties in the most neutral manner". He wished them success in their work.

The defence officials recalled with gratitude the impartial role of the president during his tenure and wished him a happy and peaceful retired life.

Hasina invited

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rule of Awami League government," a release from the opposition leader's office quoted him as saying referring to the warm and fraternal ties existing between the two countries.

The Chinese Ambassador also expressed hope that the relations between the Communist Party of China and Awami League would always remain intact.

Hasina also referred to the friendly relations between the two countries and hoped that China would continue its assistance for the development of Bangladesh. She thanked China for cooperating in the construction of International Convention Centre in Dhaka.

The centre was built for holding NAM summit, which has been postponed.

Former minister Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, former state ministers Abul Hasan Chowdhury and Alhaj Syed Abul Hossain, political secretary of the Awami League president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, her personal aide Dr Hasan Mahmud and PS to the Leader of the Opposition Nazrul Islam Khan were present.

Herat falls

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In a convoy of five vehicles, about 15 or 20 Taliban carrying their belongings wrapped in sheets were seen leaving the city as darkness fell, said a Reuters reporter.

For the first time the intelligence department was in darkness. A spotlight at its door that is lit from darkness to dawn had been switched off.

The house of the chief justice was also in darkness and his guard had disappeared from his kiosk outside the house, the reporters said.

Two French radio journalists and German magazine reporter were killed Sunday when their convoy was hit in northeastern Takhar province, Radio France Internationale and RTL radio announced in Paris.

Johanne Sutton, an RFI journalist, and Pierre Billaud, a correspondent for RTL, were riding with armed vehicles and trucks that left the northern alliance headquarters in Khoja Bahauddin, near the Tajikistan border.

The German newsmagazine Stern also confirmed that one of its journalists was killed in the attack but said the reporter's name was not being immediately released.

20 cases

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look into corruption charges against AL ministers.

Back in 1996, when the AL came to power, it filed corruption cases against former BNP ministers following investigation. BNP chief and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is accused in one such corruption case. Most of the corruption cases against BNP ministers have been stayed by the High Court. The government is now withdrawing some cases.

Back in the early 1990s, the BNP government filed cases against most of the ministers and one bureaucrat of the autocratic regime of HM Ershad on corruption charges.

Of them, only Ershad was punished in one corruption case. The cases against other Ershad ministers are still pending with different courts.

Incumbent State Minister for Energy Mosharruf Hossain was convicted by the lower court and sentenced to five years in prison in two corruption cases during the then BNP regime. Both these cases are now pending with the High Court.

The current Law Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed was also accused in a corruption case filed by the then BNP government. This case has been stayed by the High Court.

Vice-chancellors

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removed both the vice-chancellors as per the Section 16 of the Clauses Act of 1897 and appointed the new VCs as per Section 11(2) of the University Act of 1973.

Section 11(2) of the University Act says: Where any temporary vacancy in the office of the Vice-chancellor occurs by the reason of leave unless resignation or other cause, the Chancellor shall make such arrangement for carrying on duties of the office of the Vice-Chancellor as he may think fit.

Campus sources said, Prof Anwarul Islam Chowdhury visited the DU VC office at the administrative building at about 8 pm yesterday.

Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury was appointed VC for a four-year term in September 1996 during Awami League tenure after he was elected by the DU Senate. Later, he was re-elected by the Senate in September 2000 for another four-year term.

According to the University Act of 1897, the Chancellor can appoint a new Vice-Chancellor of any university by removing any person from the post.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday evening, Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury said, "I am yet to get any official letter regarding my removal. I do not know why I have been removed and what was my fault."

He said, "The government decision is not a democratic one as it has removed me before completing my tenure. The Chancellor can not remove any VC elected by Senate."

"I learnt that the new VC has asked the (DU administrative) office to make necessary arrangement for taking over charge."

In an emotion charged voice he said, "I struggled a lot for betterment of students and all concerned and for creating a congenial atmosphere on the campus in the last five years. Is it my reward?"

When asked if he would go for any legal action against the government order, he said, "I will decide after receiving the official letter of my removal."

According to sources, teachers of Dhaka University belonging to BNP-Jamaat backed White Panel met Education Minister Dr Osman Faruq recently and suggested him to remove Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury from his post.

The Ministry of Education sent a proposal to the Office of the Prime Minister on Thursday seeking her consent for appointment of a new Vice-Chancellor, the sources said.

Earlier, leaders and supporters of

the White Panel had suggested Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury to resign voluntarily, they said.

Prof. Jasimuddin took office at a simple ceremony at the Senate Hall of the JU administrative building at 9:00 pm.

He arrived at the Register's office at 6:00 pm to take charge but the official letter, which was likely to reach the university at 6:00 pm, came at 8:30 pm. He was waiting at the register's office, flanked by many of pro-BNP teachers and leaders of Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), students' wing of BNP.

Before getting the appointment letter in hand, Prof. Jasimuddin received congratulations from leaders of almost all the organisations at JU.

Meanwhile, Prof. Harunur Rashid and Prof. Anwar Hossain resigned from posts of provost of AF Rahman Hall and Fazul Haq Hall respectively yesterday protesting what they called domination of JCD activists in administrative activities at the halls.

Jubo Dal leader

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without any provocation.

Meanwhile, the condition of Public Prosecutor Ali Akbar who is among the injured was stated to be critical till 5 pm yesterday. He suffered head injuries. The condition of others including the former state minister improved, AL sources said.

When contacted, Selim however refuted the allegation that his party men were involved in the attack. He termed the incident a stage-managed one to create a political issue against BNP. But he condemned such a 'dastardly attack' at a meeting at the residence of AL leader.

Twelve leaders and activists of district unit of Jubo Dal who were expelled on Sunday night on charge of their involvement in the attack are Shah Elias Hossain, Iqbal Mahmud, Fakir Rahmatullah, Sheikh Abdur Rahman, Tanvir Hossain, Sheikh Saifur Rahman, Kamrul Ahsan, Ataur Rahman, Abdul Mannan, Abdul Kalam, Shahadat Hossain and Tayebur Rahman.

The expulsion notice was signed by Tutul who is organising secretary of district Jubo Dal.

Expulsion of the Jub Dal men and handing over of Tutul to police have created sharp reaction among leaders of BNP and its fronts Jubo Dal and JCD. Some sources said they have planned a showdown in favour of and against Selim.

JS tidbits

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given in the last parliament," he said, adding the contradiction had sparked off public criticism.

In an oblique reference to the fact that the presidential address is prepared and approved by the government, the JP MP observed that "injustice was done to the justice-turned-president." It would have been appropriate for the prime minister to deliver such an (partisan) address.

Shamsuzzaman Khan of BNP demanded action against the independent Ekushey Television (ETV) for "undermining" BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in its November 6 news bulletin.

"The ETV bulletin simply said Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan without referring to his portfolio or party position. This was an insult to a leader like Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan who is also an MP," Khan said, adding that in a way the ETV insulted all the members of parliament.

Most of the members in the Treasury Bench thumped the desk in agreement with Khan while the man in question, Mannan Bhuiyan, was smiling.

Speaker Sircar, in his response, expressed the hope the information minister would take necessary step to this end.

B Chy elected unopposed

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official sources.

Earlier on Sunday, the Election Commission declared valid the nomination papers filed by Chowdhury and Ali upon scrutiny.

However, Ali, an independent candidate proposed and seconded by two Jatiya Party lawmakers, withdrew his candidature at 11:25 am.

Hence, the EC in the afternoon declared Chowdhury as president "elected uncontested".

Chowdhury, who was appointed the foreign minister of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's coalition government and deputy leader of the House, will vacate his post in the cabinet and the Munshiganj-1 parliamentary seat from where he was elected. By election to the vacant seat will take place accordingly.

Chowdhury, son of late Kafiluddin Ahmed Chowdhury, was born in Comilla on November 11, 1929. He obtained his MBBS degree from the Dhaka Medical College and later did his MRCP from Royal College of Physicians at Edinburgh and Glasgow, and TDD from Wales University.

Chowdhury began his political career in 1978 when he joined the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), founded by late president

Rajshahi BIT students form human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Students of the Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT), Rajshahi formed a human chain in the city yesterday morning in support of their demand for upgrading Rajshahi BIT into university.

The BIT teachers also joined the programme.

Hundreds of BIT students formed the human chain at Kumarpara Crossing in the city.

After a two-hour human chain from 11:30 am the students held a meeting at zero-point at Saheb Bazar.

Bhola flooded

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Low-lying areas of the coastal districts of Sathkira, Khulna, Barguna, Bagerhat, Jhalakati, Pirojpur, Patuakhali, Barisal, Bhola, Noakhali, Feni, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and their offshore islands and chars are likely to be inundated by wind-driven surge of 3-5 feet height above normal astronomical tide.

Tribunal orders

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"public interest" behind their retirement as cited in their retirement order.

Barrister Moinul Hossain and Sirajul Haq appeared for the officials in the court. They were assisted by Azizul Haque, Barrister Hassan S M Azim and Moniruzzaman Hawladar.

The four additional inspector generals are Shahidul Islam Chowdhury, Wahidul Haque, Shahulul Haque and Ahmed Nazmul Hossain. The five DIGs are Rafiqul Alam Khan, Osman Ali Khan, Aminul Islam, Ziauddin Ahmed and MASalam.

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from Sardar Shakawat Hossain Bakul, the minister informed that the immediate past Awami League government gave contract appointments to 206 officials. Of them 56 are still in job.

Replying to another question from Prof Joyal Abedin of BNP he said contracts of 20 officials had already been cancelled. They were given contract jobs during Awami League regime. "Proper steps will be taken against others after proper inquiry," he said.

"As per government rules, no government employee can cooperate in any political movement and if anyone got involved in any political movement, provision of punishment is there," he said in reply to another question from Alhaj Mosharruf Hossain Mangu of BNP.

The ruling party lawmaker wanted to know whether the government has any plan to take any action against the government employees who joined the 'Janata Manch', a platform raised by Awami League for movement against the then BNP government in 1996.

AL: Hartal

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domestic consumption.

A formal endorsement to the LDF call may still not come from the AL, as it is pledge-bound not to support hartal. While in power, AL President Sheikh Hasina promised that her party would never call hartal that had damaged the economy in the past.

Meanwhile, a central AL leader has told The Daily Star that although different front organisations of the party, including the Bangladesh Chhatra League and Shechshahabek League, have already given support to the LDF-called hartal, the AL has not taken a decision in this regard as yet.

Cabinet decisions

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duce Free Education of Girls up to 12th class. Both these are BNP's election pledges.

It accepted in principle recommendations of the secretarial committee relating to education and health. It also decided to implement the recommendations as quickly as possible through short, mid and long-term programmes.

The Cabinet gave top priority to publication of school textbooks in time so that students could get those at the beginning of new academic year.

Sources said the meeting discussed the government's plans to make English the second language at all levels of education and expand IT training facilities across the country for rapid human resources development.

Education policy also figured at the meeting which noted that standard of education in government schools has deteriorated over the years. It emphasised improving the quality of education and schooling system.

The Cabinet also discussed the

situation in some poverty-stricken regions of the country and decided that if necessary, the government would introduce VGF cards and Test Relief in those areas.

It had a lengthy discussion on arsenic contamination of ground water and asked the authorities concerned to find out ways and means to mitigate the problem and take up effective programmes for this.

Sources said the Cabinet took up arsenic contamination of ground water and other environmental related issues with utmost importance and asked the ministries concerned to immediately take up programmes to resolve the problems.

Besides, the cabinet also decided to take necessary steps to combat the dreaded Hepatitis B virus.

Ministers and State Ministers in-charge of different ministries attended the meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office. The cabinet secretary, principals secretary to the PM and secretaries concerned were present.

US plane crashes

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"At least one group of people who saw it say that the engine came off first, then the plane crashed," Giuliani told local television.

Giuliani said he had spoken to President Bush and that US fighter jets were in the skies over New York.

"Everyone should remain calm, we have talked to the White House several times, there is air cover, you can see the jets up in the air, making certain this is an isolated incident."

"We have put the city on high alert," he said, adding that the fire and smoke around the crash site is "very, very bad."

All metropolitan area airports Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark, New Jersey were closed after the plane crashed in the Rockaway section of the New York City borough of Queens. All bridges and tunnels into the city were closed except to emergency vehicles.

Flight 587, an Airbus A300 that can hold 275 people, went down shortly after 9 am local time in the waterfront neighbourhood 24 kilometers from Manhattan, setting buildings on fire. A plume or thick, black smoke could be seen miles away. There was no immediate word on the number of people

aboard the plane.

A US official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said intelligence agencies, the FBI and the Federal Aviation Administration were reviewing all recent intelligence for any signs that terrorism was involved, but an hour after the crash there was no evidence pointing to an attack.

"They are comparing information to see if it provides any insight into what transpired. At this point, there's no indication of a terrorist attack, but it certainly can't be ruled out in the current environment," the official said.

Giuliani cancelled his morning events and headed to the scene.

"Now we should focus all our efforts on finding survivors," the mayor said. Asked what he thought when he heard about the crash, he said: "Oh my god, Oh my god, and I just passed a church where I attended 10 funerals."

Triage Centers were set up at a high school and an elementary school, both of which were closed for the Veterans Day holiday.

Planes were being diverted to other airports, and Delta Air Lines spokeswoman Peggy Estes said the airline was working to account for all its planes.

Gas: Another assessment

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resource," said a source.

"It is too early to say anything about the outcome. But we can expect that the study group would be ready to share its primary findings in a couple of months."

He said, "As Norway has no business interest in Bangladesh, the study is likely to have more credibility than the United States Geological Survey (USGS) study completed in January this year. USGS, which also reported in this field, in its joint study with Petrobangla had said that there was a 50:50 possibility of finding 32 tcf of new gas."

The NPD-Bangladesh study actually began in 1998, the sources said. But as the then Energy Secretary was more keen on the USGS study, collaboration with Norway was very slow. Norway was conducting its independent study of global energy resources and Bangladesh requested it to conduct a joint study in the country.

After the USGS study was presented in February in Dhaka, the NPD-Bangladesh study started to get some life.

However, the Norwegian method of study is different from that of USGS.

The USGS-Petrobangla study suggests that Bangladesh's average potential of finding gas is 32.1 trillion cubic feet (tcf) in next 30 years while the range of this potential fluctuates between 8.4 tcf (95 per cent possibility) and 65.7 tcf (5 per cent possibility).

The USGS study was supposed to bury the debate over gas reserve and resource—especially among those who promote pipeline export of gas and those who oppose it. However, it did not. The debate on reserve still dominates the scenario as the issue of gas export is being discussed.

Chairmen

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agement of NCBs and specialised banks. Rabiul Hossain has been transferred from Rupali Bank to Sonali Bank and Yasin Ali of BSB has been posted at Rupali Bank as MD. Murshid Kuli Khan has been transferred from BKB to Janata Bank as managing director. SA Chowdhury of Sonali Bank has made officer on special duty.

It has been learnt that more changes will be made in bank boards and most of the present directors will be axed.

Khaleda assigns ministers

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are: State Minister for Youth and Sports Fazlur Rahman Patal for Nabaganj, State Minister for Public Works and Housing Alamgir Kabir for Rangpur, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Amanullah Aman for Magura, State Minister for Freedom Fighters' Affairs Redwan Ahmed for Bagerhat, State Minister for Commerce Barkatullah Bulu for Sathkira, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharruf Hossain Shahajan for Bhola, State Minister for Land Barrister Shahjahan Omar BU for Jhalakhati, State Minister for Science and Technology M Lutfur Rahman Khan Azad for Tangail, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman for Pirojpur, State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir for Thakurgaon, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Prof Rezaul Karim for Panchagarh, State Minister for Education Eshanul Huq Milon for Nilphamari, State Minister M Quamrul Islam for Gaibandha, State Minister for Power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud for Sirajganj, State Minister for Post and Telecommunications M Ahsanul Huq Mollah for Meherpur, State Minister for Textile Mizanur Rahman Sinha for Chuadanga, State Minister for Finance and Planning Anwarul Kabir Talukder for Jamalpur, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources A K

M Mosharruf Hossain for Mymensingh, State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar for Netrokona, State Minister for Water Resources Gautam Chakrabarti for Gopalganj, State Minister for Disaster Management and Relief Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury for Habiganj, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ukil Abdus Sattar for Brahmanbaria, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Huq Zia for Cox's Bazar, Prime Minister's Advisor on Primary and Mass Literacy Affairs Prof Jahannara Begum for Feni, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Meer Mohammad Nasir Uddin for Khagrachari, and State Minister for Environment and forest Zafarul Islam Chowdhury for Bandarban.

The designated whips are: Ashraf Hossain for Khulna, Mujibur Rahman Sarwar for Barisal, Rafiqul Bari Dina for Joypurhat, Zahed Ali Chowdhury for Sherpur, Whip (proposed) Fazlul Huq Asia for Sunamganj.

The Deputy Ministers: Deputy Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu for Natore, Deputy Minister for Jamuna Bridge Division Asadul Habib Dulu for Lalmonirhat and Deputy Minister for Hill Tracts Affairs Mani Swapan Dewan for Rangamati.

Dhaka test drawn

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there will be five full days of action," said the young Zimbabwan skipper before leaving for Chittagong, where the second Test starts on November