

CUCSU polls a dream of students

ATAUL GANI SUMON

Not only to the freshers but also to the masters' students of the Chittagong University (CU), name of the Chittagong University Central Students Union (CUCSU) is now the history only.

Those who have passed from the university two or three years back were not lucky enough to see the CUCSU election.

The election remained suspended for the last 12 years. The CUCSU, the most powerful political hub and lone students' representative organisation of the university.

University authorities' insincerity and confrontations among the student organisations round the year were responsible for not holding the election.

Yet the CUCSU was inactive the university authorities did not dissolve it.

In the name of CUCSU, the then leaders are still engaged in extortions. They influence the city's political leaders to get the construction works.

Now there are no activities of the CUCSU committee on the campus as the election was suspended for indefinite period.

As a result, there is no legal body of the students in the University to place their demands before the authorities. The student leaders as well as the general students said they could not place their demands before the authorities for lack of CUCSU. The authorities have no headache to solve the students' problems. They did not care for their demands.

A section of students said the campus became lifeless in absence of an elected CUCSU.

They blamed the student organisations for their non-

cooperation with the authorities and violence by them for not holding the election.

The first election of the CUCSU was held in 1970, one year before the War of Liberation of the country.

Mohammad Ibrahim and Mohammad Abdur Rob were elected as the Vice-president (VP) and the General Secretary (GS) of the then CUCSU respectively for the 1970-71 academic year. None of them are alive. Mohammad Ibrahim, the then VP died few years ago and GS Abdur Rob was the first martyr of the university who was killed by the occupation forces of Pakistani army in 1971.

Abdur Rob, golden son of the university, was also the first 'Bir Protik' of the university. The newly built hall of the university was named after Shaheed Abdur Rob showing respect to his sacrifice for the motherland.

The last election of the CUCSU was held in 1989. At that time, all student organisations of the university formed an alliance against the Jamaat-backed Shibir. The left leaning student organisations Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU), Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF), the then Jatiya Chhatra League of Baksal (Razzaq), Bangladesh Chhatra League (Habib-Oshim), Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) formed the All Party Student Alliance (APSA) to defeat Shibir in the election. Finally the APSA swept the election.

The APSA got all 27 posts of CUCSU and Shibir none.

Nazimuddin of the then Jatiya Chhatra League and Azimuddin of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) were elected vice president (VP) and general secretary (GS) respectively. Other office-bearers were: Assistant General Secretary (AGS) Mahbubur Rahman Shamim of JCD, Social Welfare Secretary Salauddin Reza of JCD, Publication Secretary Sudhita Barua of BCL, Entertainment Secretary-Mamunur Rashid of BCL.

Of the 27 posts of the executive committee of CUCSU, 12 are the secretarial posts and rests 15 are for the members.

In the hall committees APSA were also able to keep their dominance. Of the five male halls, APSA won in four while the ICS bagged all the posts at F Rahman hall.

The Bangladesh Chhatra Union won the all posts of the Shamsunahar hall, the then lone female dormitories of the university.

Though, at that time, the BCL and the BCU were the dominant student organisations on the campus they could not reach any agreement over the distribution of posts. A meeting held at the residence of the Awami League (AL) leader Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury at Kazir Dewry over the matter was foiled following scuffle among leaders of the two organisations.

Later, decision makers of the two organisations reached an understanding that the nominations to the posts including the VP and GS will be nominated from small

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Toxic contamination and occupational hazards at the shipbreaking yards in Sitakundu are widespread. Although the shipbreaking industry provides job opportunities for many, hazardous substances such as oil and gas, asbestos and other toxic substances are released into the environment when the ships are broken. Even the local residents are suffering due to pollution.

Budget makes shipbreaking business dull

NURUL ALAM

Shipbreaking industry, developed along the Sitakundu coast here, though became a potential source of revenue to the national economy, now faces a slump in business, sources concerned said.

They attributed the slump to dull trading in the local market and enhancement of duty on the ships imported for scrapping here.

Price of the scraps used for recycling in the re-rolling mills for manufacturing rods, dropped to about Tk 11,000/- per metric ton from Tk 13,000/- per metric ton recorded earlier.

On the other hand, ship breakers are taking little interest to import ships for scrapping due to the enhancement of duty in the new budget announced last month, sources said.

Ship-breakers Association sources said the import duty earlier fixed at 5 per cent was now made 15 per cent in the new budget that

discourages the import of old ships for scrapping here.

Ship Breakers Association President Jafar Ahmed while talking to this correspondent said with the increase of duty import of ships for scrapping would see a decline by 90 per cent this year that might threaten the existence of this potential industry.

"It will be really dangerous for ship-breaking sector as over three lakh labourers would face an uncertainty and the government's revenue earning also will fall", Jafar said.

However, sources said some of the ship breakers had imported more old ships for scrapping before announcement of the budget sensing enhancement of duty.

Ship-breakers Association sources said that revenues of about Tk 600 crore were contributed to the national economy last year.

The industry, run without use of any modern technology, meets 90 per cent of the raw materials required for the re-rolling mills in

the country for producing corrugated iron sheet, rods and other construction materials", association source said adding "the current system is more cost-effective".

The industry is unique in using gas driven welding machines instead of modern laser cutting methods.

"A ship is like a mini world where everything is available and after scrapping of the ship all things are sold", the source added.

"In fact, there is high demand for furniture and other goods of scrapped ships. A number of markets selling goods from ships have grown here around the Sitakundu coast and goods are trafficked to other parts of the country", the association sources said.

High rate of return had prompted the people to invest in ship breaking sector.

But some of the unscrupulous ship breakers reportedly changed their signboards and business pattern after minting money in a bid

to avert the repayment of bank loans taken against the ships imported for scrapping, sources said.

Consequently, huge amount of bank loan money reportedly remained stuck up for years together.

The ship-breaking industry is capable of supplying one million tonnes of scraps to the re-rolling mills in the country.

The workers who face the risk of gas explosion or other accidents, earn between Tk 70 to 150 a day.

According to reports available here, about 400 workers were killed and 6,000 others injured in the past 21 years due to accidents in the ship-breaking industry here.

Little was done to ensure their safety though sometimes, compensations were given to the victims, sources said.

Shipbreaking began here in the year 1960 when a storm hit foreign ship grounded at Sitakundu coast, association sources said.

The shipbreaking business however, thrived from the year 1980.



Strewn with potholes, the Arakan Road in Chandgaon area has been in very bad shape for long but the city corporation remains indifferent to the woes of road users.

Chittagong city to have flyover

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD

The procedures for construction of a flyover at the busy Dewanhut intersection, the first of its kind in the port city, is nearing completion.

Chittagong City Corporation took initiative for construction of the flyover to facilitate smooth movement of traffic at that intersection where traffic congestion has become a regular scene.

After floating of tenders for the project and receipt of tender schedules, the CCC is now waiting for experts' report on the feasibility of the design of the 1220-ft proposed flyover.

The expert report on the flyover is likely to reach CCC authorities within a day or two, sources said.

"After some accidents and collapse of footbridge in Dhaka, we now have to proceed carefully examining and re-examining every aspect of the flyover so that a least risk exist there

to cause casualty," CCC Chief Engineer Rezaul Amin Khan said.

"As such the design of the flyover has been sent to the Research Division of Roads and Highways (R&H) in Dhaka for further examining and report on it by the experts," he said. "The professional and expert report is likely to reach within a day or two", he added.

After the CCC chief planner AKM Rezaul Karim made the imaginary vision of the flyover, CCC invited designs for the project and received response from firms having experience in constructing such flyovers from China, Bangkok and the home as well, sources said.

Of the project designs, CCC received one offered by a Chinese firm.

If the project is approved by the experts it would be sent to the city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury for making arrangement for Memorandum of Understanding

(MOM) and agreement in this regard later.

Chittagong City Corporation decided to construct the flyover at a meeting with CCC Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in the chair on February 13.

Tender was floated in this regard in April where fourteen bidders participated.

Sources said, the same firm that already got work order for the construction of flyover at Mohakhali in Dhaka, reportedly became the lowest bidder in the tender.

The project might cost around Tk. 28 crore as it includes arrangement for housing some shops along retaining walls of the flyover, sources said.

However, CCC is yet to examine the financial aspects of the project and it might seek for financial assistance for the construction, they said.

According to the project design, the main portion of the 1220-ft

flyover over Dewanhut intersection would be 120 ft while it would stretch 550ft each in the east and west ends towards Kadamtoli and Pahartoli respectively.

In the first parts of the extended portion of the flyover at both the ends 440-ft retaining walls would be made (with 220-ft in each side). Earth, macadam and RCC slabs would be used in the retaining walls. The second parts of extended area of the fly-over will have a total of 660ft retaining walls with 330 ft in each side and 20 spans would cover the surface of the flyover here.

The flyover at this portion would also have arrangements for housing some 152 shops.

The main portion of the flyover would be at a clear altitude of 120ft and would be consisted of a single span with a length of 120ft.

Knowledgeable circles said, it would bring a great change in the

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FOC can expand shipping industry

Capt. M. Habibur Rahman

Shipping is considered to be one of the largest industries in the world.

In Bangladesh, steps should have been taken to explore, evaluate, develop and expansion of the industry from the very beginning. The matter has been discussed with the government but lack of prompt decision for its implementation has been observed. In the private sector some ships are running profitably but in the public sectors the matter is discouraging for long. At present, development through shipping seems to be very poor, so we must look for an alternative way to earn foreign currency for the economy of Bangladesh. Like ours, most of the developing countries failed to do shipping business in their own procedures, forcing them to find alternative way for its development and these countries have succeeded to attract foreign investors. In other words, "A Ship owned in one country while it is registered in another country for the purpose of commercial / legal advantages sails under a Flag of Convenience (FOC)". That means 'registration' system can play an important role in the economy of a country. In this system, a foreign ship owner for enjoying the facilities of commercial benefits and legal advantages can register his ship in another country.

Bangladesh as a developing country could not introduce itself as a "Flag of Convenience" but there is a great opportunity to earn foreign currency as well as generate employment of thousands of seamen through the flag of convenience process.

As stated earlier, in Bangladesh there has been a thought as to how to increase number of ships both in the government and private sectors giving more attraction to the shipping industry. Presently, Liberia, Panama, Malta, Cyprus, Norway, Bahamas, Belize as well as some other countries are in the system of FOC.

The FOC has both advantages and disadvantages for various reasons.

FOC is not the system that will abruptly change and bring about development in the shipping industry of a country. But, it will reduce and prevent from declining. The main aspects of FOC are as under:

FOC system will introduce a new horizon in the shipping industry in Bangladesh. Many ships owned by foreigners will fly Bangladesh flag and will sail all over the world. As a result the name of Bangladesh will be more prestigious in addition to economical benefits. Thus Bangladesh will be recognised as a

maritimation.

2. There are difficulties for the employment of cadets who passed out from Chittagong Marine Academy and ratings who has been trained in Seamen Training Center. Therefore, we can make bindings to employ Bangladeshi officers and seamen on board ship plying under Bangladeshi flag.

3. The government will be able to earn foreign currency by registering foreign ships.

4. Presently, Bangladeshi ships merely carry 10 per cent of total sea borne trade though, under Flag Protection Act, they can carry up to 40 per cent. If FOC is implemented, the percentage will increase and will be able to attract foreign and local investors.

5. The owners will maintain their ships according to Merchant Shipping Act and will take measures for safe traffic at their own interest. In this regard, the responsibility of Bangladesh will expand as the Flag

State Control. For this, some changes have to be brought in the infrastructure and if necessary, Directorate of Shipping has to be expanded.

If the FOC is implemented, there is also a possibility that there will be no change in the shipping business. Valid reasons stated as under:-

1. Bangladeshi private ship owners likely to suffer loss.

2. Small amount of revenue may be collected against registration following low registration rate.

MAJOR FOC Fleets Owners

USA 30%
Hong Kong 20%
Greece 13%
Japan 11%
Germany 3.3%
Norway 3%

-An UNCTAD Report
Recommendations:
Considering the overall situation my opinion appended below:

1. To prevent from declining and to make shipping business

active and competitive, Bangladesh may be introduced as a Flag of Convenience country.

2. The system may be started on test basis and after evaluating success it may be considered to take permanent form.

3. There are suspicious for the substandard safety standard of the ships under Flag of Convenience. But if the government increases the safety standard through Flag State Control, ships can be made free from any deficiencies.

4. Besides giving flag facilities to the ship owners, it has to stress ship owners to recruit Bangladeshi seamen.

But the matter on which I am very hopeful is that if the authority concerned maintains the safety standard of ships as per IMO regulations then all ship owners will show interest.

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Congratulations to Faujderhut cadets



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Faujderhut Cadet College of Chittagong performed the best result in the SSC examinations among all the seven education boards of the country this year.

The College showed this brilliant result with its cadets achieving as many as a total of 23 GPA (Grade Point Average) 5, the highest number of GPA 5, in the SSC examinations

held this year throughout the country.

This year 46 candidates - 43 from science group and 3 from humanities group - appeared in the SSC examinations held under Chittagong Education Board from this college. Of them, 23 candidates - all from science group - got A+ grade obtaining GPA 5 while the rest 23 got A grade.

Of the three candidates of

Humanities, one got GPA 4.75, another got GPA

4.50 and the other got GPA 4.25. Principal Lt. Col. Mokarram Ali Khan said side by side with hard work of the cadets, congenial academic atmosphere of the college, professional and sincere efforts of the teachers and cooperation of the guardians helped the college achieve this glorious result.

Because of systemic and disciplined way of teaching the average

results of the cadet colleges are always good, he added.

But unfortunately Faujderhut Cadet College had a bad time and could not show expected results after the opening of Chittagong Board in 1996, he said.

However, the college started to regain its reputation since the HSC examination of last year (2001) when 36 candidates of the college, out of 37, got Star Marks with 13 secured places in the combined merit list, he added.



An engine boat carrying bananas from Shuvalong in Rangamati to the district town for supplying these to different places. Shuvalong is one of the major suppliers of banana in this region.