

BB showcauses City Bank chair for graft

STAR REPORT

Bangladesh Bank (BB) yesterday asked City Bank Ltd Chairman Din Mohammad to show cause in one week's time why he should not be removed from his position for working against the depositors' interests.

The show-cause notice, under Article 46 of the Bank Company Act 1991, was issued after a BB investigation found the bank chief guilty of at least two abuses of his position.

In one case, Din Mohammad took Tk 5 lakh from City Bank's funds for personal overseas travel. Surprisingly, he billed the bank for business class airline fare while travelling in economy class.

In the other case, he appeared to have appropriated a handsome kickback from his own bank in a land purchase deal. City Bank recently procured a plot of land

from Eastern Housing for a price of Tk 9 crore, of which Tk 1.3 crore was deposited into Mohammad's personal bank account.

Asked why that money was deposited into the chairman's account, City Bank officials kept mum, BB sources said, adding they guessed the money might have been paid as a commission for the deal.

According to Article 46 of the Bank Company Act, if Bangladesh Bank is convinced that a chairman or director or chief executive of a bank has to be removed in order to check activities against depositors' interests or to ensure efficient operation of the bank for public interest, it can order to remove the chairman or director or chief executive stating the reasons. But, before issuing his dismissal the accused must be given reasonable time to present his arguments against the move.

Activities at Benapole port resume

UNB, Benapole

Export-import activities at Benapole land port resumed yesterday after withdrawal of an indefinite strike enforced by the Clearing and Forwarding (CAF) Agents' Association and two other organisations of India at Petrapole land port.

The three organisations went on the strike on March 3 to protest restriction imposed by Indian

Border Security Force (BSF) on cross-border trade.

Some 600 trucks with Indian goods entered Benapole land port following withdrawal of the strike by Indian traders in the morning.

Officials said Bangladeshi trucks will now go up to Haridaspur and unload consignments there. Earlier, the consignments were unloaded at no man's land.

Political parties

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blasted on the office of Badruddoza and his KC Memorial Clinic in Baridhara late Wednesday night.

In a statement, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said the attack shows the ruling BNP-Jamaat coalition does not believe in the democratic right to rallies.

Gano Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain and its General Secretary Saifuddin Ahmed Manik in a statement also protested the attack on the rally and described the snatching of the public addressing system and demolition of a podium by police and other unknown people as undemocratic.

"It bears the hallmarks of fascist nature," Dr Kamal said, calling for unity against undemocratic activities.

The 11-party left alliance said the government unleashed repression on opposition parties, alienating itself from people.

Khalequzzaman, coordinator of the alliance, called upon people to come forward to resist the repressive move of the ruling coalition.

Hasanul Huq Inu and Syed Zafar Sajjad, president and secretary general of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), slammed the government for violence at the rally site, which was later overrun by members of the "Homeless People's Group."

"This has proved the alliance government is intolerant of the opinions of others," a JSD statement said.

Manjurul Ahsan Khan and Mujahidul Islam Selim, president and secretary general of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), termed the attack a human-rights violation.

Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League also issued a similar statement.

The attack on Badruddoza came after his son Mahi B Chowdhury quit parliament and the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party Wednesday with another lawmaker Abdul Mannan, a retired army major.

In identical resignation letters, they said the government failed to curb crime and corruption and improve the life of the poor.

BNP young Turks

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These senior leaders suggested ignoring Badruddoza's move arguing that he would not be able to do any harm to the BNP if the government does not give importance to his move.

They felt it would be better if the former president is kept under invisible pressure by not using police or party activists openly to maintain the image of the government. He will draw attention of the media and others if he is barred from holding public meetings and

this will substantiate the opposition allegation that the present government is undemocratic, the sources pointed out.

But the young leadership within the BNP differed with the senior leaders and contended that if the government keeps Badruddoza's move under tight control from the very beginning, it would not succeed and no lawmakers or leaders and workers would defect into the new party. Finally, the young leadership established their supremacy and foiled the planned rally.

A top BNP leader on condition of anonymity said the government itself now proved that it obstructs its opponents' democratic programmes in an undemocratic way.

"I will definitely be termed an agent of the former president if I say the government action was wrong. It is now very difficult to express our views because the party is being run by hot-headed young Turks," he added.

Another senior leader said people would not like the government action regarding Badruddoza's programme and that he would utilise this to drum up public support for him.

Fatwa

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going out of house and relatives stopped visiting them.

"After the declaration of the imam, his followers threatened us coming out of home, forced me to shut down my chamber in the bazaar and local youths beat a maid for going to shop for us," Morshed, a homeopathic doctor, alleged.

The family of Alamgir Hossain, Omar Faruk and Tajul Islam reported of facing the same difficulties.

Salauddin, also teacher of a local high school, confessed to issuing the fatwa and said he asked the local residents to follow his edict.

PM calls

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have called 30 hartals during last two and a half years."

The prime minister also pledged supply of natural gas to Rajshahi and said if any private entrepreneur comes forward to set up an export-processing zone in Rajshahi, her government would extend all support to them.

Chaired by Rajshahi City Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu MP, the meeting was also addressed by Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh Ameer and Industries Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami and its Secretary General and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mujahid, Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Nazimur Rahman Manju and its Secretary General Kazi Feroz Rashid, Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Fazlul Haque Amini, Post and Telecommunications Minister Aminul Haque, Aman Ullah Aman, Nadim Mustafa and local leaders of the four-party alliance.

Earlier, Khaleda laid foundations for the construction of Nawhata Bridge, Women Teachers' Training College, a hostel for disabled students, a residential model school, Rajshahi Education Board's administration building and second Rajshahi jute mill.

Azad

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His condition has improved a lot, but he still needs other's assistance to move and walk around, she said, adding: "It will take a long time before his badly stabbed jaws heal up."

"We were beside his bed at the intensive care unit in the morning. He was in a talking mood, Kohinoor said. Azad's daughter Smita read out newspaper headlines on his condition and the situation at Dhaka University.

"Doctors have suggested us to talk more with him saying it may help his recovery faster," she said.

No one from the government or the hospital authorities has as yet said anything about Azad's treatment abroad.

"We are waiting for the CMH authorities' decision for sending him abroad for treatment," she said.

Taiwan

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that Taiwan recently opened in Dhaka a trade representation office the signboard of which read, "People's Republic of Taiwan" and that Taiwanese visas were being issued from the office, according to meeting sources.

"We have asked the (foreign) ministry to delicately deal with the issue of Taiwan's doing business here and to watch the activities of its trade liaison office in Dhaka so that our relationship with China is not hampered," Ziaur Rahman Khan, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee, told newspersons after the meeting.

"We have asked the foreign ministry to allay the concerns of the Chinese government and assure them of Bangladesh's unwavering stance on the 'one China policy,'" the standing committee chairman said.

"We have no reservations about Taiwan's doing business here if it does so only as a province of China. If Taiwan opened an office here, it would be a trade office. Taiwan cannot be treated as a (sovereign) state," he said.

Khan also said China has been given wrong impression about the issue and media reports on the matter were 'a little exaggerated'.

The foreign minister however assured the committee that ties with China would not worsen, meeting sources said.

Morshed also refuted reports that Bangladesh's Ambassador to China Ashfaqur Rahman was recalled to Dhaka to brief the higher authorities on the development at the Chinese end. Ashfaq came to Dhaka to attend the chehlum of his mother, the foreign office did not summon him, the ministers said.

The parliamentary body was also unhappy at the lack of coordination in the activities of Bangladesh's foreign missions and asked the ministry to improve coordination.

The committee discussed free visa regime within Saarc countries.

Beware

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plans to make a tremendous expansion in the current year in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, the North Sea, Kazakhstan, South East Asia and West Africa creating huge job opportunities.

A few weeks ago, the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment filed a case against the local representative of a London-based company for staging a similar scam by offering lucrative jobs in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The company in its job offer posted on the website www.satumjobs.com asked to send \$55 as entry fee. Acting on a complaint and request from the Bangladesh embassy in Dubai, a UAE police investigation found the announcement baseless and a fraud.

Following confirmation from Dubai, the government filed the case and Ramna police arrested the local representative of the company and closed down his office in Malibagh.

BNP men attack

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Virtually under siege, the 73-year-old former president held a small rally at Kuril, condemning the government action.

"This is sheer hooliganism, undemocratic and outrageous," he told the rally, adding: "They will not be able to stop people's voice against repression of the government using criminals and hooligans."

ATTACKS
The rally over, the alternative stream leaders along with about 200 supporters walked towards Mohakhali and took a bike ride for a short distance.

When they were heading towards Mohakhali intersection, police once again obstructed them at the rail crossing.

Stopped by the law-enforcers, the marchers sat on the street, where Mahi said: "The government has stopped us from holding our scheduled rally. We've reports that they are going to attack us in a display of fascism."

Using a megaphone, Badruddoza said: "You, the media persons, please note the extent of government's repression."

He disclosed his plan of returning to his KC Memorial Clinic office and announcing the committee there.

As soon as Badruddoza concluded his speech, about 60 youths, armed with rods and sticks, stormed the gathering disregarding a police cordon, shouting "Soldiers of Zia, Unite! Get Them!" and "There is No Place for B Chowdhury on the Soil of Shaheed Zia".

The assailants chased the alternative stream gathering toward the railroad towards Teigaon, beat up the supporters with the rods and sticks and rained stones on the top leaders of the platform.

One of the attackers on a bike ran into Badruddoza and some hurled stones at his back, at the leg of Mahi and at the forehead of Mannan, but police stood by.

In the act of running about 500 metres along the track for cover from brickbats, Badruddoza fell down on the rail line. His supporters propped him up and sat him by the rail line before a train stopped there.

When the renowned physician tried to take the train to safety, police escorted him to the road from where he hitched a ride in television channel car to his Baridhara clinic.

MUKTANGAN OVERRAN
Paltan area transformed into a

hotbed of chaos and anarchy soon after a faceless organisation captured Mukktangan with the backing of police.

The activists of Bastahara Kalyan Parishad overran the ground under its general secretary MA Hashem Raju, a former vice-president of BNP's student wing JCD, to stage anti-hartal demonstration.

The undercover JCD activists chased away people whom they suspected as alternative stream supporters from entering the rally ground until evening.

When senior journalist Ataus Samad went to the spot, the demonstrators surrounded him and were about to assault him before he gave his identity.

Dr Zakir Hossain, president candidate of Supreme Court Bar Association, was heading towards the ground in a procession of lawyers in support of Badruddoza.

When his procession reached Paltan, the JCD activists chased them, assaulted Zakir and some other lawyers.

MAWAROAD MAYHEM

Witnesses said at least 300 people were injured and 40 buses damaged when BNP activists attacked supporters of the alternative stream, who were coming from Munshiganj to attend the rally, near Dhaleswari bridge on the Dhaka-Mawa Highway.

The attackers, lurking near the bridge, beat them up savagely with rods and sticks at will foiling the supporters' efforts to attend the rally from the home district of Badruddoza.

Earlier on Wednesday, police put the house of the former president under a cordon.

GOVERNMENT DENIALS

Prime Minister's Political Secretary M Harris Chowdhury denied allegations of government's hand on getting buses to the rally, saying Badruddoza could stage it at Mukktangan if he wished.

Talking to BBC Radio yesterday, he termed reports of attacks on the former president's motorcade as 'misleading propaganda'.

"How could people identify the former president's car and block it?" he asked, saying traffic movement in the capital was normal yesterday.

JCD President Shahabuddin Laltu refuted allegation of JCD involvement in the attacks. "The JCD is not in favour of attacks," he said, adding, "People have their rights, they are free to express themselves."

Attack 'barbaric'

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saying, "I urge the supporters of the alternative political stream to get prepared. Democracy is being strangled by this government. Let's prepare to save it from a premature death."

"I believe the people won't remain silent at such a behaviour of the government," he hoped, adding, "I demand justice from the nation for such heinous, autocratic and undemocratic act of the government."

The veteran politician said, "People elect a government to safeguard their life and livelihood. But this very government has unleashed its own hooligans on the peace-loving people."

Remarking that "this incident has exposed the real face of this government," Chowdhury said, "In this situation, I urge the parliamentarians and cabinet members who are against corruption and violence to quit the ruling party and join the people to serve the country."

The convening committee assigned to announce the political party within 60 days is formed with Badruddoza Chowdhury as convenor and Maj (Rtd) Abdul Mannan as its member secretary. The other members are former chief of DGFI Maj Gen (Rtd) MA Halim, Social Investment Bank Chairman Prof MA Mannan, Dhaka University Teachers Association Vice President Prof Nurul Amin Bepari, Mahi B Chowdhury, legal expert Altaf Hossain, former secretary general of FEMA Firoze M Hasan, Abu Mozaffar Ahmed, former chief

of Ziaur Rahman's Self-reliant Bangladesh project Maj (Rtd) Wahedul Hossain, chartered accountant Abdullah Bin Reaz and Minority Board Chairman Lion MR Barua.

B Chowdhury also informed that the committee would be extended soon through declaration.

He accused the government of being highhanded on the issue of his rally right from the beginning: "I sought permission to hold the rally at Paltan and then at Ramna Green and was refused. Finally, I was permitted to hold it at Mukktangan. Yet, the government sent its party-hoodlums to foil it and prevented us from going there."

"A champion of crime and corruption, the ruling party couldn't even resist the temptation of stealing the loudspeakers from my podium," he said in sarcasm.

With injury on his forehead, renegade BNP lawmaker Maj (Rtd) Abdul Mannan said BNP 'terrorists' carried out attack on them with police protection.

Mahi Chowdhury, another breakaway BNP lawmaker, lately attending the press conference narrated the assault on him. He said a 'terrorist' riding a motorbike hit him in presence of police.

"I feel ashamed that I was associated with this party," Mahi said, adding, "With the resignation of two MPs formal fall of this government has begun."

Padma bridge

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blockade and damaged three trucks and a passenger bus of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTC).

They warned that they would continue such blockade till March 15 and then go for an indefinite strike if their demand is not met by that time.

The demonstrators also held up vehicles carrying officials of foreign aid organisations.

Vehicles from Dhaka were stranded at Paturia in Manikganj and those bound for the capital at Daulatdia. Vehicles were however ferried to Daulatdia till noon but the ferry service was stopped then as there was no space to park vehicles at Daulatdia.

The blockade yesterday began at 10:00am and continued till 3:00pm bringing traffic to a complete halt and causing immense sufferings to passengers, particularly women and children.

Local shops and restaurants doubled and even trebled the prices of food items and bottled water multiplying the sufferings of the stranded people, said a journalist who was on board a stranded bus with his family.

Architects for same building code for both normal, high-rise structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Institute of Architects (BIA) proposed to the government to formulate a single building code for both normal and high-rise structures to create an environment friendly, planned and aesthetic city.

The BIA, after reviewing the proposed Dhaka City High-rise Building Construction Code-2003 prepared by the housing and public works ministry, has suggested a separate code that will cover all types of building.

The launch of separate rules would create confusion among the dwellers and developers, BIA officials said.

The BIA and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) will jointly present today the code at a round-table meeting to seek opinion from different professional groups.

In the code styled Dhaka Metropolitan Area Building and Planning Rules 2003, the BIA has offered to apply modern FAR (floor area ratio) technology to all buildings.

The BIA proposed to form an independent commission comprising professional and experienced persons that would okay different constructional designs to reduce ongoing pressure on the Rajuk. It also asked the government to set up a one-stop centre so that people can learn the rules through it.

It also suggested solar panel and arrangement to reserve rainwater for new buildings and system for the disabled in every high-rise building.

Manarat student killed in road accident

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An A-level student of Manarat International School and College was killed in a road accident in the city's Mohammadpur area yesterday.

Mahbub Hasan Rakib, 19, was waiting for bus at the Gonobhaban crossing in Mohammadpur at around 12:00 at noon when a speeding bus (Dhaka Metro Ja-11-0022) hit him severely on the head.

One traffic police rushed Rakib to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital at 12:40 p.m., where doctor declared him dead.

Police seized the bus, but the driver managed to flee the spot.

Victim's father Mohammad Ullah filed a case with Mohammadpur Police Station.

Hasina

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March 7 organised by the AL at the auditorium of the Institution of Engineers, Dhaka, in the afternoon.

The opposition leader bitterly criticised her arch political rival Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and accused her of promoting war criminals and anti-liberation forces. "She (prime minister) formed government with the persons who directly opposed our Independence in 1971", Hasina said.

"A war criminal has been made cabinet minister while another nominated for the post of secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)", she said.

Presided over by senior party leader Zillur Rahman, the discussion was also addressed by AL leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Suranjit Sengupta, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Mohammad Hanif and Acting Editor of The Daily Ittefaq Rahat Khan.

Professor Shamsul Huda Harun of the Department of Political Science of Dhaka University analysed the speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 7, 1971 from different aspects.

Dr Kamal

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But Oikya Procheshta will not invite any party of the coalition to its convention and was indecisive about the main opposition Awami League until last night.

"We will announce the Jatiya Oikya Mancha (national unity platform) from the convention," Mafizul said.

Oikya Procheshta activists posted on roadside walls hundreds of posters with slogans "Get United Against Crimes, Corruption and Sick Politics".

Convention organisers look forward to participation of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Workers Party, Ganatantri Party, Gano Azadi League and Gano Forum, Krishak Sramik Janata League, Janata Party, BAKSAL (Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Awami League), Forward Party, Communist Kendra, Oikyabaddha Nagorik Andolon and Trade Union Centre.

The organisers alleged they faced threats and intimidation for calling on people by loudspeaker to join the convention.

Leaders of the organisation alleged a group of ruling BNP men snatched loudspeakers from their supporters on the campaign trail in Dayaganj in Dhaka yesterday.

BRTC to run more buses during hartal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTC) is planning a range of preventive measures to ensure smooth plying of its buses across the capital during hartal times.

BRTC Chairman advocate Taimur Alam Khondaker revealed this yesterday at a motivation meeting held at the BRTC's Motijheel bus depot with the staff and lessees.

He said, during the hartal hours BRTC would add on 50 buses to the present number of 450 buses that run in and around the capital.

He said it will engage extra personnel to protect the buses from getting rampaged by the agitators and even to capture those responsible for doing a harm.

"If a staff gets injured while saving the bus, BRTC will bear his treatment cost," said the chairman at the meeting. BRTC plans to hold such motivation meets at other bus depots in the city as well.

BRTC will also introduce checking system for the passengers during those days as a safety precaution.

"A total of 11 BRTC buses including a Volvo double-decker were set on fire since the alliance government assumed power," Taimur mentioned.

Speakers from the BRTC staff and the lessees suggested the authority launch a media campaign and observe a BRTC week to urge people, especially the political activists, not to vandalise the buses as this belong to the people.

The BRTC chairman announced some other steps that include increasing security at the risky points of the city in consultation with the home ministry, equipping each bus with two cans of water and two buckets of sand to control fire, and engaging its officials and staff to keep the plying buses under constant surveillance. The chairman said on-duty drivers will be instructed not to leave the bus vacant and the bus would be checked out after the passengers get down.

The chairman said a procession would be brought out in protest at the attacks on BRTC buses and from now on the damaged buses would be publicly exhibited in front of the National Press Club.

10-year-old girl

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Taherbagh Model School and took her to an unknown place.

The culprits released her after four hours and hired her a rickshaw to go home, the victim said at the DMCH.

ROK opposition claims support for impeachment

Roh refuses to apologise

AFP, Seoul

South Korea's two main opposition parties said they would oust President Roh Moo-Hyun from office yesterday after securing enough support in the National Assembly for a motion to impeach the embattled leader.

Earlier Roh refused to meet opposition demands for an apology for acts of illegal electioneering that triggered impeachment proceedings.

Both the opposition Grand National Party (GNP) and the Millennium Democratic Party (MDP) said the number of National Assembly members who have pledged to support the impeachment motion had surpassed the required two-thirds majority, or 181 of the 271 seats in the unicameral parliament.

Roh was rebuked last week by the National Election Commission (NEC) for illegal campaigning after he called for a big turnout in favor of the pro-government Uri Party at April 15 general elections here.

Opposition lawmakers who control parliament vowed to oust Roh for violating his electoral neutrality unless he apologized.

But a defiant Roh told a press conference earlier Thursday that he would not respond to political pressure by apologizing.

"Impeachment is something grave," Roh said. "It brings about an interruption of constitutional orders."

"But it will not be helpful for political development to leave a bad precedent by