

Tension at NU over teachers' appointments

STAR REPORT

Appointments to two senior posts in the National University (NU) in violation of recruitment rules have sparked anger and frustration among the ranks of education sector.

Senior teachers and officials concerned said the appointments were given following political interference of the government high-ups.

The National University (NU) has appointed Muhammad Ibrahim, a retired deputy secretary, to the vital post of controller of examinations ignoring seniority rules. It has also appointed Abdur Rashid, a newly promoted associate professor, to the college inspector's post that demands a vast experience.

According to the university recruitment rule no 8, one should have a minimum of five years' experience as deputy controller and must possess 15 years' job experience in the related field to be appointed as controller of examinations.

The new appointee Mohammad Ibrahim does not have even a day's experience as deputy controller of examinations.

The NU authorities have appointed him ignoring many experienced and eligible candidates, said a senior teacher of a government college.

"This is the very first instance of such inexperienced persons being appointed to these vital posts. Previously, principals and senior professors usually were appointed to these posts," said the teacher, requesting anonymity.

The person NU authorities have appointed as the college inspector has been promoted to associate professor from assistant professor only three months ago.

Recruitment rule No. 6 says 15 years' work experience as professor, principal or college inspector is required for a college inspector.

First these appointments were made on ad hoc basis. But they were made permanent within a month breaching the recruitment rules that require at least six months' probation.

The NU authorities have also appointed Harun-ur-Rashid, a former bank employee, who has no prior teaching experience, as deputy college inspector.

The NU vice chancellor could not be reached for comment despite repeated efforts.

Education Minister Dr Osman Faruk replying to a query at a press conference on Sunday said the ministry is aware of the situation.

"I have asked the University Grants Commission to investigate the matter and inform the ministry," he said.

Sylhet airport swamped

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The beginning of monsoon, blamed for the deluge in two other South Asian countries India and Nepal.

The flood-hit people in most areas were not provided with adequate relief and it has become a mockery of aid distribution as a victim received less than Tk1.

Reuters reports that five people drowned when a boat sank in a flooded river near Sylhet yesterday.

IN AND AROUND CAPITAL
Sufferings of about one million people around the capital have intensified, as floodwaters inundated the eastern fringe of the city.

Hundreds of people in Keraniganj moved to high ground abandoning their homes, as floods are churning in on more low-lying areas.

The Turag, Balu and Shitalakha rivers, flowing fast on the eastern side of the city, flooded unprotected areas. Floodwaters that rolled down to the centre from upstream swept thousands of houses in Amalia, Mendipur, Kaekpara and Patil in Demra.

People in vast low-lying areas behind Khilgaon, Shahjahanpur and Bashabo are using country boats for commuting in suburbs. All roads in and out of Manda, Madartek, Dakkhingon and Dummi have been reeking under floodwaters.

LEFT TO STARVE
Most families in Dhunat in Bogra and Kazipur upazila in Sirajganj marooned in the wake of Dhunat embankment sabotage pass their days in starvation as government relief reached only a few of them, while the water level climbs by the day because of ceaseless downpour.

Dhunat-Sherpur Road is a few centimetres to go under water and Dhunat will be disconnected by road link from the rest of the country if the road is flooded.

About 5 lakh stranded people in the two upazilas still wait to be rescued, but the government has not taken any step. Waterborne diseases such as dysentery and diarrhoea broke out among over the flood-affected people who took shelter on roads.

Asked, local Union Parishad Chairman Monul Hossain Mukul said: "I don't have a full list of the affected families."

People in Bhandarbari union have received some relief since the dam was breached apparently by saboteurs on July 14, but none in the rest eight unions got relief till now.

Starving families are frightened by the breakout of waterborne diseases in Kazipur, most of which is under water. Most diarrhoea patients did not get oral saline, as medical teams working in the upazilas could not reach them.

FLOODING RAGES
Three people drowned in floodwaters in Sherpur on Friday and Saturday. A sharp rise in the Shomeshwari, Mogra, Kangsha and Donu submerged several upazilas in Netrokona, our correspondent reported.

Mymensingh Sadar upazila has gone under water as the Brahmaputra rose further.

Rushing waters washed away four children in Kushtia and Boror Char unions on Saturday afternoon.

Flood-hit people who moved to safety are passing their days with a little or no food, as no relief was distributed there.

Our Barisal correspondent reports that the floods in Barisal division deteriorated killing a 6-year-old boy. Twenty villages went up to 4 feet floodwater marooning thousands of people.

Surging water washed away about 20 metres of the town protection embankment along the Ghagor river in Kajoldhop in Sadullapur upazila and 40 metres at Rayerbazar in Gobindaganj in Gaibandha.

Business strike

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introduction of package system for VAT payment.

Instructed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) stripped the VAT inspectors of arrest power, but retained the authority with assistant VAT commissioners.

Md Helal Uddin, chief of Baboshayev Shanganthan Oikya Parishad (BSOP), a newly formed platform of shops and other businesses that called the strike, told The Daily Star that they would hold the strike as the arrest power still existed with the commissioners.

The NBR has yet to meet the demand for introduction of retail VAT in package system, he said, adding the extension of time for payment of outstanding VAT at import level in installments would little benefit the traders.

The BSOP called the strike from a press conference at the National Press Club earlier yesterday.

In a statutory regulatory order (SRO) on June 10, the NBR gave VAT inspectors authority to arrest dodgers upon instructions from the assistant commissioners.

The NBR at a meeting with the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) at the NBR office yesterday took a set of decisions to solve the problems of agitating shop owners.

The NBR exempted importers with outstanding VAT from paying the arrears at a time. They will be able to release their goods seized at ports upon payment of 30 percent of the arrears.

The rest 70 percent could be paid in installments by March 31 next year. NBR said the importers across the country owe Tk 400 crore to the national exchequer.

The meeting decided that the importers would pay 1.5 percent VAT in advance to unload their imported consignments.

It also extended the deadline for self-assessed VAT return by retail-level taxpayers to August 31 this year from July 31 considering the monsoon flooding ravaging Bangladesh.

At the press conference yesterday, Helal Uddin alleged customs officials were not releasing imported items in the name of VAT collection at import level, creating instability of some products in the market.

The basic infrastructure and technology required for realising VAT at retail level has not yet developed. Since majority of the traders will fail to deposit VAT because of the absence of infrastructure, the government should replace the system with yearly realisation of VAT, he said.

After promulgation of the SRO, retail and wholesale traders with the BSOP hoisted black flags at shops and businesses in Dhaka on July 6 in protest against the arrest power.

About five lakh traders and employees in Dhaka City also kept their shutters down and staged street processions against the authority on July 7.

Cops seal roads to AL HQ to foil siege plan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police blocked the roads to the Awami League (AL) headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday with barbed-wire fences to foil a siege programme of the Awami Jubo League.

At 8:00am law enforcers sealed all entries to the AL central office and Awami Jubo League office for four hours. Awami Jubo League was scheduled to bring out a procession from the area at 11:00am to submit a memorandum to the secretary of Home Ministry. During the barricade, police mounted guard against participants of the programme and forced the vendors of the road side footpaths to leave the area while Ramna Bhaban market authorities were compelled to shut down their shops. At least 15 workers of the youth front were injured when police used batons to disperse the gathering.

Awami Jubo League's programme was to protest the implication of Jubo League chairman and general secretary in the double-decker bus arson case on the basis of a judicial statement of a vagabond. It also demanded withdrawal of 'false' case against Opposition Leader and AL President Sheikh Hasina.

At 12:15pm police barricade was relaxed and Jahangir Kabir Nanok and Mirza Azam MP, chairman and general secretary respectively of the Jubo League, read out the memorandum at a press conference in front of the party office. The memorandum demanded judicial investigation into the bus arson incident and immediate arrest of the real criminals.

"The ruling alliance was trying to avoid its responsibilities by blaming the Jubo League leaders", it added. It also demanded withdrawal of the case filed against its top leaders.

Apart from the top leaders of the youth front, Dr Mizanur Rahman, Syedur Rahman, Majibur Rahman Chowdhury, Fazul Haq Atique, Mohiuddin Mohi and Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shahon were present at the press conference.

Saarc FMs' meet in Islamabad begins today

BSS, Dhaka

The two-day meeting of the Saarc (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Council of Ministers begins today in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, aimed at spurring trade among the South Asian countries.

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, who is now in Islamabad, is leading the Bangladesh delegation to the foreign minister-level meeting.

Foreign secretaries from the seven South Asian states met in Islamabad on Sunday and finalised a 16-point agenda for the meeting of the council of ministers, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The agenda of the meeting includes South Asia Free Trade Area (Safat) pact, promotion of investment, standard of quality control and cooperation in poverty alleviation, environment, communications and energy.

On the sidelines of the Saarc foreign ministers' meeting, Morshed Khan will hold talks with his Indian counterpart Natwar Singh.

Security has been tightened in Islamabad.

BTTB cellphones

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The Awami League government was negotiating with a company to implement the project at \$104 million, but we are implementing it at \$41 million under a consortium of 14 countries.

Before connecting the country to the information superhighway via submarine cable, he said the BTTB is going to increase the capacity of international trunk exchange (ITX). It will add some 10,000 ITX and is installing 15,000 circuit TX.

The telecoms minister said currently the digital exchanges have been expanded to all the 64 district headquarters and 165 upazilas. The remaining upazilas will be brought under digital network in the current fiscal year and the installation of digital exchanges in the upazilas will start in December.

On the high rates private mobile-phone operators charge, he said a parliamentary sub-committee is discussing with Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and the private operators a call rate cut. He hoped they would reduce the rates soon.

The telecoms minister said the government has taken initiatives to privatise the landline telephone considering the growing demand of fixed phone. "Let the private sector also come for the sake of a healthy competition," he added.

Farm loan recovery

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during such a serious crisis.

The minister gave the directives at a meeting attended by high officials of his ministry, agriculture ministry, Bangladesh Bank governor and chief executives of the SoBs at the Secretariat.

Sonali Bank Managing Director Tahmilur Rahman said at the meeting the bank had already appointed one deputy general manager for each of the two districts for fair disbursement of farm loans.

According to primary estimates of the Department of Agricultural Expansion (DAE), the sector has incurred a loss of about Tk 300 crore as the current floods have submerged 2,78,028 acres of arable land in 165 upazilas in 31 districts.

Approval of the Tk 20 crore fund came in response to the DAE's request for Tk 18 crore for saplings and other inputs for flood-affected farmers.

The finance minister asked the

SoBs not to harass borrowers seeking loans and said, "Farmers do not default on loans, but the thieves and robbers who have dinners with are the ones who default on loans."

He added, "The wealthy, and not the poor, are the ones who steal money."

Explaining the proposal for insurance for natural disasters, Saifur said farmers cannot repay loans when floods affect them, and consequently the banks have to bear a large part of the loss.

Initially, Tk 10 crore to 20 crore will be provided for creating an insurance fund to make good the loss to the SoBs and the amount will be gradually increased.

Saifur also advised the SoBs to create contingency funds by themselves to offset the loss incurred due to natural disasters.

About the Karmasangsthan Bank, Saifur said its officials should be active in ensuring security of the bank.

JCD men make money

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reportedly for their firm stand against illegal activities of the JCD.

Despite repeated attempts, Principal of the college Firoza Begum could not be contacted. Each time it was said she was busy.

DHAKA COLLEGE
College unit JCD leaders have taken as high as Tk 15,000 to Tk 30,000 each for illegal admission of students.

JCD leaders, split in at least four groups, have influenced the college authorities to get admitted of more than 100 admission seekers, sources in the student body said.

Two such admission seekers said they had to pay 20,000 to a JCD leader.

JCD leaders also influenced the college authorities to change departments of their candidates. One of the students allegedly paid Tk 15,000 to a former JCD leader to change his department.

Principal of the college Prof Mariam Begum denied the allegations and said, "No such admission was entertained in my college." She admitted JCD's influence in admission procedure.

JAGANNATH COLLEGE
JCD leaders of the college unit were also involved in similar malpractice, taking Tk 10,000 to Tk 20,000 from each admission seekers. They have so far influenced the college authorities to grant admission to more than 100 students, sources alleged.

BCL leaders of the college unit also made a list of at least 20 admission seekers and pressed the authorities to get them admitted. Principal of the college Prof Ayesha Shirin Rahman was not available for her comments.

KABI NAZRUL COLLEGE
Leaders of the JCD college unit took Tk 5,000 to Tk 10,000 from each, promising illegal admission to many students. Principal of the college Selima Khaleque however denied any such admission in her college.

Sources said illegal admissions are also going on in Tejaon College, Bangla College, Titumir College and some other government colleges. The situation was similar when the AL was in power, they added.

Women's reserved

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tion of 45 seats is absolutely absurd and unworkable and it cannot be implemented because 300 constituencies are not divisible by the number.

They said previously the number of reserved seats was initially 15 and later it was increased to 30 and both these figures are factors of 300 general seats. The reserved seats for women in the past had corresponding constituencies, which is absent in the present provision.

The petition moved by Barrister Tania Amir said women for these 45 reserved seats are to be indirectly elected by members from 300 general seats according to proportional representation in parliament through a single transferable vote.

In other words, under the new system, every political party or a group of MPs that commands at

Sea vessel drifts away in Ctg port

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A foreign cargo vessel yesterday drifted into the mainstream of the Karnaphuli river from the jetty of Chittagong port, as its anchor rope was torn by heavy current.

MV Tireless, registered in the Marshall Island and laden with imported edible oil, escaped major accident at the port channel as it did not collide with other vessels, radio control of the Chittagong port said.

The 170-metre long ship loaded with 21,000 tonnes of edible oil arrived at the outer anchorage of the Chittagong port Sunday and entered the port's RM-4 jetty yesterday afternoon, radio control said.

The Tireless floated away towards the mainstream at 6:30pm as soon as the anchor rope torn off during the low tide, a senior port official said.

Tugboats of the port were sent to the Karnaphuli for toying the trouble-torn vessel, he added.

1 more robber

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were still lying at the DMCH morgue as no-one came to receive those.

Tuhin's father went to the morgue but he could not take the body due to lack of money, hospital sources said.

"We had no contact with Tuhin since he left us and got involved in criminal activities a few years back," said his father Samiullah.

"Golakata Mujibar's body The body of notorious gangster 'Golakata' Mujibar, who was killed in a shootout with police in Motijheel in the DMCH morgue till yesterday. No-one came to receive his body.

Autopsy of this body was carried out in presence of a magistrate.

Teenager abducted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

A gang kidnapped a teenager of the village Gobinda Roy under Sadullapur Upazila on Sunday. The abductors later demanded a ransom for his release.

The gang wielding sharp weapons abducted Ashrafur Alam, 17, when he was going to Dharai from Palasbari.

The gang of abductors took Ashrafur to their hideout. Nurul Islam claiming to be a leader of the gang yesterday demanded Tk 50 thousand for Ashrafur's release.

A case was filed in Sadullapur Police Station.

Ekata train rerouted for flood

UNB, Dhaka

Dinajpur bound Ekata Express train from Dhaka will run over the Jamuna Bridge from tomorrow (Wednesday) as Bahadurabad-Balasi ferry ghat has been flooded.

A Bangladesh Railway press release said the train service has been temporarily rerouted to run through Santahar, Bonarpara and Kaonia.

Ekata Express will leave Dhaka at 9:00am everyday to reach Dinajpur at 9:30pm. Likewise, it will leave Dinajpur at 5:30pm to reach Dhaka at 6:00am.

Teesta and Ekata trains will, however, continue to run on the Dhaka-Bahadurabad Ghat route until further notification.

In the western zone, shuttle trains-Teesta on Dinajpur-Trimuhini, Karotoa on Santahar-Trimuhini and Teesta on Lalmonirhat-Kaonia routes--will remain suspended.

7 hurt in BCL factional clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Seven persons were injured, two of them severely, in a clash between the two rival factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) on the MM City College campus in Khulna yesterday.

The clash occurred following a conflict over formation of a new committee at the biennial conference of the organisation. According to witnesses, the faction of Deb Dulal Bapji demanded the formation of the new committee of college through secret ballots. But the Prashanta Das faction rejected this demand. As a result supporters of both factions clashed using bombs, clubs and bricks for half an hour.

Central leaders Zakir Hossain Maruf and Raihan Farid invited to attend the biennial conference as guests were beaten up by the Deb Dulal Bapji faction supporters. The office of students' union in the college was damaged during the clash. The injured seven Chhatra League activists of both factions are Mizanur Rahman, Sabui, Rajiv, Bapji, Bappa, Korban Ali and Prashanta Das.

Leaders of Jatiya Chhatra Dal, Islamic Chhatra Shibir and Students' Union of MM City College strongly condemned the incident and demanded immediate arrest of those involved in ransacking the students' union office.

BCL leaders, on the other hand, accused agents of Jatiya Chhatra Dal and Islamic Chhatra Shibir for creating rift in the student body. Two platoons of police have been deployed on and outside the MM City College campus.

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Suicide bombing

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Insurgents often target the police and the National Guard, accusing them of collaborating with the US military. One National Guardsman was angered by that accusation on Monday.

"They say we collaborate with the coalition. We don't collaborate, we just protect our nation. We protect the land of Iraqis," Amer Shaker Mehdisaid.

Babar warns

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embarrass the government, meeting sources said.

The minister urged them to handle properly each murder case and arrest the real culprits. The supervising official will also be held responsible if the IO (investigation officer) failed to arrest the killers, he added.

Babar blasted the officials, as police are yet to arrest killers of the two cops of Cobra-7, a special police team, who were gunned down in Motijheel on June 20.

The meeting suggested a crackdown on illegal CNG-run three-wheelers using forged numberplate. The government has limited the number of auto-rickshaws to 10,000 in the capital. It also recommended a survey of the police stations across the country under the additional home secretary.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ashrafur Huda at the meeting indicated improvement in law and order in the capital but submitted statistics that showed 51 and 40 people were killed in June and May against 29 and 37 in April and March.

The home secretary, inspector general of police and other home ministry officials were present.

Prior to the meeting, Babar handed over a check of Tk 3 lakh to the families of four constables and one coastguard sailor killed by criminals.

Injured Javed

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scored back-to-back fifties in the first phase, is sidelined due a hamstring injury.

Another thing that has upset the team on the eve of the big match is news of newcomer left-arm spinner Razzak's bowling action being called into question after the Tigers' last match against Pakistan on Saturday.

Javed said he was feeling an occasional pain but when the team resumed training yesterday at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground he had to sit out the session.

"He has a lateral hamstring strain in the left leg and will be out for at least two matches. If he recovers sufficiently then he might play in the third match," said team physio John Gloster.

"But if there is any further aggravation, then Javed might be out of action for six to eight weeks. We are not ready to take such risks," he added.

Razzak, who made his interna-

tional debut in the regional tournament, clearly has been the team's best bowler taking 3-17 and 2-37 against Hong Kong and Pakistan respectively.

Meanwhile, captain Habibul Bashar said that no official complaint was lodged to the team management from the ICC but it was conveyed verbally.

"He was reported for his quicker deliveries but his entire action is not suspect as far as I know. We have decided to stand beside the young player for the rest of the tournament."

"If there is any further problem, we will take steps to rectify his action after the meet," hoped the Bangladesh skipper.

Bangladesh play hosts Sri Lanka on Friday and their last match is against Pakistan on July 29.

SC declares illegal DCC shopping complex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Appellate Division of the Supreme Court yesterday declared illegal the initiative of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to construct a multi-storied shopping complex in front of GPO near Bangabandhu Avenue.

A bench of the Appellate Division comprising Justice MD Ruhul Amin, MM Ruhul Amin and Md Tafazzal Islam has allowed the appeal of Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA).

The 1.2-acre land of the under-construction shopping complex, Udayan Market, was earmarked in the master plan of the city for car parking. The Ministry of Public Works handed over the land to the DCC in 1986 for car parking but the DCC started construction of the shopping complex, said a press release of BELA.

The site is the only open land, through which air and light pass to the adjoining buildings. Besides, if the DCC constructs the complex with 341 shops and more office spaces, the area will suffer more traffic congestion, BELA said.

Following the beginning of the construction in 1995, Sharif Nurul Ambia, joint secretary of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, filed a petition with the High Court (HC) with legal support of BELA.

Although the DCC did not have approval from the Rajuk and the Department of Environment said the construction would be disastrous for environment, the work continued until the HC issued a stay order on the construction.

However, the HC vacated the stay order and discharged the petition in the final hearing in 2000, against which BELA appealed.

Two more cracks

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dredged for free flow of floodwaters. It costs between Tk 150 and Tk 200 for each cubic metre of dredging."

Moreover, the 32-km-long flood protection embankment from Tongi to DND dam has been damaged at eight points, officials said.

The chief engineer however said the damages do not threaten the dam.

Authorities

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