

Irregularities in recruitment, politicisation hamper development of BTV

PORIMOL PALMA

Irregularities in recruitment, politicisation and bureaucratic tangle at Bangladesh Television (BTV) have seriously hampered the development of state-run electronic media.

The BTV, being used as a tool of government propaganda, has lost its credibility among the viewers who are more and more turning to private and foreign satellite TV channels.

But 90 percent of rural people who have no access to cable network are compelled to watch low standard BTV programmes, said dramatist Abdullah Al Mamun.

None of the eight producers presently working in the programme section of BTV was given direct appointment although there was a government rule that 75 percent of the posts at the producer level have to be filled up through

fresh recruitment, according to BTV officials.

However, the percentage of direct recruitment was set at 50 in Bangladesh Television (Gazetted and non-gazetted officials and employees) Recruitment Rules, 1992.

Six copier-cum-typists were promoted to the posts of associate producers in June last year.

Most of the 40 designers were promoted from the posts of shifters and carpenters and 30 editors from Transmission or VTR keepers.

Presently, all the eight permanent cameramen against 40 posts were auto-promoted from the posts of camera cable boys or light assistants. The rest 32 posts have been lying vacant for the last five years although 15 to 20 cameramen work on contract basis.

The last direct recruitment in these posts was made in 1981

through competitive tests and the minimum requirement for candidates was a Master's degree with honours and in-depth knowledge and experience in any of the fields—literature, song, drama and dance.

Under the new rule, even a clerk can become director general, said an official requesting anonymity.

There is not a single media organisation in the whole world where the lower class employees are promoted to the creative and policy-making posts, he said.

"There are some producers who were clerks only a few years ago," said a senior artist.

These highly bureaucratic-minded people have turned the television into a dead institution that does no good to the people but wastes hundreds of crores of public money, said Badal Rahman, a former assistant producer of BTV and filmmaker.

"There is no system in the BTV to punish the inefficient people and reward the extraordinary professionals," an official said.

Most of the employees are busy trying to make extra money and get promoted to the higher posts, he noted. Political interference and nepotism also played a role in drastic slide in quality of the TV programmes, he added.

The BTV does not have its own programme in the prime slot from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm except Thursday, sources said.

The BTV began providing slots to various organisations and individuals for programmes after the present government took office. And that created an opportunity for many politicians and partisan people to make programmes for the television and earn a huge amount of money.

These people, who have never been involved in creative and cul-

tural activities, subcontracts productions of various programmes to other producers who does not give much attention to the quality.

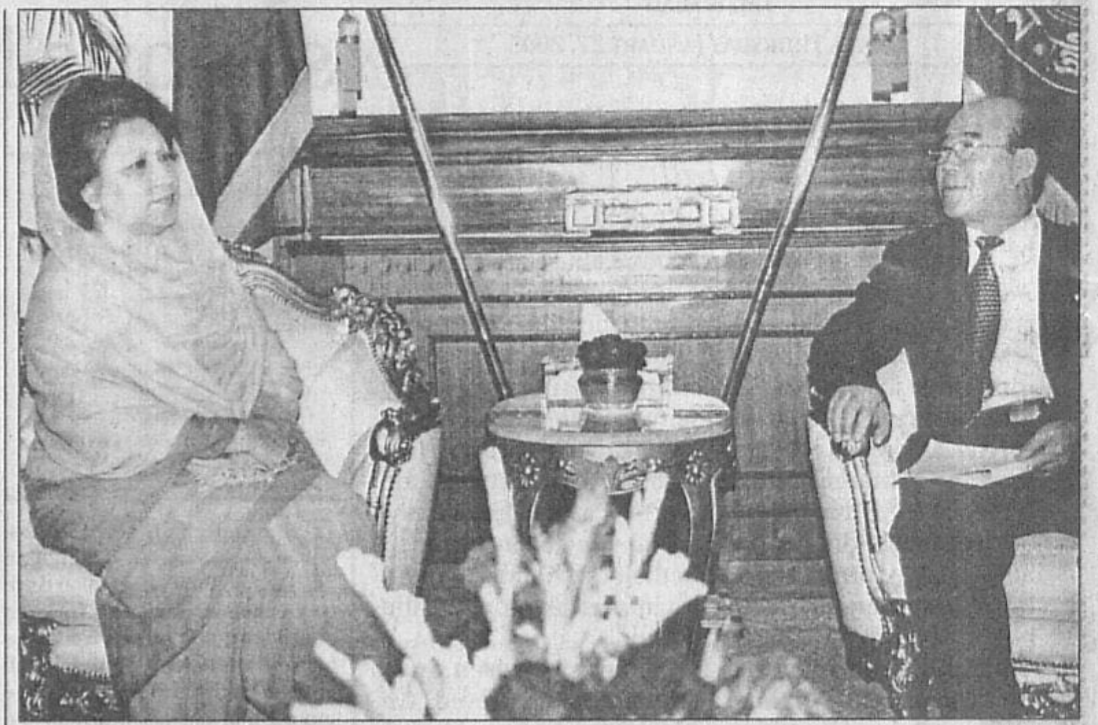
The so-called artists, who have political links, get chances to perform in such programmes, said a senior artist, preferring anonymity.

Abdullah Al Mamun said there are many talented producers, dramatists, singers and artists in the country, but they are not given any opportunity in the television.

"The whole system of the BTV got cancer, it needs a total change to run independently," said media personality Muhammad Jahangir.

The government should immediately leave the BTV to the Privatisation Board to rid it of the cancer, he said.

"BTV has become a dead organisation and we are just guarding the dead body," said an official of BTV.



Newly appointed North Korean Ambassador Mun Song Mo made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

Expatriate woman commits suicide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi expatriate woman living in Dubai allegedly committed suicide at Mirpur in the city in the early hours of yesterday.

On information, police recovered the body of Farida Begum, 24, from her house at Manipur at 2:00am.

The body was found hanging from the ceiling with a scarf in her bedroom, said police.

Victim's father Farman Khan alleged that his son-in-law Kamal Uddin Bepari had killed Farida and hung the body from the ceiling to grab her money.

Farman said Kamal had been pressing Farida to take him to Dubai and quarrelling over the money she earned in Dubai.

Police arrested Kamal from his residence yesterday.

IBA MBA admission test tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The admission test for MBA programme at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) of Dhaka University will be held at 10:00am tomorrow.

The seat plan for the test is as follows: Admit card Nos. from 1001 to 1570 at the IBA, from 1571 to 3050 at the faculty of business studies, from 3051 to 3595 at the Institute of Education & Research, from 3596 to 3835 at the lecture theatre building, from 3836 to 4613 at the arts building (top floor) and from 4614 to 5000 at the arts Building (3rd floor).

Detailed seat plan will be put up on the bulletin board of the examination centres, said a press release.

The seat plan will also be posted on the web site www.iba-du.edu. Candidates have been requested to report to the examination hall by 9:30am on the day.

DU exams postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Annual examinations of Dhaka University which was scheduled to be held at Curzon Hall examination centre today have been postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

Fresh date will be announced later, said a press release.



Children of stranded Pakistanis stage a demonstration in front of the High Court yesterday demanding their permanent rehabilitation.

Tk 16 lakh cheque fraud in Chittagong

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

An amount of Tk 16 lakh was withdrawn from a bank through forged signature in the port city on Tuesday.

However, the money was returned to its owner through Kotwali Police Station yesterday after a case was filed in this connection.

Police and witnesses said Moinuddin, an office peon of Victor Electronics of Chittagong New Market, drew the money from Jubilee Road branch of National Bank using fake signature of the proprietor Mohammad Hossain. Moinuddin then fled to his village home at Bakhtpur in Fatikchhari with the money, and deposited it to his aunt Rozina Akter.

It raised suspicion in the mind of Rozina, a pious woman and madrasa teacher, who asked Moinuddin to return the money to its owner.

But as the fraud refused to do so and fled instead, Rozina came to the city and deposited the money to Kotwali Police Station.

Powell greets Morshed Khan

UNB, Dhaka

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has greeted Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha.

In a message, Powell said: "May the friendship between our two democratic nations continue to strengthen."

He also wished the people of Bangladesh peace and prosperity in the coming years.

Govt plots to kill prospective AL leaders ahead of polls: Saber

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League yesterday accused the government of plotting to kill prospective leaders and workers of the party at grassroots level ahead of the next general elections.

"The government has engaged the religious extremist groups and the police to eliminate the activists of Awami League and other opposition parties before the next election," said Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to AL President Sheikh Hasina.

He was addressing a weekly press briefing, initiated by the AL, at Sudha Sadan in the city.

Referring to the recent killing of AL leader Mahbubur Rahman in Bagmara, Rajshahi, by the cadres of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh and arrest of party men in Gopalganj in the last couple of days, Saber said, "Thirty two leaders and workers of the Awami League have been arrested so far and all of them were put in jail under Section 54 and the government used extremist group of

Bangla Bhai to kill AL leaders in Bagmara."

He also referred to the killing of AL leaders Ahsanullah Master, Manjurul Imam and Mottajuddin, and said all these leaders were highly popular and had strong organisational capability in their constituencies.

"Our grassroots level leaders are the target of the ruling alliance. Many of them have been killed and hundreds of others sent to jail in false cases," he said.

Saber said the BNP-Jamaat-led ruling alliance has resorted to such repression, fearing that they might lose the next election because of their misrules and misdeeds.

Referring to Ahsanullah Master killing case, he said that although there is no headway in the case, the people who protested the killing have already got punishment.

Saber also announced that the AL will hold regular press briefing at Sudha Sadan once a week where the leaders will exchange views on different issues.

Father kills minor son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A cruel father brutally killed his minor son in the port city on Tuesday night.

The ill-fated boy, aged only 21 months, was identified as Sabuj Mia and the father as Khokon Khan, 25, of Jajira under Shariatpur district.

Police and witnesses said following an altercation over a trifling matter, Khokon started beating his wife Nasima Akter, 21, at his house at C&B Colony under Kotwali thana at around 8:00pm.

At one stage, the boy fell down from his mother's lap and the agitated father picked the boy up only to throw him again to the ground.

With serious injuries, Sabuj was rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where the doctors on-duty declared him dead.

The body of the boy was handed over to her mother for burial after its autopsy.

Nasima filed a case with the police in this connection.

Killer father was arrested and sent to jail custody yesterday.

Talking to this correspondent at Kotwali Police Station, Nasima

alleged that her husband Khokon, a rickshawpuller, had a passion for gambling to run out of money very often.

He forced her to bring money from her father's house to run the family, and often beat her in case of failure, she added.

On that fateful night, Nasima asked Khokon to leave some money at home to buy some baby food for their son. This infuriated her husband resulting in an altercation that led to the murder of the boy, Nasima said.

Nasima, who hailed from Moksdepur under Gopalganj district, said she developed an affair with Khokon while working at a garment factory in Dhaka and married him in 2001.

They came to Chittagong only 26 days ago.

"I want justice and punishment to Khokon. Many asked me to try for his bail, but I can't continue my conjugal life with a man who killed my innocent son," said the shocked mother.

Assistant Police Commissioner Shah Mizan Shafiur Rahman quoted the killer father as saying that the boy slipped from his lap. He did not kill his son intentionally.

Madhyapara Hard Rock Project to be commissioned in April

North Korean Ambassador tells PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday hoped that the existing good relations between Bangladesh and North Korea could be utilised to enhance economic cooperation and expand trade for the welfare of the two peoples.

The expectation was voiced when newly appointed ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) Mun Song Mo made a courtesy call on the Prime Minister at her office.

The ambassador told the prime minister that work on the Hard Rock Project at Madhyapara, where North Korea is involved, would be completed by March and commissioned in April.

This will remain as the milestone in cooperative relation between Bangladesh and DPRK, Mun Song said.

Mentioning that Bangladesh now produce various products that are being exported to many coun-

tries, Khaleda said the DPRK could also import goods from here.

The ambassador said they would consult with the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry about import of goods. The Vice Trade Minister of DPRK would visit Bangladesh soon to discuss the matter.

Welcoming the new Ambassador, Khaleda assured him of all possible cooperation in the discharge of duties here. She said that the diplomatic relations between the two countries had started during the period of Kim Il Sung.

Mun Song Mo said the cordial relation between the two countries has been built up since the visit of late President Ziaur Rahman in 1978 at the invitation of Kim Il Sung. Both sides are active to maintain the good relation.

He said the celebration of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries in DPRK last year also enhanced the bilateral relation-

ship.

Referring to Saarc, the ambassador appreciated Bangladesh's efforts and initiatives in deepening relations among the regional countries as well as the Asian nations.

He also praised Bangladesh's advancement and progress in various sectors under the leadership of Khaleda Zia, especially the successful tackling of the recent floods by using its own resources.

Khaleda told the ambassador that Bangladesh has been making progress in education and health by utilising its own resources as part of its bid for attaining self-reliance in all fields.

Khaleda invited her North Korean counterpart through the ambassador to visit Bangladesh and conveyed greetings to both the president and the prime minister of DPRK.

The ambassador, on behalf of the prime minister, also invited Khaleda Zia to visit North Korea.

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