

GUILTY OF CORRUPTION

CAAB official gets demotion instead of forced retirement

STAR REPORT

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism is demoting a deputy director of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB), withholding its decision of forced retirement upon finding him guilty of corruption in three rounds of departmental investigations.

Competent CAAB sources said the authorities initiated the process of giving Deputy Director Jalaluddin Ahmed forced retirement in June 2004 as the charges of corruption and irregularities against him were proven beyond doubt.

But under the pressure of a powerful lobby, the CAAB is now sparing him with only a demotion.

Ahmed, however, argues that he has been a victim of internal politics of CAAB and all allegations against him are false. He claims that the evidence proving his innocence have been erased by his opponents to frame him in baseless charges.

Ahmed has been accused of five rounds of corruption and irregularities in issuance and renewal of flight maintenance contracts between 1999 and 2001 when he was serving as the

deputy director of the Airworthiness and Engineering Licensing wing of the flight safety and regulation directorate.

In these cases, he travelled to Singapore without any Government Order (GO) or approval and visited two flight maintenance companies. Upon his return, he recommended in favour of these companies through issuing "certificate of approval".

The CAAB unwittingly issued licences and renewals to these companies as it was unaware of the deputy director's unauthorised visits, risking the country's flight safety process and the CAAB's reputation.

Under these contracts, the authorities spend Tk one crore each year on spare parts and maintenance services. "Luckily both the Singapore companies were competent. They would have been selected anyway. But Jalal blackmailed them in exchange of hastily done deals," said a CAAB source.

Normally, the CAAB officials visit the maintenance companies abroad and thoroughly inspect their capacities before issuing certificates of approval. It takes more than a week to make such inspections. But in the case of Jalal, his

visit lasted two to three days to these two companies in each round.

Jalal was transferred to the Central Engineering and Maintenance Unit as a punishment in 2002.

When allegations were brought against him, the first primary investigation took place in June 2002 in which he was found guilty. He was served with a show cause notice, but his answers failed to satisfy the administration.

In the next round, an administrative investigation again found the charges against him to be true. Again his reply to the second round of show cause failed to satisfy the authority and the CAAB recommended the ministry to take action as per the civil service (order and appeal) regulations, 1985.

The ministry then formed a third investigation committee in May 2004. This committee headed by the then secretary found him guilty once again and issued the final show cause on him asking him to explain why his services will not be terminated. The committee cited several clauses of the 1985 civil service regulations under which he has been proven "dishonest" and "corrupt".

As his final answer once again proved to be futile, Jalal was all set to be given forced retirement. However, the ministry earlier this year made a fresh suggestion that he can be given a demotion, instead of forced retirement, as a punishment.

"I have already been given enough punishment through a transfer three years back. I am not being charged with corruption. It is alleged that I went abroad without any GO. I had them. But they (opponents) removed them from the files. I gave my copies of the GO to the investigators, but those copies were not properly placed," Jalaluddin Ahmed told The Daily Star on Monday.

He claimed that the ministry had formed a fourth committee late last year to investigate the allegations against him. "Of the five allegations, this committee found irregularities in only two," he noted.

"Now the ministry is giving me demotion. If I go to the court challenging this decision, I know I will win. But I am left with only two more years of service. So, I am not going to waste these two years in the court," he said.

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Teletalk lottery deferred

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Teletalk lottery for the countrywide applicants scheduled for Friday has been postponed, sources said.

They said a date for the draw of the lottery among 808,000 applicants is yet to be fixed, but it would be held by the first week of next month.

Aminul Hassan, general manager of the Teletalk, said that this time the Teletalk SIMs would be distributed among 140,000 applicants.

Regarding the delay of the draw, he said, the scrutiny of the application is going on and the Teletalk is also checking the vulnerable parts of the country from where a small number of applications were received.

"We are thinking of introducing quota system for the remote areas," he said, adding that the total system would take a few more days to be readied.

Earlier, the Teletalk authorities continued the countrywide online distribution of forms from July 12 to 22.

According to Teletalk officials, the winners, afterwards, would have to collect the SIMs from the nearest booths of some approved banks.

Earlier, 70,000 customers of Dhaka zone were selected through computerised lottery from among some 433,461 applicants in two phases.

Meanwhile, the interconnectivity agreement of Teletalk with all private mobile operators was signed and the subscribers would enjoy the facilities within a week, the officials added.



PHOTO: STAR
Bangladesh Scout Chittagong region took out a procession in the port city yesterday demanding measures to stop poaching of birds.



PHOTO: STAR
Nagrik Sanghati and Green Voice form a human chain at Shahbagh in the city yesterday demanding compensation for the victims of the Tengratala blowout.

'Make public the agreement with Niko'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a rally yesterday called on the government to realise compensation from Niko Resources Ltd. for the blow-out at Tengratala gas field.

They also demanded that the contents of the agreement between the Niko and the Bapex be made public and all unequal agreements with the foreign companies be cancelled.

Awarding the contract to Niko, which do not have enough expertise in exploring gas fields, has raised many eyebrows, said the speakers at the rally organised by the Nagrik Sanghati and the Green Voice at Shahbagh.

They urged the government to be active to realise proper compensation from the company for the affected families.

They also demanded that the persons responsible for the disaster be brought to book.

Presided over by Nagrik Sanghati President Dr ASM Atiqur Rahman, the rally was addressed by Dr Badil Alam Majumder of Hunger Project, Ruhin Hossain Prince of Communist Party of Bangladesh, Advocate Abed Raja, Dr Khandakar Mokaddem Hossain, Paribesh Banchao Andolon Convenor Abu Naser Khan, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon General Secretary Mohidul Haque Khan, Dr Shamsul Alam and Prof Liakat Ali.