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Govt jobs politicised

2,000 JCD men get appointed in four years

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The present government has recruited so far 2,000 leaders and workers of the ruling BNP's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) into different ministries and government sectors, public universities, and autonomous institutions after coming to power in October 2001.

According to JCD sources and The Daily Star investigations, most of the selections for the jobs were made after the JCD high-ups, ruling alliance lawmakers, and leaders had sent lists to the concerned authorities, pressing for confirmation of their candidates' appointments.

At least 300 leaders and workers of ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) have also been recruited along with the JCD men into different government sectors, and public universities.

The Daily Star investigation reveals that at least 290 leaders and activists of the JCD, and relatives of BNP lawmakers have been recruited recently as Upazila Election Officers (UEO) through the Public Service Commission (PSC). Out of 328 UEO posts, at least 150 were filled with the candidates from a list prepared by Chhatra Dal top brass, sources said.

At least nine JCD activists were appointed senior assistant secretaries in the Election Commission (EC) secretariat last year. Of them, seven were from JCD Dhaka University (DU) unit, one each from Eden College and Bogra district unit JCD. They are Raton, Faisal Ahmed, Nabab Ali, Ruhul Amin, Rafiqul Islam Rafiq, Akbar Ali of DU, Kaniz of Eden College, and Delwar Hossain of Bogra district unit JCD.

Some 16 JCD leaders were made district election officers through the PSC in 2003 and they were picked from a list that the JCD high-ups had sent to the PSC. JCD leaders Abul Kalam Azad, Rashed, Belayet, Nazmul, Khorshed, Alauddin, Dulal, Kabir, Farid, Gaffer, Younus, Momen and others are currently working as election officers in different districts. Of them, most came from DU, Rajshahi University (RU), Chittagong University (CU), and Bogra district JCD units.

At least 500 JCD leaders and workers, 100 ICS men, and 178 others have recently been appointed sub-inspectors (SI) of police. Many of them had to pay money ranging from Tk 2 lakh to 3 lakh to a section of BNP leaders for the jobs, the JCD sources said.

Of the appointees, at least 15 were leaders and activists of DU JCD, seven of RU, five of CU, and the rest were involved with different thana and district chapters of the student organisation.

Murad Khan, Zahid Hasan, Sohel, Aminul Islam, Milton, Kamal, Jahangir, Akmal are among the student leaders-turned-SIs.

A couple of top Chhatra Dal leaders had prepared a list and requested the home ministry officials to recruit the SIs from there, sources said adding that 10 JCD workers on the list were excluded from being appointed as their family members were found to be involved with Awami League (AL).

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INCOME TAX RETURN

Submission deadline now Oct 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The deadline for submitting income tax return has been extended by one month to October 31 as the newly introduced elaborate tax return system comes into effect from the current fiscal year.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) in a circular yesterday extended the deadline earlier fixed for today.

"This is the last extension and we will not further extend the deadline for submitting income tax returns," Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told reporters at Zia International Airport on arrival from Washington yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, NBR member AS Zahir Mohammad yesterday said, "Different organisations sought the extension. Besides, some new measures have been introduced this time."

"The decision to extend the deadline was taken considering the overall aspects," he added.

NBR sources said the growth of income tax is 15.79 percent and

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'Criminal', PBCP leader killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal and a leader of outlawed Purba Bangiar Communist Party's (PBCB) Janajuddha faction were killed in 'crossfire' in Dhaka and Bagerhat in the early hours yesterday.

The dead are Tutul alias Bhaista Titu, 25, a resident of Basundhara in Badda, and PBCB cadre Shah Alam, 38, also a workers' union leader.

Acting on a tip off, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-3 arrested Titu in Rampura at around 11:00am on Wednesday. A Rab press release said the elite force yesterday took him to East Hazipara in Boubazar, Khilgaon to seize firearms and nab his accomplices.

The release claimed the Rab team came under fire at around 3:50am and encountered the attack. Titu received several bullets when he made an attempt to flee during

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Bangladesh 11 notches up in FDI ranking

Secures 122nd position with 72pc growth in 2004, says Unctad report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the growth of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the last couple of years, Bangladesh has advanced to the 122nd position from the previous 133rd in the World Investment Report (WIR) 2005 index of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad).

The report said improved investment environment and the privatisation of assets are the reasons behind the high FDI flow in Bangladesh in 2004.

According to the report unveiled jointly by the Board of Investment (BoI) and United Nations Information Centre (Unic) yesterday in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world, Bangladesh attracted $460 million FDI with 72 percent growth in 2004 from the previous year's $268 million investment.

The growth is the second highest in South Asia while Pakistan secured

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First improve management, then buy planes

JS body suggests Biman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday suggested improving the management and services of the Biman Bangladesh Airlines before purchasing any new aircraft.

The parliamentary standing committee on public undertaking at a meeting in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban also criticised the Biman authorities severely for poor management that causes huge loss to the national flag carrier every year.

Biman officials informed the meeting that in the 2004-05 fiscal, Biman faced a net loss of about Tk 300 crore, which may rise to Tk 450 crore in the current fiscal, committee member Awami League lawmaker Faruk Khan told The Daily Star after the meeting.

On the recent strike of Biman

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PURCHASE OF 3 AIRCRAFT

Biman tender stalled for 8 months by a lobby

SHARIER KHAN

A powerful business lobby, who wants Biman to purchase three airplanes for $20 million more than a competitor, has forced the national flag carrier to shelve a tender process for eight months.

To purchase three medium-sized airplanes for its domestic route operation, Biman Bangladesh Airlines floated three rounds of tenders beginning in July 2003. The last two tenders generated lucrative offers, but Biman refrained from proceeding with the deal since February.

Meanwhile, Biman continues to use its wide-bodied airplanes on some of the vital domestic routes, swallowing heavy losses.

The state owned airline, which incurred Tk 250 crore loss in the last fiscal year, is incurring more losses in a rapidly growing aviation market due to lack of aircraft, among other issues, the sources said.

Since Biman has increased the frequency and number of domestic flights, it floated a tender to purchase or lease three French ATR or Canadian Bombardier Aerospace aircraft. This purchase included a trade-in of four old F28 aircraft or two ATP and three F28 planes.

Although both the companies participated in the tender closing on July 3, 2003, the tender rule demanded at least three offers in the first time tender. So Biman retendered the scheme.

On August 21, 2003, a tender was participated in by both ATR and Bombardier. ATR offered a price of $47.8 million for three ATR 72-500 planes, each with the capacity to carry 70 passengers, while Bombardier offered $67.98 million for three Dash 8-Q400 planes, each with passenger capacities of 78.

Biman's tender evaluation committee favoured the ATR 72-500 aircrafts as the price is cheaper and the operating cost lower than Dash planes, and also because ATR offered 100 percent credit financing against the 85 percent credit financing offer of Bombardier.

However, Biman also pointed out

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Galib's link not yet found

Says Babar on Aug 17 blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

State Minister for Home Lutfozzaman Babar said here yesterday investigations are yet to show if militant linchpin and Rajshahi University teacher Asadullah Al Galib was linked to the August 17 serial blasts across the country.

"We did not get his (Galib) name in investigations. Our emphasis is now on arresting Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai and the government is serious about it", he told a press briefing.

The issue of Galib's involvement in militancy is yet to be resolved, Babar said replying to questions from journalists after attending the Rajshahi Divisional meeting on law and order.

Divisional Commissioner Musleh Uddin chaired the meeting held at the deputy commissioner's

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Weekly holiday to be reconsidered later, PM says at Batexpo opening

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said the government will reconsider the issue of weekly holidays at a convenient time as the decision for two-day weekend was taken as an energy-saving measure.

She was inaugurating the 16th annual Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition (Batexpo) 2005 at the Sonargaon Hotel organised by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA).

Referring to the resolution of conflicts among three major trade bodies--BGMEA, Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Bangladesh Textile Mills Association

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PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visits a stall after inaugurating the annual Bangladesh Apparel and Textile Exposition (Batexpo) 2005 at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

Wanted JMB chief seen in Bogra, ducks arrest

Press owner arrested in Dhaka for printing August 17 blast leaflets

STAR REPORT

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Abdur Rahman, the militant kingpin for whose arrest the government has recently placed a bounty, was seen in Bogra town with two accomplices on Saturday.

On learning about his presence, intelligence men carried out raids but failed to arrest the most wanted suspect in August 17 serial blasts.

A source in the Detective Branch (DB) of police in Bogra also said one of the two men accompanying Rahman resembles Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, operations commander of Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB). He was wearing a turban and sunglasses, reports our Bogra Correspondent.

After a brief stay at a coaching centre in Jaleswaritola, Rahman and his men had left the area in a blue private car, said a source in the DB. The coaching centre is the one-time workplace of Bangla Bhai.

The JMB chief and his two cadres went to the coaching centre at around 2:00pm and left in just 15 minutes after using the toilet facilities there.

By the time the intelligence men reached the place on having leads from an informant, Rahman and his associates had gone, added the source.

He, however, could not say from where the three came and in which direction they drove off.

Abdur Rahman had visited Bogra

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Intelligence fears more bomb attacks

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Bogra*

Intelligence men fear further bomb attacks on key installations in six divisional headquarters and other important cities including Bogra as the anti-militant drives slow down on orders from higher authorities.

They, however, have yet to be sure whether the attack this time would be countrywide.

In response to widespread apprehension among the intelligence agencies, instructions have been given to strengthen security at important establishments including the power stations.

Hinting at the involvement of Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) in the August 17 blasts, members of an intelligence agency said the anti-militant

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Govt to monitor Hasina's visit in India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling BNP views Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's visit to India not as a religious but a political pilgrimage and has instructed authorities to closely monitor her programmes in New Delhi and Kolkata.

A highly placed government source yesterday told The Daily Star the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi and Deputy High Commission in Kolkata have been instructed to provide Hasina full protocol.

The source said the government has already got detailed programmes of Sheikh Hasina's five-day visit. Finding it significant,

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NIKO PIPELINE SCAM

Probe points finger at energy ministry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Petrobangla has concluded its investigation into the Niko gas pipeline scam with the findings that Titas gas company had to illegally give pipes to Niko for a 19km pipeline as per a directive of the energy ministry.

Titas gave the pipes which belonged to Dhaka Clean Fuel Project (DCFP) on condition that Niko would replace those within three months.

The DCFP is an Asian Development Bank (ADB)-funded project, and Titas was in no position to lend the pipes.

While giving the pipes to the Canadian company, Titas just mentioned that these belonged to the DCFP.

Niko replaced the pipes after three months.

The three-member Petrobangla probe committee was preparing its report yesterday and it will be submitted to the energy ministry next week. Earlier this week, the ministry had asked Petrobangla to investigate the scam as the ADB threatened to suspend funding the $113.4 million DCFP. Stakeholders of the DCFP include Titas and other gas companies under Petrobangla.

The ADB warning followed a report in The Daily Star in the previous week that exposed the pipeline scam. "The investigators found the report authentic," said one source.

The Daily Star reported that while Tengratila gas field was burning during March- June, Niko was busy constructing the 19 km pipeline to carry Tengratila gas to Doarabazar.

The then state minister for

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BHASANI UNIVERSITY

50 injured as cops attack students

BDNEWS, *Tangail*

Authorities declared Bhasani University closed and asked students to vacate halls by ten this morning after some 50 students were injured in a police action yesterday.

Police also rounded up at least 20 students.

The vice-chancellor of Moulana Bhasani University of Science & Technology however said the Durga Puja vacation will begin two days before the schedule.

Witnesses said police launched the attack when the students, who have been demonstrating for reduction in credit fees for the last few

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JCD factions rock RU with gunfight

10 injured; VC's residence hemmed in over leader's arrest

RU CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people including a photo-journalist were injured as two armed factions of the Jatiyatabadi Chatra Dal (JCD), student front of the ruling BNP, engaged in a gunfight at Rajshahi University (RU) yesterday.

The clash began in the afternoon when 50 armed cadres of the RU JCD Convenor Nuruzzaman Likhon's group, led by Miran and Shafin, attacked the Joint Convenor Aslam Reza's group at Sher-e Bangla Hall, over establishing supremacy in the committee of the organisation.

Both the groups blasted nearly 15 crackers at the hall gate and exchanged a number of gunshots during the half-an-hour long fight.

The police stood by while the clash was going on. Later, when the gunshots stopped, they charged 10 teargas shells and blank fired to disperse the groups.

However, Faizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the Motihar Police

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Bangladeshi Brac staff shot near Kabul

His Afghan colleague killed

AGENCIES, *Kabul*

A Bangladeshi aid worker was shot and wounded and his Afghan colleague killed when they were ambushed outside Afghanistan's capital, the interior ministry said yesterday.

Unidentified attackers opened fire on the men as they were travelling on a motorbike Wednesday in Parwan, which adjoins Kabul, ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanizai told AFP.

It was not clear who had attacked them, he said. The injured, working for Brac, was being treated in a Kabul

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