

ACC rejects

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"I still hope Nicar will not accept this structure with 650 posts," said Justice Sultan. "But if they impose it, we will have to live with it."

Meanwhile, the ACC held an emergency meeting yesterday to discuss this proposal. It decided to convey to the government its feelings and opinion on the matter.

"We will send a letter to the government tomorrow (today) saying that we don't accept this structure, and urging it to accept ACC's previous proposal on the issue, suggesting 1,376 posts," Sultan said.

The Cabinet Division's proposal contains many issues that violate the ACC Act, he pointed out.

The proposal showed the ACC chairman and two commissioners as on-contract service holders. This violates the ACC Act that says a selection committee will screen potential candidates and nominate the chairman and commissioners to the president for final selection and approval.

The Cabinet Division's proposal says the posts of ACC secretary, five director generals, 15 directors, 46 deputy directors and 21 public prosecutors will all be held by bureaucrats on deputation.

But Section 16 of the ACC Act provides that the commission itself will appoint its secretary. The other officials are also supposed to be appointed by the ACC as per recruitment rules to be framed by it and approved by the president. The ACC framed the rules last year but the government has not accepted them.

The Act also outlines job description of the secretary. But the Cabinet Division's proposal itself gave a 28-point job description for the secretary, trying to establish the secretary as chief executive of the ACC.

The proposal says the ACC has freedom to appoint officials and staffs below the rank of public prosecutors. But this structure does not give any scope for promotion of employees to be recruited by the ACC.

A C C C o m m i s s i o n e r Maniruzzaman Miah hoped that the government would not impose such a structure on the ACC. "Nicar sits after a long interval. Therefore, it is very

Nam urged to defend Iran's nuclear right

AFP, Putrajaya

doubtful whether we can get an organogram before the present government's tenure expires," he told The Daily Star.

Ignoring the formalities spelled out by the ACC Act, the ACC chairman and the commissioners were all selected by the ruling coalition. As a result, these high-ups of the ACC do not want to antagonise the government and want to pass the blame on to the bureaucrats for the stagnation in the ACC.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday told the press that the ACC should remember it is not as free as the judiciary. But it is similar to Bangladesh Bank, Election Commission or auditor general.

"The ACC should remember that it is a part of the executive wing of the government," Saifur said at a discussion organised by the Economic Reporters Forum. "Therefore the ACC should try to work within the framework of the government."

Kansat victims

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PBUPSP joint conveners Arep Ali Tisu and Zahir Chowdhury, Rabbani's cousin Tipu, and his close associates Taher, Abdul Latif and Rafik also withdrew compensation money as "seriously injured", it was alleged.

Some real victims of the police action were listed for a compensation of Tk 3,000 each only while one seriously injured was not even listed, the villagers alleged.

The Kansat villagers held protests in Kansat, Abbasbazar, Kaitapara and Shibnagar over what they termed a cheating with them who did not hesitate to sacrifice lives to free the PBUPSP leaders from jail.

"Rabbani's men are threatening us for holding protests," said Saiful Islam of Kaitapara.

"I was injured as I was in the frontline and faced the police, but I have not received any compensation," said Mostafa from the same area. "How could Joynal Abedin [also PBUPSP joint convener] and his son and grandson collect Tk 53,000 as injured?" he asked.

Rabbani denied the allegations, saying the protest was organised by his opponents.

Darul Ihsan

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Meanwhile, a group of students staged demonstration for the last few days demanding Ali Naki as their VC when most of the students are demanding appointment of a vice-chancellor as per the law.

Some students formed a human chain on the university's Dhanmondi campus yesterday and chanted slogans claiming Ali Naki as their vice-chancellor.

The students of Darul Ihsan University on May 17 confined its two 'vice-chancellors' for five hours at the university's Shyamoli campus and released them when they signed papers containing the students' nine-point demand that includes resolving all the problems of the university within May 29.

To resolve the problem, the UGC called a meeting of 26 members of Darul Ihsan Trust, two claimants of the vice-chancellor post, an education ministry representative, and the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police at 4:00pm yesterday.

After postponement of the meeting, no new schedule was fixed, Prof Monirul Hoque said.

"Legal complexities arise further following filing of cases by Ali Naki's men and a rule nisi issued by a court on the opponent group," said an UGC member.

Prof Monirul Hoque said a quarter within the Darul Ihsan University had sent him letters saying, "You [Monirul] might be in the trouble of facing contempt of court charge if you hold the meeting when the issue has gone to the court."

Later additional police and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) men brought the situation under control.

KRU organised the journalists' convention protesting against the oppression of four local journalists. At least 500 journalists from ten southwestern districts and from the capital gathered at the venue to attend the convention.

Amanur Aman, acting president of KRU and Kushtia correspondent of The Daily Star was presiding over the programme.

Sources said BNP lawmaker of Kushtia-2 constituency (Mirpur-Bheramara) Shahidul Islam sent around 50 cadres and activists to foil the convention. They came to the town in the morning and took part in the attack. Another lawmaker of Kushtia-4 constituency also provided cadres for the attack, sources said.

The other injured journalists are Kushtia Correspondent of Channel 1 and Editor of local Dainik Andolaner Bazar Manjur Ehsan Chowdhury, Special Correspondent of Danik Manabzamin Laekuzzaman, Faridpur Correspondent of United News of Bangladesh (UNB) Munshi Harun Rashid, Acting President of KRU and Kushtia Correspondent of The Daily Star Amanur Aman, Kushtia Correspondent of Prothom Alo Tariq Haq Tariq, Chief Editor Dainik Ajker Sutrapot Mujibul Sheikh and Editor Akther Hossain Firoj, Staff Correspondent of Dainik Andolaner Bazar Sarif Biswas, President of Meherpur Press Club Ashraful Islam. They were treated at Kushtia General Hospital.

The journalists left for the capital in police escort afterwards as panic gripped the local journalists.

Harassment of our journalists

Shahidul, lawmaker of Kushtia-2 constituency (Mirpur-Bheramara) and president of Kushtia BNP, filed several cases against four journalists terming them extortions.

The journalists are Hasan Jahid, staff correspondent of Dainik Manabzamin and Kushtia correspondent Rtv. Al-Mamun Sagar staff correspondent ATN Bangla and Kushtia correspondent Dainik Jugantor, Munshi Tarikul Islam Kushtia correspondent of Dainik Samakal and Channel 1 (one), and Manjur Ahsan Chowdhury.

Following a news item about the declining popularity of three lawmakers, Shahidul filed another case against them while Azad Biswas, known to be a cadre of Shahidul Islam, and Channel 1 (one), and Manjur Ahsan Chowdhury.

"Finally, we must fight corruption and bring high accountability to infrastructure projects," he concluded.

WB shifts

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stated. "This 40 billion hours are lost from their lives. The children could use the hours to attend schools. Sanitation is needed to stop diseases -- telephones for business, global trade and medicare."

"East Asia grew by investing on infrastructure. But the growing inequality is big challenge and we have to find an answer about how to overcome it," the WB chief said.

He said the Bank has to move away from the paradigm of private sector dominance in infrastructure as it cannot serve all purposes of development needs. Private sector investment in infrastructure dropped sharply in recent times.

"So, private-public collaboration is of compelling need to face the infrastructure challenge. But an enabling regulatory environment must be created," Wolfowitz said.

Babar said the government has identified several financiers of the militants. "We've already stopped the activities of two organisations. As per recommendation of an expert committee, we've asked another (foreign) organisation to leave the country," he concluded.

Money whitening

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said, "That results in violence, and to bring a balance, a pro-poor growth is necessary."

He acknowledged the grievances among garment workers about their wages and asked the owners to resolve the crisis through discussion to avert such violence in future.

On the rise of the number of businesses turning to politics, especially as parliament members, the minister said, "Increasing presence of businessmen in parliament often hampers national interests as every decision involves businesses."

"But, in a democratic country the government has nothing to do in this regard and it is the voters' choice who they will vote to the parliament," he added.

Saifur admitted that there is corruption in implementing the Annual Development Programme (ADP). He said slow implementation of the ADP is one of the main reasons for corruption and in the current fiscal only 45 per cent money has been spent in the first nine months.

The ministries go for a quick expenditure in the rest three months to raise the expenditure to as high as 73 per cent and that creates room for malpractice, he said.

Saifur identified the delay of payments to contractors by the government officials concerned as another main reason of corruption and slow ADP implementation.

He said implementation of the donor-funded projects is slower than those funded internally as the donors demand "more transparency and accountability" in releasing funds.

He opposed different ministers' plea that "unnecessary conditions" of the donors hamper smooth implementation of the projects. The donors' conditions are to check corruption and for the

proper utilisation of their tax payers' money, he said.

The World Bank (WB) recently cancelled some projects of different ministries on allegations of corruption, Saifur told the ERF members. Citing his discussion with WB officials, he said the donor agency told him that they have enough document of corruption in these projects.

Although the government has enacted the Procurement Act to check corruption, it is not enough, Saifur said, adding, "I am not optimistic that a mere act will stop corruption. We need moral regeneration campaign against such malpractices."

He expected that the GDP growth will reach seven per cent. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, however, predicted the figure at 6.7 per cent.

Chairman of National Board of Revenue Khairuzzaman Chowdhury, Finance Secretary Siddique Rahman Chowdhury, and ERF General Secretary Nazmul Ahsan were present at the meeting chaired by ERF Acting President Masumur Rahman Khalil.

Garment workers

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recently increased the wages of 300 out of 1,600 workers of the unit.

The workers became agitated yesterday following a declaration from the owners that the wages of the remaining 1,300 workers would not be increased.

At one stage, the aggrieved workers stopped working and closed the doors and windows of the factory, keeping the top executives confined.

The workers set free the executives after getting an assurance from the owners that they would resolve the problem through discussion today, said a police official when contacted over cellphone from Dhaka.

Police and Rab rushed to the spot to avert any untoward incident.

Kushtia BNP cadres

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mercilessly while a few police personnel posted at the venue remained inactive during the rampage.

The four journalists had returned to Kushtia for the convention but they left the district again fearing more attacks on them while the others remained at their homes.

CONDAMNATION

Different organisations condemned the attack and demanded punishment of the lawmaker Shahidul Islam. Journalists in Faridpur, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jhenidah, Magura, Jessore and Khulna condemned the heinous act of killing party members.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfuzzaman Babar also condemned the attack in front of journalists at his office yesterday.

Meanwhile, journalists in the capital staged a sit-in in front of the Jatiya Press Club to protest against the attack on newsmen in Kushtia.

The angry journalists blocked roads in front of the press club, brought out a procession and held a rally burning the effigy of Shahidul Islam MP.

BUJU President-elect Manzurul Ahsan Bulbul, Secretary-General-elect Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Altaf Mahmud addressed the rally.

The BUJU will announce fresh protest programmes when the newly elected committee takes over at a meeting in Mymensingh on Tuesday.

Similar protest programmes were also held in Chittagong, Khulna, Jessore, Bogra and other districts.

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In a message yesterday, the acting president recalled the contributions of Zia to the War of Independence.

He said proclamation of the independence of the country by Ziaur Rahman in 1971 inspired the people from all walks of life to join the Liberation War.

"Patriotism, honesty and moral strength of the late president were unmatched," he said.

The acting president said the late leader had established multiparty democracy, freed the press from the "authoritarian" rule and ensured freedom of expression.

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and its front organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the death anniversary of its founder, also a valiant freedom fighter.

National and party flags will be hoisted at half-mast and black flag atop all the offices of the BNP and its front organisations.

BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations will wear black badges, place wreaths at the grave of Zia and offer fateha there.

The other programmes of the day include, qurankhwani, milad mahfil, feeding the destitute and special prayers at all places of worship.

The prime minister will also distribute food among the destitute at different places in the city.

Arms smuggling

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for criminal activities.

South Asia Partnership (SAP) Bangladesh in collaboration with International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), organised the conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity as part of marking Global Week of Action Against Small Arms 22-29 May 2006.

At least 128 syndicates in the country have engaged in criminal activities including gun running, human trafficking, extortion, prostitution, illegal occupation of land, especially for shrimp cultivation and real estate business, smuggling of contraband items, drug peddling, drug dealing, money laundering, election rigging and tender snatching, Major General (rtd) Syed Muhammad Ibrahim said.

"More than six lakh operatives use four lakh illegal guns and forty percent of them are under 18, which is very alarming for the nation," he said reading out the keynote paper.

More than one person generally uses one gun and many guns are rented out to different parties on various occasions, he added.

Militants and insurgent outfits of neighbouring countries have chosen the country's south and southeastern region as a transit route for arms smuggling business because Bangladesh government and its law enforcers are yet to be aware about these illegal business.

South Asian region has now turned into a large illegal arms trading centre due to the conflict between India and Pakistan, as well as internal violence in Sri Lanka, Kashmir, Nepal, and Myanmar. Brigadier General (rtd) Shakhawat Hossain said.

The tense situation contributes to the demand and supply of small arms and explosive devices in the region.

Civilians are the largest category of gun owners in the South Asian region, accounting for far more weapons than the military, police and insurgents, he said.

Out of some 75 million firearms in South Asia, only 12 million are legal while there are 63 million illegal firearms in civilian hands, he said, adding that India and Pakistan civilians overwhelmingly account for 40 million and 20 million weapons while civilians in Nepal and Sri Lanka own the remaining three million.

The data on how many civilians in Bangladesh use illegal arms are not available, he said.

He also said that a total of 192 light weapons, 44,979 bullets, 199 bombs and 11 kg explosive materials were recovered in 2005 while 79 light weapons, 25,442 bullets and 149 bombs were seized in the first five months of this year.

Around two million people are engaged in running arms and crime networks in the world, said Nadira Mallick, programme coordinator of SAP Bangladesh.

To create mass awareness, they have organised community consultation on illegal small arms at six divisions of the country, she said