

HSC exams deferred

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school teachers led by Prof. Abul Kalam Azad and Kazi Fazlul Haque at Muktagong vowed to continue their strike until their demands were realised.

On the other hand, several hundred government primary school teachers of Bangladesh Government Primary Teachers Association, led by Abdul Awal Talukdar, issued a seven-day ultimatum to the government to meet their demands. They have been observing hunger strike until death at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital since Saturday.

Several hundred community primary teachers under the banner 'Bangladesh Community Primary Teachers Association' have also been continuing their hunger strike until death at the Central Shaheed Minar since June 16 demanding nationalisation of their jobs.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Shikshak Karmachari Front, a platform of non-government high school and college teachers and employees, led by Prof. Kazi Faruque Ahmed observed a daylong hunger strike at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday demanding cent per cent salary from government teachers.

Several hundred teachers and employees of non-government high schools and colleges started to gather at the Central Shaheed Minar around 10:00am when leaders blasted the four-party alliance government for failing to give them a pay raise following price hike essentials.

Meanwhile, Shikshak Karmachari Oikya Jote non-government high school, college and madrasa teachers and employees led by Selim Bhuiyan held a rally at Muktagong in the capital and submitted a memorandum to the prime minister also demanding cent per cent salary from government exchequer.

They also threatened to go for indefinite strike from July 6 if the government did not meet their demands.

A fourteen-member team led by Bhuiyan submitted the memorandum to Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to the prime minister, with

the 10-day ultimatum to meet their 10-point demand.

Their demands include extending the retirement age of teachers to 65 years, introducing service rules for the employees and repealing the provision of Managing Committee in the institutions.

Underlining the importance of unity among the teachers, Bhuiyan called upon all non-government teachers and staffs to join the movement if they truly wanted to see their rightful demands realised.

CEC

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that requires formation of a supreme judicial council to remove him.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, former adviser to the caretaker government M. Hafizuddin Khan said the CEC must quit now. "Time has come to form a supreme judicial council to remove him on grounds of misconduct and inability to continue in the post," he said.

Referring to Aziz's recent remarks challenging the jurists who said there is no legal bar to visiting door to door for updating the existing voter list, Hafizuddin said "no mentally-balanced person" can speak this way.

PREPARING THE VOTER LIST
CEC Aziz said yesterday, "The voter list will be prepared in accordance with the judgment of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and the Electoral Rolls Ordinance, 1982 and the Electoral Rolls Rules, 1982. I am going as per the laws and will not go beyond the laws."

He said there are three steps in the voter-listing job—preparation, amendment and correction, and revision. "We are now taking up the procedure for amendment, correction and inclusion in the existing voter list," he said.

Meanwhile, the EC is yet to launch its campaign for the month-long task for preparing the voter list from July 1. The CEC said it will start soon.

When reporters requested the CEC for talking to the press regularly ahead of the next election, Aziz said, "Is it a factory that produces news every day?"

Hasina finally receives

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marked the end of the speculation if she would accept it as controversy has been dogging the credibility of the organisation that gives the award.

The decision to go to Kolkata was taken at the last minute as she was supposed to fly back to Dhaka from New Delhi yesterday morning.

Difficulties in availing a direct flight to Dhaka yesterday morning made her aides to change the route and go via Kolkata. Hasina's route had indicated that she would make a transit stopover at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport at Kolkata but she chose to enter the city, receive the award and call on Jyoti Basu.

Sources close to Hasina said the visit to Kolkata city gave her an opportunity to interact with Jyoti Basu as part of her meetings with the Indian political leaders.

Wrapping up her five-day visit to India, AL chief Hasina yesterday suggested that relations between the two countries are bound to improve if there is trust and friendship.

"If there is trust and friendship, the bilateral relations are bound to improve," Hasina asserted before reporters on the sideline of the award giving ceremony at the hotel.

She cited in the context that the 30-year Ganges Water Sharing Treaty signed between India and Bangladesh during her tenure as prime minister and said the agreement was worked out without any third party mediation.

Asked about India's persistent concerns over Indian insurgents' operation from Bangladesh territory, Hasina said, "terrorism is a global phenomenon and Bangladesh is no exception."

She said she herself had been subjected to terror attack in her own country, an obvious reference to the August 2005 grenade attack on an Awami League rally in Dhaka.

Answering a question if her party, if voted back to power in next general elections, would concentrate on further improving Bangladesh's relations with India, Hasina said AL would give importance to ties with all neighbouring countries. "It is our principle," she added.

Hasina said the first priority of AL, if they returned to power, would be poverty alleviation in Bangladesh as poverty has been a scourge not only for her country but the entire South Asia.

The AL chief called on veteran Marxist leader Jyoti Basu at his residence at Salt Lake in Kolkata.

Referring to the 40-minute meeting with Basu, she said a wide range of Indo-Bangladesh relations came up for discussion, including the Ganges water sharing accord.

Hasina said she was thankful to Basu for his role in clinching the accord and taking 'great interest' in improving relations between India and Bangladesh.

Nonagenarian Basu thanked Hasina for visiting his residence and recalled his association with former Bangladesh president and her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his stellar role in the liberation of Bangladesh.

Basu also recalled his visit to Bangladesh and his ancestral home when Hasina was the prime minister and enquired about the house and how it was being maintained. He voiced anxiety over the attack on Hasina at the August rally in Dhaka and said, "This sort of incident is worrisome."

Hasina expressed her fear that the alliance government in Bangladesh would resort to malpractices in the next general elections.

"I am afraid BNP government would again resort to malpractices in

Akbar

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College and Hospital in Gulshan around 8:35pm yesterday and the doctors declared him dead at 9:40pm.

He was the second minister of the BNP-led alliance government to pass away within a span of little over a week after the death of Women and Children Affairs Minister Khurshid Jahan Haque, also Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's eldest sister.

Akbar left behind his wife, four sons, a host of relatives, friends, colleagues and well-wishers to mourn his death.

Born on December 2, 1941 at Kashari Patti in Comilla town, Akbar joined the army at Kakul Military Academy in Pakistan on May 8, 1966 and was commissioned to join the 31 Baluchi Regiment. He received his BA from Dhaka University in 1969.

He joined the Liberation War in 1971 first under Khaleda Musharraf and then with the 'Z' force headed by late president Ziaur Rahman. For his heroic role in the War of Independence, he was awarded the title of Bir Protik.

After the independence, he took voluntary retirement from the Bangladesh Army on December 31, 1973. He then got actively involved with politics and joined the United People's Party (UPP) on January 1, 1974. He was the vice-president of UPP.

In 1977, when UPP merged with Ziaur Rahman's Jatiyatabadi Front, Lt Col Akbar actively joined in the formation of BNP. He was first made special secretary and then he held the position of joint secretary general and was one of the vice-presidents of BNP till his death. He was also the convenor of Comilla district unit of BNP till his death.

He was made Minister for Petroleum and Mineral Resources in Ziaur Rahman government's cabinet in 1978.

Late Akbar was first elected MP from Comilla-8 constituency in the 5th Jatiya Sangsad election in 1979. Then he was elected MP from the same seat in 1991, 1996 and 2001.

He was appointed Minister for Environment and Forest in October 1993, during the first tenure of Khaleda Zia's government.

He was made Minister for Shipping on October 10, 2001 when the BNP-led 4-party alliance won the 8th Jatiya Sangsad election with a two-third majority and Khaleda Zia became the third time prime minister of Bangladesh.

In his long political career, late Akbar actively participated in the anti-corruption movement and in all democratic movements. He was a devoted politician and popular pro-poor leader in his district.

Receiving the sudden death news of her cabinet colleague, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia rushed to see his body at his Gulshan residence. She stayed there for some time consoling his grief-stricken family members.

Earlier, on hearing the news of his death, a number of ministers, MPs, party leaders and well-wishers rushed to Shikder Hospital, BNP Secretary General and LGD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Health Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, Environment Minister Tarique Islam and other ministers and leaders visited the hospital and the residence of Lt Col Akbar.

CONDOLENCE MESSAGES
Acting President Jamiruddin Sircar expressed profound shock at the sudden death of Shipping Minister Lt Col Akbar Hossain. In a condolence message yesterday, he recalled the contributions of late Akbar to the country's independence, its rebuilding and democracy.

"The nation has lost a valiant freedom fighter and politician at his death," the acting president said. Sircar expressed deep sympathy for the bereaved family members and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

In a message of condolence, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed deep shock at the death of Lt Col Akbar Hossain. She recalled Akbar's contribution in the War of Independence and said the country lost a patriotic politician and an efficient minister in his death.

She said the nation will remember with respect late Akbar's role in democratic movements and his contributions to nationalist politics. BNP lost a devoted leader in his death, she added.

Khaleda Zia prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

FUNERAL
BNP sources said his first namaz-e-janaza will be held in front of the BNP central office at Naya Paltan at 11:00am today, the second janaza will be at the south plaza of Jatiya Sangsad at about 12:00 noon and the third will be at Comilla Eidgah at 3:00pm today.

As a veteran freedom fighter, he will be given a guard of honour and the national flag will cover his coffin.

He will be laid to rest at Sharifpur in Laksam at 5:00pm today.

Donors doubt

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He said the donors expressed satisfaction over the government's performance in implementing the action plans.

DFID country director David Wood welcomed the progress status. "I think it's very important to maintain the momentum. We have seen that a momentum has started now. We have seen the mechanisms put in place by the government for monitoring and for dealing with some of the difficult issues," he said.

The donor community however expressed frustration over the slow pace of implementation of civil service reform.

The government clarified that civil service reform is a lengthy process but the establishment ministry already undertook several initiatives including merit based promotions and postings, and pay incentives for employees.

The government also informed the donors that it had introduced a PRS Harmonisation and Action Plan Cell in the ERD early this month for better implementation of the PRSP.

The meeting was participated by representatives from the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, USAID, DFID, and UNDP, and government representatives from Japan, the Netherlands, and Norway.

AL wants JS body

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charge. The government should make its decision clear whether the president will continue or not."

"Speaker Jamiruddin had undergone bypass surgery twice, but he can perform as the acting president. Then why President Iajuddin cannot discharge his duties after similar surgery," Nasim questioned saying that in parliamentary system of government the president is the head of the state but he has nothing to do except signing a few files.

In reply, the health minister said the president has not taken charge as the medical board suggested him rest for another 15 days. Besides, he has developed some complications due to old age.

"But many people have tried to cook up controversies over the president's illness. Many of them have misinterpreted that the country has two presidents. But it is not true -- there is only one president and the Speaker is the acting president," Mosharraf said.

Later, participating in the discussion on proposed budget for

FY07, AL lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim asked why president Iajuddin's car did not bear the president's flag when he was returning to Bangabhaban.

Taking floor on a point of order, BNP lawmaker Syed Moazzem Hossain demanded formation of a parliamentary body to make public all information regarding the India visit of the leader of the opposition.

Acting Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui however did not say anything about the demands of AL and BNP lawmakers for parliamentary bodies.

Meanwhile, lawmaker Abu Hena, who was expelled from BNP in November last year for his stance against patronage of militancy by the ruling party leaders, for the first time joined the session.

Although Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar on the day he was expelled from BNP said "Abu Hena has become an independent lawmaker," Hena yesterday took his seat in the treasury bench. Independent lawmakers usually sit in the row of the opposition bench.

Bigots driven out

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areas yesterday 'at any cost'.

Sixteen Nabuwat activists led by its Amir Noor Hossain Nurani and Secretary General Abdul Alim Nizami took out a procession from Jomiate Sahaba Madrasa at sector-9 in Uttara at 6:00am to start picketing at Abdullahpur.

As a huge number of police were posted at different points there, they marched towards Tongi, chanting anti-Ahmadiyya and hartal slogans.

But later taking a U-turn at Station Road, the procession headed back for Uttara.

When they reached Tongi bridge, the entry point to the capital through Uttara, police in riot gear charged batons to disperse them, leaving several of them, including Nurani, wounded.

After all of his activists fled the scene, Nurani kept shouting and hurling abusive words at police for attacking him despite learning about his identity as chief of the organisation.

As he had one finger of his left hand cut, police rushed him to Bangladesh Medical College Hospital and arranged his treatment.

The Nabuwat activists, however, did not attempt to take to street later in the day.

Talking to The Daily Star, Nurani

said hundreds of their activists would join picketing to make today's hartal a success.

Nurani also alleged that four policemen assaulted him and demanded closing them by today and departmental action against them by Wednesday.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), meantime, said they would not let the zealots hamper public life.

ZIASIEGE

The religious bigots declared to lay a siege to the Zia International Airport next Thursday as next course of action to realise their three-point demand including passage of a law during the current parliament session 'to uphold the dignity' of last prophet Hazrat Mohammad (pbuh) and setting up 'Khatme Nabuwat Foundation'.

Nabuwat chief Nurani threatened that they would fight and "sacrifice as many lives as needed" if police try to foil the programme.

"We'll cancel the programme if only the prime minister agrees to meet our demand and requests us to withdraw the programme," Nurani said adding that they won't pay heed to anyone else in this matter, be it BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan or Harris Chowdhury or the prime minister's son Tarique Rahman or Motiur Rahman Nizami.

Economy not doing

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reforms in the state generally and more specifically in government institutions, and in the process and mechanism of governance.

Mahmudur Rahman noted that although Bangladesh has been suffering from poor governance, its economic indicators have been going up. He presented details of growth in GDP, exports and in the industrial sector in Bangladesh in the last few years.

Rahman pointed out that a significant amount of foreign direct investments (FDI) came to Bangladesh and the total amount in the current year will touch one billion dollars mark for the first time in the country's history.

According to him Bangladesh experienced an economic miracle in spite of weakness in governance. The social sector in the country has also gone through massive changes, he pointed out.

Mahmudur Rahman as usual criticised the media saying that it plays a negative role by not reporting the actual situation of the country's economic development.

Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir noted that prices of essentials have been rising because of the government's inability to cope with increasing demand. Giving an estimate he noted that corruption transfers at least Tk 48000 crore every year from productive and hardworking people to non-productive extortionists working inside the government and under its protection.

He said the government's inability to draw up projects with long term perspective and in line with the requirements of inter-sectoral coordination, coupled with corruption in the process of implementation are depriving the country of expected return from investments. Poor governance is also discouraging private investment, he added.

MCCI President Latifur Rahman said the business people have been suffering from the anarchic political system like calling of hartals and siege programmes. He said although the political parties thank the people for observing such programmes the actual truth is far from that.

He noted that the political parties lack democratic practices and the country has been suffering due to politicisation of government institutions.

He regretted the media bashing by some politicians and said whenever someone joins a government institution he must be scrutinised by the media. "We have faith in Bangladesh and think it has a great

potential and we also think that we can bring some changes in the society," Rahman said.

According to former secretary Shah Abdul Hannan, political corruption is the biggest challenge for Bangladesh. "Political corruption generates corruption everywhere," he said.

Describing his bitter experience while he was the chairman of the National Board of Revenue, Hannan said, "I had to tender my resignation after tremendous pressure from political leaders for not allowing duty reduction for a particular company." He also noted that Bangladesh has serious problems in governance as nothing is functioning properly.

"If political corruption is not corrected the country cannot move forward," he said.

Two working sessions of the seminar will be held today at the same place on the topics of 'role of citizens in addressing corruption' and 'policy reforms in government to business relations: looking ahead'.

Top business leaders, and political leaders from both ruling and opposition sides will participate in the discussion.

Workers' unrest

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authorities to resume operations of one of YG's units, Savar Sportswear Ltd (SSL), as promised. On June 17, the authorities informed the workers that SSL would resume operation on June 24.

Around 2,500 workers of the unit showed up to work yesterday and burst into protest seeing indefinite closure notice of SSL at the main entrance of the factory.

Workers allege that SSL has been closed since die as it has highest number of factory representatives to Workers Representative Welfare Committee (WRWC) and WRWC is believed to have led the last workers' agitation in DEFFZ.

"If authorities delay to reopen all units, situation may turn violent any moment. The last movement was to establish our rights and we cannot join work knowing that some of our co-workers' job status unsettled," said Shimu, a worker of the factory.

The YG in a press release yesterday stated that the group was forced to close its operations since die yesterday because 'agitators' have been

"...instigating and threatening management and workers..." counselors were not allowed to enter production floors..." The group hopes to resume soon, "...but this is contingent upon a safe and peaceful environment..."

Shazneen case

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stantial evidences indicate that the accused maintained a three-part division of labour in committing the crime of raping and killing the victim.

The accused Shahid, Minu, Parvin and Humayun (who died during the trial) committed the crime from inside Shazneen's room, Badal and Shaniram assisted them by being beside her room while the prime accused Engineer Hasan planned the execution of the crime from outside the house, the prosecution said.

Deputy Attorney General (DAG) ABM Waliur Rahman Khan yesterday in his argument before the High Court (HC) Death Reference Bench said on April 1, 1998 Hasan tried to grope Shazneen in a bathroom. He said Hasan also met 15-year-old Shazneen about four to five hours before the murder. Seeing Hasan, angry Shazneen then shouted at him saying how he dared to stand in front of her and threatened to arrange for his punishment by complaining to her parents about his lewd behaviour with her, said the DAG. He said the information came from the statements made by Shazneen's two sisters before the trial court. He also said there was only one motive behind the killing, Hasan plotted to kill Shazneen to take revenge.

The DAG argued that the High Court can uphold the verdict of the trial court under section 32 (1) of the Evidence Act based on Shazneen's allegation against Hasan that was mentioned in the statements of her two sisters Shahzreh Haq Shehri and Simin Hossain.

Yesterday's hearing on the trial court's verdict at the HC Death Reference Bench comprising Justice Ali Asgar Khan and Justice Emadul Haque will continue today.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, youngest daughter of a leading businessman Latifur Rahman, also a class IX student of Scholastica, was raped and killed at their Gulshan residence on April 23, 1998.

Latifur Rahman filed a case with Gulshan police station on the night of the murder and the police filed another case during investigation under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The prosecution yesterday also said witnesses' accounts confirm that neither Shazneen nor any of her family members had any prior conflict with the accused.

The Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka on September 2, 2003 convicted Hasan, his assistant Badal, a domestic help Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, carpenter Shaniram Mandal and housemaids Estema Khatun Minu and Parvin for the murder of Shazneen and sentenced them to death by hanging.

Additional Attorney General Razzak Khan, Deputy Attorney General ABM Waliur Rahman Khan, Assistant Attorney General Zinat Akhter Nazli Begum, and advocates Nazmul Haq and Sahara Parvin represented the state during the argument, advocates Mujibur Rahman, Abdus Sobhan, Barrister Masudur Rahman, AS Abdul Mobin Anisul Huq and Farida Khan assisted the prosecution.

Advocates Khondokar Mahbub Hossain, Anisul Haq and Mosharraf Hossain Kajol represented the defendants.

Hero laid

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Earlier, Matiur Rahman's Namaz-e-janaza and a special prayer for him were held at the National Parade Square at 10:00am. Acting President Jamiruddin Sircar, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and senior ministers were present.

The coffin was kept there for sometime for people to pay homage to the martyr. However, many people could not make it to the National Parade Square due to too much security there.

The remains of Matiur Rahman were flown to Dhaka from the Masroor airbase of Pakistan on Sunday night as a mark of paying him the highest honour.

Jamaat

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Rahman as a traitor and extolling pilot Rashid Minhas as a 'shaheed' [martyr], Noor said.

Jamaat lawmakers, who were present in parliament when Noor launched the broadside on a point of order against the ruling coalition party for its role during the Liberation War in 1971, did not protest the claim.

On August 20, 1971, Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman piloted a T-33 trainer aircraft from Karachi of Pakistan towards India in an attempt to desert the Pakistan Air Force and join the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Matiur could not complete his desired mission as the plane crashed during a scuffling with his co-pilot who tried to prevent him.

The valiant war hero was later honoured with the Bir Shreshtho gallantry award for his supreme sacrifice for the motherland.

Noor criticised Jamaat ministers for not attending the programme arranged for the arrival of the remains of Birsreshtho Matiur Rahman in Dhaka from Pakistan on Saturday.

"Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner of the alliance government, has not yet apologised for opposing the country's independence," he said, demanding trials of the war criminals.

Later, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Prof Rezaul Karim in a statement informed the House of bringing back the remains of Matiur and his funeral.

MP Pintu sues

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lawmaker Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu yesterday.

The lawmaker along with a huge number of his activists appeared before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court at about 12:30pm and filed the case accusing the daily's editor Matiuur Rahman and publisher Mahfuz Anam of publishing defamatory stories in the daily at different dates.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Mizanur Rahman recorded statement, took the complaint into cognisance and issued the summons.

In his complaint, Pintu mentioned that the daily published a news item titled 'Agitation in the Leather Technology College at Hazaribagh, local lawmaker Pintu took police to the college and beat the students' on June 12.

On June 14, the daily published another news headlined 'Pintu has a project of Tk 1 crore for a road construction razing over 200 graves of the Azimpur Graveyard but Dhaka City Corporation knows nothing'.

The next day the daily run the news titled 'Mayor's stay order on a road construction of Azimpur Graveyard,' the complainant added.

These news stories were false and intended to undermine him politically and socially, Pintu said.

CASE AGAINST THE DAILY

JANAKANTHA
Pintu filed another defamation case with the same court accusing the editor, publisher, advisory editor and executive editor of the Daily Janakantha.

The court issued summons upon Atiq Ullah Khan Masud, Toab Khan and Borhan Ahmad to appear

RU appoints

FROM PAGE 16
The syndicate, the highest decision-making body of the university, approved the appointments at a meeting on June 22.

Many senior teachers and leaders of student organisations of RU demanded cancellation of the recruitment terming it 'illegal' and 'unprecedented' in the history of the university.

Law department sources said against six posts in the department, the university authorities recruited three in 2004 and four more last year on an ad hoc basis.

Salma Akhter Khanam, daughter of former RU press manager Abul Kashem, Morshedul Islam, son of political science teacher Prof Nazrul Islam, and Shibir leader Abdur Rahim Mia Sagar were appointed in 2004. Jubaida Sultana, Abdul Alim, Julfikar Ahmed and Shibir leader Shahid Uddin were recruited last year.

Later, the university authorities published circulars in newspapers for appointing permanent teachers in the department.

The seven ad hoc recruits appeared before the university selection board headed by RU Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Altaf Hossain for an interview on May 8.

The selection board also comprised Jamaat leader Tasnim Alam and BNP leader Abdul Hai as 'subject experts', sources said.

The board finally selected six candidates except Shibir leader Shahid Uddin as he could not impress the board.

Ramna Kali Mandir