

Draft police ordinance

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Police Reforms Programme (PRP) Additional Inspector General of Police Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura said reducing the workload of police personnel by shortening their daily duty shifts is currently under their consideration.

The draft proposal which is expected to be submitted to the chief adviser to the caretaker government by the middle of this month, however, contains a suggestion for forming a new pay commission recommending a salary hike for the police.

To reduce the influence of ruling political parties on the police department, the draft proposes that between the ranks of the superintendent of police (SP) and the inspector general of police (IGP) none can be transferred from their current postings within two or three years of assuming the current responsibilities. The proposal has been incorporated in the draft due to allegations of harassments of opposition leaders and activists in the hands of policemen who often do that to appease the ruling political party in an effort to shun any punishment posting. No contractual appointment to the post of IGP will also be allowed according to the draft police ordinance.

Recommendations from any minister, lawmaker or influential person for appointments, transfers and promotions in the police department will be considered a criminal offence. The draft ordinance has been prepared to replace the 150-year old police law that had been introduced in 1861 by the erstwhile colonial rulers.

Once the draft ordinance is adopted, the police department is supposed to be freed from the influence of political parties. The draft focused on issues like human rights, a police code of conduct, guidelines regarding dealing with women and children, and community policing based on mutual understanding between a community and law enforcers.

Asked whether the police force will become independent once the new rules are enacted, a high ranking police official said the police force will be very much under the government, but they will be accountable to different regulatory bodies to make sure that no one can use the law enforcers for personal or political gains.

Formations of a National Police Commission (NPC) and a Police Complaint Commission (PCC) will be proposed in the draft ordinance to supervise policing.

NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION (NPC) According to the draft ordinance the NPC will appoint the IGP and investigate any allegation brought against the police chief. Nobody will be able to remove or transfer the IGP without the consent of the commission. Besides, it will recommend measures to the government for building a skilled, effective and accountable police system.

The NPC will also finalise a list of three nominees for the post of the IGP and forward it to the government after scrutinising their service records, and the government will appoint one of the nominees as the police chief.

The minister for home affairs will head the proposed 11-member NPC. Two lawmakers from each of the ruling and opposition political parties will be included in the commission while four neutral civil society representatives will also be selected as its members. The IGP

and the home secretary will act as the member secretary and the secretary respectively. Each member of the commission will be selected for a three-year term and for one term only. The lawmakers and civil society representatives will have voting rights for selecting the IGP nominees.

POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSION (PCC)

The proposed five-member commission with a retired judge of the Supreme Court as its chief will ensure accountability of the police. A former IGP or a former additional IGP, two representatives from the civil society including a woman, and a retired secretary or retired additional secretary will be the members of the commission.

The commission will be entrusted with the authority to accept complaints against the police and take legal actions against guilty cops. The commission will also collect necessary information and evidence from the NPC, police range or any police unit regarding incidents of death, rape or grievous injury in police custody.

Other allegations will be sent to the authorities concerned while high profile or serious cases will be dealt with by the commission itself. If necessary, the commission may recommend to the chief justice judicial inquiries of the incidents of alleged police brutalities and other irregularities.

A committee comprised of a justice of a higher court, and the chairmen of the ACC and the Public Service Commission (PSC) will oversee the activities of the commission.

SUMMARY COURT

For quick adjudication of cases against police personnel and for meting out exemplary punishments, the draft ordinance includes the provision of a summary court for the police department, which will take quick actions if police personnel are accused of abuse of power or other departmental irregularities.

Any convicted police personnel however will be allowed to appeal to the PCC against a summary court verdict.

Besides, the draft ordinance includes a code of conduct for police personnel aiming to uphold human rights during any search, arrest, detention or interrogation of suspects. Any deviation from the code of conduct in some cases will be considered a criminal offence.

The police reform project was initiated in 2005, which did not see any remarkable progress earlier due to many complexities. Several 'model police stations' however were established recently at different parts of the country under the project. Additional IGP Naba Bikram Kishore Tripura, and former IGP ASM Shahjahan are respectively the project director and the consultant for the programme.

A law reform committee was also formed with high ranking police officials. The committee finalised the draft of the reform proposal after meeting ten times. The draft police ordinance has 172 sections while the current police law has only 47.

The draft proposal was formulated after studying the police laws of Pakistan and India, the two neighbouring countries which reformed their police laws recently.

Hasina has to quit

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from relinquishing in the wake of election debacle in 2001 and repression of the AL leaders and workers following the polls.

Now, if her proposal is implemented, apart from Hasina herself, the AL general secretary and most of the presidium members will also have to quit from their present posts as they all are already above 60.

A few such leaders yesterday reacted sharply and opposed Hasina's proposal while younger leaders welcomed it.

"Does the idea exist in the constitution of any political party? It is an absurd proposal. Politics cannot be controlled by age limit," said a senior AL leader.

AL Presidium Member Matia Chowdhury said the matter is still a proposal and the party council will decide on it.

A few other AL leaders echoed Matia's view.

A young leader, however, described the idea as "nice" for promoting young leadership. "The senior leaders will guide us staying in the advisory council and we will proceed on," he said.

The AL chief's proposal has come at a time when some senior leaders of her party have already been secretly preparing a set of reform proposals. These leaders have been reiterating that they were preparing proposals to curtail the party chief's absolute power and not to allow any leader to simultaneously hold the posts of party president and prime minister.

Upon receiving the proposal unofficially, Hasina said she wanted further amendment to those proposals.

'71 killers

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After eight years of the excavation, the Liberation War Museum built a triangular memorial at the site of the torture chamber and the mass grave keeping the structure of the pump house intact. Museum Trustee and Architect Rabiu Hossain designed the memorial based on the concept provided by another Trustee Mofidul Hoque while artists Rafiqunnabi and Muniruzzaman adorned it with murals.

The walkway leading into the memorial and coming out of it is flanked by marble rails on both sides with the names of over 400 killing fields found across the country engraved on it. The invading Pakistani army and their local collaborators used to kill freedom fighters and dump their bodies in mass graves in those killing fields.

The marble rails are also topped with six altars where the soil of six such killing fields in the six divisions of the country is stored as symbols of respect to the martyrs and the significance of the killing fields in forming the nation's current identity.

At the centre of the memorial, there is a mural by Rafiqunnabi titled 'Jibon Abinashish' (Life is immortal). The mural made of burnt bricks speaks of the scattered bodies of the martyrs which could be mutilated and destroyed, but whose memories remain unvanquished, said Rafiqunnabi.

In between the two ends of the bending walkway stands the pump house with a bell hung over entrance of the torture chamber. Once tolled, the ring of the bell reverberated through the air lingering for a few minutes creating an emotional connection between the present and the past, said Liberation War Museum Trustee Mofidul Hoque.

The words 'What Happened' are engraved in five languages including Bangla above the entrance of the pump house. The words were extrapolated from a publication of the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums to inspire the visitors to be curious and to learn from the site, Hoque noted.

Then comes the 20 feet deep water tank of death from where the excavators recovered the skulls and bones of the martyrs. Visitors can see the tank covered with thick glass on which it is written, "We bow our heads in deep respect to all martyrs."

This is the pit where men, women and children were thrown in after being butchered throughout the nine-month of the liberation war in 1971. "Dead bodies of many others were also dumped here. The shattered lives of the martyrs remind us of our duty towards the victims of genocide" is written on one of the inside walls of the pump house.

Visitors then can move through a little park place where they can sit on benches.

Thus comes the end of the journey through the memory lane of Jalladkhana as the place is named by local residents, but the emotion generated in one's heart from the visit lingers on.

"Our goal of preservation and collection of the memories here in the site is actually to make our liberation war memorable for ever so that generations following us can be inspired by the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and can stand against any genocide anywhere in the world," said cultural activist Aly Zaker.

The visit ends, but a sentence engraved on a wall of the pump house clangs to one's memory: "The silent call of the martyrs is resonating all around us asking for truth and justice."

Ex-MP Gias

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DND dam stretching from Sarulia to Godnile in 2002 for three years in the name of his construction firm named Kassaf Construction Firm at Tk 23.16 lakh.

Gias took the lease of the land for fish cultivation showing in papers his wives and four relatives as fishermen.

In the other case, Monajer stated that the former lawmaker established two educational institutions one after his name and the other after the names of his father and mother—defying the rules of the education ministry.

With the two cases, the number of criminal cases filed against the lawmaker stands at nine.

Reformist BNP

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Following the meeting she told reporters, "Time demands reform so, we and even madam [Khaleda] want reforms." She said implementation of reforms would begin once the ban on indoor politics is lifted.

"We should do what the situation demands, this is not a matter of kicking out or leaving out someone," Shamsuzzaman Dudu, a former lawmaker and leader of Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal told reporters after his meeting with Bhuiyan.

Party leaders said most of the leaders want to see Khaleda leave the top post but Bhuiyan does not want to make any decision hurriedly even though most of the party leaders, former ministers and lawmakers expressed their support for his reforms initiatives.

Falu remanded

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In his forward report, ACC Assistant Director Sheikh Abdus Salam, also the investigator (IO) of the case, mentioned that Falu gave important information about government relief materials, which were seized from the office of a ward commissioner of his constituency and also about the whereabouts of his accomplices involved in misappropriating relief materials.

But Falu did not give information about wheat and rice seized from his accomplices' possession. He also did not follow the rules of the concerned ministry in distributing the materials among the destitute people, the IO added.

So he needs to be questioned about his involvement with misusing government relief materials and the whereabouts of his accomplices, the IO said.

The court had earlier recorded statements of seven prosecution witnesses including the complainant and the IO of the case.

On June 3, the same court framed charges against Manju in his absence and issued arrest warrant against him.

Before the order, the court had asked Manju to appear before the court to defend himself but he failed to oblige the court order. So, the court had cancelled his bail.

On May 14, Dhanmondi police pressed charges against Manju in the case.

Sub-Inspector Amirul Islam, also the IO of the case, submitted the charge sheet to the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate showing 12 people as prosecution witnesses.

On March 8, the joint forces raided Manju's Dhanmondi residence and seized 21 bottles of contraband liquor. Later, a case under the Narcotics Control Act was filed against him.

Following the case, Manju obtained bail from the High Court.

HUDA CASE

Another Dhaka court yesterday asked the jail authorities to produce detained former communications minister barrister Nazmul Huda on July 1 in connection with a fraud case.

The law enforcers picked up Nazir Ahmed, office assistant of the commissioner, for interrogation.

Later, Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) official Abdus Samad of Rab-2 filed a case with Tejgaon Police Station against Falu, Jahangir and four others.

CASE AGAINST SARWAR

Gulshan police on Monday filed a criminal case against Barisal City Corporation Mayor Mujibor Rahman Sarwar for possessing illegal ammunition at his Salton Myers residence at Gulshan in the capital.

Deputy Assistant Director Aktheruzzaman of Rab-3 lodged the case against Sarwar with Gulshan Police Station in this connection.

Sarwar was picked up from his Gulshan residence at about 9:30am on May 29. The crack forces raided his residence in Gulshan and seized four bullets, Tk 4 lakh, gold ornaments weighing 50 tola and some documents.

CASE AGAINST NASIM

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Third Special Court—set up at Shere-e-Bangla Nagar MP Hostel—framed charges against Nasim and AHS Rahman Sarwar for possessing illegal ammunition at his Salton Myers residence at Gulshan in the capital.

Nasim pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court after the charges were read out. The court fixed Tuesday for trial of the case.

Mohammed Abdul Hai, an official of now defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption, pressed charges against Nasim and AHS Rahman of Consociates Limited on June 13, 2002.

Following the submission of charge sheet, Nasim and Rahman submitted separate criminal miscellaneous petitions to the High Court challenging the legality of the proceedings of the case.

The higher court had earlier rejected their petitions saying that the charges brought against them would be proceeded with.

In the case filed with Ramna Police Station, the complainant said in order to "illegally award" a contract to WorldTel for installing three lakh telephones, Nasim had appointed a private firm, Consociates LTD, for consultancy without any competitive bidding.

"Accordingly, the consultancy made 'fictitious' recommendations for WorldTel, the lone bidder of the pro-

Mohiuddin

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A trial court on November 8, 1998 sentenced him to death along with 14 other former and dismissed army men for killing Bangabandhu and 26 others. The High Court on April 30, 2001 upheld the punishment of 12.

Mohiuddin was sent back to the country on Monday from the United States after he lost a legal battle for asylum there. Upon arrival, he was sent to condemned cell at Dhaka Central Jail.

"Mohiuddin expressed his willingness to appeal to the Supreme Court," Deputy Inspector General (Prisons) Major Shamsul Haider Siddique told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said that he had talked to Mohiuddin for a short time on Monday night when he expressed his willingness. "We are trying to contact Mohiuddin's close relatives for starting the process," Major Haider said.

A top jail official said that Mohiuddin spent his first night and day in jail mostly sleeping. His physical and mental conditions are normal, the jail official added.

He was served Gur (molasses) and bread for breakfast in his cell named "Rajaniandha," one of the cells for keeping the people condemned to death.

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SUB-INSPECTOR (SI) KAZI AMIRUL ISLAM

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