

SACKING OF 431 'ILLEGAL' STAFF

Crucial meeting at SCC office today as stalemate on

Ministry wants hired manpower to do the job while fired employees think of legal step

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Stalemate continues at Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) office where virtually no work is done since sacking of 431 'illegal' employees...

The SCC may have to issue newspaper advertisement for

appointment of some private firms to maintain essential services on contract basis.

"We will have to do so in line with LGRD ministry's order for maintaining essential services from outsourcing management, SCC Chief Executive Officer Kazi Abdul Nur SCC told The Daily Star.

"It will be a temporary arrangement as the ministry asked for doing so only for three months", he said.

He however said even if the corporation decides to get essential services done on contract basis, the contractors will have to engage SCC staff recruited on master roll basis because they are experienced. A contractor will not be able to do the jobs with people who have no experience, he said.

"By February next year, we may go for recruitment of new staff in line with the organogram, which is in the process of approval by the ministry of finance", Nur said.

SCC officials on December 3 asked 257 of the sacked employees to continue work until further instruction to run essential services.

Even officers could not use their official vehicles as drivers except in conservancy section stopped work, sources said.

Executive Engineer Syed Hossain Jamal in water supply section, who is also on the list of sacked employees, said 67 employees were working in his section for long and they were experienced.

Jamal had worked in the ADB aided 9-town water supply project of the then Sylhet Pourashava in 1990s. He was appointed executive engineer in SCC water supply section in 2003.

SCC secretary Harun Ur Rashid said he asked employees and officials in essential service sections to continue work so that civic life is not affected.

On December 4, a 3-member team led by acting mayor Azam Khan met the LGRD advisor at his office in the capital and discussed the situation after sacking of the employees.

He informed the advisor that approval of SCC organogram remained pending for years though Sylhet Pourashava was upgraded to a city corporation in 2002.

The advisor assured steps considering the situation but rejected the plea for continuation of essential services by 'old ones' (sacked employees) and asked for getting those done by 'outsourcing manpower', sources said.

Until the organogram is approved, there is no scope for appointing new staff, they said.

The 431 employees were sacked after an official investigation in November this year by a committee termed their appointment during the past governments 'unapproved and illegal'.

The SCC made temporary appointments in posts of 4th class employees like cleaner, electrician, helper and peon on master roll (no work no payment) basis as more manpower was needed after declaration of SCC in 2002.

Taking advantage of the situation, a section of SCC officials recruited as many as 431 people on master roll during 2003-2005, many of them allegedly in exchange of money, sources claimed.

The corruption was revealed when the chief engineer, an executive engineer and some ward commissioners were arrested after promulgation of emergency for their alleged wrongdoing in the recruitment.

During quizzing, they confessed many 'unfair deals' including alleged realisation of money for appointment and in the name of regularisation of service.

'Corrected' juvenile convict yet to be freed

AMANUR AMAN, Kushtia

A juvenile convict, attaining 18 years of age after staying around three years in jail and one year at a government-run correction centre, is yet to be released despite having 'very good' behavioural records and showing willingness to lead a normal life.

Sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment for killing a minor girl, Jahidul Hasan Rony, is now at Jessore Kishore Unnayan Kendra, waiting for being sent to jail to suffer the remaining period of punishment.

At the age of 14 on November 25 in 2003, the boy killed his neighbour Subarna Yasmin Setu, a five-year-old girl at Fakirabad village in Bheramara upazila in Kushtia.

As per a court verdict, the boy was sent to Kishore Unnayan Kendra (KUK), Jessore, on August 17, 2006.

KUK Assistant Director Mir Darashiko on May 3 this year sent a letter to the secretary of Social Welfare Department, saying that Rony had been corrected, was repentant for his past act and willing to lead a normal life if released. The boy attained the age of 18 on May 9 but the authorities concerned are yet to decide whether the boy would be released or sent to jail.

Considering the boy's behavioural improvement and motivation to go back to normal life, the government can release him, said Dr Nasrin Lubna, Assistant Programme Coordinator, Sachetan, Rajshahi, a partner organisation of Save the Children UK.



Youth representatives from seven Saarc nations on tune with songs at Garpara village in Manikganj yesterday.

Saarc youths' 'gala event' in Manikganj village

ZAHANGIR ALAM BISWAS, Manikganj

Participants of the Saarc youth camp had a special occasion to celebrate yesterday as they took part in cultural events at Garpara village, some 6-7 kilometres from Manikganj town.

Aged between 16 to 22 years, 107 youths from India, Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal and host country Bangladesh took part in the cultural events.

They spent a nice time singing, dancing, flying kite, gossiping, and displaying cultural events.

Several participants talking to this correspondent described their experiences about the Saarc youth camp.

Hina Pandey, a student of Masters of International Relation in Jawaharlal Nehru University in India and residence at New Delhi, said

India and Bangladesh share similar culture and the Bangladeshi people are very helpful and cooperative.

Dawa from Bhutan, who observed cultural difference between Bhutan and Bangladesh, also found the people of Manikganj very helpful and cooperative.

Anika Mainuddin, an A-level student of Bangladesh, said she is proud of being a citizen of the country that hosted Saarc youth camp.

Her country also hosted the first summit of Saarc that was founded following the initiative from Bangladesh, she said.

With the theme 'Connecting South Asian Youth', the Saarc youth camp, first of its kind, began at Savar near Dhaka on Monday to develop communication, cooperation, cultural exchange and fraternity among the youths of the member countries.

It also aims at developing leadership quality among the youths of the region that faces similar crises like unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, inadequate healthcare service, HIV/Aids and drug abuse.

Manikganj Deputy Commissioner Ataur Rahman and district officer of Directorate of Youth Development (DYD) Shah Sheikh Mohammad Farid welcomed the participants at 1:00am while Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Mojibar Rahman Al-Mamun, Director (Planning) of Directorate of Youth Development (DYD) KM Amanur Rahman Aman, President of Manikganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mahbubul Alam Runu and NDC of Manikganj Hedayet Ullah and guardians of the youths were present, among others, at the cultural exchange function that ended at 2:00pm.

Allegation against Sirajganj LGED engineer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

An official of a construction firm yesterday alleged that executive engineer Quzi Khurshid Hassan of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) in Sirajganj demanded Tk 5 lakh from him to give work order of a Tk 74 lakh project for construct of Ullapara-Goyhatta road.

After his firm, Mita Construction, got the work in tender, the executive engineer called him to his office on August 29 and demanded the money, its official Md. Goma Mostafa claimed at a press conference here.

In a written statement, Mostafa alleged that Quzi Hassan also stopped payment of Tk 9.70 lakh deposited as security money for construction of Tarash-Baruhash and Tarash-Naogaon roads.

He said also made written complaints to army camp, Rab office, police and district administration in this regard.

Mostafa alleged that he went to Sirajganj Sadar police to file a case but police declined.

When contacted, Mahbubur Rahman, officer-in-charge of the police station said Mostafa came to record a general diary but he was advised to file a case with a court.

Contacted, LGED Executive Engineer Quzi Khurshid Hassan refuted the allegations and said, "I don't know who is Mostafa and whether he is a representative of Mita Construction or not."

Wife acid-burnt by husband

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

A housewife, beaten up and acid-burnt by her husband and his men at Zamirchan village under Koikuri union in Pirgachha upazila on Monday night, is undergoing treatment at Rangpur Medical College Hospital.

The victim, Rojina Begum, 33, said her husband Mahbubur Rahman alias Babla aided by his brothers Belal and Liton and friend Ronju beat her and poured acid on her face. Police arrested Ronju.



Patient wait by Sidr victims at Titkata field in Patuakhali yesterday for financial assistance from Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

All political govts ignored FFs Kader Siddiqui says

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Valiant freedom fighter and Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) president Abdul Kader Siddiqui Bir Uttam yesterday alleged that all political governments after the Liberation War ignored freedom fighters.

Freedom fighters liberated the country from at the cost of blood but they are still being ignored.

Kader Siddiqui was addressing a discussion meeting at the Central Shaheed Minar in Tangail town marking Tangail liberation day.

Freedom fighters should not salute government officials at Victory Day programmes, he said. With freedom fighter Abu

Mohammad Enayet Karim in the chair, the discussion meeting was addressed by, among others, Habibur Rahman Khoka Bir Protik, Abdus Sabur Khan Bir Bikram, Ashraf Girani, Nazrul Islam, Iqbal Siddiqui, Idris Sikdar, Mokaddes-al-Mamun and Advocate Hassan Ali Reza.

Freedom fighters led by Kader Siddiqui liberated Tangail from occupation of Pakistan forces on December 11, 1971.

Different political and socio-cultural organisations organized programmes to mark the day.

These included placing of wreath at the Shaheed Minar in the town, colorful rally, discussion meeting and children's painting competition.

Train guard killed on board

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Criminals stabbed to death the guard of intercity train 'Turna Nishita' early hours yesterday, when he was on the Dhaka-bound train from Chittagong.

According to Government Railway Police (GRP) sources, The victim, Gopal Chandra Mandal, 50, was on Turna Nishita train that left Chittagong Railway Station for Dhaka at 11:00pm on Monday. After halting at Comilla Railway Station as per schedule, the train had to stop at Rasulpur Railway Station to allow crossing for another train at 3:33am.

Guard Gopal Chandra Mandal properly recorded the all particulars in his official book till 3:33am yesterday.

Then the train stopped at Akhaura Railway Junction and restarted from there after five minutes following the signal light of the station. Signal from the train guard was not needed there.

Later it was found that the guard

did not record anything about the train's stopping at and restarting from Akhaura Railway Station although the train remained there for five minutes, railway sources said.

The train entered its scheduled Brahmanbaria Railway Station at 5:05am and the stationmaster showed the signal to restart the journey after five minutes but the train driver did not leave the station as his guard was not showing any signal.

After ten to fifteen minutes, a team of GRP police headed by Brahmanbaria GRP out post in-charge Taposh Chandra Roy went to the guard's compartment when they found Gopal's body lying in a pool of blood.

They found 10 marks of stabbing on the guard's body. A case was filed with Akhaura GRP Police Station and rail officials will investigate the case.

Meanwhile, the train left Brahmanbaria for Dhaka at 7:30am yesterday, railway sources said.

6000kg fertiliser seized in Dinajpur

800 Urea bags in Bandarban

STAR REPORT

About 6,000 kilograms of fertiliser including TSP was seized from Raniganj village under Dinajpur Sadar upazila on Monday night for alleged hoarding to realise high prices from the farmers, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Acting on a tip off, Chirirbandar Upazila Nirbahi Officer Rezaul Karim and Agriculture Extension Officer Md Abdul Rahman jointly conducted a raid at Ranibandar village at 8:30pm and found at least 6000 kg fertiliser at the godown of Kakan Traders, sources said.

The owner of the godown managed to escape sensing the raid. Our Bandarban correspondent reports: Police yesterday seized 800 bag of fertiliser that was stored illegally by a tobacco company at Alikadam Bazar in the district.

As the tobacco company started stocking one tonne (800 bags) of Urea fertiliser in their godown early morning, local fertiliser dealers informed the upazilla nirbahi officer (UNO) and upazilla agriculture officer.

Following instruction from the UNO, police seized the fertiliser.

Unite for trial of war criminals

Speakers say at Pabna Bijoy Mela

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Speakers at the inauguration ceremony of 'Bijoy Mela' (victory fair) in Pabna yesterday called for raising voice and forming unity for trial of the war criminals.

At the fair arranged on the premises of Pabna Town Hall, they vowed to establish the principles of Liberation War.

"The crime of by the war criminals is unpardonable. The war criminals must be punished for establishing the war principles," said veteran journalist and cultural organiser Kamal Lohani, who inaugurated the fair as chief guest.

"Bangabandhu did not pardon the war criminals who were involved in looting, rape, arson, killing and such type of crimes. People should be aware of the war criminals who are trying to mislead the nation," he said.

Expressing his dissatisfaction over treatment of those who fought for the liberation of the nation, woman freedom fighter Vanu Nesa Begum said, "We took part in the Liberation War without any expectation. But nobody bothered to look after us after the independence. Earlier I got allowance but it is stopped now."

People's unity is essential for punishment of the war criminals advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku said. Urging implementation of the Liberation War principles, the speakers said war criminals' punishment is now demand of the nation.

Convener of Mela Udjapon Committee Abdul Matin Khan chaired the meeting.

Thirty stalls took part in the fair that will continue till December 16, the Victory Day.

Earlier a colorful procession brought out from town hall premises paraded the town.

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