

Hospital of graft

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example of how the top brass including the VC can spoil such a service-oriented institution through corruption and irregularities with blessings from partisan influential professionals.

"We've investigated financial corruption of only Tk 20 crore to Tk 25 crore. More irregularities and graft were found during investigations. We only incorporated those that matched with the terms of reference of our work," said an investigator of the probe committees formed by the university and the government.

"The purchase process embezzled public money. But graft in appointments and promotion of unqualified teachers and doctors has caused a long-term loss as eligible and qualified officials were deprived. It would definitely reduce the standard of higher studies if we cannot take action against those involved in the process and fail to bring in correction," said Prof Nazrul Islam, who was chairman of the probe committee formed by the university.

Investigations revealed stunning information about different types of graft in BSMU including bribery involving even the VC.

Officials wonder how one could think of such an act being carried out by a person like the VC with the help of other teachers, doctors and officials who were supposed to uphold the institution's dignity.

Besides getting personal benefits through corruption, Hadi also carried out irregularities to get his two sons established at the university through appointment and promotion.

"It's beyond imagination how persons of such stature were involved in graft in sheer violation of rules, regulations and purchase process," said a professor of the university who was involved in the investigation conducted by the university.

The investigators have so far unearthed evidence of graft involving over Tk 22 crore purchase and maintenance, about half of which was estimated as loss of the university.

Besides BSMU-formed probe committee, the government is also conducting simultaneous investigations by the army-led task force and the Anti-Corruption Commission.

However, though several committees were formed both by the university and the government in phases no action could be taken in this regard.

Sources say some of the university-formed committees include persons who were partners in corruption during the tenure of Hadi. They are not willing to look into the issues and are trying to convince the government investigators that no graft had actually taken place, the sources add.

Even the investigation committees formed by Hadi could not make any headway as it was politically biased and targeted to take a hand on the opposition rather than combating graft, the sources observe.

CORRUPTION IN APPOINTMENT

The probe committee led by Prof Nazrul found that 15 professors, 14 associate professors and 10 assistant professors were appointed or promoted violating three conditions required for appointment and promotion.

The probes also revealed that about 400 medical officers and 11 non-medical officers were appointed violating the rules and regulations.

The investigations also found that Mohammad Abul Kashem, a ward boy of dental department and CBA president, had his share in the illegal appointments of medical and non-medical officers.

The probe report categorically says all the documents and pieces of evidence regarding involvement of Kashem in appointment graft should be handed over to ACC.

Candidates should qualify in three categories for being entitled to appointment or promotion. The categories are educational qualification, experience and publications.

Speaking anonymously, a top-level administrative official told The Daily Star, "Although the candidates didn't qualify in the categories they were appointed considering special qualifications. Candidates lacking in qualifications for becoming an assistant professor were made professor in this way."

EXAMPLES OF CORRUPTION
Most of the purchase was made through quotation and without floating any tender except for a couple of cases though any purchase involving money more than Tk 2 lakh should be given through tender.

In some cases tender notification was published in one newspaper only though it was supposed to be published in more than one newspaper.

There were instances that no technical evaluation was carried out on receipt of the quotation. The purchase was made violating all rules, regulations, and provisions. Besides, the matter of purchase was not informed to the central purchase committee.

Investigators say there is a gulf of difference between the prices of the heart-lung machines bought by BSMU and other medical institutions at the same time. Other medical institutions bought the machine from same supplier and at a much lower price, they add.

Earlier, medicine named Injection Ceftriaxone (Unj. Trizon) used to be purchased from EDCI but BSMU began purchasing it through quotation in violation of purchase rules from 2002-03 fiscal year. Former VC Hadi in each case mentioned on the documents that "work orders be granted" causing

loss of Tk 31.3 lakh.

The Echo-Cardiogram Machine worth Tk 83.55 lakh purchased for the cardiology department and cardiac surgery was bought without any requirement and specification from the department. The machine was purchased in accordance with the specification of the supplier. No technical evaluation committee was formed.

Six ventilators were purchased for the anaesthesiology department causing a loss of Tk 75 lakh. The VC on May 19, 2004 decided to purchase the machines worth Tk 1.2 crore through spot quotation by forming a committee the same day.

Purchase of the ventilators was so necessary that those remained abandoned and unused for three years," an investigator said ironically.

The investigators found that purchase of telephone sets caused a loss of Tk 10.42 lakh.

The primary expenditure for ICU renovation was approved at Tk 12.9 lakh. Excess work was carried out at verbal order of the authorities and later another Tk 12.5 lakh was approved for the purpose. An additional expenditure of Tk 3.44 lakh was shown in the bill. Due to the verbal order about Tk 15 lakh was spent in addition to the approved amount.

The second Cathlab (a machine to conduct Angiogram) was purchased at Tk 7.52 crore and the VC granted the amount though he had the authority to grant maximum Tk 50 lakh.

The authorities reduced the warranty period to three years from seven years as suggested by the Technical Evaluation Committee, causing a loss of Tk 4.20 crore in purchasing and reducing the warranty period.

The Lithotripsy Machine for Urology was purchased at a higher rate of about Tk 5 crore without considering the loss. The lowest bidder proposed Tk 3.2 crore. But at the same time the same supplier sold the machine of same specification at a price, which was Tk 1 crore less than BSMU's.

About Tk 4.35 crore was spent in purchasing 12 types of operation theatre items through a frail purchase process. The items include scissors, ICU bed, blood gas, invasive monitor, and ICU ventilators.

Paediatrics Department Chairman Prof MA Mannan, who was pro-VC at that time, however, told The Daily Star, "I don't know whether any corruption had taken place or not, but there might have been some procedural irregularities."

BRIBERY
The government investigators say they have traced incidents of money transaction as bribe by the VC and some other BSMU administrative officials in purchasing equipment in at least six cases and one renovation case. In some cases investigators have got witnesses to bribery incidents.

The sources categorically mention that there is an allegation of bribery in purchasing Lithotripsy and second Cathlab machines against Hadi and Deputy Registrar Dr Kazi Ebadullah.

The purchase was made through Tk 85 lakh bribe transaction and the VC took the major portion of the money, they say. The investigators say the date the supplier withdrew the money and the VC and the deputy registrar depositing it in their accounts are same.

BSMMU Deputy Registrar Kazi Ebadullah told The Daily Star, "I don't know anything about the VC taking bribe. And the allegations brought against me are false, baseless, and fabricated. There is conspiracy behind this. I have been carrying out my service honestly for 14 years and there is no question of taking bribe."

"As I possess no power to have anything done, there is no point in giving me bribe. Executive power lies with the VC and the registrar," he added.

"I think many things were not done legally and in accordance with the rules regarding purchase, appointment and promotion," Kazi Ebadullah admitted.

There are also allegations against some members of the purchase committee, some administrative officers and doctors who became beneficiaries out of the matters.

"In matters of purchase the main responsibility lies upon the VC, pro-VC (finance), and the treasurer. The central purchase committee in fact doesn't have any responsibility other than being used as post office. They only forward the proposal of technical committee to the VC," said Prof Mannan, former head of the 27-member central purchase committee.

"The committee can only add or decrease the numbers of equipment to a certain level. But the central purchase committee has no jurisdiction to deny the proposal made by the technical committee," he added.

Apart from these, some officials realised about Tk 1 crore in the name of renovating BSMU on the occasion of a supposed 'visit' by the Saudi health minister during the alliance government rule. In reality, existence of the renovation work was not traced anywhere at that time and the Saudi minister never showed up.

"We didn't mention anything about bribery incident in our report as we didn't have any eye-witnesses. But we knew that there was bribery in the process of purchasing," said an investigator of the university-formed probe body asking not to be named.

The investigators also say the matter of partisan political influence behind appointments could not be clarified due to lack of clear

evidence. There has been a nexus maintained between Hadi and some others influential persons in and out of the university including AZM Zahid Hossain and Khaleda Zia's assignment officer Dr Firoz Mahmud Iqbal.

Hadi, Zahid and Firoz were leaders of BNP-backed Doctors Association of Bangladesh (DAB) and manipulated their power in health sector.

There are scores of allegations of corruption, irregularities and misuse of power against Zahid and Firoz. Interestingly, Zahid also won first prize in a lottery through corruption.

Both Zahid and Firoz, who have been absconding, were sentenced to 13 and 10 years imprisonment respectively for amassing wealth beyond known sources of income and concealing information from ACC.

Delwar

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through a rigged election," he said during a discussion organised by the BNP-led four-party alliance at the Diploma Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city.

Delwar said the election must be held under Representation of People's Order, 1972 (RPO) and it would not be acceptable if any changes are brought to the RPO.

"You [the government] have no jurisdiction to formulate any law related to the election. The election should be held under the laws made by the parliament," he said, adding that only an elected parliament can formulate laws.

Expressing worries over Tarique Rahman's health, he said Tarique may be paralysed or even die if the authorities do not send him abroad now for treatment.

Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid said the EC has already become controversial due to different activities including violating the constitution and its involvement in BNP's division.

BNP Vice-president MK Anwar said to enable the country recover from the ongoing crises, there is no alternative to releasing Khaleda Zia.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party Chairman Andaleev Rahman Partho alleged that the Awami League is helping the government destroy democracy as well as the four-party alliance.

Meanwhile, 133 former lawmakers of BNP in a statement demanded withdrawal of all cases filed against former lawmaker Nazimuddin Alam and his unconditional release. Nazimuddin is also the research and information secretary of the party's central executive committee.

The statement had the names of Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmad, MK Anwar, Sarwari Rahman, Selima Rahman, Syed Mehedi Ahmed Rume, Abdul Moyeen Khan, Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan, Mohammad Shahjahan, Shirin Sultana and Rehana Akhter Ranu among others.

4 witnesses give
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statements of the witnesses after ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harunur Rashid, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, brought them to the court for giving their statements.

But details of their statements, however, could not be known immediately.

According to the case filed by ACC Deputy Assistant Director Harunur Rashid, former prime minister Khaleda Zia and other accused embezzled over Tk 2.10 crore, establishing an organisation that only exists on papers.

The five other accused are former BNP lawmaker Qazi Saleemul Huq Kamal, Sayeed Ahmed, Gias Uddin Ahmed, Sharfuddin Ahmed and Momtazur Rahman, son of Khaleda's sister.

On Friday last, accused Sharfuddin Ahmed was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court that sent him to jail.

Earlier, The ACC had interrogated Khaleda and Tarique at the jail gate about the case.

Iftekhar

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preparing its position on each of these matters, he said.

Iftekhar said he will sign the South Asian Development Fund at the summit, which he said would be an "important instrument bringing visible, tangible and concrete benefits to the people of the member states".

He also said the programming committee meetings, which finished yesterday, have also chalked out details of a regional counter-terror pact that has been in the works since 2002.

"Our delegation which is already there has also informed me that we may be in the final stages of negotiating a convention on the Mutual Legal Assistance on Criminal Matters," Iftekhar said.

The foreign adviser, attending his second summit as adviser, also welcomed the decision to base the headquarters of the South Asian Regional Standards Organisation (SARSO) in Dhaka.

He said Saarc should also work to replicate the success of regional groupings in Southeast Asia and Europe to embrace the "dawning of the new Asian era".

"We will make best efforts to render the organisation into people's Saarc," he said.

Earlier yesterday, Iftekhar sent a congratulatory letter to the newly appointed Thai Foreign Minister Taj Bunag.

He also received Singapore High Commissioner Verghese Mathews. Mathews said Singapore investors are keen on improving the \$1 billion investment in Bangladesh.

Tk 186 crore

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The cases will be filed under sections 409, 109, and 34 of penal code and 5 (2) of the corruption prevention act 1947.

The communications ministry had moved to find out if there were any financial irregularities after toll collection from the bridge and highway rose significantly with the caretaker government taking over early last year.

TONGI-ASHULIA
Sixteen RHD staff including three superintendent engineers and seven deputy department engineers are likely to be charged in the case to be filed for graft in toll collection on Tongi-Ashulia road.

A deputy assistant engineer, four ward supervisors and an office assistant might also be named accused.

A six-member committee formed by the communications ministry to investigate the allegations found that Tk 12.52 crore of toll money was embezzled in each of the years 2005 and 2006.

The ministry enquiry also yielded that during the same period Tk 3.43 lakh was embezzled a day while Tk 1.02 crore a month.

The RHD began charging tolls for the Tongi-Ashulia highway in May 2005. Before that, the work would be leased out to private firms.

The amount of tolls collected rose by more than double last year while the number of vehicles using the highway in 2005 and 2006 was only 19.12% and 11.50% less than that in 2007.

The tolls realised in 2005 and 2006 totalled Tk 3.98 crore and Tk 5.56 crore against standard estimates of Tk 9.23 crore and Tk 13.84 crore.

The ACC probe found that Tk 4.24 crore and Tk 7.32 crore were embezzled in those years, sources said.

After the military-backed interim administration took office the rate of toll collection shot up to Tk 4.93 lakh from Tk 1.49 lakh a day.

MEGHNA AND MEGHNA-GOMATI
Twenty-one people including one

from Bromas Joint Venture, the private firm overseeing the computerised toll collection for the bridge, are likely to be charged in the case to be filed for causing a loss of Tk 174.35 crore to the government.

A former superintendent engineer, an incumbent superintendent engineer, three deputy divisional engineers, nine deputy assistant engineers and six work supervisors (toll collectors) might also be accused by the anti-graft body.

The investigation revealed that the RHD staff in question, mostly posted at the toll plaza since 2002, used fake money receipts or no receipt in realising the money they pocketed. They also did not register the actual number of vehicles that crossed the bridge.

According to the ACC probe, Tk 20.87 crore, Tk 43.29 crore, Tk 42.03 crore, Tk 37.68 crore and Tk 28.10 crore were embezzled at the plaza in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Sources said the number of vehicles using the bridge in 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 was 35.66%, 30.04%, 25.37%, 19.12% and 11.50% less than that in 2007.

2 robbers

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Sub-inspector Afzal Hossain, constables Md Shamim and Md Sahadat Hossain were also injured in the shootout. They are receiving treatment at a local hospital.

Police also recovered two revolvers, a gun and nine rounds of bullet from the scene.

The two were accused in several criminal cases on different charges including murder and looting, police said.

The bodies were sent to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) morgue for autopsy.

Two separate cases were filed with Banaripara Police Station.

EC for adequate

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magistrates will help security personnel maintain law and order on polling day. Each mobile court will have jurisdiction over two or three wards of a city corporation or municipality. The four city corporations and nine municipalities have a total of 199 wards.

The mobile court ordinance however says it is the responsibility of law enforcement agencies to assist the executive magistrates in discharging their duties.

According to the EC letter, upon directives from the establishment ministry, divisional commissioners and district magistrates of the electoral areas concerned will ensure deployment of magistrates.

Copies of the letter were also sent to the secretaries of home and law ministries, inspector general of police, chief metropolitan magistrates of four city corporations and divisional commissioners concerned.

PUNISHABLE OFFENCES
Electoral offences to be tried by mobile courts include canvassing for votes on polling day, seeking vote from any voter, persuading a voter not to cast vote in the election or for a particular candidate, disturbing or annoying a voter, interfering with discharge of duties by polling officials, persistently shouting in such a manner that is audible within polling stations and using loudspeakers or amplifying sounds audible within polling stations.

Electoral rules also impose restrictions on convening, attending or persuading people to join public meetings within

electoral areas during a period of 48 hours ending at midnight following conclusion of polls.

An individual might be sentenced to imprisonment for different terms along with fine for violation of the rules.

SC upholds

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and independence of the judiciary.

Advocate Tajul Islam, a writ petitioner, yesterday told The Daily Star that since the chamber judge of the Appellate Division did not pass any stay order on the HC verdict, the judgment declaring the contempt of court ordinance 2008 would remain in force.

7 JMB men
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Bhai--were dropped as they were hanged earlier.

The JMB militants had exploded bombs on the premises of the judge's court, DC office, and at New Market, new bus terminal and Nohata simultaneously at about 11:05am on August 17, 2005.

Sub Inspector Moklesur Rahman of Sadar Police Station filed a case on the same day.

After investigating the case, DB police submitted a charge sheet with the court accusing the seven militants on November 17, 2005.

After further investigation, DB officer Mohammad Mortaza submitted a charge sheet with the same court against the seven militants on April 9, 2007.

The court fixed next hearing on August 13.

Salman, Sohel

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directors Iqbal Ahmed and MA Qasem.

Of the accused, Salman F Rahman is now in jail custody while the other five have been absconding since the case was filed.

The IO prayed for issuing arrest warrants against the absconding accused and the order to attach their properties.

He also prayed for dropping charges against former managing director of IFIC Bank Ataul Haque as the allegations brought against him were not proved.

ACC Assistant Director Muhammad Mahbubul Alam filed the case against Salman F Rahman and his family members evaded Tk 24,104,343 in income tax from 1995 to 2005.

Judge Azizul Haque took the charges into cognisance after the hearing and directed the jail authorities to produce Salahuddin before the court on July 31. The court also issued arrest warrants against his wife, sons and daughter.

In his order, the judge said the charges brought against the accused were primarily proved and they should be brought under trial.

The former lawmaker and his family members gave false information about their real income and expenditure to the income tax department, the complainant added.

Child labour

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Star correspondent Mahtabi Zaman carried out a report headlined "Jamdani industry thrives on child labour" in the July 28 issue of the newspaper depicting the ordeals of the children working in the Jamdani industry.

The government handout said that the government team did not find any arrangement of treatment, education and entertainment for the child workers in the palls.

Children are employed at very young ages and are put to work in exchange for very low wages or mere food. Also there are no fixed working hours for them, it said, adding that the ministry will soon take necessary steps in this regard.

The team comprising of a deputy secretary of labour and employment ministry and other officials concerned visited different Jamdani production villages in Rupganj upazila.

Dhaka-Ctg

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extraordinary and beyond its jurisdiction, the purchase committee members expressed serious resentment, sources close to the committee told the news agency.

Explaining the matter, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam, who presided over the Purchase Committee meeting, told newsmen that the committee asked the IMED of the planning ministry to make a comprehensive investigation as to why and under what basis the communications ministry cancelled the tender.

"This is absolutely beyond their (communications ministry) jurisdiction. The cabinet purchase committee is the only authority to make the final decision," he said.

Adopting other decisions the committee approved a proposal of the industries ministry to import 10,000 tonnes of phosphoric acid for a DAP fertiliser factory of the BCIC.

The committee also approved a proposal of the National Board of Revenue to procure and install a scanner machine at the Chittagong port. The scanner machine will cost Tk 43.40 crore.

Priority gas

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Commerce Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman who chaired the meeting told journalists following the meeting, "These are preliminary recommendations that would be finalised in another meeting in Dhaka."

The final recommendations would be placed before the chief adviser and the cabinet for approval at a meeting scheduled for August 13 in Chittagong.

The recommendations would be implemented soon after they are approved, Zillur added.

Dr M Tamim, special assistant to the CA on power, energy and mineral resources divisions, Brig Gen (ret'd) MA Malek, special assistant to the CA on social welfare, post and telecommunications ministries, Jalal Ahmed, chairman of Petrobangla, Manjur Alam, acting mayor of Chittagong City Corporation and Shah Muhammad Akhteruddin, chairman of Chittagong Development Authority attended the meeting among others.

Petrobangla Chairman Jalal Ahmed said gas supply would increase in Chittagong by December this year as two wells at Bakhrabad Gas Fields are expected to start production by that time.

Dr M Tamim in his speech said measures would be taken to provide adequate gas connections to industrial units in Chittagong before September this year and restore normalcy in gas supply by March next year.

MA Malek suggested tax exemption for import and manufacturing of solar panels and energy saving bulbs to reduce the pressure on electricity.

Six killed

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Sayyuddin. They were admitted to Faridpur Medical College Hospital (FMCH) and Bhanga Health Complex.

People not so seriously injured took first aid from hospitals and clinics.

The bodies were sent to Faridpur Medical College morgue for autopsies.

Drivers of the vehicles managed to escape arrest.

JP to contest

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the country into eight provinces for decentralisation of power. He said no government can sustain concentrating all powers at the centre.

Rawshan Ershad in her speech urged the JP leaders and workers to strengthen the party at grass-roots level.

Party leaders ABM Ruhul Amin Howlader, Karimuddin Bharrasa, Brig Gen (ret'd) Kazi Mahmud Hasan, Abu Hossain Babla, Saidur Rahman, Fakir Ashraf and Anwara Begum addressed the conference.

Twin blasts kill 17

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neighbourhood on Istanbul's European side, officials said.

A small bomb went off around 10:00 p.m. (1900 GMT) Sunday, creating the initial panic.

A second, more powerful explosion followed about 10 minutes later, some 50 metres (yards) away, as passers-by and residents milled around the site of the first explosion.

The second bomb claimed all the lives, including that of a 12-year-old girl hit in the heart by a piece of shrapnel as she stood on her fourth-storey balcony, Anatolia news agency reported.

There were scenes of panic with people covered in blood fleeing the area littered with debris and shattered glass.

"People gathered after the first blast. There was a real crowd. Five to 10 minutes later there was another one, much stronger than the first," resident Alaattin Hatayoglu told Anatolia.

"The building I was in was shaking. People were wounded in a 40-metre radius," he said.

Asked whether the PKK was responsible, Governor Guler said, "a link is seen with the separatist organisation" and police are working on it, Anatolia reported.

But a senior Kurdish militant denied any PKK involvement.

"The Kurdish liberation movement is not involved in this attack," Zubeyir Aydar told the pro-PKK Firat news agency.

He said the attack was the work of "sinister forces" timed to coincide with the AKP trial and the pending case against the shadowy "Ergenekon" nationalist group alleged to have organised attacks and plotted assassinations to create chaos and prompt a military coup against Erdogan's government.

The Turkish army has stepped up operations against the PKK, striking the rebels both inside Turkey and in neighbouring northern Iraq, where they take refuge.

Turkish jets bombed PKK camps in the Qandil mountains in northern Iraq, a major rebel stronghold, on Sunday morning.