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PROCUREMENT RULES

Govt now to review proposed changes

Decision follows Muhith's meeting with WB, ADB

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

In the face of objection from major multi-lateral donors, the government is going to revise its proposed amendments to the Public Procurement Act/Rules (PPA/PPR) regarding qualification of bidders for contracts.

Sources said it will devise a formula combining requirements of qualification and room for freshers for awarding contracts.

A decision to this effect was taken yesterday at a meeting with representatives of the World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith at his office.

Sources said some sections in the amendments would be decided by experts of both the sides -- the government and donors -- at meetings.

Muhith told journalists yesterday that qualification (for getting contracts) is

necessary but it has to be ensured that freshers also get scope.

Earlier, the government had identified about 50 articles of the PPA/PPR for amendments. The proposed amendment to one of the articles says, "For contract up to Tk 2 crore, there should not be any qualification requirement in terms of work experience or annual turnover."

Both the WB and ADB conveyed the government their serious objection to amending some of the articles. The WB objected to proposed changes in six articles and said, "These could have serious implications for the bank's processing of future budget support operations and could restrict its ability to rely on the country system (PPA/PPR) in future operations."

Later, the government discussed the issue at several internal meetings, and took it up with representatives of the WB

and ADB yesterday. The sources said a consensus has now been reached so that corruption does not occur, and implementation of the annual development programme (ADP) is not hindered. The government has changed its original position regarding the amendments.

Muhith said the decisions now taken in this regard would be sent to the prime minister very soon for approval. "We do not see the non-requirement of qualification from the same angle as you (journalists) see. Qualification is necessary, at the same time it has to be seen so that the freshers get chance."

In reply to a question, Muhith said when a tie occurs in awarding contract among competitors, the necessity of lottery arises. Loopholes in laws however would be sealed so that corruption does not occur.

Demo at DU continues

DU CORRESPONDENT

With symbolic coffins, aggrieved leaders and activists of Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) yesterday staged demonstrations on Dhaka University (DU) campus demanding expulsion of four JCD leaders of DU unit to be declared illegal.

They also demanded changes in central JCD leadership to save the organisation from ongoing conspiracy.

Top leaders of the newly formed JCD central committee had dissolved three units including that of DU expelling its four leaders Monday night. The expelled leaders were accused of rebellion against the central leadership.

During yesterday's demonstration on DU campus, protesting JCD activists chanted slogans against the decision and vowed to continue their protest until their demands are met.

The student wing of BNP is suffering from serious internal conflicts as a large section of its leaders and activists have

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JCD lacks constitution

'Special power' in draft paper makes BNP chairperson all powerful

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and RAKIB AHAMMED

Since Jatiyabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) came into being, Khaleda Zia has formed all its central committees, except for one, with "non-students and aged leaders" by dint of "special power" bestowed on her in the draft constitution of JCD.

BNP chairperson, if special necessity demands, can dissolve or suspend any committees and form full-fledged or convening committees in their stead," provision 18 of the draft constitution reads.

The new registration law, however, says a registered political party cannot have any student wing, which BNP accepted before the last parliamentary polls.

BNP's student affairs secretary announced the new committee of JCD on July 1 with Khaleda's approval in a blatant violation of these provisions.

JCD hasn't had a permanent constitution to run the organisation since its inception in January 1979. It formulated a draft constitution during Nasiruddin Pintu Sahabuddin Laltu committee in 1998, which was revised on April 5, 1999, said JCD leaders.

But the organisation later could not approve the draft constitution through a council due to the non-cooperation of the BNP high-ups, they

added. As per the draft, the councillors through a national council will elect the JCD central executive committee. But Khaleda has repeatedly misused her authority given to her in section 18 of the draft constitution.

Moreover, BNP high-ups included a post of students' affairs secretary in the party constitution from the very beginning to control JCD.

Previously-selected student leaders who were aged and not regular students but made president or general secretary of JCD include Aman Ullah Aman, Fazlul Haque Milon, Nasiruddin Pintu, Sahabuddin Laltu, Azizul Bari Helal, Shafiqul Bari Babu.

JCD in its entire history only managed to form a central committee with Rizvi Ahmed and Ilias Ali through a council in 1993 that was suspended after 19 months of its formation.

Khaleda, however, approved five top leaders of the newly formed 101-member JCD central executive committee on Wednesday night creating serious resentment among a large portion of JCD leaders and activists.

All top leaders of the newly-formed committee including President Sultan Salauddin Tuku and General Secretary Amirul Islam Khan Alim have completed their studentships ages ago. The draft constitution has a provision that

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WAR CRIME TRIAL

Bill placed to change law

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bill was placed in parliament yesterday seeking amendment to the International Crimes (Tribunal) Act 1973 to try any individual and group of individuals on charge of 1971 war crimes.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafiqul Ahmed placed the bill with a proposal for including a provision in it for empowering the government to file appeal with the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court against the

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45 more cases against AL men to be withdrawn

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The metropolitan public prosecutor (MPP) yesterday recommended withdrawal of 45 more cases filed against Awami League (AL) leaders and activists, considering those 'politically motivated' and meant for 'harassment'.

MPP Mohammad Abdullah Abu made the recommendation after scrutinising the case dockets and documents, sources said.

The accused in the cases

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A rally in front of the BNP office at Naya Paltan blocks almost an entire side of the road triggering a traffic jam that lasted till evening yesterday.

BB suspends staff over fake note

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladesh Bank Motijheel office employee was suspended yesterday after a counterfeit Tk 500 note was found in one of the central bank's wads of 500-taka notes.

An investigation team was also formed to probe the incident.

A Bangladesh Bank high official said a client of Habib Bank registered a complaint yesterday morning with the central bank saying that he found a fake note in a Bangladesh Bank Tk 500 note

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Sohel Taj yet to return

Leave period ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj did not return home from the US, although his leave was over on Tuesday.

According to the schedule of his leave, the state minister, who had left for the US on June 9, was supposed to be back in his ministry office yesterday, but he was not there. No one in the ministry or the cabinet could also say when he will return or whether he had extended his leave.

"We heard that he will

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Consider transit commercially

Says BB governor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transit and transshipment issues should be considered from a commercial viewpoint to tap the country's growth potential, Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Atiur Rahman said yesterday.

These issues had earlier been considered only on the basis of security undermining the areas where Bangladesh has clear and robust comparative advantages, said Atiur at a seminar on "Intra-Regional Investment and Regional Integration in South Asia" at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

"Transit and transshipment have become controversial subjects. Many people point out to the issues relating them to security. But they need to be addressed from a commercial point of view for securing substantial welfare gains," said the BB governor.

He said obstructing trade on security grounds is tantamount to compromising the country's growth and development.

"Measures may be taken to enhance security, but not at the cost of trade," the BB governor said while speaking as the chief guest.

Atiur said countries like the US and the UK have enhanced security following terrorist attacks but at the same time they made sure that trade and investment flows are not affected

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Dr Atiur Rahman

Troublemakers to be executed

Warns Chinese CP chief; troops pour into Urumqi

AGENCIES, Urumqi

Hundreds of helmeted troops in riot gear swarmed the central square of the capital of western Xinjiang yesterday after ethnic riots left at least 156 dead.

The city's Communist Party boss promised those behind the killings would be executed.

Ethnic clashes have paralysed Urumqi over the past several days with minority Uighur and Han Chinese mobs roaming the streets and attacking each other. The violence forced President Hu Jintao to cut short a trip to Italy where he was taking part in a Group of Eight summit an unprecedented move by a Chinese leader.

The government further responded yesterday to the violence by pouring columns of troops into the far-flung province, hundreds of which were stationed in People's Square in the middle of the city.

Communist Party chief Li Zhi told a televised news conference that many people had been arrested, including students.

"To those who committed crimes with cruel means, we will execute them," he said, adding government forces would crack down on any security risk. He did not give details.

Mobs wielding makeshift weapons roamed this restive city, with vigilantes pummeling two Uighur Muslims, despite the massive show of force by Chinese troops that brought some calm.

In Urumqi, the capital of the remote northwest Xinjiang region where 156 people died in unrest on Sunday, army helicopters circled overhead as thousands of soldiers and riot police filled the city shouting out "protect the people".

"We support this," said a 45-year-old Han Chinese as he watched the troops roll by in trucks.

"But they should have got here sooner. It took them three days to do this. Why so long?"

After authorities blamed Muslim Uighurs for Sunday's unrest that also left more than 1,000 people injured, Han Chinese took to the streets Tuesday with shovels, meat cleavers and other makeshift weapons vowing to defend themselves.

After a night-time curfew was declared on Tuesday, Chinese authorities appeared determined to show they were able to maintain order.

Thousands of riot police wearing helmets

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4 JMB men held, 6 firearms seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rab personnel yesterday recovered six firearms and 10 bullets from Chapainawabganj and arrested four JMB militants, including two ehsars (full-time members), in three districts.

Based on arrested Selim alias Saifullah's statement, a team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-5 raided Selim's father-in-law's house around 3:00am yesterday.

Director of Rab-5 Lt Col Israt Hossain said the team recovered six local one-shot guns and ammunition digging around Selim's father-in-law Quamruzzaman's house. None was arrested during the operation, he added.

Selim, chief military commander of JMB offshoot Islam O Muslim, was taken to Rajshahi Rab headquarters and was interrogated overnight after his arrest on Tuesday. They recovered a foreign 9mm pistol, nine bullets and two empty magazines from his possession.

Meanwhile, Rab arrested another active member of JMB Delwar Hossain, 22, at his house in Jagadishpur under Gaibandha district following confessional statement of Selim. Delwar is an accused in two murder cases.

Another Rab-5 team arrested JMB militant Ishaq Pramanik, 48, of Konopara village in Bagmara. Ishaq, an associate of executed JMB leader Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai, is an accused in the Golam Rabbani Mukul murder case.

Bangla Bhai and his men kidnapped Mukul from his house at Bagmara and tortured him hanging upside down from a tree. Mukul later succumbed to his injuries at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

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OnlinePoll

Do you think existing punishment (Max Tk 10 lakh fine & max 10yrs jail) is enough for tree plunderers, who razed 40-acre forest belt near Sonachhari coast to development-breaking yards?

Yes (21.45%)
No (75.82%)
No Comments (2.73%)

Total votes: 550

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think JS body's recommendation to empower National Human Rights Commission to look into allegations of human rights violation by any disciplined forces would stop extra-judicial killing?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

| July 9 | | |
|---------|------|--------|
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 5-10 | 5-45 |
| Zohr | 1-45 | 2-15 |
| Asr | 6-00 | 6-15 |
| Maghrib | 7-55 | 8-00 |
| Esha | 9-17 | 9-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation