

JCD convening committee full of non-students!

Where is the promised change?

FOllowing on the heels of the formation of the JCD central committee, that witnessed, rightly so, a widespread resentment for having members belonging to every profession but students in the body, comes the new convening committee of the Dhaka University wing of the Chhatra Dal that looks equally malformed. For, this is again, reportedly, composed not only of non-students but also some persons of questionable reputation, of people who have done time in prison, and alleged drug peddlers. This is an inexplicable move given that the RPO requires that student bodies be formed entirely of genuine regular students.

The relevant RPO provisions in the essence require a national political party to sever links with its student, teacher and labour wings. And these bodies are to function exclusively as self-governing and independent entities. Their central and executive committees are required to be formed not by the command of the party central committee but by the free will and choice of their members. But it's contrary that is happening, at least with the student body, with the BNP central leadership pushing its choice down the throat of its student body. This is in violation of the commitment made by the party, to the Election Commission before the December parliamentary election, to sever all links with associate bodies.

The BNP has sought time extension of six months for submission of the party's constitution to the EC incorporating, among other things, changes related to the party's relationship with its teacher, labour and student wings, in conformity with the RPO requirement for de-linking all connections with them. Does it give the BNP any license to continue its link with affiliated bodies as heretofore?

One cannot but be disappointed having not seen any signs as yet of change in the BNP's mindset. The BNP's refusal to offer anything new in the face of heightened public expectation for a change in political culture can only diminish the party's image.

Khaleda Zia as the party chief has sent wrong signals to the youth that are bound to mislead them apart from doing immense damage to the process of growth of young leadership from amongst the genuine students that is so very necessary for rendering politics corruption free.

We congratulate the Bronze winners

They have laid the foundation for a bigger achievement

OUR budding mathematicians have done it at the International Math Olympiad in Bremen, Germany. They have won two bronze medals to register Bangladesh's name in the list of medal winners in this prestigious event -- a cerebral warfare among the very best from all over the world. The day is not far off when hopefully we can clinch silver or gold. Our congratulations to Samin Riasat and Nazia Choudhury for their maiden win.

This was an opportunity to prove that we as a nation are not lagging behind others in mathematical pursuits or the games of the brain which need great intelligence and analytical power. It was a pleasant surprise to Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury, the President of Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee, who said that their goal was to win a medal in 2010. It has come a year earlier! We share their joy and happiness.

Excelling in mathematics is needed not only to do well in a Math Olympiad, but it is an essential precondition for improving the overall standard of education, particularly science education, in the country. Our students should feel encouraged by the great achievements of Samin and Nazia. It has indeed been an inspired and inspiring performance.

We also appreciate the services rendered by the academics like Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury and Professor Zafar Iqbal for their great contribution to introducing and popularizing math competitions for students, which indeed paved the way for the success in Bremen. When there is a Math Olympiad, like any other sporting event, it shows that it is a highly interesting subject not to be dreaded.

Success in such events is a yardstick for measuring the position of our students vis-à-vis those from other countries in solving mathematical problems in an intensely competitive atmosphere. So, apart from demonstrating mathematical skills our students have shown a competitive flair at that level.

The organisers of math competitions have to make best out of the triumph in Bremen. There are little mathematical geniuses in our schools who can scale great heights if they get the opportunity to do so. Find them out and create the facilities that they deserve. Mastery of mathematics can elevate us to a higher pedestal in the intellectual world.

EDITORIAL

Making ad hoc appointments

Some analysts have expressed concern that the open-door policy for recruitment to revenue budget posts on ad hoc basis, by-passing the PSC, may lead to politicisation of bureaucracy along ruling party lines.

M. ABDUL LATIF MONDAL

SOME daily national newspapers reported on July 14 that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina ordered appointments on an ad hoc basis to the vacant posts in the public service, skipping the process of the PSC, amid complaints that manpower shortage was hampering posts in ministries.

She assigned five of her advisers to prepare a report on vacant posts and suggest ways to fill them. She issued the instruction at a closed-door meeting of ministers after the formal cabinet meeting in the cabinet room of the Secretariat on July 13.

Appointments to posts in the public service on ad hoc basis were made earlier also. In Pakistan days, such appointments were made sparingly. Even the purpose of such ad hoc appointments was mostly misused. A memorandum issued on May 31, 1960 by the central public service commission of Pakistan shows that the CPSC cautioned the ministries to appoint only those candidates on ad hoc basis who possessed all the qualifications laid down by the ministries for those posts. When unqualified persons holding ad hoc appointments applied to the commission in response to the advertisement, they had to be ruled out.

A lot of ad hoc appointments were made in the early days of Bangladesh. Considering the ground realities, the government framed a rule known as "Regularisation of ad hoc Appointment Rules, 1983" to regularise persons appointed on ad hoc basis at any time between the April 9, 1972, and January 24, 1982, either by promotion or by direct appointment under some relaxed conditions.

Records show that the establishment

ministry earlier issued a number of office memoranda directing the ministries that the ad hoc appointees should possess the requisite qualification and experience prescribed for the posts. But such requests were not always complied with. As a result, many ad hoc appointees found it difficult when facing competition from outsiders for regular appointment to those posts.

So the government had to swallow the bitter pill by regularising the ad hoc appointments made between January 25, 1982 and December 31, 1993 through another rule dated December 3, 1994, and then finally stopping further ad hoc appointment to any post in revenue budget. This is the position that stands at the moment.

As stated above, the government has had a bitter experience with appointments on ad hoc basis.

The government is also well aware of the effects of short-cut method of recruitment

of cadre service officers. In 1973, the then AL government recruited a large number of bureaucrats from amongst the freedom fighters without properly going through the PSC's long established procedure of recruitment. During the regime of H. M. Ershad, a large number of magistrates were recruited in 1983 through special examination consisting of only 300 marks -- viva voce test 200 marks and psychological and intelligence test 100 marks -- to man the newly created upazilas and districts.

Some analysts have expressed concern that the open-door policy for recruitment to revenue budget posts on ad hoc basis, by-passing the PSC, may lead to politicisation of bureaucracy along ruling party lines. This may help create vote banks for ruling party for the next general election and other elections.

In view of what has been stated above, the following suggestions are made for consideration of the government:

- There may not be two opinions that public offices are over-staffed. It is high time for rightsizing the manpower in public offices.
- Ad hoc appointment to posts within the jurisdiction of the PSC should be made sparingly and they should be limited primarily to technical posts.
- Only persons having the requisite qualification, experience and age for such technical and sensitive non-technical posts should be appointed on ad hoc basis.
- Out of 28 or so BCS cadre services, the cadre strength of BCS (Education) and BCS (Health) is very large. The government has reportedly decided to establish a separate PSC for recruitment, promotion, etc of teachers at government schools, colleges, institutes, etc. So, the government may consider establishing a separate PSC for BCS (Health) cadre. This will ease the pressure on the present PSC.



Vacancy.

AMIRUL RAJU

M. Abdul Latif Mondal is a former Secretary to the Government.

The climate change challenge

Global climate change leadership isn't coming from the North, thanks to its preoccupation with the grave economic downturn. Nor is it coming from the South. Southern governments are rightly suspicious of the North's seriousness about sacrificing its disproportionate carbon-space. But they're not on a low-carbon path.

PRAFUL BIDWAI

THOSE who expected the Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised countries and the 17-nation Major Economies Forum (MEF) meetings in Italy to take a big climate-related initiative will be disappointed. This was their last summit before the major climate conference in Copenhagen.

The Northern G-8 countries only pledged to limit the global temperature rise to 2OC and reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050 -- without stating the base-year. There were no targets for 2020, which are far more important. It's a serious matter. Many industrialised countries won't meet even the modest Kyoto Protocol target of 5% GHG cuts by 2008-12 over 1990. If 2005/2006 is smugged in as the base, they'll get a licence to emit 15% more.

The North's GHG-reduction plans largely rely on offsets -- trading carbon credits with the South -- than cutting their own emissions. The United States' new mandates a paltry 17% cut by 2020 (over 2005) and 83% by 2050 -- an unacceptably distant date. This too relies on flawed cap-and-trade systems which gift away 85% of quotas to polluting corporations.

The world needs increasingly deeper GHG cuts -- between now and two to four decades. The globe is racing towards a tipping point beyond which no corrective action will work.

Global climate change leadership isn't coming from the North, thanks to its preoccupation with the grave economic downturn. Nor is it coming from the South. Southern governments are rightly suspicious of the North's seriousness about sacrificing its disproportionate carbon-space. But they're not on a low-carbon path.

China has overtaken the US as the world's largest emitter, and is adding steadily to GHGs by burning coal and building furiously. India is now the world's fourth emitter. India's emissions are rising above the global average rate.

Southern governments rightly emphasise the right to development and argue that the North is responsible for the bulk of GHG accumulations and must cut these urgently. It must also help the South financially and technologically to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

But the South is wrong to insist it'll

contribute one-half of all global emissions and by 2030, two-thirds. This does entail an obligation.

India has taken a particularly inflexible stand: it'll accept no GHG obligations, barring that its per capita emissions won't exceed the North's. To fight poverty and provide electricity to its power-deprived 600 million people, India says it must have high GDP growth. If this means large and

high GHG emissions, so be it!

India's position is flawed. Per capita measure are highly misleading in a divided, unequal society like India's with higher-than-Northern income differentials. India's emissions aren't growing

because of its poor, but because the rich are consuming voraciously, at rates 5 to 10 times higher than the poor.

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