

DELAY IN ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW PAY SCALE

Govt employees unhappy

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

Delay in the announcement of new proposed pay scale has led to widespread dissatisfaction among the government employees in the secretariat as well as other government offices across the country, according to a confidential report of Special Branch of Police.

Also, the huge gap between different tiers in the proposed salary structure is fuelling resentment among the employees, the report said and called for the government's intervention in addressing the issue.

The report was submitted to the home ministry

recently.

The report has put forward two-point recommendation, saying that the only way to remove the negative attitude of the employees towards the government is to announce the pay scale without further delay.

It also suggested introducing a single pay scale for all employees of the republic. Special allowance might be introduced for the special category of employees, said the report, adding that otherwise discrimination in pension and gratuity would be increased for different pay scales.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith has said the new pay

scale would be announced in November. Earlier, he told the media that the pay scale would be announced after Eid-ul-Fitr. He, however, said it would be effective from July 1, 2009 whenever the pay scale is announced.

The police report said some employees' unions in the secretariat have been taking preparation to stage demonstrations to press home their demand for quick implementation of the new pay scale.

The unions have already submitted memorandum to the finance minister with a call for immediate implementation of the pay scale with narrow gaps between

various levels in the salary structure.

A group of employees has also met the prime minister and urged her to reduce the gap in the salary structure.

Recently, a section of employees even tried to lay a siege to the finance ministry to press home their demands. After their attempt, security measures have been beefed up at the secretariat.

The finance ministry, however, has now been reviewing the proposed pay scale and would finalise it soon at the cabinet meeting after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returns home from abroad, sources said.

MEETING OF JOINT COMMITTEE ON MANPOWER

Oman to check irregularities in labour recruitment

Omani team urged to ensure that employers pay salary to workers thru' banks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday asked an Oman delegation to take action against manpower brokers engaged in visa trading, which increases the migration cost of Bangladeshi workers.

In response, the delegation has agreed to take steps to check irregularities in the labour recruitment process and bring down the migration cost, but asked Bangladesh to curb anomalies in the labour migration process in the country.

Both the sides exchanged their views at a meeting of the joint committee on manpower at the state guesthouse Padma in the capital. Joint

Secretary of Overseas Employment Ministry Mansur Raja Chowdhury led the Bangladesh team while Oman's Adviser for Labour Care Saleh Bin Ayeel Al Amri led the Oman delegation.

They elaborately discussed the issue of welfare of Bangladeshi workers in Oman. At present, 2.12 lakh Bangladeshi are working there.

High migration cost has been one of the major problems in the overseas employment sector. For Bangladeshi workers going to Oman, the cost ranges from Tk 2 lakh to Tk 3 lakh mainly due to existence of manpower brokers at several levels at both the ends. But the figure should not cross Tk 50,000, officials

say.

At the meeting, both sides discussed the issue and agreed that they would work together to prevent such malpractice.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry Deputy Secretary Kazi Abul Kalam told The Daily Star that Bangladesh requested the Oman delegation to develop a mechanism so that visas issued by the authorities in Oman could be verified online to check visa fraudulence.

The delegation members said they would discuss the issue with the authorities concerned.

Bangladesh also requested them to ensure that the

employers pay the salary to the workers through banks.

The Oman delegation, on the other hand, said Bangladesh should make sure that the workers going to Oman have skills appropriate for the job.

"Despite economic recession, Oman needs more skilled and semi-skilled workers in construction and agriculture sectors. In 2008-09, recruitment of foreign workers' increased by 18 percent," a member of the Oman delegation told The Daily Star after the meeting.

But, he said, Oman wants to check any forms of human trafficking and fraudulent practices and improve the recruitment process.

HC declares termination of Prof Tahir illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday in a verdict declared illegal the termination of Prof Dr Mohammad Tahir from the office of vice chancellor (VC) of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU).

The HC bench of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui delivered the verdict upon a writ petition filed by Prof Tahir.

The court, however, ruled that there is no scope to reinstate Prof Tahir in the post of VC of BSMMU, since two VCs were already appointed in that post after his dismissal, the lawyers said.

They said the caretaker government terminated Prof Tahir on November 4, 2008 from his service on different allegations.

He filed a writ petition with the High Court on November 18 the same year, challenging the termination order.

Barrister Rafique-Ul-Huq assisted by Barrister Zafarullah Chowdhury appeared for the petitioner while Barrister Tanjib-ul-Alam represented BSMMU.

JU admission test from Nov 2

A JU CORRESPONDENT

The first year honours admission test at Jahangirnagar University (JU) for academic year 2009-10 will begin on November 2.

Details about schedule and seat plan will be published in newspapers and website of the university (www.juuniv.edu), says a press release.

DHAKA TODAY

Lecture

Asiatic Society of Bangladesh organises Munshi Aftabuddin Memorial Lecture 2009. Venue: Society auditorium. Time: 4:30pm.

Workshop

Promoting Governance, Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (PROGATI) organises a workshop on 'The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General and the media: Working together to increase transparency and accountability'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 9:30am.

Condolence meeting

Children's Film Club of Bangladesh will hold a meeting to condole the death of its president Mahbub Matin. Venue: Public Library seminar room. Time: 4:00pm.

Withdraw cases against BNP leaders: Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday asked the government to withdraw all cases filed against party leaders including Chairperson Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman.

He said they would be forced to announce tougher programmes if the cases filed against his party leaders are not withdrawn soon.

"We gave the government time in last 10 months. But the government is still busy in carrying out torture and repression on opposition leaders and activists instead of meeting our demands," he said at a rally organised by Jatiyatabadi Swachhchasebak Dal in front of the BNP's central office at Naya Paltan in the city.

Demanding a halt to repression on opposition leaders and activists, he called

for immediate release of all the party leaders who are still in jail.

"You are withdrawing all the cases filed against your leaders and continuing those filed against our leaders. But there cannot be dual application of the same law," he said, accusing the government of obstructing justice by intervening into the activities of the courts.

"This government has failed in every sector. After making parliament dysfunctional, the Awami League is now working to make Bangladesh a failed state," he alleged.

Delwar said the BNP chairperson has shown enough tolerance and gave 10 months as breathing space for the government. "But they seem to pay no heed to our gesture and people are now eager to take to the streets," he headed.

BNP leaders Abdullah Al Noman, Goyeshwar Chandra

Roy, Zainal Abdin Farroque, Barkat Ullah Bulu, Moazzem Hossain Alal, Aman Ullah Aman, and Ruhul Kabir Rizvi also addressed the rally.

Habib-un-Nabi Sohel, newly nominated president of Swachhchasebak Dal, presided over the rally which was moderated by General Secretary Sarfat Ali Safu.

Meanwhile, BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury has said the BNP leaders who have negative perception among the people should quit the party.

"Good days will come if we can learn from the past," he said at a meeting organised by the National Youth Forum at the National Press Club in the city.

Chowdhury also termed August 15, 1975 and October 28, 2006 as turning point in the politics of Bangladesh and blamed Awami League for August 15 and BNP for October 28.

Body to ensure Nagar Bhaban security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday formed a committee to ensure security in Nagar Bhaban.

DCC Chief Engineer heads the committee. Armed Ansar men are deployed in the building. Officials who want to work after 5:00pm are requested to inform the chief engineer.

On Sunday night police recovered a body of an employee of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry from a balcony of the sixth floor of the DCC building. The committee was formed in this backdrop.

An unnatural death (UD) case was filed in this connection. Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Shahbagh Police Station Rezaul Karim told The Daily Star that he might have slaughtered himself with a blade and jumped from the building's higher floor to the balcony.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Medical College Morgue sources said the bones of the body have been broken which indicates that he could have jumped from upper floor or thrown by others.

Noor Muhammad's uncle Mujibul Haque told The Daily Star that he was a bit depressed due to his suspension from his job in March

2007 as he misbehaved with a deputy secretary of the CHT ministry. But that cannot be a cause for committing suicide, he said.

He had also served in jail in this connection as the deputy secretary had filed a case against him, Mujibul said. He

claimed that Noor might have been killed.

DCC sources said recovery of the body from the DCC compound created mystery as there had been clashes inside the DCC for tenders of different works for the past few months.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:22pm today and rises at 7:02am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 33.5 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 17.3 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi and Srimongal.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

| City/Town | Temperature in Celsius | | Humidity in percentage | |
|-------------|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
| | Max | Min | Morning | Evening |
| Dhaka | 32.3 | 23.0 | 45 | 49 |
| Chittagong | 31.8 | 22.4 | 73 | 69 |
| Rajshahi | 31.5 | 17.3 | 60 | 61 |
| Khulna | 32.0 | 22.0 | 67 | 81 |
| Barisal | 31.5 | 21.5 | 81 | 91 |
| Sylhet | 33.2 | 20.3 | 62 | 85 |
| Cox's Bazar | 33.3 | 23.0 | 64 | 68 |

SHIP-BREAKING YARDS HC rule on govt to monitor activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to regularly monitor the activities in the ship breaking yards as per relevant laws and its (HC) earlier directives.

The HC in March this year directed the government to ensure that ships are broken after ensuring safe working condition for the workers and making arrangements for disposal of hazardous waste and protection of environment.

The ship-breaking yards have to take or apply for environmental clearance from the government, it directed.

Government officials concerned and the authorities of Pakija Shipyard, Kabir Steel Yard and Crystal Shipyard have been asked to apply the rule within two weeks.

The HC bench comprising of Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui came up with the rule upon a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela).

The petition sought directions from the HC upon the respondents to ensure implementation of labour and environment-related laws in the operation of the ship breaking yards and to take appropriate actions against the non-compliant ship breakers/yard-owners.

It was stated in the petition that in view of the repeated failure by the respondents to enforce legal sanctions, the non-compliant and defiant activities of the ship breaking yards in the name of ship breaking continued resulting to the deaths and injuries of 16 labourers within a span of just seven months (from last March to October 2009). Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali moved the petition.

Ban activities of Shibir

Demands BCL

DU CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday demanded ban on the activities of Islami Chhatra Shibir at all educational institutions across the country.

Leaders of the BCL DU unit made the demand at a rally on Dhaka University (DU) campus on Sunday.

DU unit BCL President Sohel Rana Tipu, General Secretary Sajjad Saqib Badsha and leaders of different halls spoke at the rally.

BCL leaders demanded punishment to the cadres of Islami Chhatra Shibir, student organisation of Jamaat-e-Islami, involved in vandalism on Chittagong Medical College campus on Sunday. BCL also brought out a protest procession that paraded several streets on the campus.

The leaders said there should not be any room in the educational institutions for reactionary student bodies.

They called upon the student community to be united against Shibir.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal



Jalal Uddin Ahmed, one of the leading activists of the Language Movement in Pirojpur,

passed away due to old-age complications at his residence at Muslim Para in the town on Sunday night at the age of 82.

He left behind his son, two daughters and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Different organisations, leaders of major political parties and socio-cultural organisations expressed deep shock at the death of Jalal Ahmed.

Sudhir Sen, a senior journalist, freedom fighter and Language Movement veteran, passed away due to old-age complications at his hospital room residence in Barisal on Sunday night at the age of 85.

He left behind his wife, two sons, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death. People from all walks of life, including leaders of different socio-cultural organisations, paid their last respects to him on Ashwini Kumar Hall premises. He was also given state honour there.



Bangladesh Civil Students Rights Movement forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding removal of discrepancy between division and grade point system in examinations and protesting police attack on students.

Khaleda's remark on govt tenure anti-constitutional Says AL general secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) General Secretary Syed Ashrafur Islam yesterday termed BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's remark on the government tenure "anti-constitutional and anti-state" since only a no-confidence motion by majority in the parliament can oust the government.

"There is no scope to drive out an elected government without a no-confidence motion by majority in the parliament before its tenure ends," he said after attending a bilateral meeting with the representatives of United Kingdom's Labour Party, Conservative Party, Liberal Democratic Party, Westminster Foundation, among others, at

the AL president's political office at Dhanmondi.

Ashraf, also LGPD and cooperatives minister, criticised Khaleda's comment that the government wants to change the country's map.

"We established the country's map at the cost of 30 lakh freedom fighters. So, we know its dignity and how to protect the map," he added saying AL changed the map of her beloved Pakistan.

Ashraf said anti-liberation war forces along with those who do not believe in the independence of Bangladesh could change the country's map, not the AL. Those who believe in democracy and constitutional rule cannot make such statements, he added terming Khaleda's statements an attack

on democracy and constitution.

Khaleda Zia, who is also the opposition leader, said on Saturday the present government has to quit power before completion of its tenure. "They want to change the country's map instead of changing the fate of the people," she said.

On stopping tender manipulations and extortion by the party men across the country, he said these malpractices would be tackled strictly without considering the offenders' involvement with AL.

The AL leader also said they collected names of those leaders and workers involved in extortion, tender manipulations and criminal activities and would take actions soon.

Dhaka pushes for Food Bank

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finalise the constitution of the Saarc Food Bank to ensure food security of more than 1.5 billion people. However, steps are yet to be taken to make it functional.

The finance minister said the major nations of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) should concentrate more on the issue of cooperation to which Bangladesh was fully committed.

Speaking as the chief guest, Muhith said it is not enough to have food if people do not have access to it. This is where the central banks can play a key role by forming monetary policies to help accelerate growth.

Stressing implementation

of the Saarc Food Bank, Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque said relaxing tariff and non-tariff barriers and increasing trade facilities in the region might ensure food security.

"I hope political leaders of the region will come together to help this out," he said, adding that if global economic meltdown continues, the pressure on food, remittance and resources would go high. Bangladesh Bank (BB) Governor Atiur Rahman said by framing monetary policies the central banks could help overall growth giving importance to the marginal farmers and ensuring adequate supply of food.

He said the October 2009 Global Hunger Index reported "distressingly high"

hunger levels in south Asia with "alarming vulnerabilities for the three populous countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh."

To boost the credibility of the sharecroppers, marginal and landless farmers and the small and medium enterprises (SME) the central bank should provide loans, said the BB governor, citing examples that in many countries there are crop insurance for the farmers and repayment guarantees for the SMEs in mitigating loan default risks to help the agricultural and SME sectors.

BRAC Executive Director Mahabub Hossain and BB Deputy Governor Nazrul Huda also spoke at the symposium.

Petrobangla questions

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The letter said GTCL's tender documents on compressors had mentioned that once installed, gas inflow at the Muchai compressor station would be 937 PSIG, while the output pressure would be 1050 PSIG. It added, on August 24, Chevron in a presentation stated that as the gas reserves of Bibiyana, Jalalabad and Moulvibazar had increased, the gas flow at Muchai point would stick to 1050 PSIG till 2023.

It further added that in recent times, the GTCL MD had informed Petrobangla that the gas flow pressure at Muchai is already 1050 PSIG. "In such situation, there is no justification in installing a compressor station at Muchai," the letter said asking the MD to clarify his position on the matter.

Sources said, following the PM's approval of Chevron's project, Petrobangla invited

GTCL's experts several times to attend Petrobangla-Chevron Joint Management Committee (JMC) meeting on setting up the compressor station. But these officials declined saying that they did not want to be part of the controversy.

While talking to The Daily Star, a Chevron source says that the US company firmly believes that the Muchai compression project is a significant step towards increasing the supply of gas from several gas fields in the northeast part of Bangladesh to meet the energy needs of the country. The subject has been extensively discussed both from technical and financial standpoints before the government gave its decision in September.

The government's recent Network Analysis indicated that installing compressors at Muchai, Ashuganj and Elenga

on the nation's pipeline system is a long range plan to improve pipeline efficiency. Additionally, experts have readily concluded that the system will benefit from the installation at Muchai while the other two compressors undergo their bid and approval process," said the source.

Meanwhile, a team of Asian Development Bank (ADB) officials are now on a visit to Dhaka to discuss financing GTCL's remaining two compressor stations. Sources said the ADB has primarily agreed to provide \$110 million for the two compressors.

The tender to install three compressors has been cancelled twice. The first one was cancelled by the ADB in 2006 when it smelt foul play in the GTCL tender process while the second one was cancelled a few months ago.

Attorney gen gets death threat

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are not released in 15 days".

Meanwhile, Indian High Commissioner Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty also received an e-mail that issued threats on his life and also threatened to make bomb-attack at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.

MAHBUBBEYALAM The attorney general told The Daily Star that the letter might be sent by any lawyer who does not want him to run the case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia.

"I am running some crucial cases including a few against BNP leaders including Khaleda Zia. Several attempts have already been made to stop me from conducting the case against the BNP chief," he said.

The attorney general said most people did not know the correct spelling of his name but it was spelt correctly in the letter. It indicates that whoever had sent the letter knew him very well.

A quarter has been spreading propaganda against me. But I am not afraid of any threat that comes in the way of my duties," he said.

Alam said he informed the home minister and the police

about the letter. "The home minister told me not to panic and discharge my duties properly," he said.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku told reporters at his office that they had asked the law enforcement agencies to investigate the matter and take stern action against the culprits.

Tuku pointed his finger at anti-liberation war forces and associates of Bangabandhu's killers for making the death threat.

He said the anti-liberation war forces along with a vested quarter are out to destroy the spirit of the Liberation War but they will be resisted.

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President AFM Mesbahuddin and its Secretary SM Rezaul Karim condemned and protested the death threat to the attorney general and his family.

In a statement, they demanded immediate arrest and punishment of the people responsible.

They claimed that the death threat to the attorney general after the bomb attack on Taposh, a state lawyer in Bangabandhu murder case, indicates connection between

Bangabandhu's killers and the senders of the letter.

INDIAN HC

The Indian high commissioner informed the home ministry about the death threat mentioning that the threat was sent to him using the name of al-Qaeda.

Sources said after the incident, security measures have been beefed up at the high commissioners' offices and embassies of different countries as well as at the diplomatic zone.

Meanwhile, the home ministry also requested the Indian High Commission to shift its office.

Sources said additional Rab and police personnel have been deployed in the diplomatic zone to ensure security for the high commission offices.

According to the sources, on request of the Indian High Commission office, 11 check posts have been set up in the commission area while public movement has been restricted within 120 feet of the office perimeter.

Home Minister Sahara Khatun, State Minister for Home Affairs Shamsul Haque Tuku and Home Secretary Abdus Salam Sikder talked to Pinak and assured him of total security.