

Poor performing bureaucrats to face music

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and MABUL KALAM AZAD

The government is considering administrative actions against the civil servants who are performing poorly and using red tape for financial gains.

It is drawing up a list of officials--from deputy secretaries to secretaries-- not doing enough to implement policy decisions and development programmes, said administration sources.

"Of course, some secretaries are not working the way they should. They are disregarding the prime minister's repeated calls for the government officials to deliver. There's no alternative to taking actions against them," a minister told The Daily Star on Monday.

In return for anonymity, the cabinet member also observed that some top bureaucrats' negligence in discharging duties has been

slowing down the administration's work. "We need to know if they are doing it intentionally or they are just not capable of doing the job they have been assigned," added the minister who is also a government policymaker.

Another minister said some officials keep project files unattended for days to derive undue benefits out of those. "This cannot be tolerated, especially when we are trying to bring dynamism in the administration and accelerate development activities."

Even many officials at the secretariat, the country's administrative hub, are not happy with some of their peers' performance.

They said the government's various targets including Vision 2021 would not be fulfilled if the administration keeps working at a leisurely pace.

"Most of the officials are not performing as expected. It's because they lack commitment to

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Locals join in the army efforts to protect Sirajganj Town Protection Embankment yesterday. Breaches in this embankment on the Jamuna put the district town in great danger. Story on page 13

PHOTO: STAR

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT Special JS body to be formed today

BNP replies to AL letter, keeps from naming party rep

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament will constitute a 19-member all-party committee today for bringing major changes to the constitution.

The committee will have a post vacant for the main opposition BNP, which has yet to nominate an MP for the committee.

Treasury bench Chief Whip Abdus Shahid yesterday evening confirmed that the special JS body would be formed today.

Earlier on Sunday night, he sent a letter to the opposition leader, requesting her to nominate by yesterday a lawmaker for the committee.

In a late development, BNP last night replied to the ruling AL's letter. It however did not give name of its representative in the proposed parliamentary panel.

The decision to send a reply came when BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia met five senior party leaders and constitution experts at her Gulshan office in the evening.

Earlier in the day, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and finalised the names of 17 members of the committee to be formed under section-266 of the rules of procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad.

Lawmakers belonging to AL, Jatiya Party, Workers Party, Jatiya

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BSF kills 2 Bangladeshis

UNB, Chuadanga

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) shot dead two Bangladeshi cattle traders at Ghosalpur border of Jhenidah district yesterday morning.

Locals and family members of the victims said Obaidul Islam (32) of Padmapur village and Akbar Ali of Seja village left home in the morning for purchasing cattle across the border. BSF patrol team of Pakhiura outpost fired 10 or 12 gunshots killing Obaidul and Akbar on the spot.

Their bodies were dragged away by the killers to Haskhali thana.

Shayampur union parishad Chairman Shahanur Rahman told UNB by phone that cattle traders Obaidul and Akbar died of BSF bullets in the morning.

The BSF killing created tension in the area, he said.

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Dhaka, Delhi finalise 14 projects for mutual gain

\$1 billion loan from India to be utilised in the schemes

REZAUL KARIM

Bangladesh and India have finalised 14 development projects, particularly for infrastructure building, to be implemented in Bangladesh with Indian loan of \$1 billion.

Both the countries will be benefited directly as some of the projects are aimed at new connectivity between Bangladesh and India, officials say.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh announced a line of credit of \$1 billion during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's state visit to India on January 10-13 for a range of projects including railway infrastructure, supply of BG locomotives and passenger coaches, rehabilitation of Saidpur workshop, procurement of buses and dredging projects.

Sources say the Bangladesh side submitted 29 projects to India for utilising the one-billion-dollar loan. However, the two sides at a recent meeting held in New Delhi reviewed the 29 projects and finalised 14 for implementation.

Most of the projects are for development of railway infrastructure in Bangladesh.

Official sources say the projects have been sent to the planning ministry for final approval. After the ministry's clearance, the finance ministries of the two countries will sign a loan agreement to utilise the loan.

The first project is procurement of six high-powered dredgers at a cost of around \$71.7 million. One of the dredgers will be used for dredging at Mongla Port, three for Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and two for Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Hasina in her meeting with Singh sought Indian help for dredging of rivers in Bangladesh and indicated the need for nine dredgers. Her Indian counterpart agreed to support implementation of the strategy of the Bangladesh government to dredge rivers for flood control, navigation and access to ports. He also agreed to provide dredgers to Bangladesh on an urgent basis.

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Gunmen kill 3 cops in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least three policemen including an officer were killed as gunmen fired on them at Daspara in Bera upazila yesterday evening.

The slain cops are Sub-inspector Md Kafil Uddin, Nayek Abdul Wahed and constable Shafique of Dhalarchar police camp.

Jamil Ahmed, superintendent of police in Pabna, said a gang opened fire on the three plainclothes policemen who were returning to their camp.

"We are still trying to know details about the incident," the SP told The Daily Star over telephone last night.

The motive behind the attack could not be known as of filing this report at 1:00am today.

Police suspect the gunmen are members of an outlawed group.

They launched a combing-operation in the area infested by different outlawed groups from Pabna, Manikganj and Rajbari.

Deputy Inspector General of Rajshahi Range Mokhlesur Rahman and the SP of Pabna visited the spot, some 40 kms off the district headquarters.

In a similar attack in 2001, outlawed party operatives killed a sub-inspector at Dhalarchar. Later, a police camp was set up there.

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Battered buses are mended and given coats of paint so that they look new as the government launched a drive against old vehicles running in the capital. The photos was taken at Jatrabari and Gabtoli yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR

Grabbers of land, rivers to face govt action

Mannan tells JS; Rajuk marked 4,000 illegal buildings in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is taking action under the natural water body protection law against the developers who grabbed rivers, canals, water bodies and agricultural land surrounding the capital and launched housing projects.

State Minister for Housing and Public Works Abdul Mannan Khan said this in parliament yesterday in response to a query whether legal action would be taken against the "so-called real estate businessmen" without being frightened by their brow-beating and threats.

Ruling Awami League lawmaker Mostak Ahmed Ruhi in a scripted question enquired about the government's steps against land grabbers.

Earlier on July 14, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina refrained from replying to such a query on whether the government would take action against land developer leaders, who launched a tirade against the state minister, and take steps to recover public

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Kushtia cops sued for death in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Family of a 'crossfire' victim yesterday lodged a case with chief judicial magistrate court in Kushtia against police officials including an officer-in-charge.

Anju Begum, wife of the victim Abdul Alim, 32, a seasonal worker, filed the case on charge of killing his husband in crossfire.

The court yesterday afternoon directed the Kushtia police to submit a report after investigating the matter by August 28.

Officer-in-charge of Mirpur Police Station Mehedi Hasan, ASI Golam Mostafa of Ahmedpur camp and some unnamed police personnel were shown accused in the case.

In the case, complainant

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BNP goes for hunger strike on Jul 25

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As part of its anti-government move, the main opposition BNP will observe a mass hunger strike on July 25 to press home a number of demands including release of their party leaders and activists.

The daylong strike will be staged in the capital's Paltan Maidan from 11:00am to 5:00pm in presence of the party Chairperson Khaleda Zia, also leader of the opposition in parliament.

The announcement came at a press briefing after a joint meeting of party leaders at its central office in Nayapalton with BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain in the chair.

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Of wildlife and ministers Prime minister's prudence saves elephants, monkeys

INAM AHMED

When two incumbent ministers, both of whom are also lawmakers, want to break the law, it creates an insane situation. But sanity prevails in the end, and in this case Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had to use her authority and reject their plea for breaking the law.

The situation occurred on Monday when Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan first wanted to kill monkeys in his constituency in Madaripur. In his words, the resident monkeys have been a nuisance for the people, so kill them off.

Soon after him, Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad demanded that "Indian" elephants, which now roam inside Bangladesh, should be killed as they damage crops.

Lucky for us all, the prime minister snubbed both desires. She deserves to be congratulated, as her wise decision has saved the lives of some of the world's endangered animals, and reined in her cabinet members from breaking the law.

She must have remembered that it was her father,

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who framed the first wildlife law titled Wild Life Preservation Act 1973. This law clearly prohibits catching, harassing, trading, and killing of any wild animal or bird. Sheikh Hasina must have also recalled that an amendment to this existing law is awaiting her cabinet's approval. The amendment will provide for lifetime imprisonment for killing wildlife. Killing of elephants is prohibited by the Elephants Preservation Act 1879 as well. Hasina must have acted against the desires of her cabinet ministers because she knows the law. But above all it must be her soft-heartedness, and love for nature that saved the innocent lives.

The preposterous desires of the ministers have left us numb. Elephants are now the largest ground mammals still surviving. But their numbers have dwindled fast over the last century. The number of Asian elephants has shrunk from over 2,00,000 to over 35,000 in about a century. In Bangladesh only about 200 to 350 elephants exist. They are included as globally endangered species in IUCN's Red Book, the status report of world's wildlife.

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