

HC RULE ON BTRC Audit of telcos stayed

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The High Court has stayed Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission's (BTRC) telco audit for four months.

The court also asked the commission to explain why it refused to implement the decision of the review panel of Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) that directed fresh bidding to appoint firms for the audit.

Justice Farid Ahmed and Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif of the Supreme Court issued the rule on June 23 following a writ petition by a chartered accountant (CA) firm.

Petitioner's counsel SK Md Moshed said BTRC did not appoint the audit firms as per Public Procurement Rule (PPR). Besides, it bypassed the review panel decision by going forward with the audit.

The CPTU review panel in its decision cancelled BTRC's process of appointing the audit firms as it violated the PPR and recommended fresh bidding.

According to telecommunication law, BTRC requires prior approval from the telecom ministry to appoint consultants. But it did not obtain that either.

BTRC officials said they do not need such permission.

In a letter on May 24, the telecom ministry asked BTRC to take necessary steps in line with the review panel decision.

In reply, BTRC on May 26 countered saying that the appointment process was already over by then.

Meanwhile, BTRC this month published advertisements in newspapers for appointing two more CA firms for two more mobile service operators. No question has yet arisen on this second phase appointment process.

BTRC, in the first phase, appointed two CA firms out of a short list of six firms in April this year to audit Gramophone and Bangalink mobile service operators. One of the CA firms, that were denied the work, later challenged the bidding process alleging anomalies.

Asked about BTRC reaction on the HC rule, an official of the commission said they are yet to receive the copy of the rule and has nothing to say right now.

No more

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and hinted to go tough if the drivers do not follow the existing fare chart.

The decision came from a meeting between officials of communications ministry and leaders of Dhaka Metropolitan Auto-rickshaw Owners' Association at the secretariat, with Communication Secretary Mozammel Hoque Khan in the chair.

Following the meeting, the owners' association and Dhaka Auto-rickshaw Sramik Union have withdrawn their strike from July 3.

The authorities agreed to increase the economic life of an auto-rickshaw to 11 years from 10 years. They turned down a demand to raise the daily deposit to Tk 800 from Tk 600.

Emerging from the meeting, Mozammel told reporters that the discussion was fruitful.

If any owner is found charging a daily deposit more than Tk 600, his facility for replacement of auto-rickshaw will be stopped, the secretary warned.

After raising the CNG prices by 50 percent to Tk 25 from Tk 16.75 per cubic metre, the government on May 16 increased the fares including waiting charge from Tk 1.25 to Tk 1.30 a minute. But the fixed fare for the first two kilometres remained unchanged at Tk 25.

The auto-rickshaw owners demanded raising the minimum fare to Tk 35 from Tk 25 and hiking the rate for each kilometre to Tk 9.50 from Tk 7.50 in Dhaka and Chittagong.

Money whitening

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and readymade garment factory owners was increased to 1.5 percent from 0.5 percent. Now it has been cut to 0.7 percent for exporters and for readymade garment 0.6 percent.

In the budget, Tk 20,000, Tk 15,000 and Tk 5,000 per square metre at source tax (based on location) were proposed on commercial buildings. Now it has been revised to Tk 8,000, Tk 6,000 and Tk 2,000.

The poultry industry has been given tax holiday. All types of duty on poultry feed and LPG cylinder have been withdrawn.

Import duties on machinery used by public transports and motorbikes have been withdrawn.

The cigarette companies, if listed, will pay 35 percent tax instead of 42.5 percent.

All proposed duty on ship-breaking industry has been withdrawn.

Muhith said interest rates on savings certificates have been increased.

The minister also responded to criticisms from various quarters on budget implementation issue.

"The government will sit with development partners every three months in the upcoming fiscal year to speed up implementation of projects financed by foreign aid."

He said inflation would pose the biggest challenge for the government in the next fiscal year. "We will take steps so that the poor can buy the five major essential commodities at tolerable prices."

Unelected

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proposing some major changes including scrapping of the provisions for caretaker government system was finalised after scrutiny by the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry.

She said though her party has a three-fourths majority in parliament, it would consider the opposition's "fair suggestions" even if they come after passage of the constitutional amendment bill.

"The best solution could be bringing changes to the tax system that discourages tendency to evade taxes," he said. "This budget has also targeted it."

In the budget proposal for the next fiscal year, income tax at source on exporters

Lagarde

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India and Brazil.

The post became vacant following the resignation of Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

"The results are in: I am honoured and delighted that the board has entrusted me with the position of MD of the IMF!" Lagarde said via Twitter minutes after the announcement.

In a statement, the IMF said its 24-member board regarded both candidates as highly suitable for the job, but had decided on Lagarde "by consensus".

4 held

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who led the drive, told The Daily Star that they arrested Hanif from the city's Karwan Bazar area around 2:00am.

A few hours later they tracked down the remaining thugs from the city's Kalabagan and seized the looted revolver, two machetes and a petrol bomb from their possession.

Later, DB officials recovered 35 tolas of gold ornaments from a jewellery shop at the capital's New Market, he added.

"A gang of eight robbed the house on the fifth floor of Eastern Tower around 1:10pm", the detective said.

The remaining five, including the ringleader of the gang, Rana, 32 is on the run.

During preliminary interrogation, the detainees confessed that they sold the ornaments for Tk 11,20,000 and disbursed the amount among them, while they kept the revolver to help them in their future 'projects'.

All four suspects were produced before the court seeking remand for 10 days.

Earlier on June 19, armed robbers looted around 255 tolas of gold ornaments, a licensed loaded revolver, six rounds of bullet and Tk 5 lakh in broad daylight from a flat in the city's New Eskaton.

The House leader's hour-long speech was punctuated by desk-thumping from the treasury bench.

Bill ready

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prepared its report after scrutinising the constitutional amendment bill which will be placed in parliament today.

According to the proposed changes, the court shall hear EC's views in defence of its action before it gives verdict or directives on petitions filed against the commission.

"No petition will be entertained by the court and no orders or directives will be issued without hearing the Election Commission," Suranjit Sengupta, chief of the parliamentary body, told The Daily Star after a meeting yesterday.

The House body decided to propose for the change in the constitution following a proposal by the commission.

The EC proposed for scrapping court's jurisdiction of reviewing its actions during the election period that begins with the announcement of polls schedule and ends with publication of results through gazette notification.

Previous experience compelled the EC to seek these amendments.

Following court orders, the EC had to destroy more than 24 lakh ballot papers printed for eight constituencies ahead of the December 29, 2008 parliamentary election.

Similarly, 21 candidates entered the race in 18 constituencies just 10 days before the polls, making the EC's job harder. Their applications seeking candidacy were rejected by the returning officers and was upheld by the EC.

Being turned down, they took their issue to the Supreme Court, and in most cases the EC learned the matter from court orders.

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda and Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussein yesterday joined the parliamentary standing committee on the law ministry.

The CEC on Monday wrote to the committee chief expressing his willingness to attend the meeting.

However, the committee did not agree with the proposal for scrapping the court's jurisdiction to review EC's actions taken during the process of polls.

The committee also did not agree with the EC's proposal to limit the number of its members to three including the CEC.

The constitutional amendment bill placed in parliament on Saturday proposed that the number of EC members be maximum five including the CEC.

The bill ready

intended beginning of all the sittings," says the research.

"We have observed with grave concern that the last caretaker government extended its tenure by two years from 90 days. During the period, people's basic right was trampled, businesspeople, politicians were undermined and tortured," said the statement.

The business leaders alleged that the rule of the emergency government hurt business and investment.

2 arrested

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Residential area around 12:30pm.

The arrestees Nasir Uddin, 40, manager of Fakhri and Sons, a business organisation and Azad, 28, driver of the excavator were caught while they were leveling the ground after destroying a hill.

However, two others managed to flee from the spot sensing the presence of police, Tajminur told The Daily Star.

A case would be filed soon with Sitakunda Police Station against owner of the organisation, Hossain-e-Fakhri and others involved in the crime.

On the proposed budget, the prime minister said, "It is not ambitious at all. We will be able to implement it."

The House leader's hour-long speech was punctuated by desk-thumping from the treasury bench.

Khaleda to announce

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before the protest rally yesterday.

Party policymakers think the House will pass the constitution amendment bill including dropping the caretaker government (CG) system very shortly as the ruling party enjoys an absolute majority, party insiders said.

The BNP high-command decided to go for a tougher agitation programme once the bill is passed, they added.

The Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia has already declared her party will not join the next general election without a caretaker government.

BNP and its allies observed a countrywide 36-hour hartal on June 12 and 13 against the move to drop the provision of CG system from the constitution.

Schoolgirl

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Officer (RMO) of the hospital Goutom Kumar Chakraborty said the victim was bleeding when she was taken to the hospital by police Monday night.

The alleged rapists, however, fled before police raided the spot and rescued the girl.

Police said victim's brother-in-law, Lafiz Uddin, 30, of Mandolpara village of Saghatta upazila in Gaibandha on Sunday afternoon took her to Sahebpara in Lalmonirhat giving the excuse of visiting a relative.

The victim was kept in a locked room and gang raped during Sunday and Monday evening.

A team of police from Lalmonirhat Police Station rescued the victim around 10:30pm Monday after locals sensed the matter informed police.

When The Daily Star visited the victim in the hospital, she was hiding her face. She said, "I was locked in a room, where my brother-in-law Lafiz Uddin and two other unidentified people sexually assaulted me."

"I couldn't shout for help as Lafiz tied my mouth with a piece of cloth," she added.

"I would not go to my village, if the villagers, my classmates and teachers hear about this. I want exemplary punishment to the culprits," she said.

NGOs contribute

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In a written question, Israfil also asked the House to know how many associate or partner organisations are working under MJE.

In response, Matia Chowdhury, who is in charge of Prime Minister's Office in parliamentary business, said as many as 114 partner organisations are operating development and rights activities under Manusher Jonno Foundation.

And no allegations were found against any of its partners, she added.

Matia said a good number of partner organisations working under MJE have been inspected by the bureau officials.

Answering to another question, she said the government takes action as per the law if any NGO is found corrupt.

Field-level administrations often send report on activities of different NGO's to NGO Affairs Bureau, the minister said, "and the bureau takes effective steps on evaluation of the report."

Four factors

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Muhammad Munshi Atiqur Rahman as the investigation officer of the cases.

A government-formed high-powered committee submitted its report in April 2005 accusing 10 people including some local BNP leaders and grassroots activists.

Sylhet divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal started the trial through framing charges against the accused.

But following an appeal for further investigation by the complainant, the High Court stayed the proceedings.

A further investigation was launched during the immediate past caretaker government rule.

All the 10 accused got released on bail during the same period, while one of them died.

New law on cards

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Commissioner and Election Commissioner (appointment procedure) Act 2011" in line with the country's highest charter.

The draft proposed enacting a law under article 118(1) of the constitution and curtailing the government's unilateral power to appoint CEC or election commissioners of its choice.

Article 118(1) says, "On the formation of the EC the appointment of CEC and other election commissioners (if any) shall, subject to the provisions of any law made in that behalf, be made by the president."

The law, however, had never been formulated since 1972.

The draft proposal also

Asma Kibria

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into the killing.

Terming the supplementary charge sheet incomplete and ill-motivated, Asma Kibria said in her plea that names of many bigwigs are missing on it, reports Sylhet correspondent.

The then chief of Directorate General of Forces

Intelligence Maj Gen (retd) Sadik Hasan Rumi, several military officers and leaders of the BNP-Jamaat coalition government were involved in the murder, the petition added.

On her behalf, advocate Alamgir Bhuiyan Babul submitted the plea before the court of Senior Judicial Mag