

# India's BJP asks Karnataka CM to resign

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Cracking the whip, India's right wing Hindu nationalist party BJP yesterday asked its Chief Minister (CM) of the southern state of Karnataka B S Yeddyurappa to resign forthwith after an official anti-corruption watchdog indicted him in an illegal iron ore mining scam in the state.

The decision to show Yeddyurappa the door was taken at a meeting of BJP parliamentary board.

"The BJP parliamentary board unanimously felt that there should be a change of the party leadership in Karnataka and it advised Yeddyurappa to resign", BJP chief spokesman Ravishankar Prasad told media persons soon after the parliamentary board meeting at the residence of Gadkari.

He said a new chief minister would be chosen to replace Yeddyurappa tomorrow.

Yeddyurappa had made a last-ditch effort to persuade BJP national leadership to allow him to continue as chief minister when he met Gadkari Wednesday night.

The party's decision came a day after the Karnataka Lokayukta (anti-corruption body) recommended Yeddyurappa's prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act for illegal financial dealings relating to iron ore mining.

The report of the anti-corruption watchdog headed by Justice Santosh Hegde said that a company dealing in iron ore donated Rs 10 crore to a trust managed by Yeddyurappa's family for "reasons other than genuine".

The company bought one acre of land in Bangalore, the capital city of Karnataka and India's Silicon Valley, for Rs 20 crore from Yeddyurappa's children.

Besides Yeddyurappa, some other prominent ministers of the BJP government in Karnataka have also been named in the anti-corruption body's report.

"They were claiming all this time that they were not involved in illegal mining but we have enough evidence to prove otherwise", Justice Hegde had told mediapersons in Bangalore on Wednesday.

# Hard time ahead for admission seekers

FROM PAGE 20

year, higher education is becoming a matter of great concern for the nation as seats are not relatively increasing.

As many as 574,261 students or record 75.01 percent have come out successfully in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) and equivalent examinations under 10 education boards -- eight general, one madrasa and one technical board.

The results were published on Wednesday.

Of the successful students, 39,769 achieved the highest GPA-5 (Grade Point Average) and 163,240 did well scoring between GPA-4 and GPA-5.

The numbers of successful students and GPA-5 scorers have increased sharply this year.

The students willing to study at the top public uni-

versities including Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, Rajshahi University, Chittagong University and public medical and dental colleges will have to go through a really tough competition.

In Dhaka University last year, 25 to 30 students vied for each of the over 5,000 seats, said acting registrar Syed Rezaur Rahman. In Buet, around 5,500 students vied for one of the university's 965 seats last year, said Pro-vice-chancellor Prof M Habibur Rahman.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said the government is aware of the shortage of seats at the public universities and is considering launch of new universities to meet the increasing demand.

"Three new universities --

Barisal University, Gopalganj Bangabandhu Science and Technology University, and Textiles University -- will start academic activities this year and the HSC passed students will be able to apply for enrolment," said Nahid.

The minister said it is fact that a section of students will get the opportunity to enrol at the top public universities and medical colleges through competitive examinations. Others can go to the government colleges as there are a large number of seats there, he added.

An official of the National University said around two lakh students will be able to study the honours courses in nearly 250 colleges under the university in next session.

Around five to ten percent seats have been increased this year in those 250 colleges to meet the

demand, said Faizul Karim, acting director of the NU public relations office.

Immediate past chairman of the University Grants Commission Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka University said established public universities should increase seats to meet the present demand.

Prof Nazrul sees two types of crisis ahead of the candidates -- shortage of seats and lack of standard education in several institutions.

Currently, 54 private universities are running academic activities in the country. However, a few of these provide quality education, while several government-run university colleges cannot maintain the standard due to different crises including lack of teachers and infrastructural facilities, Prof Nazrul observed.

# Rajuk chief

FROM PAGE 1

Pallabi police stations-- to appear before it on August 3 to give their statements in connection with the death of a college student.

The two other policemen are Ajit Roy and Ansar Ali sub-inspectors (SI) of Pallabi Police Station.

The court also directed Khaled Mohammad Jewel Mollah, managing director of Sagufta Group, Walid Mollah, its director and Md Osman Ali and Sazzad Hossain the building contractors to appear before it on the same day to explain their roles over the death.

On July 16, Habibur Rahman Munna, 18, an HSC examinee of Tejaoga College, died on the spot when a brick dropped on his head from the 10th floor of a 15-storey building, a construction project of Sagufta Group, on Panthapath in the capital.

On July 26, the HC ordered the OCs to arrest the builders, Khaled and Walid Mollah and summoned the OCs, the builders and Osman to appear before it two days later.

The two OCs appeared before the bench yesterday saying they could not arrest the accused as they were "not available at their residences".

Advocate Anisul Huq, lawyer of the accused, prayed to the court for more time saying they had failed to appear before the court as one of the accused, Khaled had "taken ill".

Meanwhile, Osman told the court that Sazzad, the other contractor was responsible for maintaining the safety of the under-construction building, following which the court summoned Sazzad.

On July 19, the court issued a rule upon the commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, the two OCs and the builders to explain within two weeks why the company should not be punished for not taking adequate safety measures at the construction site.

# Zambia sets elections for Sep 20

AFP, Lusaka

Zambian President Rupiah Banda yesterday set elections for September 20, hoping a humming economy will help him win his first full term in office against an opposition whose alliance has already cracked.

"I have been informed by the Electoral Commission of Zambia that the logistics for holding elections are now in place. The final voter register is also in place," he said in a live address on national radio.

Banda, 74, will seek his first full term at the polls, after he took power in a special election three years ago to complete the term of Levy Mwanawasa, who died while in office.

# Home cell to monitor

FROM PAGE 20

The inclusion, however, does not guarantee rapid headway in a case, he added on condition of anonymity.

Usually, the cell sits every three months but the ministry can call the meeting any time, Sahara told reporters. However, its last meeting was held in December last year.

State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku confirmed the inclusion of the murder case of the six college and university students.

The six were beaten to death by villagers who took them for robbers on July 18 at Baradeshi of Aminbazar on the outskirts of the capital.

Yesterday's meeting discussed 12 sensational cases - 11 for murder and one for kidnap.

Of them, charge sheets in Bashundhara Group director Sabbir killing case, freedom fighter Anwara Abedin Chowdhury murder case and

Ramna Thana Mosque Imam Maulana Hafez Md Ishaque murder case have been submitted.

Asked about Juba League activist Ibrahim murder case, Sahara said police are likely to prepare the charge sheet before the next meeting of the cell.

Ibrahim was killed by a bullet "accidentally" fired from Awami League MP Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon's licensed pistol in the Sangsad Bhaban area on August 13 last year.

Bashundhara Group director Sabbir was killed in 2006.

During the current government rule, 396 cases were included in the list of sensational cases. Of them, trials of 157 cases have been completed.

Another 177 cases are under trial and 34 others under investigation.

# Russian compressors, drilling job get nod

FROM PAGE 20

compressors in Ashuganj and Elenga. An ADB team arrived in the capital on Wednesday in this connection.

In a note to the prime minister, Petrobangla claimed the tender process will take up to December to complete, and another two months to initial the contract. Then the contractor will take 21 months to complete the task.

As if the deal with Russia has more advantage, Petrobangla said Gazprom will be able to install the two compressors within 18 months of signing the contract. The deal with Gazprom might be possible within two to three months. The Russian compressors can be installed seven to eight months ahead of the ADB-funded compressors, Petrobangla argued.

In contrast, US oil company Chevron which is installing another compressor in Muchai is taking three years to complete the job. Chevron had a compressor ready for installation when it was awarded the job in early 2009.

Petrobangla mentioned to the prime minister that the advantage of Gazprom compressors were discussed at the 280th board meeting of Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL), the child organisation of Petrobangla, which will implement the compressor project. But GTCL sources said the meeting held in September last year did not discuss this.

An official told The Daily Star due process is not being followed in the case of Gazprom and Petrobangla is trivialising financial and technical issues when talking about this deal. But it is magnifying problems of the ADB-financed tender.

"If the authorities are so serious about an earlier installation of these compressors, why did the GTCL under the directive of the Petrobangla chief has been carrying out evaluation of that tender for 11 months, and only recently sent it to the ADB for its concurrence?" asked an official requesting not to be named.

While Hyundai was technically selected out of three bidders who had to answer more than 100 questions each over the last nine months, Petrobangla with help from the GTCL practically evaluated Gazprom's technical offer within 24 hours of receiving it.

"The Gazprom offer oddly was sent through the diplomatic bag. Then a couple of GTCL officials were asked by Petrobangla to make a rough evaluation of the offer in early July. The offer was evaluated without fixing any technical parameter... And that could take

months to fix," added the official.

Citing examples of technical issues, the official said Gazprom offered to install a large compressor in Elenga and a smaller one in Ashuganj but the GTCL requirement was just the opposite. "We had asked Gazprom to respond to our queries on technical parameters by June 26. But Gazprom said it wanted to fix the issues through discussion," he noted.

The Petrobangla chairman advocates the Russian deal on grounds that the state-to-state contract will eventually save a lot of time.

Asked if he was cancelling the ADB-funded tender, he said, "No. It will be a decision of the higher authorities. We are pursuing both the deals, whichever comes first, we will do that."

On the question of financing the project with Russia, he said it will not be a problem. "We will bridge finance the scheme."

When pointed out that such arrangements could take many months, he disagreed.

On the question of unresolved technicalities with Gazprom, the chairman said, "They are sincere. We will finalise all technical issues quickly. They will be able to install the compressors earlier than the ADB-funded one because they have two compressors ready."

When reminded that Chevron could not complete their compressor installation in the last two years even though it had its compressor ready to be shipped, he said energy projects are technical in nature which might lead to delay in cases.

"But they (Russians) have high regard for our prime minister. They committed to us that they will do the job in less than 18 months, and I believe they will be able to do so," Hussain Monsur noted.

But officials are doubtful about the speedy implementation saying, Bangladesh has not made any headway with the



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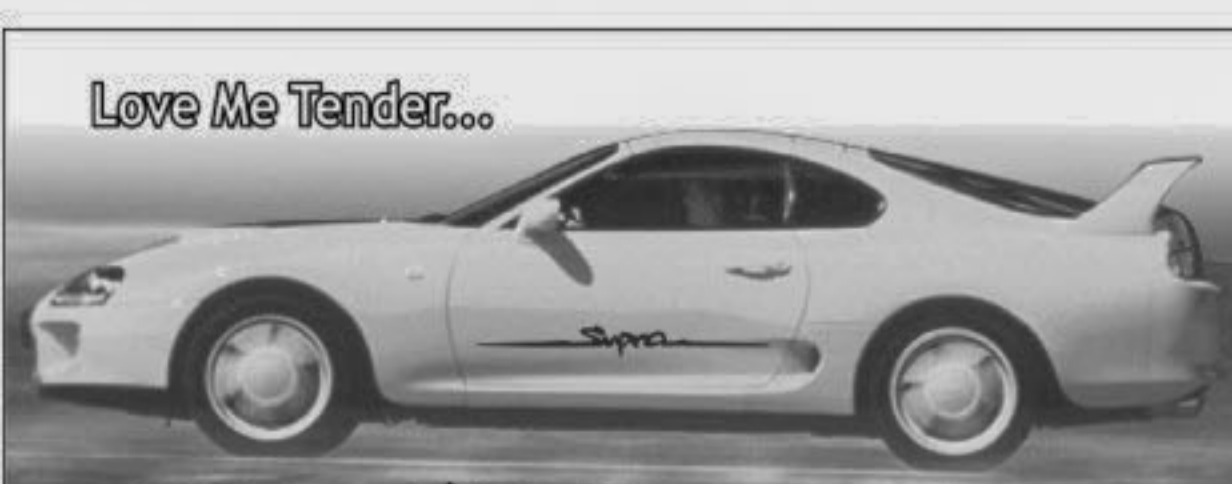
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