

Three years of an all-powerful PM

FROM PAGE 1
circles and also in the public domain. Hasina responded to public sentiments by dropping the two from her cabinet.

These two glaring incidents were considered as the shining side of a government that had begun its journey on June 23, 1996 as the then PM had honoured public sentiments by removing them from her council of ministers.

But such a strong stance on Hasina's part seemed to have gradually taken an opposite turn from 1999 after her government's stunning success in overcoming the much feared impact of the prolonged floods in the middle of the previous year. The success, many AL leaders also still acknowledge, contributed largely to turning the then government overconfident and arrogant to some extent.

Her government reportedly started either paying little heed to public sentiments or defending the controversial activities of some ministers, MPs and Awami League men. As a result, her party, the Awami League, had to pay heavily in

the October 2001 parliamentary polls.

This time around, things were moving in different directions from the very beginning. Hasina returned to power, for a second term, after seven years, with a new vision of change as pledged by her party. She left most of her senior party colleagues out of the cabinet formed on January 6, 2009 and brought in some surprise picks to run several important ministries. Although some of the new faces inducted in the cabinet did not have previous experience in ministerial positions, their loyalty to Hasina is still "unquestionable".

Keeping most of the party stalwarts out of the cabinet was initially considered by many as a sign that the AL truly wanted a change. But things started becoming clearer when Hasina in the middle of 2009 outmaneuvered the party council and dropped those senior leaders from the AL presidium, the party's highest policy making body.

Who were the AL stalwarts? They had held important portfolios in Hasina's previous cabinet and some of them were blamed for

plotting under duress to minus Hasina from the party during the army-backed caretaker government regime. The stalwarts were pushed to the party's advisory council, a largely dysfunctional body. By the induction of new faces in the presidium, who were very loyal to her, Hasina gave out the message that she did not like to keep any window open for anyone to question her leadership of the cabinet and of the party as well as.

Thus within a year, Hasina consolidated herself as a supreme leader in both the cabinet and party, one whose leadership is still "unquestionable". Therefore, her cabinet easily remained free from scrutiny by the party in the last three years. Similarly, the cabinet did not face any tough time or much criticism in parliament for any of its actions or failures as Hasina is also the leader of the House. Being the leader of the House, she controls the largest ever treasury bench in parliament since the restoration of the parliamentary form of government in 1991. It will not be any exaggeration if one says that Sheikh Hasina is now the most pow-

erful prime minister compared to her predecessor, especially since 1991.

How has the performance of the cabinet led by a super powerful prime minister been in last three years? Was she able to keep her promises? Did she act in accordance with her words? And how will her cabinet deliver in the remaining two years of its tenure?

Riding on people's hopes and expectations, the cabinet led by Hasina began a tightrope journey in January, 2009. At the beginning of her second term as PM, Hasina on several occasions cautioned her colleagues in the council of ministers about possible exclusion from the cabinet over alleged involvement in irregularities and failure to deliver.

She also reminded them that induction in the cabinet did not mean they had got permanent jobs.

Prior to the completion of her second year in office, she expressed dissatisfaction over poor performance of some ministries, and directed them to pay more attention to work. At a cabinet meeting on December 19, 2010, she also said she

had information that some ministries were not performing as expected.

Some AL MPs at the party's parliamentary party meeting on March 10, 2011 also expressed dissatisfaction at the poor performance of some ministers and observed that it may not be possible to fulfill people's expectations with them at the helm of the ministries.

But thanks to Hasina's generosity, none was dropped from her cabinet in the last three years on "failure to perform up to the mark" or for "alleged involvement in irregularities". Her cabinet even went through a little reshuffle.

Did the PM evaluate their performances and take steps accordingly in the last three years? She might have. Or she might not have? But the truth is nothing was visible or made public. So it is assumed either she did not review their performances or she found their performance satisfactory.

But mass people, even many of among the ruling AL-led grand alliance men, are not satisfied with the performance with some of ministers who not only

failed to perform, but also annoyed people by making some "whimsical remarks" and controversial activities.

This time, Hasina did not take steps like the ones she took in 1997 to maintain her cabinet's clean image. Rather, she on the parliament floor in February last year saved the then communication minister Syed Abul Hossain, who was sacked from Hasina's cabinet in 1997, from censure by ruling alliance MPs over Abul's letter to the premier against Tofail Ahmed over the latter's criticism of the communication ministry's poor performance.

Her other cabinet colleague Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan has been

openly and uninterruptedly defending drivers who are accused of killing people by driving recklessly. The minister's activities have drawn huge public criticism. But people know nothing such activities.

As the leader of the ruling AL Parliamentary Party, Hasina on several occasions warned her party deputies against corruption, abuse of power and unruly behaviour.

But no action was taken against any of ruling AL MPs who tainted her party and government's image by their controversial activities and unruly behaviour.

Similarly, Hasina's government seems to have opted not for taking stern actions against unruly and

violent activities of many AL men and leaders of its front organisations such as Jatiya Jubo League and Bangladesh Chhatra League.

But law enforcers were seen very harsh on the main opposition BNP leaders and activists to foil their protest programs against the government.

In brief, the overall situation ranging from the country's economy to the current political situation, portray a gloomy picture which does not conform to the ruling AL electoral pledges styled "A Charter for Change". Doesn't it mean the cabinet led by Hasina could not properly deliver on the ruling party's electoral pledges in last three years?

Muhith irked by media comments

FROM PAGE 20
said there were comments when borrowing went up to Tk 23,000 crore. "But you did not say anything when it declined to Tk 17,000 crore", he said.

The minister made the remarks at the launch of Background and Technical Framework Papers of the Sixth Five Year Plan (SFYP) of Bangladesh for fiscal 2011-2015 at the Planning Commission.

Planning Minister AK Khandker and Prime Minister's Adviser for Economic Affairs Mashiur Rahman were present at the event, which was also attended by economists.

Earlier Muhith called on

analysts to be careful in giving their views on economic issues, saying daily reporting and comments created confusion.

Muhith, referring to an editorial on remittances without mentioning the name of the daily, said: "The suggestions that have been made are worthless. There is nothing new in it."

He said: "The government is not an ass. Government always has to use wisdom to run and its use has been on."

He said many allege that the government does not pay heed to the suggestion of real thinkers.

"I don't accept it," said Muhith, but added that in

many cases, research papers become satirical and the scope to add in policies from these papers becomes thin.

The minister said the government encouraged consultations, open discussions and considered the opinions of stakeholders in the interest of transparency and accountability in policy making.

"We want everything to be transparent. It helps raise questions and keeps government careful."

Prime Minister's Adviser for Economic Affairs Mashiur Rahman said the country will be benefited by constructive criticism.

"There may be self satisfaction in negative criticism,

It will not do any good to the nation," said Mashiur.

Noting the published papers, he said these published documents should be made available to help university students learn.


The Planning Commission and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) published the Background and Technical Framework papers of the SFYP in six volumes so that policy makers and researchers could get help in times of need.

Published for the first time in Bangladesh, the first two parts of the publication include background and technical perspectives,

while the remaining four volumes include analyses on macro economy, its sectors and social sectors.

Muhith, referring to published documents, said politicians did not get enough time to go through them when they are in power. They have to depend on executive summaries, he said.

"Politicians can read these when they are not in power," said Muhith. "It is tough to get time for reading, and sometimes even for sleeping. It is a fact of life."



PUBALI BANK LIMITED
ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION
HEAD OFFICE
26 DILKUSHA C/A, DHAKA-1000

INVITATION FOR TENDER

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from reputed/bona-fide Printing Firms to print and supply of our Bank's Annual Report-2011 as per terms and conditions stated below.

1. Procuring Entity	Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division, Head Office, 26 Dilkusha Commercial Area, Dhaka-1000.
2. Tender Name	Printing of Annual Report-2011 of Pubali Bank Limited
3. Size	A-4 international
4. Paper	120gsm. Matt paper for inner pages
5. Total Pages	135 ± 5 Pages
6. Cover of Annual Report	300gsm. Art card with lamination as per specification and cover design to be prepared & submitted by the finally selected printing firm for approval of the Bank's Management.
7. Printing	Multi colour Printing as per requirement
8. Binding	Glue/Zujji Binding & Cover pasting.
9. Envelope Size	As per requirement
10. Envelope Paper	100gsm. Offset paper.
11. Envelope printing	Multi colour printing with Pubali Bank Limited logo & Address.
12. Delivery/supply of printed Annual Reports	All the printed Annual Reports to be delivered within 7 days after approval of final proof.
13. Price of Tender Document	Tk. 1,500/- (Taka one thousand five hundred) non refundable.
14. Amount of Tender Security	2.5% of total bid amount in the form of Payment Order favouring Pubali Bank Limited, Head Office, Dhaka-1000.
15. Name and address of the office from where tender documents will be obtained & to be dropped.	Pubali Bank Limited, Establishment Division, Head Office (12 th Floor), 26 Dilkusha C/A, Dhaka-1000.
16. Last date & time for selling tender document	Up to 10.30 AM (BST): 15-01-2012
17. Last date & time for tender submission	Up to 11.15 AM (BST): 15-01-2012
18. Date & time for tender opening	At 11.30 AM (BST) on 15.01.2012 in presence of bidders (if any)
19. Eligibility of Tenderers and other instructions	<p>i) The tenderers shall have minimum 3 (three) years experience in printing Annual Report of Banks and Financial Institutions. The tenderers will submit 3 (three) copies of Annual Report alongwith the copies of respective work order to the DGM, Establishment Division, Head Office at the time of submission of quotation in separate envelope as documentary proof of their experience to do the quality job.</p> <p>ii) Having valid trade license, up to date Income Tax clearance certificate, VAT registration certificate and Bank solvency certificate (to be submitted with the quotation)</p> <p>iii) The tenderers must have the ability to complete the job independently. No sub-contract will be admitted at any cost in this regard.</p> <p>iv) It will not be binding on the part of the Bank to accept the lowest rate offered by the bidders.</p> <p>v) Pubali Bank Limited reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.</p>

Sk. Golam Mohammad
General Manager

Cautious

FROM PAGE 20
natural gas, coal, and fuel, apart from gas.

These 16 rental power plants with a capacity of 1,400 megawatt went into production between August 2010 and May 2011. All of them run on furnace oil and diesel, said the official.

Besides, a process is underway to install independent and public-sector power plants. These plants, mostly fuel-based, will add more than 1500 MW electricity to the national grid.

The government will have to import about 70 lakh tonnes of fuel because of these plants in the current fiscal year against a usual import of 30 to 35 lakh tonnes.

Huge import of fuel is creating a chain reaction on different areas of the economy like the GDP, inflation and exchange rate, said finance ministry officials.

Taka is getting weaker against the US dollar for increasing demand for foreign currency for fuel import, which, in turn, is contributing to inflation.

The government has to borrow from the central bank to pay subsidies on fuel and power that are also pushing up inflation, said central bank officials.

According to the power division proposals, the government will have to purchase power from Satkhira and Bhairab plants at higher rates that will further increase government expenditures.

The division set power price at Tk 9.15 a kilowatt for Satkhira plant and Tk 8.88 a kilowatt for Bhairab plant. The government now buys electricity from existing furnace oil-based plants at Tk 6.94 to Tk 6.96 a kilowatt.

The proposals say the government will have to make the purchase in foreign currency with an exchange rate of one US dollar against Tk 70.

But the exchange rate has already crossed Tk 80 against the dollar due to depreciation of taka. It means the government will have to spend more for purchasing power from the two plants.



Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the position of **Finance Assistant** for "Improving Democracy through Parliamentary Development (IPD)" project. The project duration is until 2014.

The duration of the Service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than **17.00 PM, Tuesday, January 17, 2012.**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.
Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.



Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the following positions for "Police Reform Programme (PRP)" project. The project duration is until **June, 2014.**

- Project Assistant (1 Position)**
- Procurement Assistant (1 Position)**
- Admin and Finance Assistant (3 Positions)**

The duration of the Service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than **17.00 PM, Tuesday, January 17, 2012.**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

Driver cum Messenger :

Duties and Responsibilities: The incumbent will drive the project vehicle within / outside Dhaka city to meet the transportation requirement of the project, day-to-day maintenance of the vehicle, maintain a log book, arrange repairs where necessary, collect / deliver mail or documents when required

Qualifications and Experiences: The incumbent should have at least secondary education or equivalent level, with at least five years of relevant experience. The incumbent must have a valid heavy / light vehicles driving license. Good knowledge of road network in Dhaka and surrounding areas and adequate knowledge and skills in vehicle maintenance and minor repair are essential. She / he must have working knowledge of communicative English. Experience of UN or government organizations would be an asset;

Submission of Application: Application should be marked '**Confidential**' and the position applied for i.e. **Driver-cum- Messenger - PRP** should be clearly written on the **A4 Size** envelope. Application including curriculum vitae and a recent passport-size photograph should be sent to the **HR Cluster, UNDP-Dhaka, GPO Box: 224, Dhaka-1000**, or deposited at the Deposit Box at the **IDB Bhaban (Ground Floor), Begum Rokeya Sharani, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207** by **January 17, 2012.**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.
Submitted documents will not be returned to the applicants.