

Govt officials

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Complex between April 7 and 11, 2009.

Denied the information, Ali Ahammad lodged a complaint with the Information Commission.

The commission on September 8 last year fined Mostafa.

The official on September 29 filed a writ petition with the HC challenging the commission's verdict against him, saying that he was not aware of the RTI act as it was a new law; and he could not provide the information in 30 days as he took time to consult with the higher authorities.

An HC bench of Justice Salma Masud Chowdhury and Justice Nazrul Islam Talukder on the same day stayed the commission's verdict and issued a rule upon the commission and the information ministry to explain why the commission's decision to fine the petitioner should not be declared illegal.

After holding hearing on the rule, the HC yesterday delivered the verdict discharging the rule.

Additional Attorney General Murad Reza and Deputy Attorney General ABM Altaf Hossain defended the state, while lawyers Abdul Baset Majumder and Sayed Ahmed Raza appeared for the petitioner.

As per the RTI act, an official can be fined Tk 50 per day for failing to provide information. The maximum fine amount is Tk 5,000.

Contacted, Information Commission Chairman Muhammad Zamir said the HC verdict is an important milestone in the implementation of RTI act.

The law has been validated in terms of its potential for contribution to good governance, he added.

JU teachers

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office.

The agitation programmes include protest procession and rally on February 11, sending an open letter to the university chancellor (the president) the next day, meeting the parliamentary standing committee on education ministry on February 13, disclosing three probe reports on the administration's alleged corruption on February 14 and a press conference in Dhaka on February 15.

Moreover, the teachers will form a mass probe committee on February 16 to investigate the murder of Zubair Ahmed and other terrorist activities on the campus, and an open discussion and a film exhibition at the university's Selim Al Deen amphitheatre on February 18.

The agitating teachers have been demanding making public the probe report on the murder of Zubair, a fourth-year English student who succumbed to his injuries after being attacked by a group of Bangladesh Chhatra League activists on January 9.

The teachers demand the punishment of former proctor Prof Arzu Miah, who allegedly attacked the teachers' association president; driving out the former students who are still staying on the campus and involved in politics; and taking measures to hold dean, senate, syndicate elections among others.

"We are forced to announce the fresh protest programmes as the vice-chancellor himself did not show minimum respect to our demands. On February 4, he assured us of taking necessary measures including bringing change in the whole proctorial body," said Prof Nasim Akhter.

She also said they will announce further protest programme if the vice-chancellor fails to take necessary steps within the next few days.

The agitating teachers yesterday also demanded that the administration take measures to bring back those students, who have been staying out of the campus due to their involvement in politics.

Vice-chancellor Shariff Enamul Kabir at a meeting claimed that there is no legitimate student staying out of the campus.

The students who were expelled or lost their studentship for different criminal activities are spreading propaganda against the present administration, he added.

East Bengal

FROM PAGE 1

almost immediately in East Bengal and for the first time demands began to be made in the province that Pakistan be refashioned as a confederation in line with the original Lahore Resolution of March 1940. A group of individuals, rejecting the contents of the BPC report, in fact began distributing leaflets espousing a confederation. It even organised a public meeting, presided over by Aatur Rahman Khan, on the issue at Armanitola Maidan in Dhaka on October 13, 1950.

A more interesting aspect of the post-BPC report situation was that even important figures within the ruling Muslim League in East Bengal publicly made their opposition to the report known. In this they were joined by the Jamiatul Ulema-e-Islam. Shah Azizur Rahman, at the time acting general secretary of the provincial Muslim League, called for protest meetings all over the province over the BPC report.

He was, however, swiftly put down by Maulana Akram Khan, who thought that the anti-BPC agitation was being conducted by people with a motive of personal aggrandisement. He described Shah Aziz's position as illegal and called upon on people to stay away from any protest over the report. For his part, Shah Aziz withdrew his protest call but not before he had made it clear that the members of the Muslim League must be allowed to have their individual say on the issue.

Meanwhile, the Action Committee for a Democratic Federation met from October 17 to 28, 1950 to chalk out a politically coherent response to the report. Those who attended the meetings on a regular basis were Aatur Rahman Khan, Tajuddin Ahmed, Kamruddin Ahmed, Mohammad Toaha, Oli Ahad and Abdus Salam. Among those who frequently turned up at the meetings were Kafiluddin Chowdhury, Shamsuzzoha and Mirza Golam Hafiz.

The committee eventually decided to hold a convention on November 4 and 5 and to that end a list of nine questions to be placed before prime minister Liaquat Ali Khan was prepared. The key point in the questions was that the two wings of Pakistan should be empowered to exercise autonomy to the fullest extent and to the benefit of their people.

3 Indian ministers

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Lakshman Savdi, CC Patil and Krishna B Palemar quit from the ministry following a meeting among top state BJP leaders.

While Savdi was holding Cooperation portfolio, Patil was Woman and Child Development minister and Palemar was entrusted with Ports and Environment responsibilities.

Savdi and Patil were caught allegedly watching porn film clips on the former's cell phone on the floor of the legislative assembly in Bangalore on Tuesday.

The ministers were caught in the act even as the House was in the middle of a heated debate.

Close up shots of the ministers watching blue films were beamed on local television channels on Tuesday evening and sparked an outrage.

The television visuals showed both the minister

sitting next to each other, looking at Savdi's mobile phone and having banter.

Savdi claimed the clips were forwarded by Palemar.

Palemar, who had to pay a price for allegedly providing the blue film clippings to Savadi, said he was contemplating legal course over the issue.

Former chief minister Yeddyurappa said the ministers have voluntarily tendered resignation on moral grounds and none of the party leaders, including party President Nitin Gadkari, had any role to play.

"Inquiry will be conducted and soon truth will be out," he added.

This is for the first time the Karnataka state assembly was rocked by such a scandal.

Sources, however, said BJP had decided Tuesday night itself to take the resignation of the three ministers but was waiting for Yeddyurappa to come back from tour of Bidar.

Philippine quake survivors beg for search help

AFP, La Libertad

Survivors of a deadly quake in the Philippines begged rescuers yesterday to keep searching for dozens of people buried in landslides, but officials said hopes of finding them alive were dim.

Two days after a 6.7-magnitude quake flattened homes, destroyed bridges and crumbled mountainsides on the central island of Negros, rescue workers battled without heavy equipment to dig through rubble in the search for the missing.

"Please do not give up, please continue searching," 47-year-old housewife Virginita Magalso sobbed, her face streaked with dirt, as rescuers picked through mounds of dirt that covered the homes of family and friends.

"We can still save them, miracles happen all the time."

Cops didn't kill

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someone else from a close range might have shot Limon and Abdul dead.

On January 29, the two rickshaw-pullers were killed after police fired on BNP demonstrators in a bid to foil their protest movement.

At least 41 policemen were injured in the incident and of them two are still undergoing treatment at Chandpur Sadar Hospital, said Shahidullah Chowdhury.

Chandpur district administration prevented BNP from holding any procession that day on the premises of Hasan Ali Government High School to avert any untoward situation, the SP said at the conference.

He said BNP activists attacked police after they attempted to barricade the demonstrators. To bring the situation under control police fired 22 tear gas canisters and later fired 105 rounds from shotguns and four rounds from Chinese rifle.

The real story will be revealed after completion of ongoing investigations, the SP said.

BSF

FROM PAGE 1
some BSF men as depicted on an Indian TV channel, leading Indian daily The Hindu has asked New Delhi to offer apology to Bangladesh for such a brutal act.

The torture of Habibur Rahman of Chapainawabganj by the BSF soldiers sparked protests by the civil society and international human rights watchdogs.

Quoting BSF claims, BBC also reported that a gang of cattle smugglers in a February 4 assault on BSF men at Swarupnagar border of Uttar Chhabish Parganas district of Paschim Banga killed an Indian border guard.

Contacted, National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman said, "I strongly protest the comments of the BSF chief and I think such statements could harm the friendly relationship between the two countries."

"Considering the existing relationship, it seems to me that it is BSF chief's personal remark," he mentioned.

Meanwhile, the NHRC chairman at a function yesterday said the matter of Indian BSF's brutality along the border would be taken to the United Nations, reports UNB.

He was addressing the event marking the inauguration of Brahmanbaria district committee of the commission.

"The killing incidents are not acceptable. If it is not stopped, we will raise the issue in the Human Rights Council of the United Nations," he noted.

"We have written to the chairman of Indian National Human Rights Commission urging him to take up the border killings with its central government for immediate steps to stop killing of innocent Bangladeshis," maintained Mizanur.

Brahmanbaria Deputy Commissioner M Abdul Mannan, Additional Superintendent of Police Faisal Mahmud and district unit president of NHRC M Biplob were present.



Md Abu Hafiz



Md Abdul Mobarrak



Md Zayed Ali



Md Shahnewaz

Rakib made CEC

FROM PAGE 1

The committee recommended former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder, and Rakibuddin Ahmad for the post of the CEC, after the tenure of ex-CEC ATM Shamsul Huda had expired on February 6. Former election commissioner Sohul Hussain's tenure also expired on the same day.

The tenure of the other Commissioner Brig Gen (retd) M Sakawat Hossain of the former three-member Election Commission will expire on February 14.

The Search Committee proposed eight names for the posts of four new election commissioners.

Following his dialogue with political parties on formation of the new Election Commission, the president on January 22 constituted the Search Committee.

Ruling AL and five other parties recommended names to the committee. But main opposition BNP, AL's key ally Jatiya Party, and 16 other parties did not send any name.

Rejecting the four-member Search Committee, BNP demanded restoration of the caretaker government system first.

Supreme Court Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain was made the chief of the Search Committee. The three other members of the committee were High Court Justice Mohammad Nuruzzaman, Public Service Commission Chairman ATM Ahmedul Haque Chowdhury, and Comptroller and Auditor General Ahmed Ataul Hakeem.

BACKGROUND OF THE NEW CEC

A veteran freedom fighter, Rakibuddin Ahmad, was born in Andulbaria Village under Jibon Nagar upazila of Chuadanga on December 2, 1943. He studied Chemistry at Dhaka University and secured first class second position in the MSc examination.

In 1966 he joined the chemistry department of Dhaka University as a lecturer. The next year he quit teaching and joined the then Civil Service of Pakistan (CSP) as an officer. He later went to the US for higher studies. He got his MBA from Boston University, and received professional training at Harvard University.

He was a zonal coordinating officer of the freedom fighters who took shelter in Agartala, India, during the

1971 Liberation War.

After the war, he served as the deputy commissioner of Comilla, and later became the director general of the NGO Affairs Bureau, chairman of the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, and also the chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation.

He retired from the civil service as the parliament secretary during the last BNP-Jamaat coalition government in 2003.

When February 21 was declared International Mother Language Day on November 17, 1999 he was then the education secretary. He, on behalf of the then AL government, negotiated with Unesco on the matter, Kazi Rukunuddin Ahmed, elder brother of the new CEC, and the acting director of Bangla daily Jajaidin told The Daily Star last night.

Rakibuddin also served as the primary and mass education secretary and as the information secretary during the last AL government. He has two daughters -- one is studying for a PhD at Harvard and the other is studying for an MBA at the Independent University of Bangladesh.

BNP rejects new EC

FROM PAGE 1

Uddin Ahmed as chief election commissioner. Former additional secretary Mohammad Abu Hafiz, former joint secretary Mohammad Abdul Mobarrak, Brig Gen (retd) Md Zayed Ali and former district and sessions judge Mohammad Shahnewaz were made election commissioners.

BNP acting Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday the appointments are unconstitutional and unlawful as the process of choosing them as well as forming the search committee is illegal.

In his immediate reaction about the new EC at the party's Naya Paltan office, Mirza Fakhrul told journalists, "BNP will not participate in any polls under such unconstitutional and unlawful Election Commission. The people will not accept such commission at all."

He said the government

made the president hold dialogue (with political parties) only to justify its unconstitutional move, and its intention was to form an EC of its choice.

Replying to a query, he said formation of the EC is not important to them. "Decision regarding caretaker government has to be taken first to resolve the existing political crisis," he added.

Contacted, AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif welcomed the appointment of CEC and election commissioners through a search committee for the first time in the country.

He hoped that a law would be enacted to continue this process. His party will cooperate with the new EC to further strengthen democracy, he added.

Workers Party chief Rashed Khan Menon said the EC has been constituted following discussions with political parties for the first time. "It is a new development in the country's democratic process," he added.

2 students killed

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and Mujahidul Islam, a student of Zoology, was an activist.

Shibir has called a half-day hartal in the port city today to protest the killings.

Fearing further tension on the campus, the CU authorities shut the university till February 16 and ordered all resident students to vacate the halls by 11:00am today.

It all began with an altercation between Shibir activist Al-Amin and BCL activist Sharier Shahin, both second year students of Islamic history, teachers and witnesses said. At one stage of the scuffle, Al-Amin slapped and punched Sharier, pushing him to the ground.

On information, Shibir and BCL men -- both groups equipped with sticks, iron rods and machetes -- started bringing out processions from different dormitories at 12:30pm, each side chanting slogans against the other.

When the Shibir men reached Suhrawardy Hall around 1:00pm, BCL activists swooped on them with iron rods, sticks, machetes and other local weapons. The Shibir men counter-attacked with similar weapons, campus sources said.

It was then that the violent clashes spread to Gol

Chattar, Amanat Hall and the areas adjacent to Shah Jalal Hall, leaving many activists of both the groups badly injured and turning the campus into a battle zone.

Among the injured is CU Proctor Nasim Hasan, who was hit when he tried to calm both the groups. He was taking treatment at a private clinic.

Several sounds of gunfire were heard during the on-and-off running battle that continued till about 4:00pm, although none was immediately reported to be hit by bullets.

Many panic-stricken women students fell unconscious while others ran for their lives, said Madhap Dweep, a teacher of communication and journalism.

The injured students were initially taken to CU Medical Centre. Of them, 15 were shifted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where Masud and Mujahidul were declared dead.

Their bodies bore marks of injury all over, including from beating and stabbing, police said.

Talking to The Daily Star, BCL and Shibir leaders blamed one another for the violence.

Badiul Alam, president of Shibir's CU unit, alleged that two of his group's men got

hold many elections including local government polls.

Hanif, also special assistant to the prime minister, hoped that BNP would extend its support to the new EC for the sake of continuation of the democratic process in the country.

Asked, Jatiya Party Presidium Member Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu said it is a unique achievement that the president appointed the CEC and election commissioners through a search committee for the first time in the country.

He hoped that a law would be enacted to continue this process. His party will cooperate with the new EC to further strengthen democracy, he added.

Workers Party chief Rashed Khan Menon said the EC has been constituted following discussions with political parties for the first time. "It is a new development in the country's democratic process," he added.

killed as police looked on.

The BCL activists swooped on the Shibir supporters with lethal weapons, he said, adding that some BCL men stabbed Al-Amin over a trifle. He also accused the BCL activists of opening fire at them.

"We're preparing to file a case in this connection," he said.

However, MA Khaled Chowdhury, general secretary of BCL's CU unit, said the clash began after the Shibir men cut the veins of Sharier and five other BCL supporters.

He added the Shibir men created the violence to occupy the campus when most BCL activists were in Dhaka to attend a central committee programme.

He also claimed that Mujahidul, one of the dead, was a BCL activist.

Meanwhile, police picked up 11 students, including Shibir's CU unit Secretary Imrul Hasan, in this connection, said Mizanur Rahman, inspector of CU police camp.

Also among the arrestees are Masudur Rahman, Shahed Uddin, Nur Hasan Riad, Mostafizur Raman, Maruf Billah, Safique Uddin, Mahfuzur Rahman, Faisal Ahmed, Jahedul Islam and Morshedul Islam -- all Shibir men.

US to withdraw 4,700 Marines from Japan

AFP, Tokyo

The United States is to shift 4,700 Marines from Okinawa to Guam without waiting for progress on controversial plans to relocate a US base on the Japanese island, it was expected to be announced yesterday.

The redeployment was originally planned to take place in tandem with the shuttering of the base at Futenma, a crowded urban area, and the opening of a new facility in a sparsely populated coastal zone.

But Washington has become increasingly frustrated by Japanese foot-dragging on the issue, which has dominated Okinawan public life for years.

A formal announcement that Washington will go ahead with the redeployment is expected later yesterday following talks in Washington between senior representatives from each government, two US officials told AFP.

Admin

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A large number of officers expecting promotion rushed to the Ministry of Public Administration soon after the promotion orders were put on display. Many were seen embracing each other seeing their names on the lists.

Former cabinet secretary Akbar Ali Khan in his reaction said the government move would increase its expenditure.

Moreover, the administration will lose its dynamism due to the possible delay in making decisions by the additional number of officers in the same positions.

About the left out officers, he said the government should notify them why they were not given promotion. "They should be given the scope of filing appeal in this regard," Akbar, also a former adviser to a caretaker government, told The Daily Star.

A deputy secretary said, "My promotion was due for long five years. It was a great relief for me when I saw my name on the list."

There were still some officers whose names did not appear on the lists. "I am deprived of promotion although my name was on top of the merit list. Some officers of my batch got promotion whose names were much below in the merit list," regretted one such officer.

The promoted officers will continue serving in their current positions as "in situ" (meaning their designation will be elevated, not portfolio) due to no vacancy.

However, the public administration ministry yesterday issued separate gazette notifications regarding the promotion saying that all the promoted officers were made officer-on-special duty (OSD).

Insiders said the ministry last night was working on an order which would inform that they would remain in their current positions despite the promotion.

As per normal practices, a civil servant gets new office and new posting when his or her rank is elevated.

The situation this time became more difficult as no civil servant will retire in the next two years, thanks to an extension of the retirement age to 59 years from 57. Nearly 4,000 officers retire every year, creating scope for promotion and posting of their subordinates.

Earlier, the Superior Selection Board (SSB), a body of seven secretaries with the cabinet secretary at the head, held a series of meetings in the last one month to find a mechanism for promoting the officers and giving them new postings.

Public Administration Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder claimed the promotion was given based on performance and merit of the officers. "Nobody was given promotion on political consideration," he told reporters at this office.

But many officers in the secretariat say political and personal favouritism, not performance or merit, has been the primary consideration for promotion and posting. The civil administration is run by some senior bureaucrats closely associated with influential figures of ruling parties, they allege.