

Biman MD

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When the Biman chairman raised the issue at a board meeting.

The meeting of the Board of Directors began while over 200 Biman employees were protesting outside.

"The board has decided that if the MD [managing director] does not want to continue, it will allow him to quit. In that case, the chairman will appoint an acting MD and publish advertisements for appointing a new MD," a board member told The Daily Star last night wishing anonymity.

Asked whether Zakiul would have to work anymore, the board member said he has to go to work to complete some formalities. The Daily Star could not reach the MD on his mobile phone for comments despite repeated attempts. He did not reply to the text sent to him.

Zakiul was appointed Biman's MD and chief executive officer around three years ago and his tenure is supposed to end in the first week of May, sources said.

During his term, the national flag carrier incurred huge loss in subsequent years and has been facing a severe fund crisis, which led to the movement by employees under the banner "Biman Bancho Oikya Parishad".

Since March, Biman employees have been demanding resignation of all the board members, including the chairman, "for their inefficiency, and incurring Tk 1,000 crore loss".

Yesterday's board meeting was held amid tight security ensured by over 50 law enforcers.

Over 200 hundred pilots, officials, and employees of Biman masked in black clothes demonstrated before Balaka Bhaban when the Biman chairman and board members went in.

On April 3, pilots and Biman staff had called for a 48-hour strike from April 16 to press home their demand but they later called it off after the civil aviation minister assured them of meeting their demand.

Upgrade

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"As the project is a priority for the prime minister, we are expecting that it will get approval at the next Ecnc and Cabinet Purchase Committee meetings," a Caab engineer, who is involved in the project, recently told The Daily Star.

According to Caab officials, the wide-body aircraft operation at the airport will kick off soon after the purchase committee award the work order to one of the five foreign companies, who earlier participated in the project's bidding process.

Of the five companies, two are from Malaysia, one each from Turkey and China and the other is Ital-Thai, a company owned by Italy and Thailand.

"We have completed the bidding process, and necessary documents on selection of the lowest bidder have been sent to the ministry concerned for their approval," the Caab engineer, preferring not to be named, said.

Earlier, Yooshin Engineering, a renowned Korean company, carried out detailed design work of the project, while 682 acres of land had been acquired and rehabilitation work for the affected people had also been completed.

Of the total project cost, the government will sponsor Tk 274 crore while the rest will come from Caab.

The government took the project in 2009, aiming to maintain communication with coastal areas in quickest possible time during emergency situations including natural calamity.

Under the project, the length of runway of the airport will be extended to 9,000 feet from the existing 6,675 feet.

Moreover, a powerhouse, a pump house, a fire station, water supply lines and drainage system etc will be constructed under the project.

Graft in free

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The scheme (Jan '10 - June '11) aims to plant 1.83 crore wood, fruit and medicinal tree saplings across the country at a cost of Tk15.78 crore.

Raising a seedling costs Tk 5 in Rajshahi and the BFD has grown 3.24 lakh seedlings at a cost of Tk 16.20 lakh under the project, said forest officials.

Lawmaker Omar Faruk Chowdhury at the monthly meeting of Godagari Upazila Parishad on February 19 alleged that BFD officials have distributed only 21,742 seedlings out of 54,000 allocated for him.

Ahead of the meeting, the officials went to the legislator for signing the related documents showing all the seedlings distributed, Faruk told The Daily Star.

They had even prepared a list of fake organisations and individuals, he mentioned. "So it is clear that they have embezzled money from the project. I have asked the upazila administration to take necessary action in this regard."

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Julia Moyeen said the meeting had asked the upazila forest officer to respond to the complaint within 15 days. But the official didn't reply even in the following meeting on March 22.

A reminder was issued on April 12 and the matter will be discussed in the monthly meeting today, she noted.

Asked for comment, Upazila Forest Officer Mozammel Haque confessed to making a mistake for not having the lawmaker's recommendation. "We are understaffed and so I couldn't visit the MP."

The Daily Star has obtained the related documents of the scheme which show lawmaker Meraj Uddin Mollah distributed 49,500 seedlings in Poba and Mohonpur upazilas.

Inquired about this, the MP said the forest officials in their documents included an additional 9,500 saplings, though those young plants were distributed under a usual tree plantation programme last year.

According to project data, Shahrir Alam MP has distributed the highest 66,516 seedlings among the six lawmakers in Rajshahi.

Shahrir, however, said he was unaware of the distribution beyond the allowed limit.

Saplings were distributed among the local people and organisations without recording their complete addresses, though the government rules made it mandatory.

Besides, an additional 12,516 seedlings were mentioned in handwriting alongside the MP's signature on the printed recommendation for 54,000 seedlings in Bagha and Charchat upazilas.

Asked about the complaint of lawmaker Omar Faruk Chowdhury, Forest Ranger Rabiul Islam said as the MP was abroad, they could not contact the legislator.

"The rainy season was drawing to an end last year and we in good faith had distributed the saplings," argued Rabiul.

If the MP does not endorse the distribution now, the forest official concerned will have to pay for the losses, he added.

PM in Doha

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Doha where she will be staying during the four-day visit.

The six-day Unctad XIII will begin in the Qatari capital today.

Earlier, a VVIP flight of Qatar Airways carrying Hasina and members of her entourage took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka at 8:45am yesterday.

The premier is leading a high level Bangladesh delegation to the conference of Unctad, a permanent inter-governmental body of the UN General Assembly dealing with trade, investment and development issues.

During her stay in Doha, Hasina will attend different events of the Unctad conference and will hold bilateral meeting with her Qatari counterpart Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jaber Al-Thani tomorrow.

She will also attend the World Leaders Investment Summit on 'How Can Investment Foster Sustainable Development' and a high-level interactive discussion on the issues of women development.

The premier will join a reception accorded by expatriate Bangladeshis living in Qatar at the Diplomatic Club.

She will also visit Bangladesh Mashhur Ul Haq Memorial School and College in Doha.

The Bangladesh delegation includes Industries Minister Dilip Barua, Commerce Minister GM Quader, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, and State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Shirin Sharmin Choudhury.

Hasina is set to return home on Tuesday morning.



Two rhinos Dhaka Zoo brought from South Africa graze in their enclosure yesterday.

ICU at CMCH

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equipment.

Yet, due to its low cost and high reliability, patients of the Chittagong region keep on queuing up at the hospital. CMCH is the only government hospital in the Chittagong region that provides ICU services, and for cheaper than private hospitals.

CMCH introduced the ICU services in 2005 with six beds. Under popular pressure the number of beds was increased to nine in 2011 without increasing logistical support.

On-duty physicians in the ICU said there are four ventilators and three medical monitors instead of required nine of each category.

They added that the unit needs 30 syringe pumps immediately. It is now functioning with five to six such pumps which are in bad condition.

"The CMCH ICU is serving patients of the Chittagong region where around four crore people live," said Dr Maswood Ahmed, in-charge of the ICU, explaining why full logistical support is a must to run such a high technology based unit.

ICU is expensive all over the world, Maswood said. "We are trying our best to provide proper treatment to the patients despite all limitations," he said.

Compared to around Tk 15,000 per day cost for a patient in a private hospital's ICU, the cost is negligible in CMCH.

"It's a high dependency unit," Maswood said adding, "We need twenty doctors including a professor, an associate professor, three assistant professors, seven junior consultants, and eight anesthesiologists." The ward also needs six more trained nurses, he said.

"We now have a professor, three consultants, and twelve nurses in the ward," he said.

Explaining how the shortcomings are affecting the services, Dr Tapan Bhattacharjee said they have to alternate the monitors from one patient to another. Three out of nine beds also need immediate replacement, he said.

Director of CMCH Brig Gen Mohammad Fashiur Rahman is aware of these problems. "I will take steps immediately to procure the necessary ventilators, monitors, and syringe pumps," he told The Daily Star.

He said he will also immediately send a proposal to the health ministry to appoint the required doctors and nurses to the unit.

"Expansion of the ICU is also under our consideration and I will send a proposal to the ministry regarding the matter as well," he said.

All they need

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Prof Mehtab Khanam of DU psychology department said it would be better for the children to be attached with families although shelter homes teach discipline.

The authorities concerned should ensure that the children grow up in a healthy environment, she said, adding that they should also make sure that the terms and conditions for adoption, if the court allowed, are being maintained.

Salma Ali, executive director of BNWLA, said they were also in favour of the children growing up in families.

Prof Dilruba Afrose said if a family stepped up to adopt any of the children, it should be made certain that the households did not treat the child as a domestic help.

In 2006, newspaper reports revealed that ex-DIG

Anisur Rahman and his wife Anwara Rahman had been living in a house with 14 children, of whom, seven were apparently of the same age, between 18 and 24 months.

On June 15, 2006, lawyer Alena Khan, the then executive director of Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights, filed a case stating that Anisur Rahman and his wife had stolen the children to traffic them abroad.

On July 30, 2008, as prescribed by the High Court, the children went through DNA tests to ascertain whether the couple were their biological parents, which Anisur and Anwara had claimed to be.

That day the children were moved from the ex-DIG's house to Proshanti. On August 14 that year,

according to the DNA test results, the HC ruled that the seven were not siblings and the couple were not their biological parents.

One of the rescued, Jannatul Nafiza Rahman, died of fever at a clinic in the capital on November 16, 2009.

Last Wednesday, a Dhaka court sentenced the former DIG and his wife to 31 years' rigorous imprisonment on charges of stealing the children and keeping them confined with an intention to traffic them abroad.

Alena Khan said the children are now living in a shelter home under strict rules which was an impediment to mental development. While deciding on the children's future the authorities should consider how much space they can ensure for their normal development.

BNP threatens

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set to enforce a nationwide dawn-to-dusk shutdown tomorrow.

After tomorrow's hartal, the BNP high command may announce blockade programmes in Dhaka and Sylhet if Ilias Ali still remained missing, party insiders told The Daily Star.

"Ceaseless hartals will be called if Ilias Ali remains untraced," warned BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir at a party meeting in the capital yesterday.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has already approved such programmes in consultation with her party colleagues, insiders said, adding that the issue had also been discussed with the leaders of the newly-formed 18-party alliance, which the BNP leads.

The alliance partners apart, Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh of Bodruddoza Chowdhury yesterday extended support for tomorrow's hartal, added the sources.

Bhoja, 51, was on his way to his Banani residence in the capital by his private car when he went missing. Ansar Ali, the driver of the car, also remains traceless since. The car was found abandoned near Amtali of Banani with all its four doors wide open.

The government could not do anything to find him out in the last three days, Mirza Fakhrul said, adding: "We've no option but to wage an out-government move-

ment." Reacting to Home Minister Shahara Khatun's call to withdraw tomorrow's hartal, he said his party would do so only if the missing party leader returns.

The BNP Chairperson on Thursday alleged some government agencies had picked up Ilias Ali. On the same day, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said Ilias might be hiding himself on Khaleda Zia's instructions.

Law enforcers have launched a probe into the matter.

In the wake of growing concern over the issue, Khaleda has postponed her Monday's programme in Rajbari. She has been holding a series of meetings with leaders of her party and alliance partners to decide on her next move, party sources said.

Protesting the missing, Swadhinata Forum, a pro-BNP organisation, formed a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday morning, demanding immediate rescue of Ilias Ali, a former lawmaker from Sylhet-2.

BNP standing committee members MK Anwar, Mirza Abbas and Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, among others, were present.

Speaking at the programme, MK Anwar said if the BNP was voted to power, it would try Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet colleagues on charges of "kidnapping" Ilias Ali.

Later at a press conference at the press club, student

leaders of the 1990s demanded that the government return Ilias and his driver without further delay.

Former vice-president of Dhaka University Central Students Union and BNP leader Amanullah Aman told the press conference that Ilias may have fallen victim to national and international conspiracies for protesting the border killings by the Indian border force and also the construction of Tipaimukh Dam by the neighbouring country.

Protests also continued in Sylhet for the second consecutive day yesterday.

BNP's Biswanath upazila unit in Sylhet put up barricade on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at 4:30pm and held a protest rally. Police cleared the street an hour later.

FIND ILIAS: JALIL
Veteran Awami League leader Abdul Jalil has said the authorities concerned should find out Ilias Ali for creating a congenial political atmosphere in which democracy can flourish.

"There can be differences of political ideologies and opinions among us but none has the right to kidnap any political worker," said Jalil, also the former general secretary of the ruling party, at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters' Unity yesterday.

"Nobody [government and opposition] will benefit through blaming each other. As we're in power, it's our responsibility to unearth the matter and inform the nation," added the AL lawmaker.

Suu Kyi

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former military rulers, a party spokesman said.

It is the first sign of serious discord between Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) and the reformist regime since April 1 by-elections that gave the former political prisoner her first-ever seat in parliament.

The authorities have rejected the NLD's appeal to change the wording of the swearing-in oath from "safeguard" to "respect" the constitution.

The party will write to the presidential office to ask the authorities to reconsider, but a resolution to the row is unlikely in time for the opening of parliament on Monday, said party spokesman Nyan Win.

President Thein Sein is on a visit to Japan, where he is set to hold talks with Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, who is reportedly set to announce that Japan will forgive Myanmar's \$3.7 billion debt and resume financial assistance.

Myanmar, which languished for decades under a repressive junta, has announced a series of reforms since a controversial 2010 election brought a civilian government to power -- albeit one with close links to the military.

Observers say the regime needs Suu Kyi in parliament to bolster the legitimacy of its political system and spur an easing of Western sanctions.

However, the Nobel Peace Prize winner has made it clear that she would push for an amendment of the 2008 constitution, under which one quarter of the seats in parliament are reserved for unelected military officials.

Analysts say that may put her into a collision course with the former junta government.

Swine flu

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A medical board composed of physicians from local hospitals will conduct a medical check up on them this morning, on the concluding day of the five-day dosage of the drug.

Umme Hafija, a 3rd year student of the institute, said, "I was suffering from headache, high fever, vomiting and upset stomach before taking the medication. Now I feel like I am totally cured. I am weak physically though."

Begum Anjumanara, nursing instructor and in-charge of the institute, said "Almost all the patients are now moving around the institution, though some of them complained of weakness and nausea."

Earlier, they were not allowed to go outside the institute following caution urged by the medical board and the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR).

Dr Aminul Islam, Kurigram sadar upazila health officer, said "I talked with some of the patients this morning and they all told me that they were feeling well. Some of them also wanted to go outside the institute."

As for physical weakness of the patients, he said it was probably induced by the antiviral drug.

"After tomorrow's [today] medical check up, we will send our report to the office of the district civil surgeon to take necessary steps" Dr Aminul said adding that resumption of classes in the institute will also depend on the recommendation of the IEDCR.

Hazare, Ramdev to hold joint fast on June 3

THE HINDU ONLINE

Yoga guru Ramdev and social activist Anna Hazare yesterday declared joint campaign against corruption and black money.

They have decided to together go on a one-day fast at Jantar Mantar here on June 3 to press their demands.

Addressing a joint press conference at Gurgaon, they charged the government with being scared of getting back black money stashed in safe havens abroad and of accepting the Jan Lokpal Bill drafted by members of Indian Against Corruption (IAC) movement.