

Self-finance not viable

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dollar project, recently cancelled its loan agreement with the Bangladesh government on graft allegations in the selection of a consultant. Jamilur headed the project's technical evaluation committee.

With the groundwork done so far, including the selection of contractors, he said the 6.15-km bridge can be built at Mawa-Janjira point in four years.

The evaluation committee disqualified the Chinese company CRCC for lack of experience, but without putting any pressure, the World Bank wanted the technical team to reconsider its experience, mentioned Jamilur in his keynote

address at the discussion. The Padma bridge project involved a big engineering challenge, as it requires 115-metre deep piling with one of the strongest river currents, he said, adding that the piling of the Bangabandhu (Jamuna) Bridge was 72-metre deep.

Speaking at the meeting, Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain, minister for expatriates welfare and overseas employment, said the government had decided to build the bridge by raising funds locally and also drawing it from bilateral donors.

Allegations made by the World Bank were not at all acceptable, said the minister, and the government intended to uphold

national dignity by building the bridge on its own.

The government was planning to spare Tk 24,000 crore from this year's national budget for the project, he added.

"Building the bridge with self-finance might cut economic growth for the next four or five years.... It would have been better if low interest loans were available," observed Mosharruf.

The IEB organised the discussion on design and implementation of the Padma bridge project.

Yeafesh Osman, state minister for science and technology, and IEB president Nurul Huda, among others, were present at the meeting chaired by Md Abdul Azim Joardar.

Mojaheed-led Al Badr

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29-page opening statement. The statement largely narrated the formation and activities of the auxiliary forces and Mojaheed's role during the war.

Information published in newspapers had proved that ICS leaders and activists had directly and indirectly been involved with the atrocities committed between March 25, 1971 and December 16 that year, said the chief prosecutor.

"...And all the members of the organisation [ICS] joined the Al Badr force," he added.

He said the activities of the Peace Committee, and Razakar and Al Badr forces were alike. They had committed crimes against humanity during the war.

Prosecutor Muklesur Rahman said Motiur Rahman Nizami, another Jamaat leader, had been the chief of Al Badr force since

September 1971 until Mojaheed replaced him in October that year.

Hence, Mojaheed must take the responsibility of a commander, said another prosecutor Mir Iqbal Hossain.

The accused should be tried not for any political or personal vengeance but for establishing the rule of law and democracy, and for ensuring justice and human rights, said prosecutor Muklesur Rahman.

Later defence counsel Munshi Ahsan Kabir sought time from the tribunal, as they could not prepare their documents and witness list.

Upon the petition, the tribunal deferred the date for recording depositions of prosecution witnesses and submission of defence documents until August 26.

Justice Obaidul Hasan, a judge of the three-member tribunal, was absent yesterday.

On June 21, the tribunal indicted 64-year-old Jamaat secretary general for seven charges, including that of murder, torture, genocide and conspiring to kill intellectuals during the Liberation War and fixed yesterday for hearing the prosecution's opening statement, deposition of prosecution witnesses and submission of documents by the defence.

The tribunal also directed the prosecution to correct the name spelling of a judge in the opening statement.

KAMARUZZAMAN'S CASE
Defence counsels of war crime accused Jamaat leader M u h a m m a d Kamaruzzaman yesterday cross-examined Hamidul Haque, the first prosecution witness in the case, for the third day.

Kafil Uddin Chowdhury cross-examined the witness for about two-and-a-quarter hours and asked him more than 50 questions.

"Do you know that after the Liberation War, the then government had formed a high-powered committee to identify the collaborators of the then Pakistan army," he asked the witness.

"It is true," was the response.

"Was the name of accused Kamaruzzaman in the list?" the defence asked.

"I have heard that his name was there but did not see the list," the witness replied.

Kamaruzzaman was present in the court yesterday. During the cross-examination the International Crimes Tribunal-2 on two to three occasions asked the defence not to ask the witness irrelevant questions.

The tribunal later adjourned the case proceedings until July 22.

Meanwhile, the prosecution drew the tribunal's attention to a report published in yesterday's issue of Dainik Sangram and sought legal action against the newspaper for "violating court order".

Prosecutor Nurjahan Begum Mukta said the newspaper had published the name of a female witness, who testified before the tribunal behind closed doors in a case against another war crimes accused Jamaat leader Abdul Quader Mollah.

Since the witness testified "in camera", her name should not have been published, argued Mukta.

"It is regretful," said ATM Fazle Kabir, chairman of the tribunal.

The tribunal said it would consider the plea on July 23, while hearing on a similar petition.

Court clears JU for polls today

FROM PAGE 1
the court ordered the home secretary, inspector general of police and officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station to deploy adequate law enforcers at the university, which is going to the VC panel polls after eight years.

The teachers, who have been laying siege to the administrative office over the last several days to press for the election of senate members beforehand, withdraw the programme from today as a show of respect to the judiciary.

They, however, will continue a hunger strike and sit-in, said Prof MA Matin, convener of Sammilito Shikhhak Parishad, which has initiated the agitation.

Apart from laying siege to the office, the Parishad yesterday observed a hunger strike and sit-in on the campus, reports our JU correspondent.

On July 2, a senate meet-

ing with VC Prof Anwar Hossain in the chair decided to hold the election today to nominate a panel of three.

The Jahangirnagar University Act, 1973, says, "The Vice-Chancellor shall be appointed by the Chancellor for a period of four years from a panel of three persons to be nominated by the Senate on such terms and conditions as may be determined by the Chancellor, and shall be eligible for re-appointment for a further period of four years."

Yesterday morning, the HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarkar came up with the order following the petition of Prof Abul Khayer, a senate member and voter of the VC panel election.

Prof Khair, also vice-president of JU Teachers Association, prayed to the court for directives upon

government officials to take measures ensuring that the election was held in a peaceful and fair manner.

During the hearing, his counsel Shahdeen Malik told the court that the petitioner feared obstruction in casting his vote as a group of teachers was staging a sit-in at the administrative building, which is the election venue.

Meanwhile, Prof Prithila Najnin of the Bangla department, who is also a JU senate member, Prof Mujibur Rahman of statistics and Prof Fazlul Karim Patwari of IIT joined the hunger strike around 10:30am yesterday.

A leader of the agitating teachers, Prof Nasim Aktar Hossain, said it is not a proper democratic practice that senate members would remain in their posts despite expiry of their terms.

The teachers maintain that senate members must be elected first and the

newly elected ones will nominate the VC panel.

They also demand the election of deans, members of the syndicate and academic council, student representatives to Jahangirnagar University Central Students Union (Jucus) and registered graduate representatives to the senate.

Terming their demand "illogical", Prof Anwar Hossain on Wednesday night urged the teachers to call off their agitation and return to the classroom. He said the special senate meeting to nominate a VC panel would be held on time.

The last time a VC panel election was held at Jahangirnagar University was in 2004. The panel led by Khondokar Mustahidur Rahman of the economics department won the race and he was appointed vice-chancellor.

Congestion 'created'

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Sources say a strong syndicate of brokers, police, and BIWTC staff also manipulates ferry services between Daulatdia and Paturia terminals.

In many cases, ferries wait at Paturia terminal for traffic but don't come to Daulatdia to reduce huge traffic congestion there, the sources say.

Empty ferries are supposed to come to Daulatdia terminal whenever there is small number of traffic at Paturia. But the practice suddenly stopped a few months ago, which is a major reason for constant traffic congestion at Daulatdia, they add.

Assistant General Manager of BIWTC at Daulatdia terminal Nasir Chowdhury denied the allegation of manipulating the ferry service to Paturia.

"Ferry service may be

late sometimes, but we never halted ferry movement for other reasons," he said and claimed, "It is the serious shortage of ferries that hampers transport of the vehicles."

He said only seven to nine ferries have been operating on Paturia-Daulatdia route for decades.

Poor and limited infrastructure in Daulatdia hugely favours the syndicate to manipulate transport serial and realise extra money from the drivers.

There is only one road used for both loading and unloading at Daulatdia, which is a major cause of chaotic traffic situation at the terminal. There are three bypass roads in Paturia, but not a single one at Daulatdia, where they are the more needed.

The authorities did not take any initiative to improve the terminal facilities in the past. The road approaching the terminal is not only narrow but also very dilapidated, all causing difficulties in traffic movement.

Construction of a one kilometre bypass road was launched in May last year and was supposed to complete by June this year. But the contractor failed to do that within the deadline and the Tk 4 crore project got six months' extension.

Upgrading 2.5 kilometre of main road from the terminal also remained suspended mysteriously for the last three months. No one can say when the work will resume.

People in Daulatdia allege brokers, who are backed by local ruling party men, are making delay in construction of the bypass

and the four-lane work.

Although only 70 trucks can park in the terminal's truck stand, the parking is either remained unused or being used by local buses.

Trucks after getting serial numbers and ferry tickets are supposed to stay at the stand before boarding the ferry. But the syndicate members don't allow them to use that. As a result, these trucks remain on the road, adding to the congestion and delay.

"Trucks however are sent to the parking space only if they don't pay the brokers for serial number and buy ferry tickets," a tea stall owner at Daulatdia told The Daily Star.

Many in the terminal said the reign of brokers will not stop unless several bypasses are constructed and terminal infrastructures are improved.

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