

DELAY IN INVESTIGATION New ACC chief blames its staff

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly-appointed Anti-Corruption Commission chairman yesterday pointed out two major hurdles -- unusual delay by ACC officials in conducting investigations and lengthy trial process -- that hold back the commission's activities.

"Some officers take months to complete their investigations," ACC Chairman Mohammad Badiuzzaman said, adding he would take steps in this regard.

He spoke at his maiden press briefing at the ACC's Shegunbagicha office in the capital. A day before he took over charge of the anti-graft watchdog.

The post fell vacant after the previous chairman, Ghulam Rahman, completed his tenure on June 23, ACC sources said.

Badiuzzaman had been discharging his duty as one of the three commissioners of the ACC since March 14, 2011 until he got promoted to chairman.

Meanwhile, Nasir Uddin Ahmed, ex-chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR), joined the ACC as a commissioner.

Regarding corruption in the ACC, its chief Badiuzzaman said some low-level officers and staff were involved in taking bribes by threatening people over the phone.

"We have taken action against them," said Badiuzzaman.

The ACC will not consider the political affiliation of a person while probing allegations against him, he said. The government had asked for the withdrawal of a number of cases filed by the commission but it did not do so, he added.

ACC Secretary Fayzur Rahman Chowdhury at a monthly press briefing also held yesterday at the commission office said the ACC last month gave approval to the filing of 27 cases against 44 people, including 24 government employees.

DELAY IN PROCESSING JOB RELATED DOCUMENTS Expats storm Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several hundred Bangladeshis stormed the Bangladesh embassy in Bahrain on Wednesday, damaging property in protest over delayed paperwork, reported Gulf Daily News from Manama yesterday.

Police fired tear gas to disperse the crowd that broke the mission's main gate during the stampede.

Many Bangladeshis and Bahrainis were waiting in line for over eight hours to get immigration and job-related documents processed by the embassy in Bahrain, home to nearly 2.5 lakh Bangladeshi workers.

They said to have been visiting the embassy in Manama for four days to get a token to enter the embassy and submit their paperwork, but to no avail.

"We are waiting from 2:00am but were unable to get a token. When embassy officials saw the crowd, they did not open the main door and people had to break-in," one Bangladeshi protester said.

"There were more than 1,000 people and all came to finish their paperwork, including passport renewal, submission of documents to bring in Bangladeshis and others. No one was able to enter and finish their work," he said.

Another Bangladeshi said he visits the mission several times a week, but always leaves disappointed.

"I am coming here almost every day but stand in a queue for several hours and go back home disappointed," he told Gulf Daily News.

"No one comes and helps us and we are tired of this situation. This is not the first time it happened to us, but several times, and I do not know why the embassy is not taking the initiative to solve this problem. We, the Bangladeshis as well as locals, are suffering," he said.

A Bahraini businesswoman, who has several Bangladeshi employees and clients, is so frustrated with the "slow" administrative process that she hired a third party to carry out all her paperwork.

"It seems this has been going on forever, but no one has taken responsibility to answer us, and embassy officials are rude, they do not even care about people who give business to them," she said.

An embassy official confirmed the incident but did not provide any more information.

The Daily Star failed to contact Bangladesh Ambassador to Bahrain Ali Akbar despite several attempts. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Director General Nazrul Islam (West and Central Asia) said he knew nothing of such incident.

Daily Gulf News reported on April 5 that hundreds protested outside the embassy after waiting for over two hours to get their paperwork completed.

Use of vulgar words in JS criticised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Women's rights activists yesterday urged female lawmakers occupying the reserved seats to refrain from doing anything that damages women's empowerment, criticising them for hurling vulgar words at rival party leaders in parliament.

They made the call at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

The 50 reserved seats for women in the parliament are a result of a long feminist movement in the country, said BNPS Executive Director Rokeya Kabir.

Shahnaj Sumi, deputy director of the organisation, said, "There should be an arrangement to train the MPs in carrying out their responsibilities and following the rules and regulations of the parliament."

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Village court bill placed at JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Village Court (Amendment) Bill-2013 was placed in parliament yesterday amidst protest by BNP-led opposition lawmakers.

Piloted by LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam, the proposed bill was aimed to simplify judicial proceedings and to ensure smooth and fair operations of village courts, a statement tagged with the bill said.

In absence of Syed Ashrafur, his deputy Jahangir Kabir Nanak placed the bill in parliament which was sent to parliamentary standing committee on LGRD ministry giving three-week time for scrutiny.

BNP lawmaker ABM Ashraf Uddin Nizan opposed the proposed bill saying, "this [the bill] will increase the scope for corruption and bribery."

In reply, Nanak said the bill was aimed to reduce backlog of lawsuits.

In the proposed amendment, the bill sought to hike the financial jurisdiction of village court to Tk 75,000 from Tk 25,000.

It also proposed that a revision application against the court's verdict need to be disposed within 30 days of obtainment.

According to the proposed legislation, there will be no review or appeal once any issue is settled down through compromise.

If anyone files case against others without valid reasons and intentionally, he or she will be fined Tk 2,000, it said.

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