

## Biman MD

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of Directors.

"So far as I know, Kyle expressed his inability to continue as the MD and CEO of Biman, citing health grounds," Biman's acting MD Wing Commander (ret'd) MM Asaduzzaman told The Daily Star.

On January 5 last year, Haywood took over the helm of Biman as the second foreigner to do so after Kevin Steele.

Before the expiry of his tenure on January 4, his job was extended for another year, Biman officials said.

Haywood in the email said before this contract was extended, he had set some conditions, including an increase in his salary and other perks, but the Biman board did not agree, according to sources in the civil aviation and tourism ministry.

"Since his conditions were not entertained and he could not give enough time to his family, he has written that he will not continue his service," said a ministry official who had read the email.

Biman sources said Haywood's relationship with the Biman board had gone south over payment of his salary.

"During his one year tenure, he was either on leave or absent for roughly 150 days. For this, the board did not allow him to draw the full salary which irked him," said a top Biman official, wishing anonymity.

According to the official, Haywood told them that he was frustrated as he had no freedom to make decisions and implement them and major decisions were always imposed on him.

Kevin Steele shared similar frustration with this correspondent before leaving the country.

Haywood's poor health might be another factor for his quitting the job, Biman officials said.

Asked about his performance, a number of Biman officials said Haywood, unlike Steele, failed to bring about any noteworthy change in Biman.

One official, however, thinks his work "had class" but his health did not let him show his best.

"Kyle's refusal to continue his service is really unfortunate, especially since new aircraft are joining the Biman fleet now," said the official.

Haywood's resignation came just two days before the official commissioning of two new Boeing 737-800 planes.

The prime minister is scheduled to attend the event.

With the latest inclusions, Biman now has 14 aircraft in its fleet – four Boeing 777-300ERs, two Boeing 777-200ERs, two Airbus A-310s, four Boeing 737-800s and two Bombardier DASH-8 Q-400s.

Biman made a profit of Tk 272.23 crore in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. Officials attributed the profit to the huge slump in the fuel price, a fleet of new aircraft and carrying hajj pilgrims with Biman's own planes.

## Spl power plant

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This prompted Siemens of Germany, another giant turbine manufacturer, to write to the PDB late last month expressing its concerns.

"It seems from the [tender] document that the tender is prepared for 100MW+ single unit which is restricting the competition," and there was only one manufacturer that can deliver the product, it wrote.

Since the Public Procurement Rules encouraged competition, the authorities should allow bidders that can generate the same amount of electricity using multiple gas turbines, Siemens added.

Local power company Energypac echoed the concerns in a letter to the PDB in December.

"We believe this will absolutely limit the competition" and the PDB will end up with "an expensive and monopolistic solution. Absence of potential competitive bids from the local bidders will deprive the country of its capacity building," it said in the letter.

Energypac too urged the PDB to widen the scope for participation by relaxing the criterion on the capacity of a single turbine unit.

A highly placed PDB official admitted that the bidding criteria indeed allowed only the GE to participate.

"But we still have some time to change this criterion," he told this correspondent.

The country experienced its last nationwide grid failure in November 2014 due to a technical glitch in the Bangladesh-India Power Interconnection Line in Bheramara, which is used for importing 450MW electricity. The situation took several days to normalise.

Following the disaster, the government formed a committee to suggest ways to prevent such incidents in future.

A nationwide grid failure happens when an unwanted disruption takes place in the national grid in one location. The sudden drop of power supply instantly affects the power plants connected to the grid and they shut down one by one in a chain reaction.

## Celebrating

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contributions to the respective fields.

A visual presentation showcasing the life sketches and works of the three was screened at the event.

Of the other 20 awardees, two received prizes in film category, seven in lyrics and 11 in photography.

Cultural Affairs Minister Asaduzzaman Noor attended the programme as the chief guest.

Abrar A Anwar, chief executive officer of Standard Chartered Bank, and Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, spoke on the occasion.

In his speech, the minister said, "I am sincerely thanking the organisers, Standard Chartered Bank and The Daily Star, for their long-term contributions towards honouring and recognising the creative minds of Bangladesh through the Celebrating Life events."

The chief guest also put emphasis on artistic, musical, cultural and sports activities for young minds alongside their academic activities.

Thanking all involved in organising the event and congratulating all the awardees, Abrar A Anwar said, "I am delighted to be present here. Standard Chartered Bank celebrated the 110th year of banking in Bangladesh."

"Apart from carrying out our banking activities for the country's overall prosperity, we are actively participating in the country's flourishing of art, culture and sports. We hope to go a long way with The Daily Star in this respect."

Mahfuz Anam said, "There are multifarious ways of building a country. It will matter little how big my single contribution is unless it mingles with the collective and entire contributions of others. This is how a country thrives towards prosperity in every field."

"We, The Daily Star and Standard Chartered Bank, have been inspiring creative minds and giving them a solid platform to flourish their faculties in films, photography and lyrics for the last eight years. We hope to build an artistic and creative Bangladesh through this effort."

Going down the memory lane, Bobita shared her success story along with the story of her fulfilled and unfulfilled dreams.

Afzal said, "I am extremely honoured to receive the Lifetime Achievement Award conferred by The

Daily Star and Standard Chartered Bank."

The other Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, Alauddin Ali, expressed gratitude to the organisers, and hoped Bangladesh would find its way back to the realm of music.

Jointly hosted by Aupi Karim and Mohammed Nawaf Naser, the gala programme included a rendition of a song, written by Mohsin Ahmed, who won the first prize in the lyrics contest.

Popular band Chirkutt, which composed the song, performed it on the stage. The band also performed several of its hit numbers as well as "Dhono Dhanno Pushpo Bhora".

The gala event included Celebrating Life Photo Exhibition, which was inaugurated by Asaduzzaman Noor. It featured winning photographs of this year's contest.

A documentary on the winners of Celebrating Life: Lifetime Achievement Award was screened. It was followed by the presentation of awards for film, lyrics, and photography.

Zahin Faruk Amin is the winner for the best debut film, while Abid Hossain Khan received the award for the best documentary film.

Award winners in photography category are Kazi Golam Kuddus Helal (first place), Md Rafayet Haque Khan (first runner-up) and Md Rajib Hassan (second runner-up).

In lyrics category, the winners are Mohsin Ahmed (first), Tanzia Tasnim Adiba (second) and Rownok Ara Chomon (third). The trio also received awards in honourable mention category.

ANM Zia, Md Yunus, Md Anamul Haque, Md Shahnewaz Khan, KM Asad, Rumman Mahmood, Md Ekhlash Uddin and Md Mobarak Hossain received awards for their photographs in honourable mention category.

Awards for lyrics in honourable mention category went to Moniruzzaman Palash, Kumar Deep, Tofayel Ahmed Talha and OR Shihab.

After the award ceremony, the audience was enthralled by the performance of two renowned artistes -- Sabina Yasmin and Syed Abdul Hadi. They performed songs penned by Alauddin Ali.

The event was coordinated by Star Showbiz Editor Rafi Hossain. Channel i, Ekattor TV, Star Showbiz and Anandadhara were the media partners of the event.

## New law

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were also present at the meeting.

"There is no need for sections 54, 55, 56 and 57 of the existing ICT Act. The sections will be repealed through the new law," said the minister.

But confusions remain as the minister said the ICT Act will still be valid.

He also said the government was bringing all the sections of the cyber crimes in one place in the ICT Act.

"There will be provisions of maximum 14 years' imprisonment in the proposed Digital Security Act-2016,

aiming to tackle the menace," the UNB quoted the minister as saying after the meeting.

The minimum punishment for cyber crime will be decided in line with the gravity of the crime, he added.

Legal experts say section 57 of the ICT Act goes against people's right to freedom of expression and free speech. They also allege that the section is so vague that law enforcers can interpret it as they will to arrest anyone anytime.

Particularly, experts add, the section contains vague wordings, allowing its misuse against newsmen and social

## India a tolerant country

Says Taslima Nasreen

IANS, New Delhi

India is a tolerant country with a few intolerant people and it is time to focus not just on Hindu fundamentalists but on Muslim fundamentalists as well, Bangladesh author Taslima Nasreen said.

"I think India is a tolerant country, but some people are intolerant. In every society, there are some people who are intolerant," the self-exiled author said at an event here, while referring to the recent violence in Malda in West Bengal.

She said while there was talk about Hindu fundamentalists, one has to talk of Muslim fundamentalists as well.

Nasreen said absolute freedom of speech was necessary even if it offended some people.

"I think we should have freedom of expression even if that offends some people. If we do not open our mouths, society will not evolve. Of course, we should fight against misogyny, religious fundamentalism and all kinds of evil forces only to make the society a better one."

The writer was participating in a discussion on "Coming of the Age of Intolerance" at the ongoing Delhi Literature Festival at Dilli Haat here on Saturday evening.

The author had drawn the ire of fundamentalists in Bangladesh for her controversial books like 'Dwikhandito' and was forced to leave Bangladesh in 1994 for allegedly hurting religious sentiments with her novel 'Lajja'.

On the other hand, BJP ideologue and writer Sudheendra Kulkarni said absolute freedom could only be exercised with responsibility.

"There is no freedom whatsoever to show any religion in bad light, knowing that it will hurt sentiments and insult others. I completely disagree that writers should have absolute freedom. Freedom must be exercised

with responsibility," he said.

In September last year, a debate over what many writers said was a "growing climate of intolerance" saw over 40 writers and filmmakers returning their awards to protest the killings of rationalists and writers like Narendra Dabholkar and MM Kalburgi and the lynching on a Muslim man in Dadri over suspicion that ate beef.

He also said a certain kind of marginal intolerance has always been present in Indian society and so it was not right to blame "this party or that party" for it.

## Afghan forces retake northern district from Taliban

REUTERS, Kabul

Afghan security forces have retaken a district in the north of the country, killing 30 Taliban fighters and capturing vehicles and weapons from the insurgents, the defence ministry said on Sunday.

The recapture is a welcome piece of good news for government forces, which have struggled to contain the spreading Taliban insurgency since international troops wound up most combat operations at the end of 2014.

Combined army, police and special forces units took back Darqad district, on the border with Tajikistan, in the early hours of Sunday, the defence ministry said.

The Taliban briefly captured the northern Afghan city of Kunduz last year and have overrun large parts of the southern province of Helmand, where the United States has launched air strikes and deployed special forces to help badly squeezed Afghan troops and police.

## Ijtema ends

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roofs of vehicles and boats and rooftops of nearby buildings. Devotees who could not reach the venue listened to the prayers over the mobile phone and electronic media.

Dhaka-Mymensingh highway, Tongi-Kamarpada road and Abdullahpur-Ashulia road had been closed to traffic since morning with thousands of people marching towards the Ijtema venue.

To join yesterday's *munajat*, a huge number of women went to Tongi Saturday night and stayed at several places near the venue. Many others had already been on the Ijtema ground since Friday.

"I had to walk around five kilometres to reach the venue. There was no bus from Banani either," Afroza, who is from Dhaka's Farmgate, told The Daily Star after the *munajat*.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina participated in the *munajat* from the Gono Bhaban while BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia from her Gulshan home.

A total of nine devotees died of cardiac arrest and other complication during the three-day first phase of the Ijtema.

Many social, business organisations and individuals distributed free water, cold drinks and dry food among the devotees.

Under the banner of Department of Narcotics Control, some 20 former drug addicts, who have been rehabilitated, also distributed mineral water for free among devotees offering the *munajat* at Uttara Sector-9 in the capital.

Twenty mobile courts of Gazipur district administration filed 51 cases and realised Tk 1.60 lakh in fine for selling adulterated food and occupying footpaths at Tongi during the Ijtema, Officer-in-Charge Firoz Talukder of Tongi Police Station said.

For the first time, the Ijtema is being held in four phases in two years. People from 33 districts, including Dhaka, are taking part in the first two phases this year, while those from the remaining 32 districts, also including Dhaka, will participate in the other two phases next year.

The first phase was for the devotees of 17 districts, including the capital. The second phase will start on January 15 and end on January 17 with the Akheri *Munajat*.

## Trial begins

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the fire that killed and injured workers of the factory," said Khairul in his statement.

The recording officer said after getting an order from the superior authorities, he recorded the case as a regular one.

On December 22, 2013, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) pressed charges against 13 people, including Delwar and his wife.

Delwar and his wife were charged with constructing the building on a faulty plan with the help of engineers and illegally using the ground-floor walkway as a warehouse.

There was no fire exit at the factory in violation of the labour law provisions, the charge sheet said.

The managers and security guards were charged with forcing the workers to get back to work though smoke was billowing from the ground floor where the fire started.

## Iran warns of reciprocal measures in US visa row

AFP, Tehran

Iran's parliament speaker said Sunday that new US visa regulations amounted to "harassment" and reciprocal steps would be taken if the plans are implemented.

The rules, approved by Congress last month, would bar people from 38 mainly European countries from travelling to the United States without a visa if they have visited Iran, Iraq, Syria or Sudan since 2011.

Dual nationals of those countries would also be banned from using the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

"Recently some US representatives have put some plans together which can only be referred to as harassment," parliament speaker Ali Larijani told lawmakers.

"If they don't amend it, there will be reciprocation from the Iranian side."

He did not specify what reciprocal measures might be taken. Iran recently simplified its visa entry rules, seeking to boost tourism, but the United States, Britain and Canada are among 11 countries whose citizens cannot obtain a visa on arrival.

The US plan came after calls from lawmakers and authorities to reduce security vulnerabilities after November's deadly jihadist attacks in Paris.

Some of the attackers were French and Belgians who could have travelled unrestricted to the United States.

## Govt okays

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Another official of the ministry, preferring anonymity, said the sponsors and initiators of some of the proposed universities had political links.

The approval came at a time when a number of private universities are reportedly functioning without meeting the basic criteria.

Many universities have disputes among their trustee board members, do not have enough qualified teachers and properly equipped libraries and laboratories, do not publish research journals and have no campus of their own.

Prof Abdul Mannan, chairman of University Grants Commission, the statutory apex body for higher education, himself at a meeting in August last year expressed disappointment over the institutions' non-compliance with the Private University Act-2010.

Despite the issuing of repeated deadlines, only 17 out of 52 universities functioning for seven years have so far shifted to their own campuses, a basic condition stipulated in the act.

Educationists on several occasions requested the government not to approve of any more private university in Dhaka, citing lack of space as one of

the main reasons.

The new universities are named as International University of Scholars in Dhaka; Canadian University of Bangladesh in Dhaka; University of Creative Technology in Chittagong; Northern University of Business and Technology in Khulna; NPI University of Bangladesh in Manikganj; and Rabindra Moitree University in Kushtia.

Initiators of NPI University are former Chhatra League leaders Ishaq Ali Khan Panna and Md Shamsur Rahman.

Jamil Habib sought permission for opening up University of Scholars and Chowdhury Nasir Sharafat to set up Canadian University of Bangladesh.

Islami University Dean Jahirul Islam has been named as initiator of Rabindra Moitree University and Md Osman as initiator of University of Creative Technology.

More than 100 applications seeking permission for new universities are still pending with the education ministry now.

Currently, more than 3.30 lakh students are studying at private universities countrywide.

## Teachers go on strike

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student of mechanical engineering dept at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

"Our internship and post graduation will be badly hampered because of the strike."

Freshers have a similar view.

"We do not know when our classes will start," said Noor Alam of Dhaka University anthropology department.

In another development, a press release said doctors, engineers, agriculturist, and officials of the 26th BCS cadres would observe a two-hour (12:00noon to 2:00pm) work stoppage every day. Demanding removal of "discrimination in the pay scale", the programme will begin today and continue till January 17.

On January 2, FBUTA decided to call the indefinite work abstention after holding a meeting with the representatives of all the 37 public universities.

"Our nonstop work stoppage will continue until the government issues a gazette notification removing the discriminatory provisions," FBUTA Secretary General Prof Maksud told The Daily Star.

The finance minister on December 6 had assured them of retaining the selection grade and time scale. But he did not keep his words, he added.

In the existing system, if a public servant does not get promotion in due time he is entitled to get time scale and selection grade.

Prof Maksud added, "There is no scope for the professors to obtain grade 1 like the senior secretaries in the eighth pay scale. Bureaucracy and some anti-government officials of the finance ministry are the main reasons behind this ongoing crisis."

## On the run

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with actor Sean Penn for an interview conducted at his hideout while he was still on the run.

Guzman, the legendary boss of the Sinaloa drug cartel, was arrested in northwest Mexico on Friday morning, and sent back to the jail he broke out of in July last year through a mile-long tunnel that led straight into his cell.

Rolling Stone magazine said the seven-hour interview with Penn was brokered by Mexican actress Kate Del Castillo who herself played a Mexican drug queen in a well-known soap. Among the revelations contained in the interview is a claim by Penn that Guzman sent engineers to Germany for three-months of training on how to avoid problems when excavating near "the low-lying water table beneath the prison".

"I supply more heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine and marijuana than anybody else in the world. I have a fleet of submarines, airplanes, trucks and boats," he told the actor. "Look, all I do is defend myself, nothing more. But do I start trouble? Never."

The extraordinary twist comes as it was reported that Mexico has said it is willing to extradite Guzman to the US. This marks a reversal of its position after his last capture in 2014.

"Mexico is ready. There are plans to cooperate with the US," a Mexican official told the Associated Press. But he cautioned that there could be a lengthy wait before US prosecutors can get their hands on Guzman.

"You have to go through the judicial process, and the defence has its elements too," he added.

Guzman is a legendary figure in Mexico, where he went from being a farmer's son to the world's top drug supplier. Mexican officials say he even had dreams of having Hollywood do a movie based on his life.

News of the interview with Penn, in which the two men discussed drug trafficking to the middle east, will likely add another lawyer to his celebrity.

Asked about who is to blame for

Yesterday, Dhaka University Teachers Association (DUTA) announced that during the strike they would not hold midterm or any other tests. But course/semester finals will be out of its purview.

"We took this decision at the requests of students," said Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, who is also the president of DUTA.

On the other hand, teachers of Bangladesh Agricultural University took a harsher decision: they will not take even final exams.

"Teachers are very much agitated because their dignity was hurt in the new pay scale. We have no alternative to a tough movement like the postponement of the final exams," said Abdullah Iqbal, joint secretary of Bangladesh Agricultural University Teachers' Association.

"The authorities concerned should respond properly otherwise our students will plunge into a serious session jam," he said.

Teachers of all the 37 universities have been protesting the 8th pay scale since May, saying it downgraded their status. Since then, they have been pressing for a four-point charter of demands including formation of a commission to initiate an independent pay scale for public university teachers.

The other demands are their parity with senior professors and senior secretaries and between professors and secretaries in salary and allowance; upgrading the status of teachers in the warrant of precedence; and the provision of cars, foreign and government scholarships and other allowances for teachers similar to provisions given to bureaucrats.

drug trafficking, Guzman is quoted as saying: "If there was no consumption, there would be no sales. It is true that consumption, day after day, becomes bigger and bigger. So it sells and sells."

Penn said that as an American citizen he was drawn to explore issues that "may be inconsistent with the portrayals our government and media brand upon their declared enemies."

"Not since Osama bin Laden has the pursuit of a fugitive so occupied the public imagination," he wrote.

"But unlike bin Laden, who had posed the ludicrous premise that a country's entire population is defined by -- and therefore complicit in -- its leadership's policies, with the world's most wanted drug lord, are we, the American public, not indeed complicit in what we demonise."

He added: "We are the consumers, and as such, we are complicit in every murder, and in every corruption of an institution's ability to protect the quality of life for citizens of Mexico and the United States that comes as a result of our insatiable appetite for illicit narcotics."

On Saturday, "El Chapo's" lawyers began the process of fighting the extradition requests, filing an injunction.

"Mr Guzman Loera should not be extradited to the United States or any other country," said attorney Juan Pablo Badillo. "Mexico has just laws that are detailed in the General Constitution of the Republic."

Guzman is included in at least seven indictments in various US jurisdictions.

Mexico said on Saturday that it received extradition requests on June 16 and August 31. Those requests resulted in courts in Mexico's 3rd and 8th districts issuing arrest warrants with the purpose of international extradition, the AP said.

At the time the arrest warrants were issued, Guzman was on the run after escaping prison for a second time.

On Saturday night, some reports suggested that it was the interview with Penn that had helped law enforcement