

DHAKA CITY AL COUNCIL

Bazlur, Kochi for north; Mannafi, Humayun for south

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League has named Sheikh Bazlur Rahman and SM Mannan Kochi as the president and general secretary, respectively, of its Dhaka north unit for the next three years.

The party also named Abu Ahammad Mannafi and Humayun Kabir as the president and general secretary, respectively, of its Dhaka south unit for the same period.

AL General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader announced the names yesterday at the triennial council of the party's two units in the capital.

The council session was held at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh.

Bazlur was the senior vice-president of the outgoing committee of Dhaka north unit AL while Kochi had served

as the joint general secretary of the committee.

Both Mannafi and Humayun was the vice presidents of the outgoing committee of Dhaka south unit AL.

During the council session, councillors proposed eight names for the president post and nine for the general secretary post of Dhaka north unit AL.

They also proposed 10 names for the post of president and 13 names for the general secretary post of Dhaka south unit AL.

Earlier in the morning, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the council of the two city units as the chief guest by hoisting the national flag and releasing pigeons at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

The last council of undivided Dhaka City Awami League was held on December 27, 2012.

New one revving up

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managing director. Zaryab is a deputy managing director of Padma Bank.

"This is quite an illogical move on part of the central bank given the ongoing fragile situation in the NBFI sector," said Khondker Ibrahim Khaled, a former BB deputy governor.

Only four out of the 34 NBFIs are running their business smoothly, as per a central bank statement, he said.

"And in recent months, it has been seen that loans in NBFIs are fast turning sour for want of corporate governance."

At the end of June, the total defaulted loans in NBFIs amounted to Tk 8,038 crore, up 47.21 percent from six months earlier, according to data from the central bank.

Then in July, the BB began the process of liquidating People Leasing and Financial Services as the NBFI failed to repay depositors' money despite maturity of the funds.

Furthermore, on September 30 Rupali Bank alleged that 10 NBFIs have failed to pay back its funds amounting to Tk 933 crore, show BB documents.

The bank has repeatedly asked them to repay the money, but they were unable to. Subsequently, the state-run bank sought the central bank's intervention.

But the BB is yet to take any step to help Rupali recover its fund.

"Rather, it is racing ahead towards the green light for the new NBFI," said the central bank official.

Md Serajul Islam, spokesperson and an executive director of the central bank, told The Daily Star that the BB was yet to take any final decision on the new NBFI.

"We are reviewing its documents and applications," he added.

Another central bank official on condition of anonymity, however, said the BB management is taking preparations to place the proposal at its next board meeting, scheduled for the first week of this month.

"The pressure from different corners is too much, so the management is considering giving the licence," he added.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of the Policy Research Institute, said the financial sector regulator is doing the opposite of what the situation demands.

"The total number of NBFIs is too many given the country's business

volume," he said, while advising the BB to liquidate the weak ones to restore corporate governance in the sector.

A new NBFI will not add any value to the financial sector at this moment, said Mansur, also a former economist of the International Monetary Fund.

Salehuddin Ahmed, a former governor of the central bank, echoed the same.

"There is a lack of depositor confidence in the NBFI sector -- many cannot wait to withdraw their funds upon maturity."

So, the central bank should shun giving licence to a new NBFI in the interest of the financial sector, he added.

Besides, Padma Bank itself is a troubled lender that has yet to show any positive sign towards strengthening its financial health, Mansur said.

The bank, which was established in 2013, became a hotbed for financial irregularities in less than three years of operation. More than Tk 3,500 crore was siphoned out in that time, leaving the bank in financial pits and needing a bailout package from the government.

Padma had informed the central bank earlier in the year that those days are behind it now.

Yet, it is now struggling to returns fixed deposits to clients upon maturity.

And, at the end of September, its total defaulted loans swelled 10.83 percent year-on-year to Tk 3,403.49 crore, which is a staggering 62 percent of its total outstanding loans.

"The central bank should not allow any sponsors or directors of Padma Bank to run a new NBFI," Mansur added.

The Daily Star failed to reach Anjuman Ara as she has listed her husband's mobile phone number on the biographical report submitted to the central bank.

Despite repeated attempts, Nafeez also did not respond to a request for a comment.

But Zaryab, who would be taking the helm of the proposed NBFI, is sanguine about the new venture.

"Eight to ten NBFIs are in trouble, and we will take lessons from them while operating the new venture," he said, adding that Strategic Finance and Investments would be rolling out new and diversified products to make its business vibrant.

Madness for money

FROM PAGE 1

-- it cannot be tolerated," she told the inaugural function of the triennial council of Dhaka North and South City units of Bangladesh Awami League at the historic Suhrawardy Udyan.

Hasina, also the president of the AL, reaffirmed to continue her government's ongoing drive against corruption, saying that the hard-earned money of the people will be spent for their welfare.

"Those who make money illegally always think about the stolen money. Actually, it's a disease ... those, who once made money illegally, only wish to do the same. But those who earn money in the honest way could sleep in peace," she said.

The AL president said the children of those who earn money illegally go down to the wrong path, their studies are destroyed and they get addicted to drugs due to that money.

"The parents of these children have no time to look after their sons and daughters. They've no attention to the fact that their family is ruining ... they're continuing to run after money," she said.

While talking about the BNP's demand for release of its chairperson, the PM said the case for which Khaleda

Zia is serving jail is a corruption case, not a political one.

"The case was filed against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for embezzling the orphans' money and she is now in jail after being convicted in that case," she said.

"Begum Khaleda Zia and her two sons had indulged in bribery and graft and it was disclosed in the FBI investigation, not only in our probe," she said.

Referring to the BNP-Jamaat mayhem in 2013, 2014 and 2015 in the name of movement, Hasina said they killed people and destroyed buses, trucks launches, rails, CNG-run auto-rickshaws and public and private property through arson at that time.

The PM said the country had earned independence in exchange for blood of millions of martyrs. "So our work is to change the lot of the people and develop the country and we're continuing this work ... we want that our every leader and worker will build the country with that ideology," she said.

Earlier, the PM opened the council of AL's Dhaka North and South City units as the chief guest by hoisting the national flag as well as releasing pigeons and balloons.



Passengers remain stranded at the Sadarghat launch terminal in the capital yesterday amid the strike called by river transport workers. The strike was called off last night. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Patients suffer for legal constraints

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Fahmida can try to obtain a kidney illegally from a donor in the black market.

But in that case, she has to get the transplant done in a foreign country, where the law allows organ donation from a non-relative who has either an emotional connection with the recipient or an altruistic motive.

Chittagong's Pahartali resident Lucky took advantage of the emotional donation clause in the Indian law two years ago and obtained a kidney from Md Hazrat Ali, a porter from Rajabirat in Gaibandha's Gobindaganj.

Although Lucky did not live long to share her story, Hazrat Ali, now almost crippled after selling his right kidney, told The Daily Star how he was duped by organ traffickers active in the northern border areas of the country.

Hazrat Ali said he was persuaded to sell his kidney by a broker named Ziaur Rahman. He was then taken to Dhaka twice in 2017 -- once to undergo some tests and then to prepare his passport and visa.

The transplant was done at a hospital in Kolkata in December 2017. "When we returned home, broker Zia gave me only Tk two lakh though the contract was for Tk 3.5 lakh," he alleged.

Following a case filed by Hazrat and his wife against 11 organ brokers, Gobindaganj police arrested two persons, who had sold their kidneys before and then started working as agents for an organ trafficking gang, said police.

In 2011, law enforcers busted a number of kidney trafficking gangs active in Joypurhat's Kalai, where, as per official data, 42 people sold their kidneys through agents at that time.

"The organ business spread to Gobindaganj from the adjacent Joypurhat's Kalai upazila," said Inspector Imranul Kabir, investigation officer of the case filed with the Boiragirhat Police Investigation Centre.

"Now we are conducting regular drives to arrest the kidney brokers."

According to sources in Kalai, three organ trade ringleaders, Saiful Islam Daud, Abdus Sattar and Tariquzzaman Tareq, who were arrested in 2011, are currently on bail.

CHANGES IN LAW SOUGHT

On August 24, 2017, Fahmida's mother filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the provisions that limit donations.

Although the law was amended last year and more relatives now can donate their kidneys to a patient, the change will not bring any significant difference to the huge gap between the demand and supply of the organ in the country, said the petitioner's lawyer Barrister Rashna Imam.

The family filed another application with the HC in August 2018 recommending changes to the law to include emotional donation from an unrelated but known donors as allowed in India; altruistic donation from unrelated living donor as allowed in the United Kingdom and United States, and safeguards to prevent illegal kidney trading.

This year in August, the court asked for the opinion of experts in this regard and in a recent report, experts opposed voluntary donations beyond certain relatives citing the risk of exploitation of the poor by the rich.

According to transplant surgeons, under the existing system in the country, attempting to prove a bona fide kidney donation between the donor and the recipient is very risky.

Prof Dr Kamrul Islam of the Centre for Kidney Diseases & Urology Hospital explained that even now when a donor can either be a spouse or a close relative, the responsibility of proving relationship falls on the hospital doing the transplant.

For relationship identification, his hospital asks for police verification of the donor and recipient, a notarised affidavit from the court, and then DNA test report, if the donor is not a parent, he said.

Such a scrutiny is necessary because doctors risk losing their licences and the hospitals their registrations if no relationship is found between the donor and patient later.

Prof Kamrul suggested the relationship identification be done by a government body like that in India. This way, the transparency of the process will increase.

Prof Harun said most well-to-do patients in the country take advantage of the emotional donation

clause in India. Every year, about 100 Bangladeshi patients are going to India for kidney transplant.

THE WAY FORWARD

Both the surgeons view cadaveric transplant as the solution to meet the current demand for kidneys in Bangladesh.

Prof Kamrul noted that in western countries, 70 percent of the kidneys needed for transplant comes from cadaver or brain-dead patients.

Every day, around 10 to 12 people die in Bangladesh from renal failure, while at least one brain dead patient can be found in most of the 100 ICUs in the country.

As per official data, around 3,000 people die from road accidents yearly but the World Health Organisation and various bodies working on road safety estimate this figure to be much higher.

Prof Harun said if hospital medical boards are made obligated by law to declare road-accident patients brain dead following necessary tests, it may help increase the number of kidney transplant.

The physician related how cadaveric transplant attempts failed in Bangladesh mainly because of opposition from relatives of a deceased person.

He cited examples of Saudi Arabia and Iran where Islamic clerics issued fatwa in favour of cadaveric transplant, thus removing any questions in people's mind about religious restriction on removal of organs after death.

Noting that 14 vital organs can come from a cadaver, he said, mass awareness is needed to encourage people in consenting to cadaveric transplant that can save at least 14 lives.

Prof Kamrul pointed to the Iranian system, where willing people can actually sell their kidneys to patients through a government agency at a fixed price and also get a medical insurance for any future complications.

That way if the seller faces any complications, like those described by Hazrat Ali, the insurance would help him or her to seek medical help for free and also safeguard him from exploitation, he said.

[With inputs from our Dinajpur correspondent Kangkan Karmakar]

Verdict today on killing of Rajib, Dia in road crash

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court is set to deliver its verdict today in the case filed over a road accident that killed two college students in the capital sparking an unprecedented road safety movement in the country.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of Dhaka Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court is scheduled to deliver the verdict at 3:00pm, said court sources.

On November 14, the court had set the date of delivering the verdict on completion of placing arguments from the prosecution and defence.

Drivers, helpers and owners of two Jabal-e-Noor Paribahan buses were made accused in the case.

The accused are Shahadat Hossain and Jahangir Alam, owners of the buses; Masum Billah and Zobair Hossain Sumon, drivers of the buses; and Enayet Hossain and Kazi Asad, helpers of the buses.

The High Court stayed the trial proceedings against Shahdat, now on bail, on November 7 last year. Asad was on the run.

On September 6 last year, Inspector Kazi Shariful Islam of Detective Branch of police submitted charge-sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka against the accused.

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka framed charges against them on October 25 and the trial began on November 1.

Of 41 witnesses, 37 gave their testimonies before Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court in the case.

On July 29, two students of Shaheed Ramiz Uddin Cantonment College -- Abdul Karim Rajib, 18, and Dia Khanam Mim, 17 -- were run over and killed while nine others were injured during a mad race between two buses of Jabal-e-Noor Paribahan.

Victim Dia's father Jahangir Alam Fakir filed a case with Cantonment Police Station in connection with the killing on the same day.

Ansar member shot dead in Jashore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A member of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP was shot dead by a group of unidentified criminals in Hashimpur Bazar area of Jashore's Sadar upazila around 8:00am yesterday.

The dead is Hossain Ali Tarafdar, 55, a sepoy of Bangladesh Ansar and VDP.

Moinul Haque, superintendent of Jashore police, said they were suspecting previous enmity to be the reason behind the murder.

The victim's sister Sharifa Begum said Hossain was posted in Dhaka's Mirpur area and recently went to Jashore to visit his village home.

Hossain was shot and killed when he was going to a relative's house, she added.

According to locals, Hossain used to be a member of Lal Pataka Bahini, a banned extremist group. In 1999, he returned to normal life by surrendering his weapons under general amnesty. He was then recruited by Bangladesh Ansar and VDP.

SP Moinul said they would bring the culprits to books.

The body was sent to Jashore General Hospital for autopsy.

A murder case was filed with Jashore Kotwali police station in this connection.