

ACC restarts probe against Taqsem

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has reinitiated an investigation against Taqsem A Khan, former managing director of Dhaka Wasa, on charges of corruption.

The investigation has been prompted by at least five major allegations against him - corruption regarding his own appointment, favouritism in contractual appointments, corruption in major projects, collusion in contractor appointments, and embezzlement and laundering of thousands of crores of taka.

Previously, ACC had investigated these allegations and found them credible, leading to recommendations for filing cases. However, Taqsem used his influence to suppress these investigations.

Following Sheikh Hasina's fall on August 5, Taqsem resigned from his position on August 14. After his resignation, the ACC has refocused on his alleged irregularities and corruption.

According to ACC, Taqsem was appointed as Wasa MD in 2009 and his

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DHAKA UNIVERSITY Students, teachers call for non-partisan VC

SIRAJUL ISLAM RUBEL

With growing calls for reform across various sectors, a section of Dhaka University students is advocating for a vice-chancellor who is professional, academically distinguished, visionary, and has no direct affiliation with any political parties.

The demand has not only been made by students and teachers, but the university's alumni as well as leaders of some student organisations.

After some teachers' names surfaced as potential candidates to become the next DU VC, widespread discussions have sparked everywhere, as well as on social media.

"I understand that negotiations are ongoing for the VC post. But I do not accept the process of appointing VC through political considerations," said Shakibur Rahman, a student of Physics department.

Rifat Ahmed, another DU student, said, "We all realised the importance of a student-friendly VC during the protests. If the then VC sir had not allowed law enforcers to enter the campus that day and emptied the halls, they couldn't have harmed us."

Salman Siddiqui, a DU student and president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, said, "We want to see the kind of VC who will work in the interests of students and teachers,

not political parties. Someone with academic excellence, who stands by the oppressed."

Raquiuddin Ahmed, former president of Dhaka University Alumni Association, said, "The time is perfect for a reform. As an alumnus of the university, I hope the VC position goes to a teacher who possesses a good personality, is academically sound, student-friendly, and most importantly, is politically neutral."

In many cases, party lobbying and politics were prioritised for promoting teachers.

Dhaka University currently has around 2,000 teachers, and over 800 of them belong to the blue panel, the pro-AL teachers' organisation.

Meanwhile, around 300 teachers belong to the white panel, pro-BNP teachers' organisation.

Prof Lutfar Rahman, convenor of the white panel, said, "The students' demands are reasonable. However,



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SALMAN SIDDIQUI DU student and president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front

During the Awami League regime, teachers loyal to the party were appointed as VCs across the universities, and in many cases, those VCs were seen prioritising party interests over that of students'.

With the VCs holding the highest power in universities, the former government appointed people loyal to the party everywhere - from teachers to hall provosts to administrative officials - establishing a culture of partisanship.

no one is politically neutral. The university has to be run with many considerations in mind...," he added.

Meanwhile, the University Teachers' Network on Monday proposed ending political dominance and ensuring academic and administrative accountability within universities.

They urged the government to be accommodating and to allow universities to operate autonomously, without any form of political interference.

UN team flies in tomorrow

FROM PAGE 1

According to a primary report of the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights published on August 16, between July 16 and August 11, 650 people were killed in Bangladesh during the student-led protests and after the fall of the Awami League regime on August 5.

Of these, nearly 400 deaths were reported from July 16 to August 4, while around 250 people were reportedly killed following the ouster of the AL-led government on August 5 and 6, says the report.

The reported death toll is likely an underestimation, as information collection has been hindered by restrictions on movement due to the curfew and the internet shutdown, it says.

The report further says that the number of reported killings in revenge attacks since August 5 still remains to be determined. Those killed include protesters, bystanders, journalists covering the events and a number of members of the security forces, the OHCHR said.

Thousands of protesters and bystanders have been injured, with hospitals overwhelmed by the influx of patients. The majority of deaths and injuries have been attributed to the security forces and the student wing affiliated with the Awami League.

Also, there were a series of attacks on the minorities, including looting and vandalising of properties, places of worship and houses.

During a greet and meet event with the foreign diplomats and international aid agencies on August 18, Chief Adviser to the Interim Government Dr Muhammad Yunus also welcomed the UN proposal of deploying a fact-finding mission, saying the government wants an independent and impartial probe.

"All human rights violations that occurred between July 1 and August 15 will come under the purview of the investigation. However, both the UN and Bangladesh government will need to sign an agreement on the scope of investigation," the UN official said.

The agreement on the framework of the investigation will include the UN experts' access to meet the people they want, obtain documents required for the investigation and the government's commitment not to harass witnesses etc.

Based on the agreement, UN's independent fact-finding mission comprising of five respected legal experts will come to Bangladesh after one or two weeks.

"They will talk to the victims, review videos of rights violation, talk to the government officials, witnesses and whoever they need," the UN official said.

The mission will need six to eight weeks for the investigation and then submit a report including recommendations to the government.

The names of the witnesses or those accused of violence will not, however, be mentioned in the public documents of the fact-finding mission. If the government wants the names of the witnesses or those responsible for the violence, it will provide those to the government for prosecution, UN official added.

The report will put forward recommendations for the government in the prosecution process. If the government wants UN support for prosecution, including in capacity and technical expertise, evidence and even observations, it can extend the support.

"This will depend on the desire of the government," the official added.

A foreign ministry official said the UN mission may also recommend measures for reforms to the law enforcers.

ACC to probe two staffers of ex-PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has launched investigation into two staffers of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. They are: her former deputy press secretary Ashrafur Alam Khokon, and former personal assistant (peon) Md Jahangir Alam.

The ACC made the decision in a meeting held at its headquarters yesterday, its press relations office confirmed.

According to ACC sources, Khokon holds dual citizenship in Bangladesh and the US, and allegedly owns a significant amount of assets, both in his name and under aliases.

Information about four private cars registered in his name has already surfaced.

In February 2021, Khokon stepped down from his position as deputy press secretary to the then premier.

On the other hand, Jahangir worked as Sheikh Hasina's personal employee after she became prime minister in 2009. He, however, introduced himself as Hasina's personal assistant, carried a licensed pistol, and went on to amass wealth worth millions in Dhaka and Noakhali through different schemes.

Ex-AL MP Bodi arrested in Ctg

STAR REPORT

Former Awami League lawmaker Abdur Rahman Bodi has been arrested by a team of Rapid Action Battalion.

A Rab team arrested Bodi, a former MP of Cox's Bazar-4 constituency, in Panchlaish of Chattogram last night, said officials from Rab legal and media wing.

He was arrested in an attempted murder case filed with Teknaf Police Station.

On May 3, 2024, Bodi was accused of shooting at a chairman aspirant ahead of the Teknaf Upazila Parishad polls. The incident allegedly took place in Moheshkhali Para area of Whykong union.

On August 16 this year, a case was filed against Bodi, and 32 others on charges of vandalism, looting and attack on businesses in Teknaf. Bodi was named as the "kingpin" of yaba trafficking on the list prepared by the Department of Narcotics Control.



826 looted arms recovered

UNB, Dhaka

Law enforcers have recovered 826 arms looted in recent times from police stations, police lines, police outposts and other places, till Monday.

Police headquarters shared this information yesterday afternoon.

Moreover, a total of 20,778 rounds of bullets, 1,482 tear gas shells, 71 sound grenades have been recovered till date, it said.

A large number of arms and ammunition were looted from the police stations and other protected zones after law enforcers were attacked before and after August 5. Members of the Bangladesh Army have also been working to recover the looted arms across the country.

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গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ অধিনায়কের কার্যালয় রূপালি এ্যাকশন ব্যাটালিয়ন-১০ কেরানীপাড়া, ঢাকা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

UN team flies in tomorrow August 15 will come under the purview of the investigation. However, both the UN and Bangladesh government will need to sign an agreement on the scope of investigation, the UN official said.

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