

Bitter consequences for accepting bribes

Warns ACC chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To meet the public's expectations, there is no alternative to making investigation and prosecution processes as flawless as possible, said Iqbal Mahmood, chairman of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday.

Pointing out the Transparency International's (TI) 'Global Corruption Barometer - Asia 2020' report which says 86 percent respondents told them that anti corruption agency of Bangladesh is doing a good job in tackling corruption, he said the people's faith in them has increased their responsibility.

In a statement, Iqbal yesterday said the ACC needs to work on transparency and accountability.

"I can firmly say that in the last five years, we've been trying to meet public expectations. We did not give priority to a person's identity," he said.

The ACC Chairman said that they have given importance to the mode of crime and its magnitude. "We tried to take crimes into cognizance at the quickest possible time," he said.

According to the TI report, 24 percent respondents told them that they have to pay bribe to get government service. The TI conducted the survey on 1,000 people.

"We never deny that people have to give bribe to get government service. But to stop the practice, we've taken various measures," he said, adding that the ACC led drives to prevent bribery.

He said in the last five years they have nabbed many corrupt officials red-handed while taking bribes. "Some of them are being tried at the court," he said.

"Providing service is a constitutional responsibility of government servants. But some dishonest officers and staffers are taking bribe and getting involved in criminal offence," said Iqbal.

Those who take bribes will face bitter consequence, he added.

21st death anniv of Syed Mahbubul Haque today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 21st death anniversary of Syed Mahbubul Haque (Benu Mia), a prominent freedom fighter in Magura, will be observed today (Monday, November 30).

Mahbubul, who was also a leading businessman in the district, passed away at the age of 72 in the year 1999. Relatives and admirers have been requested to offer their thoughts and prayers for Mahbub and all departed souls.



Tormented

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went back to their residence but troubles seem to be far from over for the three victims. They are now passing days amid hardship.

"We have to depend on the support of our relatives and neighbours to survive," lamented Tajuddin, a father of three.

Bangladeshi

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Mayurpankhi in 2019. The book explores the underwater world of mermaids, starfish, prawns, and their friends who play to create ripples on a seashore.

"[We need to] let children shine through their own knowledge, allow them to learn through fun and not through force," the author told The Daily Star, discussing the inspiration behind the book.

The psycho-social effects of prolonged isolation and social distancing are likely to be particularly critical for young minds. The #ReadTheWorld series hopes to tackle this crisis by offering a gateway of stories for children. Given the global scale of the initiative — with stories ranging from India and France to Sierra Leone, Lebanon, and more — a child tuning in from Bangladesh can follow the hashtag and open themselves up to a whole range of stories from across the world. Language can pose a barrier since each author is reading in their own language, but stories in English are also available in the series.

For more book-related news, read follow fb.com/DailyStarBooks, @thedailystarbooks on Instagram, and @DailyStarBooks on Twitter.

Annisul

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the leading businesspersons of the country.

With a fairytale success story to his name, he took up the challenge to give Dhaka city a complete facelift, to make it green, clean and healthy by contesting the mayoral election.

Annisul came out victorious in the elections held in 2015, and was in the middle of his mission to bring about qualitative changes in delivering civic services with the slogan "Clean Dhaka, Green Dhaka".

Annisul, who led apex trade bodies like the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) and the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FBCCI), was also a popular TV show host.

To mark the day, a doa mahfil will be held at Nagorik TV office and different offices under Mohammadi Group.

Wreaths will be placed at his grave at the capital's Banani Graveyard in the morning as part of the events commemorating him.

Not a

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However, they have to be registered, so that they can be identified if a person despite paying money is deprived of going abroad for job, he added.

He also said a meeting of the parliamentary committee was held last month where different stakeholders including representatives of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baira) discussed the matter.

RMMRU Chair Prof Tasneem Siddiqui said middlemen should be registered with Baira to avoid "conflict of interest".

She said migrant rights groups launched a new campaign for regularisation of middlemen in 2016 in the wake of rise in exploitation and fraudulence in the sector.

As part of the campaign, a survey was conducted on 5,407 households, she said.

The survey found some 19 percent people could not make it for overseas jobs despite paying Tk 1.95 lakh on an average, or about Tk 2,706.2 crore in total, she

added.

Some 90 percent respondents said they paid money as migration cost to the middlemen, she mentioned.

Prof Tasneem said middlemen perform 17 different types of functions during labour migrant process.

These include providing information on migration, procurement of work permit, information on training centres, assistance in BMET online registration, support in passport processing, and meeting with recruiting agencies, she said.

Shameem Ahmed Chowdhury Noman, secretary general of Baira, said further brainstorming could be required for the registration process of middlemen.

He said it could be done to create a "win-win" situation for different stakeholders.

Shamsul Alam, director general of BMET, and Shameem Haider Patwary, a member of Parliamentary Caucus on Migration and Development, among others, spoke at the discussion.

Their lives

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shelters were reported "too congested" by the respondents, NGOs, women affairs officers, teachers, health officers and local chairman, and lacked standard features for adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating mothers and women in general.

The study also found 85 percent of women and girls from low-income groups of coastal areas faced intimate partner violence during the lockdown and about 90 percent of the time, their husband was the key perpetrator, but very few reported it.

Dr Sharmin Neelormi, professor of economics at Jahangirnagar University,

focused on changing the mindset of people and the society and said it will not change in a single effort.

Dr A Atiq Rahman, executive director of BCAS; Prof Dr Niaz Ahmed Khan from the Department of Development Studies at Dhaka University; Kaiser Rizve, director (Humanitarian and Resilience) at CARE Bangladesh; Prof Mizan R Khan, deputy director of International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD); and Dr Abul Hossain, project director of Multi-Sectoral Services for Violence Against Women under Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, also spoke at the event.

PD appointed in just

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within 2023, sources said.

After such directives, Road Transport and Highway Division Secretary Nazrul Islam held a meeting on the same day and his division initiated the process to appoint project director the following day, they said.

The division yesterday issued a circular appointing Zabid Hasan, now a superintending engineer of the RHD, as the project director of "Jhenaidah-Jashore Highway (N-7) Development Project".

Through the same circular, Abu Sayeed Md Nazmul Huda, another RHD superintending engineer, was appointed for the project to turn Sylhet-Tamabil Highway into four lanes with two service lanes on both sides.

The Tk 3,586 crore Sylhet-Tamabil Highway project was approved by the ECNEC on September 1, meaning the project director was appointed some three months after its approval.

In separate circular, two additional project directors were appointed for the two projects.

"Like this project [Sylhet-Tamabil Highway], it takes two to three months to have a project director appointed for an RHD project," an RHD engineer, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star yesterday.

After any project gets the ECNEC's approval, the meeting minutes go to the Prime Minister Office for her signature and then ECNEC issues official order approving the project.

After receiving the order, the ministry concerned gives executive approval to the project and then initiates the process for appointing a project director, he said.

In some cases, the ECNEC gives some observations about the project features and in those cases, it may take four to five months to appoint a project director, he added.

"So, appointment of project director within five days is unprecedented. It would save two to three months of some projects. This is a welcome move," he said.

Abu Sayed Sheikh, additional secretary of the division, said they have appointed the PD quickly as the higher authority wanted to expedite the project work soon.

The 48.50km Jhenaidah-Jashore Highway is a part of a 260km road corridor titled "Western Economic Corridor and Regional Enhancement Programme (WeCARE)" of the RHD.

The 260km road corridor would be improved into four lanes under four parts, aiming to improve cross-border connectivity with neighbouring countries.

Two parts -- Hatikumrul-Bonpara-Ishwardi Road and Kushtia-Jhenaidah Road -- would be implemented with a loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

Two other parts -- Jashore -Jhenaidah Road and Navaron -Sathkhira -Bhomra Road -- would be implemented with a WB loan.

While the Jhenaidah-Jashore Highway project was approved, a Development Project Proposal for the Kushtia-Jhenaidah part has already been sent to the Planning Commission, an RHD official said.

DPPs for the next two phases would be placed gradually, he added.

Villagers trust magic

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"Since I made these Ting Mongs, they helped to scare away any virus including the coronavirus and stop it spreading to my family," said Ek Chan, who has a male and a female scarecrow.

"I myself really believe in the magic of the scarecrows and I don't worry about catching the virus at all."

Cambodia is among the countries least affected by the coronavirus, with just 307 cases and no deaths reported, having contained minor outbreaks in March, July and August.

But many Cambodians are still wary of getting infected, with fears heightened earlier this month when Hungary's foreign minister visited the country and later tested positive.

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Ex-BCL leader

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written complaint from the victim's family, we will take legal action in this regard," the police officer added.

Homemaker

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to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy to determine the actual cause of death.

Indian farmers

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beyond government-regulated wholesale markets, where growers are assured of a minimum price.

Small growers fear the changes will make them vulnerable to competition from big business, and that they could eventually lose price supports for staples such as wheat and rice.

In a statement yesterday, an umbrella group representing different farmers' unions slammed the government for saying it would engage in talks with the farmers if they moved their protest off the roads into a designated stadium site.

"The government, if serious about addressing the demands of farmers, should stop laying down any conditions and should come straight out with the solution it is offering," the statement said.

Modi sought to allay farmer concerns during his monthly radio address, saying "farmers will get new rights and opportunities" through these laws.

Union and opposition leaders, however, were unmoved by Modi's comments, and criticised the government's use of tear gas and water cannon to disperse protesters on Friday.

"Farmers are not fools who would not understand what is in their interest," said Yogendra Yadav, president of Swaraj India - an opposition party.

With key roads blocked, prices of fresh produce at wholesale markets in Delhi have already begun to tick up, and the protests also disrupted commuter travel into the city.

The farmers' unions called on farmers in other states to expand the protests from Tuesday, while urging farmers in neighbouring states and others to join demonstrations in Delhi.

'Voters lost faith in EC'

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constitution's 15th amendment in 2011.

Shujan Secretary Badiul Alam Majumdar alleged that partial attitude and dishonesty of current Election Commission has curtailed the voting rights of many people, which created lack of confidence among voters.

"Voting system of Bangladesh has fallen apart, that has made the democracy in the country non-functional. Apart from that politics is almost opponent less. Main opposition parties cannot avoid responsibilities. All these have created anger and frustration among many citizens," he said.

Election is a constitutional and peaceful process of transferring power. Shutting the door of handing over power peacefully is an ominous result of non-functional democratic system, he added.

"In this condition, possibilities of unconstitutional and violent power transfer can be created, which is never expected," he said.

Former election commissioner Sakawat Hussain opined, "Restoration of fruitful election is tough job. Activities of all political parties have made the work much tougher. I support the thoughts of many that government can salvage the election system."

Ali Riaz, a distinguished professor of political science at Illinois State University (ISU), doubted whether the EC can act independently.

Free, fair and acceptable election is impossible unless the government and specially ruling parties desire for that, he added.

Lawyer Shahdeen Malik said, "Observing recent elections, I think that we went back to elections that were held in 1980s. Elections and democracy are gradually becoming a matter of imagination."

Former cabinet secretary Ali Imam Majumder said people of the country are almost in condition to forget what an election is, what a result is.

"We see less voter turnout as the country is moving toward a depoliticisation."

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said that topics like election and democracy have already been turned into a content of "Kabigaan" (light songs in the form of questions and answers from dwelling singers).

"Democracy is passing Ice Age... Election commissioners have now become people of disabled conscience," he added.

Chief Executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer Association (BELA) Syeda Rizwana Hassan said, "Farce in the name of elections is eventually curtailing the power of citizens."

Academic CR Abrar said that the EC has turned into a commission that sends citizens' rights into exile.

Journalist Abu Sayeed Khan, Shujan's central coordinator Dilip Kumar Sarkar and others also spoke at the webinar which was presided over by Shujan's President Hafizuddin Khan.

Iran to give 'calculated'

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know who carried it out.

Iranian hardline media yesterday called for a tough revenge.

The hardline Kayhan daily, whose editor-in-chief is appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, called for an attack on the Israeli port city of Haifa, if an Israeli role in Fakhriyadeh's killing is proven.

"The attack should be carried out in such a way that in addition to destroying the facilities, it should also cause heavy human casualties," wrote Saadollah Zarei in an opinion piece.

However, Iran's rulers are aware of daunting military and political difficulties of attacking Israel. Such an attack would also complicate any effort by US President-elect Joe Biden to revive detente with Tehran after he takes office on January 20, reports Reuters.

Tensions have been high between Tehran and Washington since 2018, when President Donald Trump exited Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with six major powers and reimposed sanctions that have hit Iran's economy hard. In retaliation, Tehran has gradually breached the deal's curbs on its nuclear programme.

Bangladesh entry

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the industrial policy is to rebuild the war-ravaged economy of the country with more and more industrialisation and also to create adequate employment opportunities, he adds.

The minister further says that the industrial policy draft committee has placed greater emphasis on the expansion of consumer goods industries with a view to meeting the requirements of the consumers at home and also to expand the scope for exporting the surplus.

Sources: December 1, 1972 issues of Dainik Bangla, Daily Observer and Ittefaq

CONDOLENCE



Eminent social worker and businessman **Mr. Shahjahan Sinha** passed away due to old age ailments at his residence in the city at 9.10 am on Saturday, November 28, 2020. He was 92.

Mr. Shahjahan Sinha left behind 4 (four) sons, 2 (two) daughters, son-in-laws, daughter-in-laws and many grandchildren and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death. He was laid to eternal rest at Mirpur Shaheed Buddhijibi Graveyard in the city following a namez-e-janaza after Zuhr prayers on the same day.

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