

A Long, Hot Summer

Good governance at the national level cannot be run on reputation alone but on performance. That is the bottomline, to perform ably for this nation without becoming a prey to different temptations; unfortunately barely six months into the mandate one has reason to be apprehensive.

THE Allied Landings in France on June 6, 1944 remain the greatest maritime invasion in history, widely known as "the longest day". Karachi had recorded 47 degree Celsius 47 years ago, it reached the second highest temperature on June 7, 2000 at 45.5 degree Celsius. The last days of May and the first few days of June 2000 being an indication, we are in for a long, hot summer and not of the seasonal kind. Mulling protest in the face of documentation, the traders' wildcat alliance with religious activists on the anti-blasphemy issue drew first blood. Since the tax surveys started on May 27, virtually the entire community of shopkeepers were on a shutter-down strike. One trader died at the hands of taxmen in Faisalabad, another shot himself dead in the offices of the Islamabad Electric Supply Company Limited (IESCO). False rumours being circulated about his "murder" by WAPDA men, the result was anarchy in parts of the capital as police used tear gas and batons to clear the protesters. Transporters joined the countrywide strike action as economic life threatened to come to a virtual standstill.

There are two parts to the Oct 12 counter-coup, viz. (1) the Army's reaction to the sacking of the COAS by the PM while he was away from the country and (2) the decision by the COAS to take over the governance of the country. The second part had been discussed within the military hierarchy since the storming of the Supreme Court in 1997. The initiative had a single nexus, that politicians had destroyed the institutions of the State, and thereby put its integrity and sovereignty at risk through corruption, nepotism, inefficiency, overspending, bad-decision making etc. The military's aim on taking over was clear, to viz. (1) govern the State, (2) restore the economy, (3) effect accountability and (4) reform the institutions of the State to restore viability. Accountability and reforms take time, it is in day to day governance that the military's normal surefootedness is faltering mainly for economic reasons but including extraneous pressures, lack of inherent experience in nation's governance, selection of average ministers with bloated reputations and sparse experience in administration, lack of contact with the needs of the masses, and last but not the least, corrupt holdovers from the previous regime in key public posts, protected by new "godfathers" among the khakis and giving the perception of "business as usual". The process of account-

ability and the reforming of institutions is proceeding with fits and starts, the initiatives are still in the theoretical realm rather than of any practical significance.

The most important of the reforms proposed is the concept of district government. Some of the ideas incorporated are brilliant but in a country divided on ethnic, religious and sectarian basis, are they practical? Feudal lords dominate the rural areas and the nouveau rich rule the urban, a common melting pot is necessary where pragmatism must rule over theory. There is too much distance between the Province and the District, without an intermediate governance mode of command and control will disintegrate. Some tribal leaders and principal waderas may even make "unilateral declaration of independence" (UDI). Financial powers are still directly in the hands of the bureaucrats, the allotment of 50 per cent of power to women will work very well in the urban areas, a non-starter for the rural areas where the process should be on a

from the Federal and Provincial Governments alongside the not-so-affluent Districts that need to? Unless local authorities get into the tax collection act, this will remain an imperfect exercise. Personal income tax and property tax should both be decentralized, corporate taxes should remain under Federal preserve.

Progress has been made on accountability but the reported statement of the NAB Chief Lt Gen (Retd) Syed Muhammad Ahsan that "deals" will be made with those who have plundered the nation's wealth is very alarming, opening the door to rampant corruption. Will Ahsan be able to control his own people from getting involved in the "deals"? A criminal act deserves punishment, who will quantify the volume of crime? What about those civilian lawyers that NAB has engaged for various references, some may well misuse that authority for some other client in the pursuit of their private practice? One unsavoury person from Lahore from a very famous law firm claims to be connected to

abad, the mystery has never been solved. From getting bank loans under different names to smuggling contraband and nuclear missile material to evading excise, customs duties and direct taxes, they are into every criminal act conceivable. Having a virtual stud farm of highly paid lawyers and influential lobbyists on their pay roll, they have full flank protection on their black money which is now legitimate, so what is the NAB chief talking about? Accountability has to be even-handed and should be as applicable to NAB and army personnel as anyone else. If some army personnel are mixed up with them, it should be brought out. "At the height of the Islamic State, a permanent department was always maintained to oversee the activities of officials and to correct and punish all their wrong acts. The department was also responsible for maintaining moral standards in society and for disposal of cases and complaints. These duties were performed by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) himself during his lifetime", an extract from *The Last Prophet and Teachings*.

The matter of governance should be totally separated from the accountability and reforms. The quality of leadership at the helm of affairs of the nation is often found wanting, particularly in matters of character and integrity. In reading a book called "Wisdom of the CEO", contributed to by 29 of the world's leading Corporate executives, one comes across much advice that is of striking similarity to the role of any CEO.

For any Head of State or Government (e.g. the CE of Pakistan) it is desirable to know where the nation and the nation's enemies are heading. Next the CEO should cultivate "confident nervousness". Confidence is great, not when it translates into complacency, and lastly, the CEO should surround himself with people capable of thinking better and smarter than himself. For the sake of this nation he should focus on the actual results being generated, reputations are merely a figment of public perception, fed by the bullshit artists who work for Public Relations (PR) of the person. That is no substitute for performance.

Good governance at the national level cannot be run on reputation alone but on performance. That is the bottomline, to perform ably for this nation without becoming a prey to different temptations; unfortunately barely six months into the mandate one has reason to be apprehensive.

AS I SEE IT

Ikram Sehgal writes from Karachi

phased basis. The Feudal will misuse his powers through the puppets that he will install on women seats. The police reforms proposed by Lt Gen Mohtashim Haider did not envisage police being put under the aegis of the Chief Mayor in the districts, rumours are that the NRB may well remove the police from under his operational control to forestall misuse by the influential tribal Chief/Wadera who will otherwise give anybody who does not toe the line a short shift, the population will be in worse trouble than it is now.

While the much-touted economic reforms are still rhetoric, the decentralization of financial powers to the Provinces and down to the Districts is an excellent initiative, why should a faceless bureaucrat sitting in a cubbyhole in Islamabad have control over what is necessary for Aram-bagh, Karachi to ease the travails of the common citizens of the area? This principle should also apply to taxation, let the Districts collect Federal and Provincial taxes according to a common formula, retaining a portion, anything between 20-30 per cent for the District's needs. Why should affluent Districts line up for the dole

NAB is doing just that, having failed in his efforts before the Arbitrator and the superior judiciary. Such rascals should be barred from private law practice. Those who have made billions illegally can easily afford to "ransom" themselves, made up (and much more) in no time when they are free. A very respected investigative journalist did a full expose of two presently held in NAB custody. In a short time the journalist was forced to keep his peace. Other than legal steps taken to shut the man (and the newspaper) up, the Group's various companies quietly warned various newspapers and magazines that they would suspend all advertisements if any "adverse" news items appeared. Such is their ethics and morality, everyone kept quiet. On requesting the journalist concerned for a copy of the investigation report that appeared in the newspaper many years earlier, he categorically denied having a copy. The newspaper did not have it in their records.

People were deeply scared of them and no wonder, a senior tobacco executive of that Group wanted to leave because of all the illegal activity. When he threatened exposure, he was brutally murdered in Islam-

An Overview of Flood 2000

by M A Matin

Basin	Serial	Station ID	Station Name	Days above DL	MDA DL
Meghna	1	SW266	Kanairghat	14	6.74
Meghna	3	SW269	Sunamganj	6	1.66
Meghna	4	SW172	Amalshid	12	5.14
Meghna	5	SW173	Sheola	4	0.53
Meghna	6	SW201	Monu Rly. Bridge	9	9.23
Meghna	7	SW202	Moulvi Bazar	7	3.29
Meghna	8	SW159	Habiganj	4	2.25
South	1	SW212	Parshuram	1	0.46
East Hill	7	SW204	Chiringa	1	0.44
South	8	SW84	Ramgarh	1	0.13
East Hill					

be measured by Meter Days above Danger Level (MDA DL). For each station just add up difference of water level and DL for days above DL. With this measure of flood stress shown in the last column in the table, Monu at Monu Rly. Bridge had the highest flood stress of 9.23 MDA DL followed by the Surma at Kanairghat with 6.74 MDA DL. Flood stress in the SE Hill basin was minimum. These floodings were flash

floods and caused extensive damages to boro crops in the Sylhet haor areas. FF&WC has however in their flood bulletin dated 15/6/2000 said, "The flash flood situation in greater Sylhet is likely to improve."

Although none of the rivers in the Brahmaputra and Ganges basin crossed danger level within this period, let us give a closer look to the flooding potential in these basins as of now. This will be quite appropriate in view of an existing warning by SPARRSO.

Meghna at Bhairab Bazar was steadily rising and is 86 cm below DL on 15/6/2000. Although below DL the river is flowing close to the highest level of this time of the year.

The Ganges-Padma at Rajshahi and Harding bridge were flowing much below danger level but steadily rising and flowing close to highest level of the season.

The Brahmaputra at Bahadurabad was flowing 91 cm below DL but rising at an alarming rate of 60 to 80 cm a day from Bahadurabad to the border. This river was also flowing close to the highest level of the year.

Thus, the three major rivers, although flowing well below respective danger levels but were flowing close to the highest level of the time of the year and the situation calls for caution and close monitoring by those responsible for flood management. Continued rainfall in the upstream could cause deterioration in the flood situation of the country.

The writer is retired Director, BWDB.

by Jim Davis

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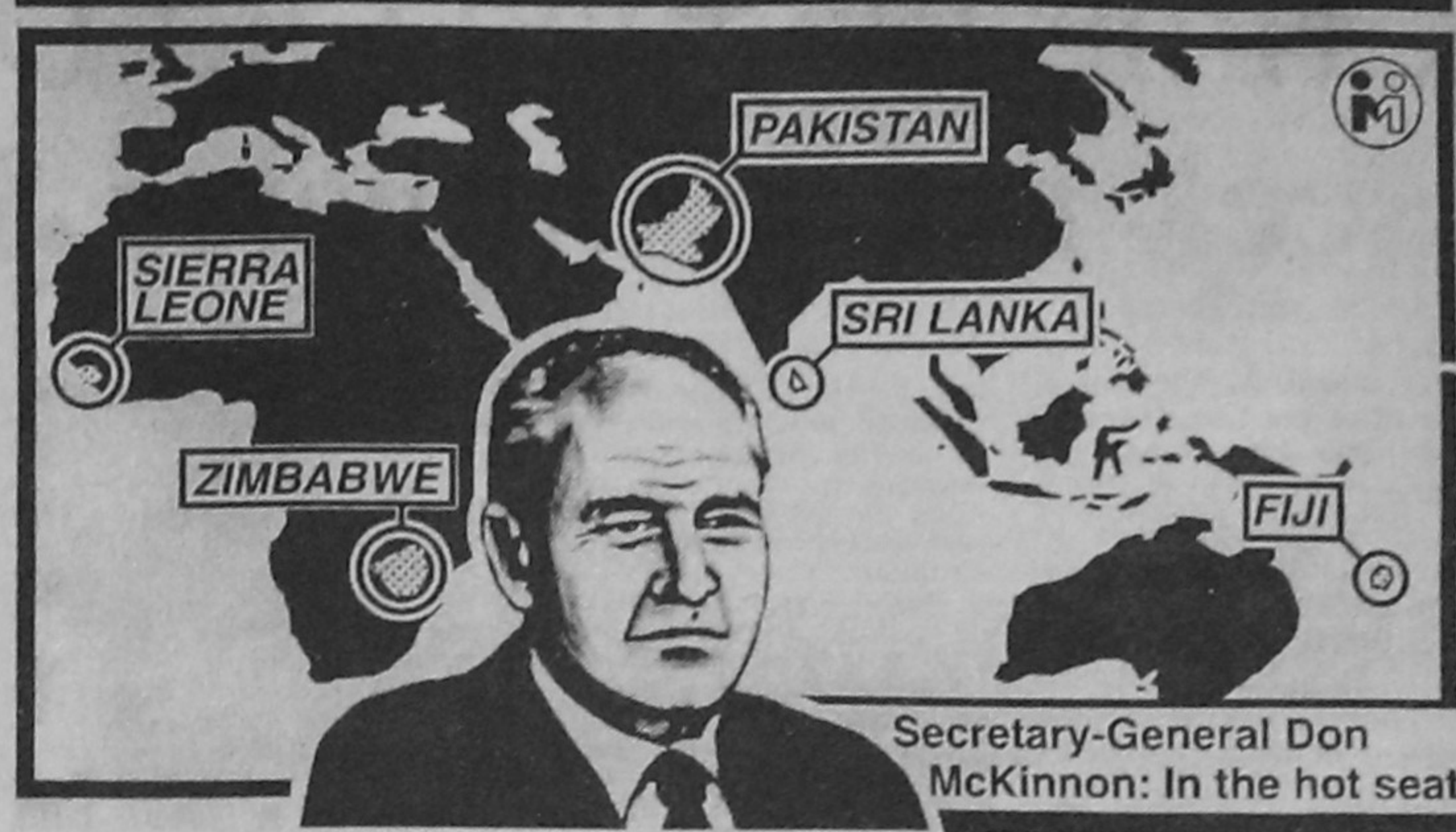


All Hell Breaks Loose for McKinnon

Derek Ingram writes from London

Election observers gather in Zimbabwe as the violence continues. More United Nations troops move into Sierra Leone as the British pull back. In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers once again reach the gates of Jaffna. Political turmoil in Fiji sidelines the Indian community. Gemini News Service reports on the unravelling of the concept of good governance and democracy.

Commonwealth hot spots



Secretary-General Don McKinnon: In the hot seat

NO sooner had former New Zealand foreign minister Don McKinnon stepped across the threshold of London's Marlborough House to take over as Secretary-General than all hell broke loose across the Commonwealth.

It was a coincidence of course. The Zimbabwe land crisis was already rumbling, the Sierra Leone war raging, and the Sri Lankan government's war with the Tamil Tiger rebels was in its 18th year. But all three situations reached boiling point just as McKinnon took over the job from Chief Emeke Anyaoku.

And then came Fiji, a renewed crisis in his own region.

For just five months last year — between the army handing over power to civilian rule in Nigeria on 29 May and the coup in Pakistan on 12 October — the Commonwealth was able to claim that all its member countries were free of military government. You had to go back to the 1950s to find a similar state of affairs.

Two weeks after taking over on 1 April, McKinnon found himself confronting President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe over the need for the elections there to be found free and fair by Commonwealth observers. Just before he arrived, Mugabe had named 24-26 June as polling days.

Six days later McKinnon was in the Fijian parliament building in Suva, surrounded by gun-toting rebels, talking to coup leader George Speight, and to Speight's hostages, who included Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry.

Pakistan, already suspended from the Commonwealth, is more peaceful, but soon McKinnon will be off to try to persuade its military leader, General Pervez Musharraf, to be more explicit about his rather vague promise to return the country to civilian rule within three years.

Musharraf plans local elections in August 2001 but political parties are banned from taking part.

In Sierra Leone, the Commonwealth is a guarantor of the Lome accord under which rebel leader Foday Sankoh became vice-president as well as head of a commission handling the country's mineral wealth.

Now Sankoh is under lock and key, and the democratically elected President Tejan Kabbah is shored up by 10,000 UN troops and, for a few weeks, by a separate British force of about 700.

Sierra Leone is very much a Commonwealth affair since most of the UN troops are from member countries India, Nigeria, Zambia, Kenya.

On the face of it, Commonwealth attempts to secure good governance and democracy, beginning with the Harare Declaration of 1991 and then by the Millbrook Plan of Action agreed at the Auckland summit in 1995, are largely in shreds.

Not since the days of the war in rebellious Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) and the deep divisions over South Africa has the Commonwealth seen such turbulence. Today, however, the climate is fundamentally different.

The Commonwealth has now set down rules for itself. Unconstitutional government leads to suspension of membership and can mean expulsion. No military ruler is ever likely to sit at Commonwealth meetings again.

When Fiji first had a coup in 1987 and declared itself a republic, its membership lapsed. It did not, as required, apply to continue as a member because it knew the Commonwealth would not accept it.

It was out of membership for 10 years until a non-discriminatory constitution was adopted, removing the obstacles to anyone of Indian or other de-

cent becoming prime minister. Nigeria was suspended after the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in 1995 and returned when President Obasanjo took over. Pakistan was promptly suspended after last year's coup.

There remain anomalies. When Sierra Leone's Kabbah was overthrown by a military coup and fled to Guinea, the Commonwealth continued to recognise him as head of state. Logically, it should continue to recognise Chaudhry as prime minister of Fiji.

Not only in the Commonwealth but elsewhere, the Western-driven quest for good governance and democracy, which started in the last years of the 20th century, is facing serious setbacks.

Latin America, largely purged of military and undemocratic rule in the last decade, is becoming stormy again. Only months ago a military junta briefly took power in Ecuador. A general then tried to unseat the Paraguayan government. In

Peru, President Alberto Fujimori is accused by international observers of holding on to power through election fiddles.

Military rule may have gone out of fashion, colonial rule long passed, but the colonial past is not easily forgotten. Paradoxically, at the same time as British troops are welcomed as saviours in Freetown, 'British' has become a dirty word in Zimbabwe.

Sadly, the lack of self-confidence among people in some parts of Africa is harming the continent's image just as much as the violent arrogance shown by the so-called war veterans in Zimbabwe.

The author was editor of *Gemini News Service* for 28 years. A former deputy editor of *Britain's Daily Mail*, he is a past president of the Commonwealth Journalists Association and is the author of four books on the Commonwealth.

Government of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer, RHD

Munshiganj Road Division

Bagmamudali, Munshiganj

RHD Notice Inviting Tender

1. Tender Notice No: 73/RD Munshiganj of 1999-2000.
2. Name of work: Tender for supplying 1st class or P. J. bricks/bats for maintenance of Mukterpur Ferry ghat under Munshiganj Road Divn. during the year 1999-2000.
3. Estimated cost: Tk. 5,15,200/-
4. Earnest money: Tk. 10,304/- only in BD/TC/P.S.P/BSP etc. certificate in favour of E. E. RHD, Munshiganj Road Division. from any schedule bank.
5. Time allowed for completion of work: 15 (fifteen) days from the date of issue of work order.
6. Eligibility of contractors: "A to E" general category of RHD contractors.
7. Last date for selling the tender documents: 25.6.2000 during office hours.
8. Last date & time for receiving the tender documents: 26.6.2000 up to 12.30 pm.
9. Date & time for opening the tender documents: 26.6.2000 at 12.45 pm.
10. Date & time for centrally open the tender documents: 27.6.2000 at 12.30 pm in this office.
11. Name of office where tender documents will be sold: Executive Engineer, RHD, Road Divn, Dhaka/Narayanganj/Gazipur/Manikganj/Narsingdi/Munshigonj/Planning & Design Divn, Dhaka Zone, Dhaka/Bridge Design Divn-I (Eastern, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka, Sub-Divl Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Divn Sreenagar/Keranigonj/Munshigonj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Divn under Munshigonj Road Division, Munshigonj.
12. Name of office where tender document will be received: Superintending Engineer, RHD, Dhaka Road Circle, Dhaka/Planning & Monitoring Evl Circle, Dhaka/Monitoring & Evaluation Circle, Sarak Bhaban, Ramna, Dhaka/ Executive Engr, RHD, Munshigonj Road Divn, Munshigonj/Sub Divl Engineer, RHD, Road Sub-Divn, Sreenagar/Keranigonj/Munshigonj/1st Line Workshop Sub-Divn under Munshigonj Road Division.
13. Date & time of lottery (if necessary): 27.6.2000 at 2.00 PM.
14. Chargeable head: 66-CACW.

Sealed tenders in BD Form No 2911 are hereby invited from the RHD enlisted contractors according to their financial limit for the mentioned works under Munshigonj Road Division. The tender will be received/opened at the time & date of above mentioned offices.

Md Abul Quasem Bhuiyan
Executive Engineer
Road Division
Munshiganj

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Executive Engineer, Roads & Highways Department
Bhola Road Division, Bhola
Phone No-0491/55553

Roads & Highways Tender Invitation Notice

Tenders in Bangladesh Form No 2911 in sealed envelopes are invited.

1. Tender Notice No: 40 of 1999-2000 Bhola Road Division, Bhola.
2. Name of work: Work of canal digging on Chowkighata Ferry Approach Barisal-Bhola-Laxmipur Road under Bhola Road Division during year 1999-2000. Head of expenditure: 266 Development.
3. Estimated cost: Tk 2,49,259/-
4. Security cost: Tk 5,000/-
5. Date for completion of work: 30 days from the work order.
6. Financial eligibility of contractors: A to C general class of Roads & Highways Department, D general of Barisal Road Circle and E class enlisted contractors of Bhola Road Division.
7. Name of offices of availability of tenders: 1) Executive Engineer, R&H, Road Division, Bhola/Barisal/Patuakhali/Pirojpur/Barguna/Jhalakathi. 2) Sub-divisional Engineer, R&H, Road Sub-division, Bhola/Char Fashion.
8. Name of offices to receive tender: 1) Superintending Engineer, R&H, Barisal Road Circle, Barisal. 2) Executive Engineer, Road Division, Bhola/Barisal/Jhalakathi.
9. Last date and time of selling tender: 26-6-2000/12-03-1407 Bangla till office hours.
10. Last date of receiving tender: 27-06-2000/13-03-1407 Bangla till 12-30 PM.
11. Date and time of opening tender: 28-06-2000/14-03-1407 Bangla at 11-00 AM.
12. Date and time of lottery: 29-06-2000/15-03-1407 Bangla at 11-00 AM.

DDP-15111-13/6/2000
G-1187

Md Abdul Khaleq Mia
Executive Engineer, R&H
Bhola Road Division, Bhola.

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