

Crawling ADP projects

Approval takes five times the normal time

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Although the guideline dictates that approval of a project under the Annual Development Programme should not take more than 105 days, a recent government study found the development projects actually take 511 days on average, with the highest being 2,767 days or seven years, to get cleared.

In the study report, the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation Department (Imed) of the planning ministry said the delay scales up the project cost, allows misuse of the fund, hinders proper use of foreign aid and causes spill-over of money from one project to another.

Above all, it said, such dawdling makes a negative impact on the economy.

The IMED study was carried on 78 ADP projects in three sectors included and approved in the fiscal years of 2004-05, 2003-04 and 2002-03. Around 17 ministries were involved with the projects.

The research found the minist-

ries take excess time to complete all the four stages including planning, processing and getting the projects approved. The delaying continues even after the approval, during the implementation phase, due to lack of skill of the officials concerned.

The development project that took the highest time to be pro-

cessed belonged to the shipping ministry. The ministry submitted the project concept paper (PCP) for a foreign-funded dredging scheme on June 22, 1995 and it was finally approved after an awesome 2,767 days, the report said.

Another PCP to complete stadiums in three divisional cities

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PROJECT APPROVAL AT SNAIL'S PACE

Project name	PCP submitted	Approved after
Shipping ministry's dredging project	June 22, 1995	2767 days
Stadiums in three divisional cities	Nov 21, 1995	2735 days
Fire stations in 32 upazila	Oct 16, 1999	1636 days
Portable steel bridge	Oct 25, 1997	1893 days
61 rehab-quarters in Rangamati	Dec 14, 1997	1571 days
Patenga connection road	Sept 22, 1999	1393 days
Architecture Directorate office building	June 27, 2002	1137 days

STAR GRAPHICS

SIRAJGANJ POWER PLANT

Another bidder pulls out

SHARIER KHAN

Bangladeshi power company Summit backtracked from participating in the second tender for the 450 megawatt Sirajganj Power Project following the retreat of Malaysian bidder Genting Barhard expressing its no-confidence in the country's bidding process.

With their non-participation, the Power Cell of the Power Ministry yesterday opened the tender with a lone bid of Bangladeshi PHP and its Indian partner Essar.

A top official of the Power Cell says, "PHP-Essar's bid will now be technically evaluated to see if it qualifies. If their offer is found responsive, we will open their financial offer."

Summit, which had won the first tender for Sirajganj project, officially did not blame anyone for its with-

drawal but stated its willingness to implement the project in accordance with its previous proposal.

In a statement yesterday, the company said, "Summit believes Summit's earlier proposal for development of Sirajganj plant in joint venture with Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) in a public-private partnership mode provides the best solution for Bangladesh. Namely, local owners with lowest price payable in Bangladeshi taka."

It went on, "Summit remains ready to implement Sirajganj project as per first tender of BPDB at world's lowest price for such a plant in Sirajganj at US 2.789 cents a kilowatt hour."

"Summit reiterates its commitment to provide most efficient cost effective electricity generation for

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PHOTO: STAR

Passengers at Sadarghat in Dhaka yesterday take boats to board launches anchored mid-river, as launch owners refrained from using BIWTA terminals in Dhaka and Narayanganj to protest a comment of the shipping minister.

England take control

SPORTS REPORTER

England were in the driving seat of the first Test against Bangladesh halfway through the final session on the first day at Lord's here Thursday.

Having dismissed the Tigers for a meagre 108, the hosts cruised to 148 for one in 30 overs, taking a 40-run lead in the first innings.

They raced to 70 in 11 overs at tea and the two left-handed openers, Marcus Trescothick and Andrew Strauss, put the inexperienced Bangladesh attack to the sword on a flat wicket.

Trescothick who cut and pulled mercilessly, was not out 62 and Strauss, whose drives penetrated the field often, was out for 69.

Strauss, who survived a close lbw shout from Mashrafe Bin Mortuza, was trapped in front in the next ball to the Bangladesh pacer.

Both the left-handers had struck nine fours each during their opening partnership with 18-year-old debutant quick Shahadat Hossain's four overs costing 41 runs.

Earlier, put into bat by England skipper Michael Vaughan, the tourists' first Test innings on

English soil lasted less than 39 overs with England pace bowler Matthew Hoggard taking four for 42.

Only three batsmen made double figures with opener Javed Omar's 22 the top score.

Debutant Mushfiqur Rahim, at 16 years and 267 days the ninth youngest cricketer to play in a Test, batted stubbornly for nearly one and half an hour to score 19. Aftab Ahmed contributed 20.

Bangladesh, 85 for five at lunch, took six overs to add four runs and then lost their last five wickets in 33 balls for 19 runs.

Wicketkeeper Khaled Mashud, who stayed for over an hour, was unlucky to fall lbw to Hoggard for six as TV replays suggested the ball hit him outside the off-stump.

Mohammad Rafique was run out and Bangladesh lost two more wickets on 98, Mashrafe bowled without scoring before Rahim was outsmarted by a Hoggard outswinger.

And it was Hoggard who mopped up the innings when he had last man Shahadat caught behind by Geraint Jones.

JS body for better ties with India

SHAKHAWAT LITON

A parliamentary body yesterday asked the government to take special efforts to improve diplomatic ties with India, as the committee believes relations with the next-door neighbour are at their lowest ebb.

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign ministry at a meeting stressed parliamentary initiatives side by side with diplomatic efforts to remove strains in the bilateral relations with India, sources said.

The committee decided to arrange visit of a parliamentary team to India to supplement the foreign ministry's efforts. It observed the government alone would not be able to improve ties with the biggest neighbour.

The parliamentary watchdog also asked the government to arrange regular visits of both the countries' delegations in various fields, including sports and culture, to strengthen people-to-people contact between the two countries.

The committee members again

criticised the government's "look east" foreign policy, saying the policy has been on paper, not in reality.

Explaining the "parliamentary efforts" to improve Dhaka-Delhi relations, Committee Chairman Ziaur Rahman Khan said they will seek permission from their Indian counterparts [parliamentary body] to visit India.

"If we are allowed to visit India, we will hold discussion with them [Indian lawmakers] and meet political leaders," he told reporters after the meeting.

Emphasising the need for peaceful relations with India, the committee chairman said, "The neighbouring countries are like our family members. If we cannot live with them in peace, then how can we improve relations with other countries in the world."

Reaz Rahman, adviser to the foreign ministry, told the meeting that the government would not say "yes" or "no" at this moment to the committee's recommendations on parliamentary team's visit to India.

"The government will examine the recommendations to see whether they can improve relations with India," a meeting source said quoting the adviser.

The parliamentary body started discussing the diplomatic relations with India at its April 27 meeting which observed that the relations had plunged into its lowest ebb. It discussed different issues including border tension, river linking project and push-in.

Both the ruling BNP and opposition Awami League members of the committee had expressed almost identical views on the current state of Dhaka-Delhi relations.

After yesterday's meeting, committee member and Awami League lawmaker Syed Ashrafur Islam said parliament has to take initiative to improve relations with India which have deteriorated in the recent times.

The AL lawmaker demanded probe into the Indian allegations that Bangladesh has been harbouring

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Passengers suffer as vessels boycott terminals on Akbar's comment

BDNEWS, Dhaka

An 18-hour symbolic terminal boycott by river vessels in Dhaka and Narayanganj threw hundreds of passengers into untold misery, as they had to board launches or reach terminals by boats from 6:00am yesterday.

Bangladesh Inland Waterways Passenger Carriers Association (BIWPCA), the association of vessels' owners, enforced the boycott programme protesting what it said an "indecent" remark of the shipping minister about its chairman.

Minister Akbar Hossain yesterday withdrew the remark, saying he also called off his "uncle-nephew relationship" with Giasuddin

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Correction

The table attached to yesterday's The Daily Star report headlined "Ambitious ADP okayed for next fiscal year" had inadvertent mistakes. The head of the third column of the table should be read as "revised" and that of the fourth column, "original." We regret the error.

Politics stops DU to honour professors

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Dhaka University (DU) could not award its eminent professors the highest post of honour, Emeritus Professor, in the last 23 years due to politics and alleged rivalry among the teachers.

The most distinguished professors of different departments of the university are eligible for the title, emeritus professor, on the basis of their academic efforts and performance. Internationally recognised research works and outstanding merit in their respective fields are also considered in this regard.

Earlier, one eminent professor won the honourable title in 1976, three in 1981 and two in 1982, and ever since, the honour remains on the shelf.

The Emeritus Professors are Dr Muhammad Shahidullah of Bangla department; Dr Sirajul Haque of Islamic studies and Dr Moazzam Hossain of Arabic; Prof Abdul Jabbar of pharmacy and Dr Mufizur Rahman of chemistry department.

Sources said teachers' direct involvement in politics, lack of initiatives and political interference

have kept the university from awarding the title for long.

A number of distinguished professors have been deprived of the title during this period, mainly for political rivalry among the teachers, they said.

The former and incumbent vice-chancellors, AK Azad Chowdhury and SMA Faiz, have admitted the posts have not been awarded due to politics and political considerations.

The university administrations in 1999 and 2002 took initiatives to give the emeritus professor honour as at least four names came for the award since 1982.

The names of late Ahmed Sharif of Bangla department, Dr LM Nath of physics, Kamal Uddin of nutrition and food science and Serajul Islam Chowdhury of English came to the fore.

But the authorities could not specify why the title has not been given and how many professors have so far been honoured.

After a backlog of 16 years, the university administration in 1999 decided to award the honour to the

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Match Report
Grameen Phone