

CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX
Frequently asked questions and answers

DR. IFTEKHARUZZAMAN

What is CPI?
The CPI, prepared under the auspices of the Berlin-based international anti-corruption organisation Transparency International (TI), ranks countries annually in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, a poll of polls, drawing on corruption-related data from expert surveys carried out by a variety of reputable institutions. It reflects the views of businesspeople and analysts from around the world, including experts who are locals in the countries evaluated.

Is it right to conclude that the country with the lowest score in terms of CPI is the world's most corrupt country?
No. The country with the lowest score is the one where corruption is perceived to be the highest among those included in the list. The index is a measure of perception about the level of corruption -- it does not and cannot brand a country or nation as corrupt. Moreover, there are almost 200 sovereign nations in the world, of which the CPI ranks about 150. CPI provides no information about the countries that are not included.

What then is implied by Bangladesh's ranking according to CPI?
According to CPI, corruption in Bangladesh has been perceived to be the highest in the world for the fourth successive year from 2001. This does not, however, justify that Bangladesh is the "most corrupt country" or "most corrupt nation." To say so represents misinterpretation and misunderstanding of the CPI. While corruption is indeed the most formidable challenge against governance, development, and poverty reduction in Bangladesh, the vast majority of the people are only victims of corruption. Corruption by a limited number of powerful individuals and the failure of leadership and institutions to control and prevent corruption cannot justify suggestions that the country or nation or the people are most corrupt.

What is Transparency International Bangladesh's (TIB) role in CPI?
TIB has no role in CPI. TI secretariat in Berlin prepares this ranking. TIB, like

The Berlin-based Transparency International publishes the annual Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which provides an international ranking of countries in terms of perceived prevalence of corruption. Bangladesh has been ranked at the bottom of the ranking for the fourth successive year (2001-2004). The CPI 2005 is going to be released on October 18. The following are intended to facilitate clearer understanding of the index and its implications.

any other national chapter of TI, is not involved nor does it provide any information that goes into the index. While TIB has its own anti-corruption research, advocacy, and citizens' participation programs in Bangladesh, as the national chapter of TI in Bangladesh, TIB's responsibility as far as CPI goes, is no more than facilitating its release when the report is available.

Is TIB responsible for any embarrassment caused to Bangladesh in terms of CPI?
No, nor can TI or the other institution(s) whose information are used in CPI ranking, be held responsible for the embarrassment. Those who are involved in corruption are responsible.

cases. Such cross-country data does not reflect levels of corruption; rather it highlights the quality of prosecutors, courts and/or the media in exposing corruption. The only available method so far of compiling data for international comparison is therefore to build on the experience and perceptions of those who are confronted with corruption in a country.

What are the sources of data for the CPI?
The CPI draws on about 16 different polls and surveys conducted by about 10 independent institutions. To qualify, the survey work must be performed with complete integrity, and the data has to be of the

Centre.

What are the sources of data specific to Bangladesh?
In case of Bangladesh, sources of data for the latest CPI are seven surveys conducted by five organisations: Economist Intelligence Unit, Columbia University, World Economic Forum, the Merchants International Group, and World Markets Research Centre.

Whose opinion is polled by these surveys?
Surveys are carried out among businesspeople, country analysts, and residents of countries. It is important to note that residents' viewpoints are found to correlate

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ble and hence should be held accountable, not those who are reporting or researching on it.

For the purpose of the CPI, how is corruption defined?
The CPI defines corruption as the abuse of public office for private gain. The surveys used in compiling the CPI ask questions that relate to the misuse of public power for private benefit, with a focus, for example, on bribe-taking by public officials in public procurement. The sources do not distinguish between administrative and political corruption or between petty and grand corruption.

Why is the CPI based only on perceptions?
It is difficult to base comparative statements on the levels of corruption in different countries on hard empirical data, e.g., by comparing the number of prosecutions or court

highest quality, well documented, and sufficient to permit a judgement on its reliability. Since fundamental changes in the levels of corruption in a country evolve only slowly, CPI is based on a three-year rolling average. For instance, CPI 2005 will be based on surveys provided between 2003 and 2005.

The institutions include: Columbia University, Economist Intelligence Unit, Freedom House, Information International, International Institute for Management Development, a multi-lateral development bank, Merchant International Group, Political and Economic Risk Consultancy, Transparency International/Gallup International, World Bank/European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Economic Forum, and World Markets Research

well with those of experts from abroad. The CPI gathers perceptions that are broadly based, not biased by cultural preconditions, and not only generated by US and European experts.

How is the index computed?
The CPI methodology is regularly reviewed by a steering committee consisting of leading international experts in the fields of corruption, econometrics and statistics. The statistical work on the CPI is coordinated at the University of Passau, Germany.

What are other relevant indexes or tools?
TI also publishes the Global Corruption Barometer, which is concerned with attitudes toward and experiences of corruption among the general public. Over time, the Global Corruption Barometer, which was

first published in 2003, will provide an indicator of the impact of the fight against corruption within countries.

In addition, TI's Bribe Payers Index focuses on the propensity of firms in leading export countries to bribe abroad -- creating the 'supply side' of corruption. The BPI underlines the point that corruption in international business transactions involves those who give as well as those who take, and the BPI is therefore a complement to the CPI. **Further information on CPI and related issues can be obtained from TI website www.transparency.org**

About TIB
TIB is an independent, non-government, non-partisan, and non-profit organisation with a vision of Bangladesh in which government, politics, business, civil society, and the daily lives of the people shall be free from corruption. More in www.ti-bangladesh.org

As TI's accredited national chapter in Bangladesh, TIB partners and cooperates with TI and its chapters worldwide. However, TIB is fully independent in terms of its strategies, policies and programs for anti-corruption movement in Bangladesh. TIB also raises its own funds and receives no financial support from TI, except for specific projects undertaken from time to time jointly with other chapters.

TIB's mission, and the various activities it undertakes -- research, dissemination, campaign and advocacy -- are geared to catalyse a participatory social movement for strengthening institutions, laws and practices for combating corruption in Bangladesh and establishing an efficient and transparent system of governance, politics and business.

TIB works against corruption, not against the government of the day, nor any particular department thereof. TIB has no mandate or capacity to investigate or take action against individual cases or allegations of corruption -- big or small. TIB is a co-stakeholder and a source of support to all anti-corruption initiatives, including those by the government.

Dr. Iftekharuzzaman is Executive Director, TIB

IN MEMORIAM
Dr Zohra Begum Kazi
The Florence Nightingale of Dhaka

MUHAMMAD MURAD LATIF

THE first Bengali Muslim female doctor of the then undivided Bengal, Professor Dr Zohra Begum Kazi, was born on October 15, 1912, at Ranjangaon, Madhya Pradesh, India. Her father, late Dr. Kazi Abdus Sattar was also a renowned physician and a political personality of the sub-continent who hailed from the famous Kazi family of Gopalpur village under Kalkini upazila of Madaripur district. He was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Shawkat Ali, Jawaharlal Nehru, Ballav Bhai Patel, Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haq, and many other personalities of that time.

Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi was married to late Razuddin Bhuiyan (MLC) (MP), the only son of the zamindar of Hiattirdia under Raipur Upazilla of Narsingdhi district. He was also a dedicated social worker and renowned politician.

Her eldest brother late Prof. Kazi Ashraf Mahmud was a famous Hindi poet and a close associate of Comrade Muzaffar Ahmed, Ramdas Gandhi (son of Mahatma Gandhi), and our national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam. He was a founder member of All India Communist Party. He retired as Professor of Botany Department, Dhaka University.

Her only youngest sister late Dr. Shirin Kazi was also a renowned physician, poet, and columnist. She was the first Bengali Muslim female doctor to obtain DRCOG degree from London in 1951.

Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi had her early education from different places of the then undivided India. She matriculated with distinction from Muslim Girls Collegiate High School, Aligarh in 1928. After passing intermediate with distinction from Aligarh Muslim University and College in 1930, she obtained MBBS degree in 1935 from Lady Harding Medical College for Women, Delhi. She stood First Class First and was awarded the Viceroy's Medal for her meritorious achievement in MBBS final Examination.

Prof Dr. Zohra Begum Kazi served in different hospitals of British India

as assistant surgeon for thirteen years. After partition in 1947 she came back to her ancestral home and joined Dhaka Medical College and Hospital in 1948 as resident surgeon and settled in Dhaka. She was a cyclist, table tennis, and badminton player. Other than her mother tongue, she could also read, write, and speak Hindi, Urdu, Arabic and English fluently.

Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi was a brilliant student. She received stipends and full scholarships throughout her educational career up to post graduate studies in the UK starting right from primary school.

She was awarded scholarship in 1955 and successfully obtained DRCOG degree from London and completed her FCPS. Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi also successfully obtained FRCOG and MRCOG degrees from London and joined Dhaka Medical College and Hospital as professor and Head of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology. During her long and illustrious career she served, among other things, as senior consultant of Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital, CMH, and Dhaka Cantonment (with the rank of honorary colonel), and as honorary professor, Bangladesh Medical College.

During her long service in Dhaka Medical College and Hospital, Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi was shocked and disturbed at the plight and sufferings of female patients who were ignorant of modern allopathic medicine and treatment. They were usually very shy and not accustomed to seeking

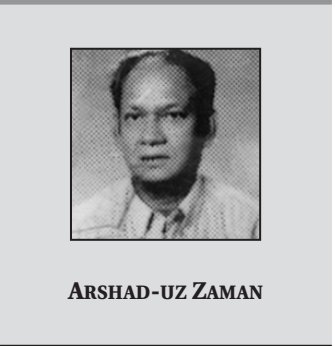


outdoor medical assistance in male dominated hospitals. The mortality rate amongst female patients was extremely high during that time. To mitigate their sufferings, she often used to visit door to door of female patients and motivated them to leave behind age old rites, beliefs, and superstitions, and encouraged them to come out of their house to seek medical treatment and assistance, to save both mother and child, which eventually yielded positive response from the long neglected women folk of the then backward society. She was a pioneer in women's education and emancipation who played a pivotal role in imparting education to women in medical science, which substantially increased the number of enrollment of girl students in MBBS course.

Prof. Dr. Zohra Begum Kazi was a dedicated physician who attained the highest degree of professional excellence. She was honest, sincere, and devoted to her sacred duties, and was punctual in her noble profession like the rhythm of a clock. Her philosophy was "humane behaviour, benevolent approach, patience, friendly caring, devotion and dedicated service to mankind" which she professed, taught, and maintained throughout her long professional life. She was awarded Taghma-e-Pakistan in 1964. She was also awarded the Begum Rokeya Padak in 2002 by the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

A social reformer like Prof Dr Zohra Begum Kazi may not come often. She came like a ray of light to enlighten the backward Bengali nation in those dark days. By dint of her selfless devotion and dedicated and relentless effort she reached the pinnacle of her profession. She never ran after wealth, name, and fame. She used to say to her medical pupils, "Don't run after money -- money will run after you -- and be sincere to your noble profession." She will be remembered by the nation for her unforgettable contribution. For her selfless and dedicated service to humanity she ought to have been called the Florence Nightingale of Bangladesh. May Almighty Allah grant her long life.

Referendum in Iraq



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

REFERENDUM in Iraq has been held under the US bayonet. That was to be expected. The result is a foregone conclusion. The Iraqis will approve the constitution by a sizeable majority. The next step, that is elections in Iraq under the new constitution will take place in January next. The new Iraq will take its place according to the plan drawn up in Washington DC.

In the meantime, the coalition led by the US continues to lose blood. Every once in a while, a major contributor to the coalition forces calls it a day and pulls out his troops from Iraq. Soon it will be Silvio Berlusconi, the Prime Minister of Italy, who will withdraw his forces from Iraq. There is virtually no possibility of any new country joining the coalition, which has remained on the ground thanks to the solo effort of US President George W. Bush. Britain, who has been a steadfast ally, is expected to run the course. In fact the Anglo-American coalition did not appear due to Iraq. How can we forget former British Premier Margaret Thatcher standing before her 10 Downing Street home, giving unstinted support to her friend, US President Ronald Reagan.

As the US-led coalition battles the Iraqi insurgency, the situation in Iraq continues to get worse by the day. The security situation remains volatile at best. The US is valiantly attempting to recruit a virtually brand new army and security personnel and train them to fight the insurgents. The forces that are ranged against the US-led coalition are mainly the remnants of former Iraq President Saddam Hussein's forces, who melted away on the arrival of the US-led forces that drove Saddam away from power and is now awaiting trial.

Those forces of Saddam Hussein and other fraternal forces have now joined hands and are continuing their murderous run on the coalition. Since more often than not the US-led coalition forces are beyond the range of their guns or suicide bombings, the target is more and more Iraqi soldiers, police, and civilians. In fact the insurgents in Iraq have declared virtual war on not only the coalition forces, but any Iraqi helping

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

the aftermath of the Iraqi elections followed by the distinct possibility of US withdrawal and the fierce fight between the three Iraqi communities, the Shias, the Sunnis, and the Kurds, is bound to create a whole new situation. Since the invasion of Iraq by the US at the invitation of the Kurds, who were mercilessly tortured by Saddam Hussein, they have enjoyed a position of privilege. In the new order of things after January the power equation is bound to change.



the US effort in establishing a regime put in place by the US. We thus witness a tug of war in Iraq, where the US is attempting to put in place a regime hand-picked by them and facing total resistance from an insurgency which continues to grow in size and daring operation.

The US onslaught on Iraq has now moved to the new phase of establishing a representative regime. The fact that referendum has been held even as guns were held by the US forces will naturally embolden President Bush to move to the next phase, that is elections under the new constitution in January next. The fact that the Sunnis have been unable to foil the holding of the referendum is seen in Washington as a success of the US effort. There has been some feeling of disappointment at the low turnout in Kurdish North Iraq. That is explained by the certainty of the favourable result anticipated by the coalition forces. The Shia dominated South Iraq is waiting for the ripe fruit to descend on her lap when the US forces say good-bye. Indeed, pressure has been building on President Bush within his own country to withdraw the US forces from Iraq as the list of killed US soldiers has grown larger. Although the approval rating of President Bush has dwindled dangerously, mercifully street demonstrations in US cities have

been few and far between.

After the projected Iraqi elections in January it will be a whole new ball game. President Bush will certainly start winding up his adventure in Iraq. The US political community and specially his Republican Party will have no interest in continuing the Iraqi adventure as presidential elections will appear on the horizon and President Bush will become a real lame duck. And the aftermath of the Iraqi elections followed by the distinct possibility of US withdrawal and the fierce fight between the three Iraqi communities, the Shias, the Sunnis, and the Kurds, is bound to create a whole new situation. Since the invasion of Iraq by the US at the invitation of the Kurds, who were mercilessly tortured by Saddam Hussein, they have enjoyed a position of privilege. In the new order of things after January the power equation is bound to change.

Iraq, the second largest reservoir of world petroleum, will continue to attract world attention.

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Bangladesh: A crisis-ridden land

ANWARUL HAQUE

THERE is no denying the fact that Bangladesh is passing through one of the most critical phases of its existence since its inception back in 1971. Never before has it been forced to grapple with so many critical internal problems in such a short period of time. It has been compelled to go through a series of crises, one following close on the heels of the other.

First, it was the Tengratila gasfield blowout on June 24; then there was the serial bombing of 63 out of 64 district headquarter on August 17; followed by fuel oil crisis; power shortage crisis, and uncontrolled price spiral crisis. Apparently, this has been a crisis central, for which the government cannot fully absolve itself of its responsibility. Apart from the fuel oil crisis, the rest of them have been the result of its own lop-sided short-sighted policies.

Tengratila blowout
To start with the first one, the huge Tengratila gasfield blowout came first. Although the government has unsuccessfully tried to shift all the blame on the previous Awami League regime for the patently uneven shady deal with Niko, it cannot really wash its hands off it. Since the blowout it has been revealed through incisive investigative reporting in the media that apart from the sacked State Minister for Energy Mosharaf Hussein, another influential minister played a major key role in giving excessively undue advantages to Niko. So this man-made crisis, which cost the country hundreds of crore of taka in burnt out gas and other enormous environmental damage, has undeniably been due to corruption of the concerned people.

Serious charges like protecting an expatriate convicted murderer like Jhintu and his involvement in the Niko deal should have brought about immediate resignation from the minister concerned, if he was a self-respecting man. But in a rotten society like ours, power is more important than self-respect. Otherwise, how can he survive with so many spectacular political somersaults to his credit. The irony is that having served a hated military autocrat like Ershad as vice president, he has the cheek to call martial law

"jungle law."

August 17
Close on the heels of the Tengratila blowout came the unprecedented simultaneous serial bombing of 63 out of 64 district headquarters. Such a country-shaking event took place at a time when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was away to China for a 5-day official visit. Consequently, she had to cut short her visit and rush back home. Initially, there had been panicky reaction from the administration. Through leaflets the Jamaatul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB) claimed direct responsibility

fare, has consolidated its already strong party base in all the nooks and corners of the country. It is now an open secret that many of the JMB activists who have been arrested had original Jamaati or Chatra Shibir (student wing) connections.

It is obvious that these bomb-toting JMB desperados and militants are posing a serious threat to our overall security. They have even allegedly infiltrated part of our bureaucratic hierarchy. Otherwise, why did Satkhira police, even after apprehending Bangla Bhai, one of the two masterminds of recent bombings, had to let him go scot-free a year

The BNP can ill-afford such extensive public discontent in the coming year with another general election due in early 2007. Already it has alienated public sympathy by openly patronising endemic corruption in all sectors, extensive politicisation of bureaucracy, shielding a BNP MP from charges of abduction and murder, protecting the criminal gangster elements, both in its student and youth wings, failure to control the powerful wholesale syndicates of food hoarders, and so on.

for such a spectacular show of strength of their countrywide network. The police has since arrested hundreds of suspects, some of whom have confessed to their direct involvement in the bombing.

This has been a loud wake-up call for the slumbering party-in-power, the BNP. Having allied itself with the Jamaat-e-Islami and some other smaller Islamic-minded parties, the BNP has allowed itself to fall into a trap from which it can neither get out. It cannot say good-bye to a party which became a most hated symbol of collaboration with the 90,000 Pakistani occupation troops during the 9-month long blood-drenched War of Liberation in Bangladesh. Lest we forget, the war left millions dead, 10 million in Indian refugee camps and lakhs of rape victims, apart from numerous other horrifying tales and trails of devastation.

In hindsight, it is difficult to understand why BNP, being a moderate liberal party, having a comfortable majority even without Jamaat support in the Jatiyo Sangsad, had to go for entente with Jamaat which has become a liability for the party. With open indulgence from BNP, the Jamaat initially with two important cabinet portfolios like the agriculture (later industry) and the social wel-

back on instructions from high-ups?

Since then the administration has allowed, deliberately or otherwise, the Frankenstein's monster to grow, and it is now threatening to cause serious security embarrassment for the government. Perhaps they forgot the adage: a stitch in time saves nine. Perhaps there is still time for BNP to mend its ways by suppressing ruthlessly this hydra-headed monster in the guise of so-called Islamic militancy, which at best forms a fringe of our vast secular populace which firmly believes that religion is a personal matter. The obscurantist fanatics may think otherwise, but they must remember that after what they did in the name of religion in 1971, people in general do not trust these 'rog-kata' (artery-cutting) jihadis.

Oil crisis
In very recent months, we had to face another serious crisis affecting our fragile economy. This time, for a change, this is not of our own making. The latest international oil crisis, as we all know, has stemmed from an unlikely source. The shooting up of oil prices to nearly \$70.00 a barrel has originated directly from the forced closure of scores of oil refineries on the Mexican Gulf Coast

more apparent than in the run-away price spiral of foodgrains and consumer goods of all kinds. With the advent of Ramadan, the high profiteering motive of wholesalers and retailers reaches sky-high, flouting all religious edicts forbidding such evil tendency. But vast majority of our traders who hypocritically don topis and panjabis during Ramadan gleefully fleece the poor general customers at will. In addition, they cheat in weights and measures. They deliberately adulterate foodstuff with poisonous chemicals and dyes. The highly criminal nefarious activities of these people have been focused in recent months by the dedicated and systematic raids by honest and incorruptible magistrates like Rokon-ud-Dowla who has set a shining example of service for the general welfare of the public. We wish we could have more people like him in the cabinet. The government should be given full credit for backing up this campaign against adulterated food. The media's investigative reports must be lauded without any reserve for being fearless standard-bearers against endemic adulteration-related corruption.

Power shortage crisis
Last but not least is the crisis in the

power sector. Despite all the tall talk of the government functionaries, the party-in-power has added only 80MWs of power by commissioning the Tongi plant last month. The proposed big power generating plants like Meghnaghat have failed to go beyond planning stage mainly because of blatant interference from the PM's office. The greed for more power and pelf has unfortunately resulted in unsolved gridlock in the power sector. No amount of high-sounding rhetoric can rescue the government for its ineptitude and inefficient handling of power generation. The shortage of nearly 1000 MWs of power is too big a gap to be filled by ministerial assurances. This reminds us of unpleasant memories of ex-Prime Minister Hasina's gross mismanagement of the power sector.

This happens to be the life-blood of any modern society and economy. This will inevitably lead to widespread public discontent.

Conclusion
The BNP can ill-afford such extensive public discontent in the coming year with another general election due in early 2007. Already it has alienated public sympathy by openly patronising endemic corruption in all sectors, extensive politicisation of bureaucracy, shielding a BNP MP from charges of abduction and murder, protecting the criminal gangster elements, both in its student and youth wings, failure to control the powerful wholesale syndicates of food hoarders, and so on.

Nobody but itself can rescue the party from this dire predicament of poor governance due mainly to ill-advised and short-sighted policies. All these critical factors nullify many of its commendable achievements in different sectors.

Anwarul Haque is an academic.