



Children draw pictures at the Institute of Fine Arts on the Dhaka University campus yesterday. Gazi Toys School Bichitra, a magazine for school children, organised the drawing competition on the occasion of the Independence Day.

Tk 3418 crore loss in land revenue for corruption

UNB, Dhaka

The government lost Tk 3417.60 crore in land revenue in last three decades due to alleged widespread corruption and irregularities at the 64 ADC (Revenue) offices across the country.

The startling figure was revealed in a book titled 'Bangladesh Dark Facets of Land Rights & Management with Directions to Agrarian Reform' written by Proshanta K Roy, a deputy secretary to the government.

"If we take the last three decades to estimate the loss of state revenue due to irregularities and fraud in all ADC (Revenue) offices of the country it would reach approximately Tk 3417.60 crore," Roy said.

He said if all other sources of state revenue collection like cus-

tom duties, income taxes and land registration fees could be ensured, then it is possible to prepare the annual development budget of the country with the state revenue.

From the beginning of the land administration which was purely a tax collection institution, it became a corrupt sector due to lack of proper management and accountability of its officials.

Misappropriation of public money through different ways and means like fraud or false documentation was very common and till now it is practised in land management sector.

A Special Audit Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (1999) on land revenue collection system found serious misappropriations and irregularities in eight ADC (Revenue) offices

and one union land office in the year 1995-96 involving more than Tk14 crore.

Roy's book also shows that all the respondents he talked with have experiences in corruption during mutation at union and upazila levels. Some 80 percent of the total 30 respondents opined that land officials like Tahsildars (TDR) had been engaged in bribing.

All the respondents spoke of non-cooperation by AC (Land) officials and TDR officials during mutation.

A household survey (2005), conducted by the Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), shows that out of 3000 households, 97 percent had to pay bribes for land registration, 85 percent for land mutation, 85 percent for

collecting land-related documents, and 83 percent for land survey.

TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad in a write up titled 'Bangladesh: Corruption as People See It' quoted a female participant of a discussion as saying that it is difficult even to register a gift deed where no transaction of money takes place.

The household survey of TIB also gave some guidelines to combat corruption in land sector.

These include better political will, setting up special judicial branch, free flow of information, appointment of sector-wise ombudsmen, policy and institutional reforms, social movement against corruption, and inclusion of corruption issue in school curriculum.

'CG should take no decision on offshore gas exploration'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday called on the caretaker government not to take any decision regarding the offshore exploration for oil and gas, saying that it has no jurisdiction to deal with the issues of natural resources.

They also called for steps to resolve the problems over demarcation of maritime boundaries internationally for proper exploration of oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal.

Criticising the government's move to lease out offshore gas blocks through international tender, the speakers called on the people to come forward to protect the natural resources from foreign companies.

Janatar Sangsad organised the discussion titled 'Exploration and extraction of oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal: Citizens' concern' at the National Press Club.

It also placed a 25-point recommendation to ensure energy security. The recommendations include incorporating a provision into the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) not allowing the export of oil and gas.

They also called for not leasing out oil and gas blocks unless a seismic survey is conducted.

They suggested leasing out gas blocks to Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Limited (Bapex), amending the PSC model and making all agreements regarding oil and gas public.

Engineer Sarder Amin, general secretary of Janatar Sangsad, Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, convener of the National Committee to protect Oil & Gas, Mineral Resources and Power & Port, and Khorshed Alam spoke at the discussion.



Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah speaks at a discussion at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Engineer Sarder Amin, Engineer Inamul Haque and Dr Shamsul Alam.

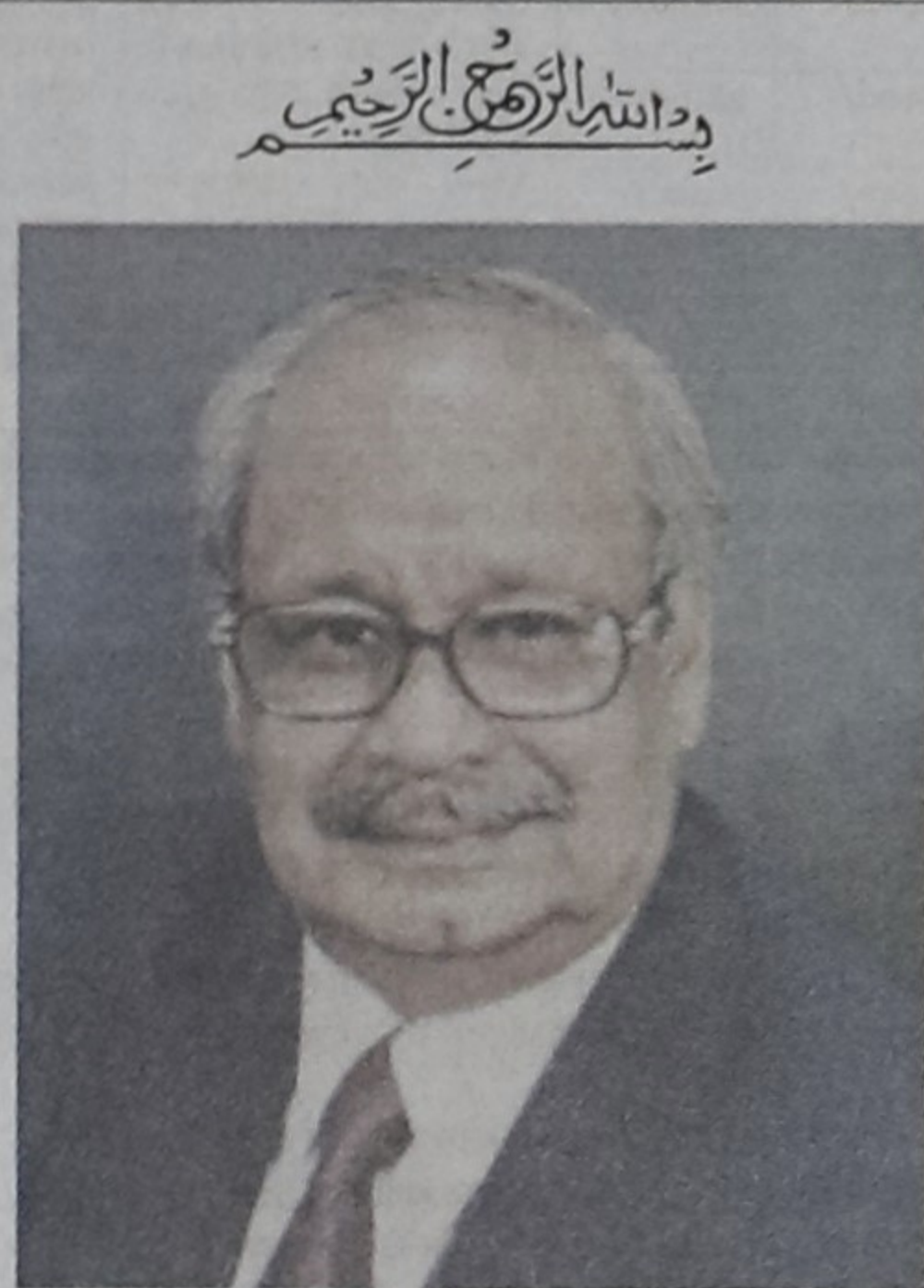
40 NGOs receive Tk 52 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh NGO Foundation yesterday distributed Tk 52.5 lakh among 40 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), says a press release.

The distribution ceremony was held at Brac Centre in the city.

Brac Chairman Fazle Hasan Abed attended the distribution ceremony as the chief guest while M Hafiz Uddin Khan, chairman of the NGO Foundation, presided over.



(1936 - 2005)

3rd Death Anniversary

of A. M. Zahiruddin Khan

On this day he left us all and returned to Almighty Allah, may the Almighty grant him peace and place him in the heavens for eternity.

We seek prayers from all for his eternal peace and salvation.

- All family members

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