Minister warns LGED officials against graft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam yesterday warned the officials of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) against corruption and urged all to discharge their duties with high level of efficiency, honesty and credibility.

"I received complaints from some foreigners that the department cannot maintain its good reputation as it has been tainted by corruption," he said at a review meeting on LGED activities at the LGED Bhaban in the city.

The standards of service have declined in the last few years, the minister said and asked the officials to be careful not to engage in corruption.

The government will show zero tolerance to corruption, he added.

The minister also called on the elected representatives at all levels to keep an eye on development activities so that the people do not suffer from corruption.

All the activities of the LGED will now be monitored closely to curb corruption, he added.
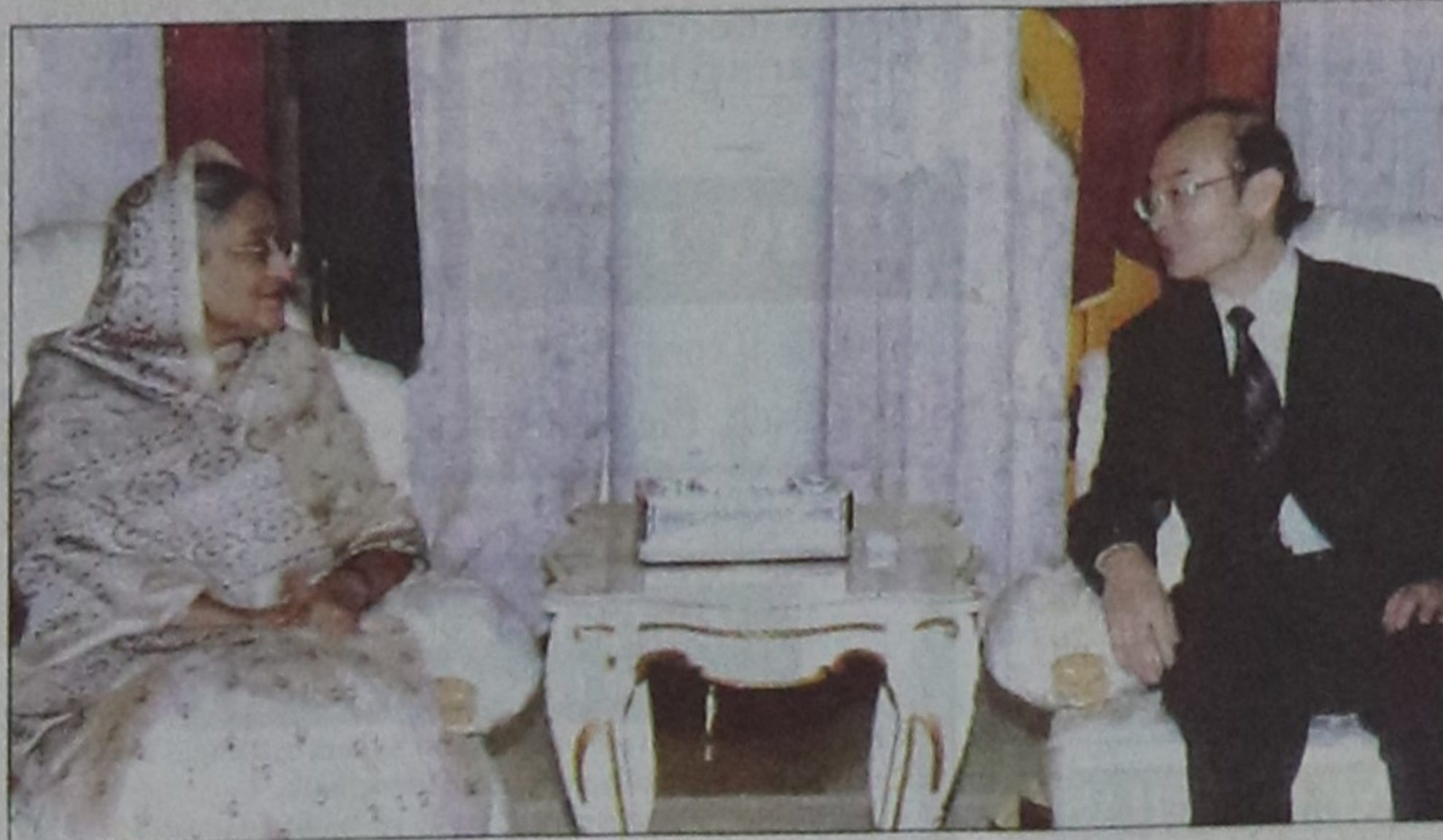
"You [LGED officials] must maintain high standards of honesty and integrity. The government will extend all-out cooperation in discharging your duties properly, if they can find any, to adding that the government even does not want to interfere in the development activities of LGED.

He also appreciated the LGED for its role in implementing massive development activities across the county.

He urged all officials to cooperate with the elected representatives in implementing development projects to fulfil the people's aspirations.

Post and Telecommunication Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Capt (retd) AB Tajul Islam, BM Mozammel Haque MP, Shah Alam MP and Lt Col (retd) Nazrul Islam MP also spoke at the meeting.

Wahidur Rahman, chief engineer of LGED, delivered the welcome address and presented a paper on the activities of LGED at the meeting presided over by Manjur Hossain, additional secretary of the local government division.

Newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Zhang Xianyi pays a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)
PHOTO PID

Investigative journalism centre launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad yesterday called on investigative journalists to provide information about BDR mutiny, if they can find any, to help investigation committees establish the motive behind such incident.

He said this at the launching ceremony of a US-funded investigative journalism centre in the city yesterday.

The Journalism Training and Research Initiative (JATRI) at Brac University's Institute of Governance Studies will develop and promote investigative journalism.

The US government, through USAID, supports JATRI as part of the $18 million Promoting Governance, Accountability, Transparency and Integrity (PROGATI) project.

The minister also said that as owning newspaper nowadays requires nothing related to journalism but money, very few journalists are found dedicated to their profession and following professional ethics.

"Nowadays, it has become a regular phenomenon that whenever a man manages to have some money, he or she wants to own a media house, either it be newspaper or television channel or radio station," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Editor of the Prothom Alo Matiur Rahman said a reader, whichever party be or she supports, does not like to read a newspaper that acts like a mouthpiece of any political party.

Vice Chancellor of Brac University Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury and USAID Mission Director Denise Rollins also spoke at the launching ceremony.

The JATRI will be developed as an advanced centre for training, analysis and education on investigative journalism.

It will offer training to journalists on a range of topics, conduct research, award fellowship and hold discussion on different issues of journalism.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad speaks at the launching ceremony of a US-funded investigative journalism centre in the city yesterday. On his left are Manjur Hasan, Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, Denise Rollins and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman.
PHOTO: STAR

'Culinary Artist Siddika Kabir' launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Noted culinary artist and cookbook writer Siddika Kabir turned 78 yesterday.

The occasion was celebrated with the launching of a biographical book 'Culinary Artist Siddika Kabir' at the Liberation War Museum in the city.

The book edited by presenter Sharmin Lucky is a compilation of articles written by friends and admirers of the master chef.

Writer Selina Hossain, former adviser to a caretaker government Rokia Afzal Rahman, actress Sara Zaker, fashion designer Bibi Russell and popular chef Tony Khan was also present on the occasion.

Rokia Afzal Rahman said, "Her cookbook is a perfect companion for many who wants to perform the art of cookery."

Selina Hossain said, "Cuisine of a nation develops in thousands of years. It is part of every culture. The diverse recipes created in years basically keep our lives entertained. Through her insight in cooking Siddika Kabir keeps the tradition alive."

Popular TV host Abdun Noor Tusher anchored the programme.

Firearms, bullets seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab)-3 in separate drives in the city's Shahbagh and Malibagh areas early yesterday seized three pistols, one revolver and four bullets and arrested two people in this connection.

The arrestees were identified as Saiful Islam Bhuiyan alias Arif, 28, and Jahangir Hossain alias Tikka Jahangir, 35.

Deputy Commander of Rab-3 Khairul Alam Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that at around 5:00am a team of Rab members in plain clothes conducted a raid in Birdem Hospital area at Shahbagh on information that Arif was waiting there with firearms to commit a crime.

On his confessional statement, Rab seized two pistols, one revolver and three rounds of bullets from an electric wire storeroom at Sutrapur.

In primary interrogation, Arif has admitted that he was involved in drug peddling and other criminal activities in the old Dhaka for long.

Rab sources said he was accused in six arms cases with Sutrapur Police Station and a drug peddling case with Kotwali Police Station.

Meanwhile, another team of Rab-3 arrested Tikka Jahangir with one pistol and a round of bullet from Malibagh Chowdhury Para early yesterday.

Rab sources said he was involved in illegal arms trading in the area for long.

School debate on safe water

METRO DESK

Brac will organise a countrywide school debate competition as part of its awareness campaign on safe water, sanitation coverage and hygiene practices among the underprivileged population, says a press release.

The yearlong competition will begin at upazila level from the middle of May in cooperation with Brac-WASH and Brac-Advocacy unit.

The objective of the competition is to create awareness among the school students about safe water, sanitation coverage and hygiene practices.

The competition will be held in two phases – 1st phase, schools from 24 selected remote upazilas will participate at the selection round and at the 2nd phase, winner teams of selection round will participate at quarterfinal, semi-final and final competition at district level.

Constructive student politics can meet their expectations

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said a constructive student politics could help meet the expectations of the young generation.

They said student politics is one of the platforms where they can raise their voice.

The roundtable titled 'Expectations of young voters and the role of people's representatives' was organised by Nagorik Moitree, an alliance of citizens working for promoting transparency and accountability, at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

The speakers said the students played significant role in different crucial times including language movement.

The young generation will have to be more conscious about society and politics in a bid to make the policymakers accountable, they added.

They said a proper education policy is needed to improve the present state of education at all levels.

Taking part in the discussion, Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon MP said the authorities concerned must eliminate violence from educational institutions as campus violence ruins the future of young generation who could be the potential leaders of the country.

He said education is a social investment and not a commercial product. So people who are trying to commercialise education, should change their mindset in this regard, he added.

"The government is very sincere to overcome the water and electricity crises," Menon said, adding, "It is also sincere to protect environment and implement Women Development Policy 1997.

Another lawmaker Mostofa Jalal Mohiuddin stressed the need for strong monitoring system so that no educational institution can be mushroomed here and there.

He also stressed the need for a change in the political culture of blaming each other for the welfare of the country.

Accusing the government of being politically biased JCD leader Azizul Bari Helal said it is appointing officials in different government institutions including the PSC and embassies on the basis of political consideration.

Prof Latifa Akanda said the government should take proper steps to promote volunteerism which is the best tool to develop the society.

Prof ASM Atiqur Rahaman of Dhaka University said the government should address the issue of exporting skilled manpower seriously to ensure job security and enhance remittance.

With Justice Golam Rabbani in the chair, the roundtable was moderated by Dr Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman.

Around one hundred people including university students and NGO activists attended the discussion.

Guests hold copies of the book 'Culinary Artist Siddika Kabir' at its publication ceremony at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday. From right are Sara Zaker, Rokia Afzal Rahman, Tony Khan, Siddika Kabir, Sharmin Lucky, Selina Hossain and Bibi Russell.
PHOTO: STAR