

Probe into graft charges

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pledges of the Awami League-alliance government.

The corruption allegations regarding Padma Bridge are also under scrutiny by the World Bank, one of the financers.

"The prime minister has directed those concerned to investigate the one or two allegations that the government has about the Padma Bridge project," Cabinet Secretary Abdul Aziz told reporters after the meeting.

Hasina directed the secretaries to show zero tolerance for corruption and warned that the government would not tolerate corruption in any sector, meeting sources said.

She asked the authorities to follow the rules in issuing driving licences and urged people to abide by the traffic rules to avoid road accidents.

Recently, the shipping minister requested the communications ministry to issue 28,000 licences without any tests and examinations, which drew a huge criticism in and outside the government.

At the meeting, Hasina observed that the print and broadcast media should point out in detail the traffic rules to create public awareness about road use, Prime Minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said.

Expressing annoyance over the poor state of the roads and highways, she said maintenance and repair work have not been carried out in time as the communications ministry could not figure what should be done first with the funds available.

She asked the communications secretary to repair the roads immediately and priority-wise. In response, Secretary Mozammel Haque Khan said the ministry did not get adequate fund in time and

for that could not do the necessary repair and maintenance.

To contain price hike of essentials, the prime minister ordered the commerce ministry to strengthen the market monitoring system and keep monitoring the markets round the year.

Voicing her concern over shrinking farmlands, she asked the authorities to make proper use of land by setting up separate zones for housing, industries and agriculture in every upazila. She also stressed the need for expansion upwards to save agricultural land.

Hasina emphasised encouraging non-resident Bangladeshis to invest in the country to reduce dependency on foreign funds, said the cabinet secretary.

The officers had gone to the now-defunct Truth and Accountability Commission (TAC) and confessed of amassing money through illegal means. They obtained pardon giving a small portion of the ill-gotten money to the exchequer.

At least 42 officials and employees of RHD and five of BRTA had gone to TAC to obtain pardon during the rule of the last caretaker government and many of them still work at the ministry and have even got promotions to important positions.

Although the ruling Awami League in its election manifesto had promised to fight corruption with a strong hand, but the government is yet to make any move against self-confessed corrupt officials in different ministries and departments.

The communications ministry is the first ministry to take any action against government officials who sought pardon before TAC.

She also sought coopera-

tion of the secretaries to help the government implement its election manifesto.

Forty-eight secretaries of different ministries and divisions took part in the meeting and 24 of them spoke.

Railway secy

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administration during the communications ministry's recent crisis over poor condition of roads and highways ahead of Eid, which prompted the authorities to take action against him," said a communications ministry official.

The communications ministry issued separate orders making the 18 self-confessed corrupt officers OSD. Of them, 14 are from RHD and four from BRTA.

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New British HC

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The new UK envoy arrived in Dhaka on Wednesday and is expected to present his credentials to President Zillur Rahman in the first week of October, said British High Commission sources.

Gibson joined the foreign office in 1978. He has served in different capacities at home and overseas, mainly in the Middle East and Asia. He has also undertaken a number of jobs in multilateral missions.

He previously served as Deputy High Commissioner in Dhaka between 2002 and 2005. His immediate past posting was in Karachi as the British Deputy Head of Mission and Director UK Trade and Investment, Pakistan.

Gibson was appointed CMG by Her Majesty in the 2011 New Year's Honours list.

On his appointment as British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Gibson said "I am honoured and delighted to have been appointed to this post. I retain a deep and abiding affection for Bangladesh and its people from my previous posting here. I look forward to resuming work in a country which enjoys such close and extensive relations with the United Kingdom."

Sayedee

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He repeatedly provided false information about his income and expenditure, said the plaintiff. Sayedee was arrested on June 29 last year in a case filed for hurting religious sentiment of Muslims. He was shown arrested in a number of criminal cases, including three for crimes against humanity during the country's Liberation War in 1971.

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Hasina's 87-member delegation includes Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Haq, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Ambassador At-Large Mohammadi Ziauddin, 23 businesspeople, 10 mostly district level leaders of her ruling party. An eight-member official media team will be with her.

During the visit Hasina will attend and address several seminars and high level meetings. She will speak on counter-terrorism, non-communicable diseases, climate change, autism, women, economic empowerment and digital Bangladesh.

The prime minister will hold bilateral meetings on Sept 23 with the presidents of South Sudan and Slovenia, and the prime ministers of Turkey and Nepal, and the UN Secretary General.

The Commonwealth secretary general, the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia and the Co-Chair of Bangladesh Caucus Joseph Crowley will pay courtesy calls on her on September 23 at New York's Hotel Waldorf Astoria, where Hasina will be staying.

She will attend a reception to be hosted by Michelle Obama at UN on September 21. The PM will also attend a reception by the UN secretary general in the afternoon same day.

Official sources said Hasina will also travel to Connecticut for a check-up of her hearing problem she suffered during a grenade attack on her rally in Dhaka on August 21 in 2004.

The prime minister will leave New York for Connecticut on September 26 and she will be staying there for two days.

She will leave Connecticut on September 28 for Dhaka and return to Dhaka the next day.

The business team accompanying her includes FBCCI President AK Azad, Chairman of Standard Bank Kazi Akram Uddin Ahmed, BGMEA leader Tipu Munshi and MCCI President Major Gen (retd) Amjad Khan Chowdhury.

"Our revenue collection in the current fiscal will be almost double the fiscal period when we took over in 2009," he said.

He will log on to the NBR's website to check the amount of revenue generated by the government.

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been able to collect Tk 55,526 crore in the fiscal year 2008-09 and Tk 79,000 crore in FY 2010-11. The authority hopes to collect Tk 92,000 crore in FY 2011-12.

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Saarc power grid

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meet the rising energy demand of the people, the premier said. "Irrespective of the level of economic development across the region, this is a challenge common to all our countries."

She hoped that the Energy Ministers' Meeting would not only consider and discuss the broader policy issues, but would also try to take a few practical collaborative initiatives.

"Such initiatives, either on bilateral or sub-regional or regional basis, should be such that would help our countries to help address the short- and medium-term challenges in provisioning energy to our masses," Hasina said.

The Saarc countries have huge potentialities to share their knowledge, technology and resources in the energy sector including the renewable energy resources. "It will help ensure sustainable development of the region in the long run," she said.

Hasina said the carbon footprint of Bangladesh is insignificant. However, the country cannot remain totally apathetic to the developments elsewhere to the paradigm shift towards the clean energy options.

"The energy development outlook of the Saarc countries has to be pragmatic as well as dynamically

aligned to the new energy world order," she said.

The premier mentioned that the Saarc Regional Energy Trade Study, which has been finalised, would provide specific and time-bound recommendations that have emerged through the study.

"We have been talking about expediting regional cooperation in energy in the spirit of mutual trust, equity and shared benefits," she said.

Hasina mentioned that in a most comprehensive manner, the study brings the ways forward in energy trade, development of efficient conventional and renewable energy sources, especially hydropower, grid inter-connections, development of renewable energy.

"Development of a Saarc market for electricity is also articulated. Therefore, this provides a much-needed blueprint to advance cooperation among our countries in a practical manner," she said.

Hasina said "The opportunity before us is vast and immediate. If we can demonstrate results through collaborative endeavours, it would eventually help us all in shaping South Asia as a truly integrating economic space, which we nurture in the vision of a South Asian Economic Union."

PM's Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, Saarc Secretary General Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, among others, spoke on the occasion.

New dolphin

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commonly known as the Burrunan dolphin, an Aboriginal name meaning large sea fish of the porpoise kind.

"This is an incredibly fascinating discovery as there have only been three new dolphin species formally described and recognised since the late 1800s," Charlton-Robb said of her PLoS One journal.

"What makes this even more exciting is this dolphin species has been living right under our noses, with only two known resident populations living in Port Phillip Bay and the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria state."

The research relied in part on the analysis of dolphin skulls collected and maintained by museums over the last century, particularly holdings at Museum Victoria.

Kidney trade

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interrogation, both confessed to their involvement in illegal kidney trading," said Fazlul Karim, officer-in-charge of Kalai Police Station in Jyotipurhat district.

The OC suspects Nasir to be an agent of an international hospital located at Panthapath, which has branches in Kolkata, Bangalore, New Delhi, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Police also seized some documents from the hospital, which shows around 101 Bangladeshi 'donors' who were sent to India by the hospital for kidney transplantation, he said.

"Nasir maintained a close contact with doctors at home and abroad while Sujan collected donors from different parts of the country," said the OC.

Police has arrested eight people, including Nasir and Sujan, in connection with kidney trading.

Earlier on September 8, Tareq Azam alias Bablu Chowdhury, ringleader of the illegal network was arrested, who named around 18 people in his confessional statement made under section 164 to Jyotipurhat Sessions Judge's Court on September 10.

During the interrogation, Tareq Azam said the gang sent kidney 'donors' abroad for transplantation, who received around Tk 1.7 lakh per kidney.

Abul seeks

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upon your consent. I seek your full assistance in creating awareness in the ministry so that no corruption can take place, and that corruption can be stopped," Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain wrote in a letter to the ACC chief Ghulam Rahman.

The ACC has received the letter, which came a day after Ghulam questioned the ministry's invitation to TIB to examine irregularities in the ministry activities.

"As the allegation of corruption regarding Padma Bridge has drawn huge flak, the commission on Sunday will evaluate what it can do in this regard," Ghulam Rahman said yesterday, adding that view exchange meetings can be held "anytime with any ministry".

In a rather unusual move, Abul on Tuesday offered TIB "all-out cooperation" in looking into his ministry's activities amid allegations of corruption in the bidding process of the \$2.9b Padma Bridge project.

The letter to the ACC chairman proposes a meeting between the senior officials of the ministry and the anti-graft body.

Signed by Abul Hossain, the two-page letter is full of theoretical discussion on corruption and its "devastating multifaceted impact on society".

"Corruption is a complex issue, which is linked to human behaviour and many other matters. At present, corruption appears to come out as a force," the letter says, for instance.

Claiming to have properly followed rules in the tender process, the letter jumps to the topic of corruption prevention by citing the proverb, "Prevention is better than cure."

The letter then focuses on gaining long term benefit by creating awareness among high ranking officials against corruption through a meeting with the ACC.

The ministry held one such meeting during the immediate past caretaker government rule," it says.

Toxic ship Ctg-bound

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hazardous ship and urged them not to allow it enter the country for dismantling, said Tajminur Rahman, senior assistant director of the DoE.

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) in a letter to the DoE, the Mercantile Marine Department and the Chittagong Customs yesterday warned them about the hazardous ship's arrival.

Bela said Indian ship breakers rejected dismantling the Chinese ship for having hazardous substances.

An official of Robins des Bois, a Paris-based watchdog for protection of people and the environment, said that surprisingly, the ship was never detained despite being detected with many deficiencies by Port State Controls at different ports.

"This is a 29 year-old ship coming to the end of her life. She is in a very bad state," said Christine Bossard, in charge of campaign at Robins des Bois.

Sources said Global Marketing System (GMS), a US company that negotiates sales of vessels, brokered the deal for purchasing the Chinese ship for RS

Shipping, a Chittagong-based company.

Parimal Sharma Barua, operation manager of RS Shipping, said they had been in talks about the deal and the ship was yet to arrive. He declined to comment further.

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India, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh are the leading ship-breaking countries in Asia. In the international ship breaking business Bangladesh is considered a dumping ground for older ships and vessels with hazardous substances due to lack of laws in the country.

The authorities have given permission to dismantle more than 100 ships in ship-breaking yards in Sitakund since the High Court on March 7 conditionally relaxed restrictions on purchase of ships for dismantling.

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