WB statement

Washington

On June 29, 2012, the World Bank announced the cancellation of a \$1.2 billion IDA credit for the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project. The Bank's investigative unit previously shared with the Government of Bangladesh credible evidence of corruption related to our financing of the bridge, and the Bank had identified a series of clear measures to be implemented by the Government for the Bank to remain engaged with the project, which the Government of Bangladesh had failed to meet. These included: (i) placing all public officials suspected of involvement in the corruption scheme on leave from Government employment until the investigation is completed; (ii) appointing a special inquiry and prosecution team within the Bangladeshi Anti-Corruption Commission to handle the investigation; (iii) agreeing to provide full access to all investigative

recognized experts so that

they can give guidance to the

Bank and co-financiers on

the progress, adequacy, and

PADMA TIMELIN

A WB report levels cor-

against the then commu-

nications minister Abul

Hossain and his com-

September 2011

The global lender says

The govt rejects graft

allegations and refuses

Abul is shifted to the ICT

Fresh talks begin; the WB

attaches four conditions

including removal of Abul

The WB cancels the loan

ministry, but the WB

from the cabinet

and PM's adviser

Mashiur Rahman

June 29, 2012

as the talks fail

July 2, 2012

The finance minister

draw the cancellation

July 23, 2012

the WB

Abul resigns; other

Sept 17, 2012

shrouded in mystery

Sept 19, 2012

Sept 20, 2012

The govt sends

the WB

donors pledge the govt

help in negotiations with

Mashiur's status remains

Mashiur's leave letter to

The WB revives the loan

urges the lender to with-

June 2012

demands his removal

the loan will be revived if

pany

Abul goes

Oct 21, 2011

to remove Abul

Dec 5, 2011

Sept 21, 2011

ruption allegations

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fairness of the investigation, and; iv) agreeing on new implementation arrangements that gives the Bank and co-financiers greater oversight of project procurement processes.

Following our cancellation of the credit, the Government of Bangladesh took actions necessary to fulfill the above measures. The Government of Bangladesh has now begun to address the evidence of corruption the Bank identified. The World Bank understands that all government employees and officials alleged to have been involved in corrupt acts in connection with the project have been put on leave from Government service until an investigation is completed, and that a full and fair investigation is now underway. In its communication

with the World Bank about the fulfillment of these measures, the Government of Bangladesh requested the World Bank to consider again information to an external the financing of the Padma panel of internationally Multipurpose Bridge. The Government agreed to a series of measures as a prerequisite for any renewed implementation. These

include new procurement arrangements with enhanced oversight, to ensure transparency and clean construction of the bridge; investigations proceeding in a full, fair, and expeditious manner; and an independent External Panel to review the Government's investigation and report their findings to the Government and the World Bank.

The Bank has agreed that, upon satisfactory implementation of the agreed measures by the Government, and with the support of the Bank's governing bodies, the Bank will engage anew in the Padma Multipurpose Bridge. The World Bank remains

vigilant to any signs of corruption in the Padma Bridge project, and our determination to take a strong line against wrongdoing will never waver. If implemented properly, the Padma Bridge has the potential to deliver remarkable benefits to the people of Bangladesh, who deserve transparent use of public money, clean implementation of the project and a high-quality bridge to spur growth and development for years to come.

AL	B	RI	D	G	E	

2	COMPONENT	COST	STATUS
	Main bridge	\$ 1.34 b	Pre-qualification done
E	River training	\$800 m	Pre-qualification done
	Land acquisition, rehabilitation, resettlement	\$273 m	80% complete
	Approach road	\$ 194 m	Pre-qualification done
	Construction	\$65m	Pre-qualification

Of heroes, zeroes

\$**65**m

\$243m

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tened to Muhith in the first place, the bridge construction could have started a year ago.

and personally -- tried to persuade Mashiur into sacrificing for the sake of the bridge and helping the ruling Awami League honour one of its key election promises.

leagues.

Bank," Muhith had said.

said a frustrated Muhith even threatened to step down over his "failure" to change the government's mind.

A group of government officials and politicians Malaysia.

All this was done apparently to confuse the top brass and benefit personally in the process.

Gowher Rizvi. He shuttled between Dhaka and Washington at least thrice this year, taking his government's message to the WB to bring the key lender to the negotiation table.

fied in the last few weeks.

Islam, general secretary of started talks with the Indian and Japanese high officials and European diplomats, seeking help for the loan revival.

Two months back, he visited Washington and talked to the top WB management.

As the formal negotia-

hurdle. All the central leaders of his party supported him.

On the other hand, lauded as an efficient bureaucrat in his good days, Mashiur disappointed the whole nation by prioritising his personal interest after his name popped up in the WB conditions in June.

down, knowing well he was the last obstacle.

In the beginning, Mashiur did not appear to be so. But later, he changed his stance, thanks to backing from the higher author-

The trouble started with Syed Abul Hossain.

He was made the communications minister following Awami League's 2008 polls victory, although Sheikh Hasina fired him from her cabinet in the previous term for his foreign visit using personal passport instead of his diplomatic one.

Abul Hossain's family company SAHCO is widely known for securing contracts with his party in office. SAHCO has bagged several power contracts, as local representatives of foreign companies, report-

edly by influencing deals. When the WB brought allegation against Abul and SAHCO, it sounded credi ble, although Abul denied any wrongdoing. He claimed to be a holy and clean person when the WB suspended the loan.

The suspension was not enough for him; the \$1.2 billion credit needed to be cancelled before he finally resigned.

Yesterday, a jubilant Muhith said he had always wanted that the WB, whose fund cancellation in June this year made the work uncertain, came back.

"It will prove that the disrepute that was given to the country is not right. At last the project is rolling on again," he told the BBC Bangla.

His comments came after the World Bank early yesterday withdrew its cancellation of funding for the country's largest infrastructure project.

The minister did not conceal his emotion. He said, "It is a day of joy."

20 return

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"But I could not enter the country as he had snatched my passport. I had to stay in the jungle of the border areas where some other Bangladeshis had also taken refuge," he added.

Later, as they tried to enter South Africa, police arrested them and sent them to Tanzanian prison as they could neither show any travel documents nor pay the penalty, he said.

While they were in prison, the Bangladeshis could not communicate with their families back home. "However, some of us

members when they were taken at a Tanzanian court five months ago," said Jahinur Rahman, another victim. The news of their loved ones came to light of the relatives when a Pakistani

national, who had met a similar fate, sent a letter to Jahinur's family in Bangladesh after he was released in February this year, he said. Jahinur's father then contacted the BMET which brought the matter to atten-

tion of the Bangladesh High Commission in Nairobi, Kenya. On August 28 this year, the Bangladesh High Commission in Nairobi

completed the process to

repatriate them. Md Baten, father of a repatriated worker Ramjan Miah, came from Narsingdi to receive his son at Shahjalal International Airport.

"When my son had told me that he could never come home, I nearly went mad. I tried to communicate with him at various places," an emotional Baten told The Daily Star.

The victims include: Ramjan Miah, Abdul Malek, Billal Hossain, Kabil Miah and Masum Miah of Narsingdi, Ohid Hawlader of Munshiganj, Ali Noor and Enamul Haq, of Brahmanbaria, Biltu Miah, Jahinur Rahman and Kala Chan of Manikganj, Anis Khan of Comilla, Faruk Hawlader of Shariatpur, Russel Miah of Gazipur, Shahid Ahmed of Sylhet, Jamal Hassan of Barguna and Abu Naser Arzu and Md Alauddin of Noakhali.

50 hurt

FROM PAGE 20 hartal for two consecutive days from Sunday.

The agitating people also set fire to three vehicles including a Phaka bound Loss of time including a Dhaka-bound "Maitree" passenger bus, running between Agartala and Dhaka, and barricaded Dhaka-Sylhet highway, said Subrata Howlader, additional superintendent of police in Narsingdi.

The demonstration was called to protest a programme scheduled for Monday by Labour and Employment Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju at Serajnagar High

Mayor Kamruzzaman, who is also younger brother of the slain mayor, said they protested against the minister for "providing shelter to the killers of Lokman".

Earlier, police foiled a procession of Lokman Sangram Parishad led by Kamruzzaman in Shapla

Peerjada Mohammad Ali, convener of Lokman Sangram Parishad, said the clash ensued as police fired teargas shells and rubber bullets to disperse the agitators that left at least 50 people including five journalists and

the mayor injured. The injured journalists are Sanjit Saha of Channel 24, Makhon Das of ETV, Benojir Ahmed Benu of The Daily Star, Biswanath Paul of Dainik Pal and Jasim Uddin of The Daily

Sangbad. On November 1 last year, the then Narsingdi municipality mayor Lokman died at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hours after masked assailants had shot him at Narsingdi city Awami League

None of the 22 passengers of the Maitree bus, 12 Indians

"The incident is an isolated and a stray occurrence, not targeted at the Indian bus or passengers," an official statement of Tripura government said.

McCullum crushes Tigers

FROM PAGE 1

including president AHM Mustafa Kamal, had flocked to Sri Lanka to watch this highly anticipated match and there were even a few Bangladeshi fans on show inside the stadium. But the dream swiftly dissolved courtesy of the strong blade of McCullum's willow, much as it had done in December 2007 in an ODI, to the same player. Despite the many empty

seats, the "papare band" and the fireworks and dances provided for quite a spicy could speak to their family atmosphere, and in the main event McCullum did everything possible to add more sheen with a lusty 72-ball 123 that contained eleven boundaries and seven sixes in New Zealand's 191. McCullum crushed records underfoot with the speed of his progress and often sent balls sailing into the grass banks beyond the boundary on way to posting the highest individual score in all T20 internationals.

191 was always going to be a steep target for the Tigers and when Tamim Iqbal and Shakib al Hasan had both succumbed in the early reckoning, it became a case of damage limitation that saw them struggle to 132 for eight from their 20 overs. Nasir Hossain was the only batsman to show some semblance of a fight, as he chipped in with a halfcentury that might have been useful under other

It had all looked so different when Abdur Razzak snapped up the wicket of Martin Guptill in the fourth over with the score on 19. The wicket seemingly vindicated captain Mushfiqur Rahim's sur-

circumstances.

prising decision to bowl first, but that was all soon turned on his head with the arrival of McCullum. The dashing Kiwi was helped by some rank poor bowling as the Bangladesh bowlers bowled too wide or too short to aid him on his record breaking endeavours.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza also gave him the gift of a life, grassing him on 92.

McCullum became the only batsman with two hundreds in T20I. He is also the highest run-getter and the number one ranked player in Twenty20 internationals. He also broke the record for the best individual score in the format, as he went past Richard Levi's 117 made earlier this year. McCullum's previous best was an unbeaten 116 against Australia at Christchurch in February 2010.

McCullum's explosive knock simply underlined the difference between the two teams and made it clear for Bangladesh that they have a long way to go to make them a competitive team in the newest format of the game.

Bangladesh's hope of reaching the Super Eight almost evaporated as they will face favourites Pakistan in the second and last group match at the same venue on September 25.

US sees greater

Corridor and Indian Ocean organisations."

The US appreciates Bangladesh's commitment to greater regional integration, including its efforts to expand relations with neighbours such as India, China, Burma, and others, it said.

"Bangladesh, which lies at the crossroads of global powerhouses in South and East Asia, can play a key role in linking these critical regions," cited the note.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy R Sherman led their respective delegations at the dialogue. The dialogue also dis-

cussed on cooperation in the areas of trade, development, governance and security. "We also discussed the

importance of appointing a respected leader to serve as the new managing director of Grameen Bank," said the media note. It said the delegations

held productive conversations on a wide range of bilateral and regional issues including development, civil

Protecting the yard is

"We are in double-

mandatory as it is located at

the end of the 6.15km bridge.

trouble now. If we want to

save the Janjira construc-

tion yard we have to spend

the money from our pock-

ets, if not, then the yard will

go under water. Then we

would have to acquire

another land or re-develop

this yard from the river.

That would be costlier,"

said an official of the

Bridges Division, the

implementing agency of

Meanwhile, the govern-

ment had spent several

crores of taka for protection

of the second construction

yard at the other end of the

acquired 58 hectares of

of special fabric) were

dumped into the water

along the bank to protect

the yard from river erosion.

sure was taken to protect

cials claimed that the land

for the construction yard in

Janjira was about 150

metres away from the bank

chance of river erosion

the yard in Janjira.

affecting it then.

than 150 metres.

However, no such mea-

Bridges Division offi-

There, the government

proposed bridge in Mawa.

the bridge project.

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the land.

trade and investment, security and extremism, science and technology, women's empowerment and gender equality. "The US-Bangladesh

society and governance,

vided an opportunity to expand the robust bilateral relationship between our two countries," according to the media note. The note was issued

following the two daydialogue in Washington DC About development and

governance, it said, "Bangladesh's status as a moderate Muslim democracy and its flourishing civil society organisations are the foundation of our bilateral part-

ticipant in all major US development initiatives, including food security, health, climate change, and women's empowerment. The United States also works with Bangladesh to strengthen democratic institutions, protect human rights, ensure space for a vibrant civil society, and improve governance and

transparency, the media note said. On trade, labour and

investment, it said, "The two sides discussed ways to strengthen and expand our already robust bilateral trade and investment ties."

The United States looks forward to working with Bangladesh on investment climate matters, energy capacity and energy security, and development of internationally recognised labour standards, the note said.

"We also discussed planned delegations of US trade and US energy experts visiting Bangladesh in the coming year."

The United States applauds the vital and active role Bangladesh plays in ensuring security and stability domestically, regionally and globally.

"At the partnership dialogue, we reviewed our continued collaboration in countering violent extremism, military-to-military engagement, counternarcotics efforts, UN peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian assistance, the media note of the US Department of State said.

initiative of the govern-

taken by the government.

Govt wasted

of pro-BNP Jatiyatabadi

Chhatra Dal (JCD) organised

government taken measures

views with journalists.

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news agency that he was walking to the mosque in Shahmirzaad when he spotted the two girls and approached them.

in an article run by Mehr 'politely' to cover up.

and that was when the girl fought back.

"She pushed me and I fell structure development

ries-if any-he sustained. ing satisfactory measures

The names of the girls programme held at a city

hotel. Newly-elected leaders the programme to exchange Fakhrul said had the

as per the WB letters the 10 months would not have wasted. "The government will have to answer why it failed to take action 10

months ago," he said. Voicing optimism that the government would not pamper corruption in the project, the BNP leader demanded disclosure of the names of those charged with corruption by the WB and their punishment.

Fakhrul stressed the need for working together coming out of the politics of vengeance, destruction and killing to face the challenges of the 21st century and to develop the country. He said though Bangladesh achieved many things in the last 40 years, it could not

Fakhrul also asked the journalists not only to project negative things but also the good aspects of things as it is their duty to build a good

AL thanks WB

FROM PAGE 1 Padma bridge project, many

things will become clear and go in favour of the government. It will help people understand that the government is with them and working for their welfare," Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury told The Daily Star. AL spokesperson

ending the stalemate with the WB, the present government has once again proved that national interest is above party or individual interests. "We thank the World Bank for its decision. We have made this possible through negotia-

Mahbubul Alam Hanif said by

tions with them. Now we will be able to fulfil one of our key electoral pledges by starting the construction work of the Padma bridge." Hanif, also a special assis-

advancement. The AL leader expressed resentment against those who

[conspirators] didn't consider the country's interests; rather they had intentions to undermine the popularity of Awami League." Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said the WB's decision is blowing away the clouds of uncertainty that

overshadowed the construction of the bridge. Talking to this newspaper he said the government wants to start the construction work

But the two sides would require some time to complete certain procedures, he added.

leader Tofail Ahmed said all should proceed with a positive attitude on the national issues. "Padma bridge is a bridge for all. No one should have a negative attitude towards it."

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According to his account

News Agency, which is partially government owned, the man allegedly asked them

He repeated his request

Europe.

have not been released and he said that he did not file a report even though it was one of "the worst days of his

times while in public, and they are expected to cover most of their bodies.

Car blast kills 6 in

AFP, Sai Buri

and 40 more wounded yesterday after a car bomb exploded in a packed market in Thailand's insurgency-hit south, officials told AFP. Nurses scrambled to

Suu Kyi for releasing Pussy Riot singers AFP, Washington

Myanmar democracy icon

mark visit to the United States, called Thursday for the release of jailed members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot. The opposition law-

Aung San Suu Kyi, on a land-

maker, who spent 15 years under house arrest, said she 'would like the whole group to be released as soon as possible," during an event sponsored by the rights group Amnesty International.

supervision

Others

this condition. Had the top brass lis-

The minister -- officially

As the government was unable to bring back the WB to the project, Muhith pointed out the loopholes in the proposals put forward by some of his col-

"Our first option is to build the project under the supervision of the World

One of his close aides

were always against constructing the bridge with donor money; some tried to draw investors from other countries, including

Another key player was

He was able to convince countries like the US, India, Japan and Britain to talk to the WB on the loan revival. His efforts intensi-Also, Syed Ashraful

the ruling Awami League,

tion with the WB was supposed to start last week, the AL leader requested Sheikh Hasina to send her adviser on leave to remove the last

done

He declined stepping

School in Raipura upazila.

Chattar area around 3:00pm.

of Shariatpur on and the rest Bangladeshis, September 7, it was seen were injured. But its driver that the construction yard and the contractor sustained minor injuries as they were hit devoured by the river. by stones thrown by the agitators, reports IANS quoting an Agartala transport official.

Janjira, told The Daily Star, "We lost about 50 metres of the yard although river erosion was not as severe as it had been last year. We must do something to Partnership Dialogue pro-

on Sept 19-20.

nership." Bangladesh is a key par-

protect it."

have been buzzing with hundreds of workers and sounds of heavy machinery had the construction work of the bridge started. Project Director of the Padma Bridge project

and establish an embankment to save the yard. "We will implement the project in two packages, each having Tk 50 crore," he told The Daily Star, adding that they had no

money to save the yard. land. Geo-bags (bags made

They asked whether the and there was a very small bridge would eventually be built and when would the

ment should have resolved was gradually being the issue quickly consider-Kajol, who supervises ing the importance of the project and win the hearts rehabilitation activities at of millions.

"We can't just accept the bridge will not be built due to irregularities and corruption," said Bachchu Mia, a resident of Purbo society.

Many said the govern-

Naoduba, Janjira. He said millions in this region had He said the area would dreamt of the bridge but were now losing hope. The Padma bridge project, the largest infra-

ment, remained uncer-Shafigul Islam said they tain since September last were going to appoint two year when the World Bank local companies who suspended its \$1.2 billion would put concrete slabs loan following corruption allegations. However, the WB formally decided to revive its loan deal yesterday follow-

way but to spend the The government has so far spent Tk 1,500 crore for preparing design of the Padma bridge, land acquisition, compensation to and rehabilitation and resettlement of the affected people in Mawa

and Janjira. Several lakhs are being spent every month to pay for the project's officials and employees and fuel for their vehicles.

Janjira asked The Daily Star

correspondent repeatedly

about the fate of the bridge.

HOPE FADING A cross-section of people in

However, severe erosion construction work start. They also wanted to in 2011 took away more know about the corruption During a visit to Janjira allegations regarding the project and who were involved.

reach the desired level.

tant to the prime minister, said the bridge will help rapid development in the southwestern region and the country's overall economic

had lobbied with the WB to cancel the loan deal. "They

of the bridge at the earliest.

UNB adds: senior AL

Teen girls

Beheshti told an Iranian

"She responded to me by telling me to cover my eyes, which was very insulting to me," CNN quoted him as

to the ground on my back. From that point on, I don't know what happened. I was just feeling the kicks of the woman who was beating me up and insulting me," he said according to Radio Free

Following the alleged attack which took place in August, the cleric said he was hospitalized for three days but he did not list what inju-

Ever since the 1979 revolution, women in Iran are required to wear a hijab at all

The Basij, a volunteerparamilitary group present throughout Iran, takes it upon themselves to "enforce" the country's dress code and ensure that women are wearing a hijab shawl at all times and to break up any male-female fraternisation.

Thai south

At least six people were killed

attend to the wave of bloodied casualties in the main hospital in Sai Buri town, an AFP reporter at the scene said, adding blood donations were urgently required

to help the wounded.