

# 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 Bangladesh Anti-Corruption Commission to handle the investigation; (iii) agreeing to provide full access to all investigative information to an external panel of internationally recognized experts so that they can give guidance to the Bank and co-financiers on the progress, adequacy, and

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 the financing of the Padma 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.

## 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 could speak to their family 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 attention 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 Nasser Arzu and Md Alauddin of Noakhali.

## 50 hurt

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harmful for two consecutive days from Sunday.

The agitating people also set fire to three vehicles 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 in Rajajanager High School in Raipur upazila.

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 Chattara area around 3:00pm.

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 office.

None of the 22 passengers of the Maitree bus, 12 Indians and the rest Bangladeshis, were injured. But its driver and the contractor sustained minor injuries as they were hit by stones thrown by the agitators, reports IANS quoting an Agartala transport official.

"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

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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 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.

## US sees greater

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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 discussed 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

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 half-century that might have been useful under other circumstances.

It had all looked so different when Abdur Razzak snapped up the wicket of Martin Gupthill in the fourth over with the score on 19. The wicket seemingly vindicated captain

Mushfiqur Rahim's surprising 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 T20. 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.

## AL thanks WB

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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 Mahbul Alam Hanif said by 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 negotiations 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 assistant to the prime minister, said the bridge will help rapid development in the south-western region and the country's overall economic advancement.

The AL leader expressed resentment against those who had lobbied with the WB to cancel the loan deal. "They [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 of the bridge at the earliest.

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

UNB adds: senior AL 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."

## Teen girls

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

According to his account in an article run by Mehr News Agency, which is partially government owned, the man allegedly asked them 'politely' to cover up.

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

He repeated his request and that was when the girl fought back.

"She pushed me and I fell 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 Europe.

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

The names of the girls 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 life".

Ever since the 1979 revolution, women in Iran are required to wear a hijab at all times while in public, and they are expected to cover most of their bodies.

The Basij, a volunteer-paramilitary 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.

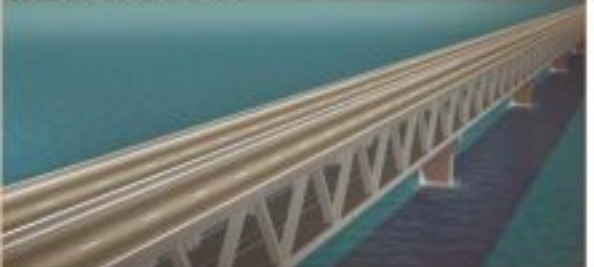
## Car blast kills 6 in Thai south

AFP, Sai Buri

At least six people were killed 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 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.

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### PADMA TIMELINE

**Sept 21, 2011**  
A WB report levels corruption allegations against the then communications minister Abul Hossain and his company

**September 2011**  
The global lender says the loan will be revived if Abul goes

**Oct 21, 2011**  
The govt rejects graft allegations and refuses to remove Abul

**Dec 5, 2011**  
Abul is shifted to the ICT ministry, but the WB demands his removal from the cabinet

**June 2012**  
Fresh talks begin; the WB attaches four conditions including removal of Abul and PM's adviser Mashui Rahman

**June 29, 2012**  
The WB cancels the loan as the talks fail

**July 2, 2012**  
The finance minister urges the lender to withdraw the cancellation

**July 23, 2012**  
Abul resigns; other donors pledge the govt help in negotiations with the WB

**Sept 17, 2012**  
Mashui's status remains shrouded in mystery

**Sept 19, 2012**  
The govt sends Mashui's leave letter to the WB

**Sept 20, 2012**  
The WB revives the loan

## Suu Kyi for releasing Pussy Riot singers

AFP, Washington

Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, on a landmark visit to the United States, called Thursday for the release of jailed members of the Russian punk band Pussy Riot.

The opposition lawmaker, 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.

### COST OF ORIGINAL BRIDGE

COMPONENT	COST	STATUS
Main bridge	\$1.34b	Pre-qualification done
River training	\$800m	Pre-qualification done
Land acquisition, rehabilitation, resettlement	\$273m	80% complete
Approach road	\$194m	Pre-qualification done
Construction supervision	\$65m	Pre-qualification done
Others	\$243m	

## Of heroes, zeroes

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this condition. Had the top brass listened to Muhith in the first place, the bridge construction could have started a year ago.

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

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 colleagues.

"Our first option is to build the project under the supervision of the World Bank," Muhith had said.

One of his close aides 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 were always against constructing the bridge with donor money; some tried to draw investors from other countries, including Malaysia.

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

Another key player was 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.

He was able to convince countries like the US, India, Japan and Britain to talk to the WB on the loan revival. His efforts intensified in the last few weeks.

Also, Syed Ashraf Islam, general secretary of the ruling Awami League, 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 negotiation 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

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

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

He declined stepping down, knowing well he was the last obstacle.

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

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, reportedly by influencing deals.

When the WB brought allegation against Abul and SAHCO, it sounded credible, 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."