

Financiers target

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Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) sources said the WB had submitted its 3rd report on the graft allegations in the bridge project to the ACC in the middle of this month. The WB Dhaka office had directly delivered the report to the ACC chairman.

ACC Chairman Ghulam Rahman yesterday told the media, "According to the information we have received so far from different sources, including the World Bank, we found that there had been a conspiracy to commit corruption...some people tried to take advantage."

The four-member ACC team formed to investigate the WB allegations of corruption in the project was expected to submit its report on December 3, said Rahman, adding that legal actions against the accused would be taken after the report submission.

The anti-graft commission yesterday interrogated three officials of the Bridges Division and two others in connection with the corruption allegations. The outcome of the interrogation could not be known.

The three Bridges Division officials quizzed are: Senior Assistant Engineer Rajab Ali, Deputy Director (finance and accounts) Moniruzzaman, and former additional chief engineer Md Rafiq Ullah.

Prof Abu Siddique of engineering department at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, and Sanowar Ali, a member of National Housing Authority, were also interrogated.

The ACC enquiry began in September last year.

Sources in the ACC said whatever today's Manila meeting decided would depend on the report of the WB's external panel and Integrity Vice Presidency (INT) as to whether the investigation into the graft allegations were being carried out fairly.

Luis Moreno Ocampo, chair of the external panel of the WB and former chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, along with officials of WB's INT would start a meeting with the ACC in Dhaka on December 2 to learn about the progress of the graft probe, said ACC officials.

Finance ministry officials said the WB would decide whether to finance the project further and de-link the investigation and implementation process based on the panel's report on the progress of the ACC investigation.

Sources said the WB INT wanted the ACC to file a First Information Report (FIR) with a police station during the first stage of the anti-graft commission's investigation.

On October 14, the WB external panel arrived in Dhaka and it was scheduled to give the global lender a primary report within a month. But sources said the report was not prepared, as the FIR was not filed.

About this, an ACC official said they had not filed the FIR due to lack of adequate evidence, but they would file an FIR very soon, as they had got substantial information in the 3rd report of the WB.

Officials said besides the new procurement arrangement, today's Manila meeting would also discuss various other issues, including the investigation into the graft allegation.

The WB proposed implementation of the project on a turnkey basis under which full control of the procurement would remain with them.

Meanwhile, the ADB proposed forming of a joint taskforce for procurement related works in the project.

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The group has 28.60 decimal land at Kakrail, 101

decimal at Purana Paltan and nearly 10 decimal at Baridhara in the capital. Destiny bought these pieces of land from private parties in 2010-11.

Destiny Group also owns land in Khulna, Barisal, Munshiganj and some other places.

Of the moveable properties, the group has automobiles.

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