Bangladesh in CPI 2013

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HE Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) 2013 was released by Transparency International (TI) on December 3. On a scale of 0-100, Bangladesh has scored 27, just one point higher than in 2012 and the same as in 2011, and has been ranked 16th from bottom, 3 steps higher than that in 2011 and 2012. Counted from the top, Bangladesh has ascended by 8 positions to 136th among 177 countries, compared to 144th among 176 countries in 2012.

Most disappointingly, Bangladesh remains the second worst performer in South Asia, better than only Afghanistan, ranked at the bottom of the global list, having scored 8 points together with North Korea and Somalia. All other South Asian countries -- Bhutan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Pakistan -- are placed higher than Bangladesh in that order.

Like in the past several years, Bhutan has performed better than any other South Asian country, having scored 63 and placed at the 31st position from top in the global list, fifth best in Asia, preceded by Singapore, Hong Kong, UAE and Qatar. Compared to Bangladesh's score of 27 points and 136th position, Sri Lanka has scored 37 points and secured 91st position, followed by India with 36 points at 96th, Nepal 31 points at 116th and Pakistan 28 points at 127th.

Except Bhutan all other South Asian countries have, however, scored lower than the global average of 43, which means that corruption remains a grave concern for the region. In the global table, three other countries -- Ivory Coast, Guyana and Kenya -- have scored the same score and rank as Bangladesh

Countries perceived to be least affected by corruption are: Denmark and New Zealand on top having scored 91, followed by Finland and Sweden (89), Norway and Singapore (86), Switzerland (85), Netherlands (83), and Australia and Canada (81). Hong Kong and Japan are the only two Asian countries apart from Singapore that are in the league of top 20.

Overall, 91 out of 100 being the highest score, no country is fully clean of corruption. OECD countries like Germany, Belgium, UK, USA, Japan, France, Austria, Spain and Italy have scored less than 80. As many as 124 countries have scored below 50. 108 countries have scored equal to or less than the global average of 43. Corruption clearly remains a global

Launched first in 1995, CPI provides international comparison of countries by perceived prevalence of political and administrative corruption. It is a global survey of surveys on governance and corruption related indicators conducted by reputed international organisations. The index is based on assessment by country experts, business people, business analysts, investors and investment analysts.

The data used in the index relate to perception of prevalence of corruption in the public sector, particularly political and administrative; conflict of interest; likelihood of encountering corruption and unauthorised payments in the delivery of government functions, justice, executive, law enforcement and tax collection. The government's capacity to control corruption and challenge impunity is also considered.

Only such sources that provide data allowing comparative picture are considered. No nationally generated data, such as TI-Bangladesh's research, or that of any other national chapter of TI, is included in CPI. To be included in the index at least three international surveys on the country concerned, with comparable data, must be available.

The index is produced by the research department of the TI Secretariat based in Berlin, and guided for methodological excellence by a panel of international experts. This year's panelists were from Department of Statistics and Political Science of Columbia University, Methodology Institute and Department of Government of London School of Economics & Political Science, Harvard Business School, Dow Jones and Standard & Poor.

CPI 2013 is based on data from 13 international surveys. Data for Bangladesh came from seven sources, namely, Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index, Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Assessment, Global Insight Country Risk Ratings, Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide, World Bank Country Performance and Institutional Assessment, World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey and World Justice Project Rule of Law Index.

Data period was June 2011 to August 2013. Countries that have performed worse than Bangladesh are: Laos, Papua New Guinea Myanmar, Cambodia, Kazakhstan,

Venezuela, Haiti, Yemen, Syria, Turkmenistan, Iraq, Libya and

Corruption is arguably no monopoly of developing countries, but for us it remains a critical challenge. To recall, Bangladesh was earlier placed at the bottom of the list for five successive years from 2001-2005. Somalia has now been ranked at the very bottom for the 7th successive year, which may be a source of relief for us, but not complacence. In 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Bangladesh was ranked at no 3, 7, 10, 13, and 12 respectively, while in 2011 and 2012 we remained in 13th position. We have now gone up to the 16th position from below, but in terms of score, which is more important, we have gained practically nothing as we remain where we were in 2011.

Factors that may have prevented better performance include growing deficits in delivery against the government's electoral pledges against corruption and a typical denial syndrome when it comes to high profile corruption allegations like Padma bridge project, railway scandal, stock market, Hall-Mark and Destiny in which precious little has been done to effectively challenge impunity. The Rana Plaza collapse came as a tragic manifestation of how corruption at various levels, including deficits in law enforcement, can become a brutal killer.

Unauthorised capture of land, river and water bodies, loandefault by the powerful -- direct or indirect -- and partisan capture of public contracting have continued unabated. The high and mighty have not delivered on the commitment to disclose income and wealth.

Low public trust in Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) due to perceived political influence has not served the purpose. Implications of the latest amendment to the ACC Act that has unconstitutionally and conspiratorially denied the Commission the authority to take action in case of corruption



allegation against judges, magistrates and government officials without government approval have not been considered in this year's index because it happened after the data period. But that the protracted game around amending the Act since early 2010 kept ACC under pressure was clear enough. May be because of such pressure, or for its own weakness,

ACC has often been viewed as a B-team of the government, adding to the perception of eroding institutional capacity to control corruption. Large-scale withdrawal of criminal and corruption cases under political consideration, undermining the rule of law, has not escaped national and international attention.

Above all, the zero-sum game of politics has continued to render public institutions, including the parliament, into monopolised territory of the ruling coalition. Beating all previous records of parliamentary boycott the opposition hasn't helped the cause either. Politicisation of administration, law enforcement and justice has had no reprieve. Whitening of black money has continued shamelessly. Policy decisions and actions of national interest have often been the domain of those who benefit from it directly or indirectly.

As the time comes again for political parties to go back to the people for votes, corruption control will probably occupy a prominent space in election manifestos. Lofty promises will thrive. But Bangladesh's prospect of doing any better in effective corruption control will depend on the capacity of the government and political leaderships to demonstrate that corruption is indeed a punishable office. Things can change only if people's mandate is used to challenge impunity effectively without fear or bias, not to protect and promote it.

Cameroon, Nigeria, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Zimbabwe, The writer is Executive Director, Transparency International Bangladesh.

Lowering commitments, not emissions

VIKAS NATH

EGOTIATORS from over 190 countries gathered recently in Warsaw to lay the framework for a global climate agreement that is expected to be signed in 2015 in Paris. Warsaw was an opportunity for negotiators to narrow their differences, and increase their ambition for longterm action on climate change. Unfortunately they failed to reach a common understanding on the shape of the new agreement, the level of cuts needed, how they should be divided up, long-term financing needs of developing countries, and providing assistance to those suffering loses and damages from climate change.

Global negotiations, national interests

While the climate issue has moved high up on the political agenda, and the platform on which negotiations take place is multilateral, the interests pursued by negotiators remain firmly rooted nationally. Countries have consistently refused to look beyond their boundaries and interests to deal with an issue that cuts across borders.

Rich countries have to lead the way in cutting emissions and providing support. But developing countries also need to contribute if the warming limit of 2 degrees centigrade is to be maintained. Unfortunately the UN multilateral climate forum is capable of keeping the negotiations alive without yielding progressive outcomes. It is likely we may end up at the 2015 summit in Paris without any bold ambitions and actions to bring down global emissions.

Lowering commitments, not emissions

Climate talks so far have distinguished between richer and poorer countries. Richer countries are those who have polluted their way to economic growth and development and are responsible for the bulk of historical emissions. While poorer countries are latecomers to industrialisation, their emissions are increasing as they need to grow and lift their population out of poverty.

The Warsaw talks saw a major push by developed countries to remove the firewall between rich and poor countries so that all countries take on binding commitments to reduce emissions. But developing countries came out strongly against this move. Developed countries argued that the deal struck in Durban in 2011 required all major economies, including emerging economies, to commit to bringing down emissions, and this was not being adhered to. Developing countries challenged that these commitments were contingent on developed countries playing their role and providing climate funds and clean technology at concessional rates, and that this was not happening. Most developing countries maintain that since the Durban decision was under the UN Climate Convention, the responsibilities to reduce emissions remain differentiated.

For developing countries, historical emissions and the principle of common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) are non-negotiable to ensure that climate justice and equity is respected. They seek that any new agreement has to come under the 1992 UN Framework Convention on Climate Change on common but differentiated responsibilities rather than ignoring it. Developed countries were against keeping any such reference and this almost led to a breakdown of the talks until a compromise was worked out to replace "commitments" with the more flexible term "contributions".

The negotiating parties ultimately agreed to go back home and initiate or intensify domestic preparations for their intended "nationally determined" contributions to reduce emissions without being legally obliged to do so. Countries ready to do so will submit clear and transparent plans by the first quarter of 2015. The plans will be assessed by other countries to determine if they are ambitious and fair, and whether they will be collectively effective in preventing climate catastrophe. As the emissions reduction goals that will come into force in 2020 will not be decided centrally, but set at the national level, it remains to be seen how these contributions will evolve. They may end up as binding targets in the 2020 framework and take the shape of a new protocol, or simply an agreed outcome to reduce emissions with legal force.

No interim or long term financing

In the 2009 Copenhagen climate talks, developed nations committed to mobilize US\$100 billion a year by 2020 for climate change. So far there has only been a trickle of funds. Developing countries want a roadmap on how the funds will be raised. But developed countries have resisted demands to put firm commitments on how they plan to fulfill this pledge. Developing countries also want richer countries to provide interim financing between now and 2020 to keep up the momentum until 2020. But this demand was rejected. Ultimately, no new financing was committed during the talks except replenishment of funds for the Adaptation Fund and adoption of the work programme for results-based financing for reducing emissions from forest-related activities.

Moving ahead from Warsaw

Political and economic realities of bringing down carbon emissions are a complex process and the Warsaw talks failed to overcome them. There is still an opportunity to salvage the trust and ambitions lost at Warsaw. A commitment to interim financing would be a good trust-building gesture and it will also give momentum to get the accord ready by 2015. This has to be followed by concrete efforts to close the pre-2020 ambition gap before an agreement can be hammered out for post-2020.

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Democracy: An elusive dream

KAZI ZAMAL

ORE than forty years of our independence have elapsed but true democracy is still elusive. Abraham Lincoln's recipe for democracy in Bangladesh has been distorted to being "a government of the party, by the party and for the party." Our politicians engaged in a diabolical frenzy to cling on to power have divided the nation into two camps to be at each others' throats. Within a few years of its inception, democracy in

Bangladesh was in jeopardy. Multiparty democracy was abolished in favour of a single party system. Corruption was rampant. Abandoned industrial and commercial establishments were up for grabs. Government appointed "administrators" took it as their own to loot the revenues and rise from rags to riches. The majority languished in abject poverty and famine. The media was brought under state control. And before the people could absorb these innovations, Bangabandhu was assassinated. Military coups were staged in rapid succession. The politicians played upon the whims of military dictators and democracy was banished into political exile.

Fortunately, the spirit of freedom inborn in every Bangladeshi was not to be extinguished. The indomitable will of the people prevailed and the mass upsurge in 1990 compelled politicians to rise above party divides to depose the dictator H.M. Ershad. Democracy got a shot in the arm and was back on track. But I never imagined that the track to a democracy would be so full of obstacles.

The ruling party in power has no time for the opposition while the opposition, irrespective of their fewer seats in parliament, cannot accept that the people did not give them a mandate. BNP has been crying foul from day one while taking to the streets, and rendering the parliament dysfunctional by boycotting sessions. All this is at the cost of 'we the people.' We may detest it but there is little for us to do as democracy in Bangladesh is for the political parties and not for the people.

Our politicians have institutionalised a culture of fear mongering by holding the people hostage through hartals. If hartal means the right to demonstrate, I have no problem. But hartal that endangers our lives and property while posing a

threat to our fundamental rights is a direct attack on democracy and contravenes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The hartals that we have been witnessing over the past two decades are contorting the norms of democracy. In fact hartals have already sounded the death knell of democracy in Bangladesh. I shudder to think of what awaits us.

The political parties in Bangladesh call for "peaceful hartal." This is an oxymoron. To let loose the dogs of war armed with lethal weapons to kill, burn, vandalise and incite terror is anything but peaceful. The lament and outrage of the people for the loss of their loved ones, fall on deaf ears. What adds insult to injury is that perpetrators enjoy the luxury of impunity. If this is democracy, I prefer not to have it.

dits and spin doctors sanctifying hartals as being a "legitimate" democratic right. If it be so and upheld in the Constitution, the Supreme Court must fulfill its obligation on defining the scope of this "democratic right". The only lifeline of democracy in Bangladesh lies with the free

It irks me to listen to intellectuals, jurists and media pun-

media, although of late we are seeing ominous signs of tightening grip of the government. Thankfully, the internet and social media have clamped attempts to stifle freedom of expression. The midnight media talk show debates try to infuse some sense to the prevalent insanity in our politics. But these too have lost their use as with the monotonous repetition of the sickening political bickering and mudslinging between the opposing guests.

The next general elections are just days ahead, if the ruling party has its way. But we the people should not be taken for granted. We are not so dumb as to think that politics in Bangladesh is doomed to bring the demise of democracy and render the country a failed state. My fear is that Lincoln's saying will be replaced by Oscar Wilde's statement: "Democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people" (The Soul of Man Under Socialism). If this happens, democracy is doomed. My only hope is the people will stand up once again with one voice against the arrogance of politicians and force them to show respect to the will of the people to serve and not to rule.

The writer is a political analyst.

BEETLE BAILEY

by Mort Walker



2 Mowing

3 Like the

desert

site





By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 1 Nurse Barton 6 Mine section

4 Director Howard **11** Hammerin' 5 Not Hank 12 Spirit 6 Even 13 Target of campaign ads

15 Last part 16 Zodiac sign 17 Give permission to 18 Comb parts 20 Light lunch 23 Like a

31 Ohio city

32 Music's

Faith

poke 37 Negative

34 Boxing

link

41 Cam-

44 Filch

46 Rich

DOWN

38 Glacier

makeup

paign's

45 Figure out

dessert

47 Spirited horse

1 Job for

Sherlock

finish line

10 Midterm event **14** Neckline shape 18 Touch base green-**19** Pleasantly house muscular 27 Wildly 20 Blue eager 21 Historic 28 Zilch time 29 Fix code

straight 7 Blazing 8 Skating jump 9 Smoke source

22 High tennis hit 24 Disfigure 25 Groom's answer 26 Writer Brown **30** Soothing answer 33 King of France

MOPSUP

ANTS Yesterday's answer 35 Choir member 36 Tankard 38 Goofing 39 Spelunking site

11-5

GORES

RISKED

31 Unlike this 40 Looked over 42 Mouse chaser 43 Negative 34 Witty word remark

QUOTABLE Quote

If all the economists were laid end to end, they'd never reach a conclusion."

George Bernard Shaw

AXYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

On letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

10-30 CRYPTOQUOTE

T C ZM B UMB CNRUMZJDB, E D K DE BCUCIIJZP CNRUMZJDB JI UDBZJBRJBT OKDUCII. SDRJI S'MVDRK

Yesterday's Cryptoquote:

PEOPLE RARELY SUCCEED UNLESS THEY HAVE FUN IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

- DALE CARNEGIE

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