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3 DEV PROJECTS IN COX'S BAZAR

Syndicate finds MINES OF MONEY

ACC's Ctg office unearths long running con, involvement of ex-DC, top cop in the district

KEY FINDINGS IN ACC PROBE

- Syndicate includes 44 admin, land and top police officials
- Tk 78 crore siphoned off
- Local ruling party men also involved
- Probe report awaits final approval



MOSTAFA YOUSUF

A syndicate of bureaucrats, politicians and officials of Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) in Cox's Bazar have systematically siphoned off Tk 78 crore in public money from three development projects.

For two of the projects, they acquired land that was far more expensive than available alternatives, costing the government an additional Tk 48 crore. Around Tk 30 crore more was embezzled in the name of land requisition for another project.

The findings, by the Anti-Corruption Commission's Chattogram office, shed light on how powerful syndicates make their fortune at the expense of taxpayers' money.

The 750-page probe report, prepared by an investigator in relation to three graft cases involving the three projects, names 44 government officials, including 23 admin cadre officers.

They include a former deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, former

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Large plumes of thick black smoke spewing from iron factories fill the sky in the capital's Shyampur area. Such air pollution often contributes to respiratory diseases of people of all ages. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

POST-COVID JOB MARKET Govt to upskill women, youth

Set to take up Tk 4,300cr project

- Special training programme for youth, women, the poor
- Implementation period from July 2021 to 2026
- Estimated cost **Tk 4,300 crore**
- WB to loan **Tk 2,580 crore**, Govt to pay **Tk 1,720 crore**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is set to start a training programme for creating skilled manpower fit for the job market with the view to creating employment in the post-Covid period with a particular focus on women and the underprivileged people.

About 6.5 lakh people will be given the training on emerging technology as well as allowances under the project, which was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) yesterday.

The project, whose duration is July

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Taliban announce hardline temp govt

Core group members get top posts; supreme leader vows to uphold sharia law

AGENCIES

The Taliban announced their new government yesterday, with a UN-blacklisted veteran of the hardline movement in the top role, after the group swept to power in a lightning offensive which toppled the US-backed president.

The announcement came as protests were growing against Taliban rule, with two people shot dead in the western city of Herat yesterday, a doctor told AFP.

The Islamists, notorious for their brutal and oppressive rule during their first stint in power from 1996 to 2001, had pledged a more "inclusive" brand of rule as US troops completed their chaotic pullout.

But all the key positions in yesterday's cabinet went to core, veteran players in the movement.

Chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a press conference that the new government would be an interim one, and that veteran official Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund would serve as its new acting prime minister.

He had served as deputy foreign minister under the Taliban's old regime, and is on a UN blacklist.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, head of the movement's political office, was appointed as Akhund's deputy, Mujahid said.

Baradar's appointment as Akhund's deputy, rather than to the top job, came as a surprise to some as he had been responsible for negotiating the US withdrawal and presenting the face of the Taliban to the world.

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Hassan Akhund

Abdul Ghani Baradar

People don't have to call you 'sir', 'madam'

State Minister Farhad tells civil servants, asks them to be humble

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saying that government officials' anger towards the general public or misbehaving with them is tantamount to corruption, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain yesterday said public servants' attitudes represent those of the government.

"Your attitude represents government. People consider your office as a part of the Prime Minister's Office ... there are no rules to address government officials as 'Sir' or 'Madam'," he said, asking bureaucrats to be humble.

"I've repeatedly said misbehaving is tantamount to corruption. It cannot be done by any means," he said replying to a question.

The state minister said this at a "Meet the Press" event organised by Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters Forum at the Mass Media Center at the Secretariat.

Saying there will be no difference between government officials and people, he said, "I always say that your attitude is important. If you don't have a welcoming attitude, vent your anger or scold [the

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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

50 lakh to be made literate

Govt planning 5yr nationwide campaign

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

The government is working on a programme that aims at providing basic literacy knowledge to 50 lakh people aged 15 and above and skill development training to five lakh of them.

It wants to set up 500 permanent community learning centres at the union level and 64 livelihood skill development centres in as many districts under the proposed project, called Non-Formal Education Development Programme (NFEDP).

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) finalised the five-year government-funded programme for Tk 15,870 crore and sent the proposal to the primary and mass education ministry for further action several months back.

The ministry is now working on it.

"The work of the programme is going on. We will be able to take further steps soon. It is taking some time due to the Covid-19 situation," State Minister for Primary and Mass Education Zakir Hossain said ahead of International Literacy Day today.

The ministry is set to hold a programme, titled "Literacy for a human-centric recovery: Narrowing the Digital Divide", to mark the occasion.

Zakir also said the literacy rate in the country is currently 75.6 percent.

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- Beneficiaries to be aged **15** and above
- Project to cost **Tk 15,870 crore**
- **500** community learning centres to be built
- **64** livelihood skill development centres to be built



People throng the vaccination centre at the ward-9 councillor office of Khulna City Corporation in the city's Mujgunni area yesterday, the first day of the mass vaccination for the second dose of Covid-19 vaccine. Many had to wait for hours.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

VACCINE DRIVE Enthusiastic response from recipients

Some go home without jabs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first day of the Covid-19 second dose vaccine rollout marked much enthusiasm among the people in all centres across the country yesterday.

On the first day, people received their second jabs during the campaign from 9:00am to 3:00pm.

The campaign will continue till Sunday, according to the health officials.

On August 7, around 34 lakh people, aged 25 years and above, received the first jab of Covid-19 vaccine through on-spot registration under the six-day-long special inoculation campaign.

The government carried out this special campaign in 4,600 unions in rural areas and 1,497 wards in municipalities and city corporation areas countrywide, in addition to

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