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Whose side is ACC on?

It sits on major cases probed by Sharif, but punishes him on charges colleagues find petty

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

Over the last three years, Sharif Uddin painstakingly enquired and investigated corruption allegations and recommended that the Anti-Corruption Commission file 22 graft cases against various individuals and quarters in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar.

Although the ACC did not act on any of the recommendations, it took almost no time in opening a probe against him, following complaints submitted by three individuals in September last year.

Interestingly, an investigation by Sharif had found all three involved in running a powerful syndicate linked with land acquisition scams in Cox's Bazar.

On Wednesday, the graft watchdog terminated Sharif from the post of deputy assistant director under Section 54(2) of Anti-Corruption Commission (Servants) Service Rules 2008.

The decision triggered an outcry among his



Rashed, a man with physical disabilities, rolling his wheelchair on the Khulna-Barishal highway with a packet of masks, putting his life at risk. Every day, Rashed makes a 1.5-km journey from Jhalakathi's Boroitola area to Shaitpokia bazar to sell the masks. He also operates a mobile phone refilling service by handing the device to clients and instructing them on how to send money to their numbers. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

RECOVERING FROM COVID, REINVENTING OUR FUTURE

31 The Daily Star CELEBRATING YEARS OF JOURNALISM WITHOUT FEAR OR FAVOUR

Today, we are pleased to present to our readers the fourth instalment of our five-part 200-page special supplement series, titled

"DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE AND DEMOCRATIC BANGLADESH", which features a collection of articles focusing on how we can create an egalitarian, democratic and developed Bangladesh.

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ACC did not approve any of 22 cases recommended by Sharif

- The watchdog opened investigation against him after those allegedly involved with a Cox's Bazar-based land acquisition syndicate filed complaints against him
- ACC initiated 'fresh probe' into Sharif's findings



Sharif Uddin

colleagues, who called him an honest and sincere officer. They said he paid the price for his firm stance against corruption.

Around 50 ACC officials held a human chain in front of the ACC headquarters in the capital's Shegunbagicha on Thursday, protesting the termination.

Sharif had worked at the ACC office in Chattogram for three and a half years before being transferred to Patuakhali in June last year. While in Chattogram, he filed 52 corruption cases against various individuals, organisations and quarters.

He was the plaintiff in the ACC cases filed against Election Commission officials last year over illegally including many Rohingyas in the voter list and providing them with national identification cards.

He came into the limelight for filing corruption cases against a ruling Awami League mayor in Cox's Bazar municipality, a ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation, several union council chairmen in Chattogram and Cox's Bazar, and three senior police officials.

Sharif also investigated financial allegations against the son of a former minister and various government officials and law enforcers, including Cox's Bazar PBI police super, a former deputy commissioner, deputy secretaries, UNOs, an AC land, a former director of Petrobangla, and a general manager of Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDCL), said his colleagues.

In 2019, he submitted to the ACC three separate charge sheets against 155 people in Cox's Bazar over land acquisition scams. The three who filed the complaints against him were among the 155.

The graft watchdog did not approve the charge sheets. Sharif had also recommended that the commission file eight cases against "rogue" KGDCL officials for alleged irregularities in recruitment in 2019, seven cases for "unfair overnight" promotions in KGDCL and providing illegal gas connections to different companies and organisations.

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IN-PERSON CLASS Primary schools to resume it on March 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to reopen in-person classes at the primary schools on March 1 as the coronavirus infections rate dropped.

Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, public relation officer of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, said, "The ministry has decided to reopen in-person classes on March 1."

A gazette notification will be issued in this regard on Sunday, he added.

The concerned department is preparing routines on the duration of classes per week. It will be disclosed along with the gazette, he added.

The move came following the decision of resuming in-person classes at secondary schools and colleges from February 22. Only students with two doses of Covid-19 vaccines will be allowed in the classrooms.

At a press conference, SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

E-gates at HSIA yet not operational

DIP, SB trade blame for the delay



RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Seven months after the inauguration, the authorities could still not make the e-gates operational for e-passport holders at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, frustrating inbound and outbound passengers.

The Department of Immigration and Passports (DIP), which installed six e-gates, is blaming the Special Branch (SB) of police for the delay in operations.

The SB, on the other hand, alleged it did not get the required server link from the DIP to make the e-gates operational.

In the meantime, e-passport holders are not getting any benefit from the new technology. Their immigration is now

being carried out manually.

Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal inaugurated the first-ever electronic gates at the Dhaka airport in June last year, marking the country's step into the digital era of travel. Bangladesh is the first country in South Asia to launch an e-gate for e-passports.

The SB, in charge of immigration through land ports and airports, said they are carrying out immigration formalities manually at the moment as a link between the e-passport server and the e-gates is yet to be established.

Once the e-gates are in operation, the camera attached to the gate will identify the passenger automatically after analysing information from the

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8 lives cut short by crashes

STAR REPORT

Road accidents claimed six lives in Cumilla and two others in Dhaka and Madaripur yesterday.

In Cumilla, six people, including two of a family, were killed and another was injured after a dump truck hit a CNG-run auto-rickshaw from behind on the Cumilla-Sylhet highway in Mainamati area around 4:30am.

Mohammad Kamal, sub-inspector of Debpur Police Outpost in Burichang upazila, said five died on the spot and another on the way to hospital.

Police said truck driver Robin, 19, was undergoing treatment in the hospital. Robin did not have the licence to drive the truck, police said.

The deceased were CNG driver Julhas Mia, 60, his cousin Zahirul Islam, 35, Alamgir Hossain, 23, Mohammad Jalal, 40, and Saiful Islam, 33.

The identity of another victim could not be known immediately.

The victims are from different villages of Burichang and Debidwar upazilas.

Family sources of the deceased said most of them were vegetable and fruit traders and they were going to local Nimshar wholesale market to buy goods for their trade.

In another accident, a college student was killed after a truck hit his motorcycle on the Dhaka-Mawa highway in the capital's Keraniganj in the evening.

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