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## Don't take up projects that waste money

PM tells new council of ministers at informal meeting in Tungipara

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the new ministers not to take up unnecessary projects that waste money and to be cautious while making public comments so as not to stir controversy.

"Before taking a project, carefully consider whether it is essential for people," Hasina was quoted as saying by a minister.

At the same time, she added, the projects that will benefit people should take utmost priority.

She was speaking at the first informal meeting with the members of the new council of ministers at her home in Tungipara, Gopalganj.

Hasina took oath on Thursday as the prime minister for the fourth consecutive term and formed government with 37 ministers and state ministers.

"Make sure you check the progress the projects are making," she said, adding that the activities of the ministries and divisions should be strictly monitored.

"You will have to monitor whether service-providing organisations are serving the people. Act so that people do not face hassles while seeking services," she told the meeting.

She then asked why the prices of daily essentials were rising even though there was no problem with the supply and told her cabinet colleagues to arrange regular raids targeting hoarders who try to create artificial crises, according to three ministers who attended the meeting.

Mohammad Salahuddin, secretary at the Prime Minister's Office, told reporters later that the PM asked the ministers to keep the prices in check during Ramadan.

Yesterday's meeting was held after the PM, her younger sister Sheikh Rehana, and the ministers paid tributes to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Hasina is expected to travel to the capital in the evening today.

At the beginning of the meeting, the Awami League president said her party's election victory overcoming hurdles from home and abroad was a major political success.

"Work for the people because they kept their trust in the Awami League," she told the ministers.

The PM said the new ministers should learn from the experienced ones and they must all work together.

She asked her colleagues to read the AL manifesto first and to learn the ins and outs of their ministries.

She then reminded them of the government's zero tolerance for corruption.

She asked the ministers to take steps to increase remittance inflow and to cultivate fallow pieces of land.

After the meeting, Hasina had lunch with her colleagues.

BSS reports: At a views exchange meeting with AL leaders and activists, the PM said that the government's priority is to keep the development going, control the prices, and increase people's purchasing power.

Mentioning that there is no scarcity of food items, she said, "I don't see any major problem in rural areas; however, people of limited income living in Dhaka are suffering due to higher prices."

Hasina observed that a vested quarter is responsible for price increase to multiply the sufferings of the people.

She also laid emphasis on increasing production and strengthening supervision on supply chain.



### PM'S INSTRUCTIONS

- Regularly conduct drives against hoarders
- Be careful about making public statements
- Take step to increase remittance inflow



A train driver peeks out of his window in the locomotive for a better view of the tracks ahead early yesterday. With winter raging on, the density of fog occurring across the country, especially in the early hours, has further intensified, disrupting the navigation of all modes of transportation.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Cold wave may worsen this week

Rain expected on Thursday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cold spell, accompanied by cool winds and dense fog, that has been disrupting daily life in various parts of the country is likely to intensify as it is expected to rain on Thursday and Friday (January 18-19), resulting in a further dip in the mercury, said the Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

"The temperature will start to increase from Sunday [today], though it will fall again after Wednesday [January 17] as there is a possibility of rain on Thursday and Friday [January 18 and 19] across the country," said meteorologist Omar Faruq yesterday.

According to BMD's regular weather bulletin yesterday, "A mild cold wave is sweeping over Rangpur division and the districts of

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## How Arav Khan preyed on migrants in Dubai

8 Bangladeshi expats lost Tk 1.46cr to his trickery

SHARIFUL ISLAM

After slogging it out in Dubai for 16 years, Aynal Sipat Ali had saved up 131,000 UAE dirham (AED), which is about Tk 44 lakh. But he never got to enjoy the money thanks to Rabiul Islam, better known as Arav Khan.

Aynal is not alone; nine other expatriate Bangladeshis in Dubai were priced out of AED 425,500 (about Tk 1.46 crore) by Rabiul, who is wanted by the Bangladesh government over the murder of Special Branch Inspector Mamun Emran Khan at a Banani flat on July 8, 2018, and another arms case.

As of now, it appears the 10 Bangladeshis are unlikely to recover the sum given the grey area about his nationality: he fled to India after a case was filed against him over Mamun's murder, assumed the name of Arav Khan and took on Indian citizenship.

At present, Rabiul, who hails from Gopalganj, lives in Dubai under his assumed identity of Arav Khan and as an Indian citizen.

Although he was arrested by Interpol in Dubai for 37 days, the Bangladesh government could not repatriate him due to his being an Indian citizen.

On November 18 last year, the 10 victims lodged a complaint with the Bangladesh consulate in Dubai and sought the mission's

intervention to get back their money.

"Since Arav is now an Indian citizen, we advised the affected people to apply to the consulate general of India in Dubai for justice," BM Jamal Hossain, the counsel general of Bangladesh in Dubai, told The Daily Star over the phone on December 21 last year.

According to the complaints, Arav embezzled AED 178,000 from Tariqul Islam, AED 131,000 from Aynal Sipat Ali, AED 37,500 from Yousuf Ali, AED 31,500 from Mohammad Rafsan Jani, AED 25,000 from Hasan Khan, AED 10,000 from Istiaque Ahmed, AED 12,500 from Md Shabbir and AED 5,000 from Sarwar Ahmed.

Four of the victims told the correspondent that they lodged a complaint with the consulate general office of India in Dubai but to no avail.

K Kalimuthu, the consul general of India in Dubai, and Arav did not respond to The Daily Star's request for comment.

The victims said Arav is continuing to defraud people by offering fake visas to different European and North American countries through his travel agency Arav Khan Travels.

"He [Arav] ruined my life - now I don't have any money for my wife's treatment," said Aynal, who is in his late 50s and is making ends meet by working as a watchman in Chattogram's Satkania.

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## Ensure a single authority for better cities

Says Rehman Sobhan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Red tape in governance and management is depriving the city dwellers of their civil rights, noted economist Rehman Sobhan said yesterday.

"This exists because of the conflict of jurisdiction between the local government and city corporation authorities," said Sobhan, chairman of Center for Policy Dialogue.

He made the remarks at a day-long conference titled "Sustainable Urbanisation: Problem and Solution", organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and Bangladesh Environment Network, at the Krishibid Institution in the capital's Farmgate.

In his speech as the chief guest, Sobhan said that as the LGRD ministry appoints employees of the municipal authorities, mayors have no control over them.

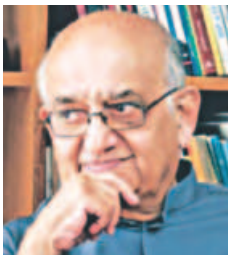
Moreover, the ministry also has the power to remove mayors.

"Therefore, city mayors can't exercise their powers with real responsibility."

For planned urbanisation, coordination between the organisations concerned is a must. Everything regarding urban management should be brought under a single authority, observed Sobhan.

He added that the citizens were not happy with the two city corporations' performances.

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দ্বাদশ জাতীয় সংসদ নির্বাচনে নিরঙ্কুশ সংখ্যা গরিষ্ঠতা  
অর্জনকারী বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগ এর সভাপতি  
জাতির পিতার সুযোগ্য কন্যা, সফল রাষ্ট্রনায়ক  
**জননেত্রী শেখ হাসিনা**  
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আইসিবি ও আইসিবি'র সাবসিডিয়ারি প্রতিষ্ঠানের পক্ষ থেকে  
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