

# Justice is only for the little people

Thursday, 29 May 2008

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Bangladesh: Justice is only for the little people

By GM Solaiman

I read news and opinion piece in Bangladesh newspapers related to corruption and people's perspective toward it. I read with a great amusement how some people stay cool and not even bother by the mountain of corruption. If media reflect any percentage of views in real ground, it is almost shocking how they show tolerance toward corruption. Some people took it as part of the life very well. Now that's a compliment. One probably will go crazy if he would not or can not take this as business as usual. Isn't Bangladesh a part of this civilized world? Is there any respect for justice in any part of the society in Bangladesh? Actually, there is. It is for the little people who must obey the law. It is the little people to whom justice is served. It is the little people who, with all the hardship in life, keep Bangladesh a part of the civilized world. Well, at least as of now.

Let me bring your attention to a recent court verdict. Md Shahid Mia, a technician from Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company, was sentenced to three years in jail for taking Tk 5,000 in bribe. Few local newspapers reported this in May 22, 2008.

"A special Dhaka court on Wednesday sentenced an official of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company to three years in jail for taking Tk 5,000 in bribe."

"Convicted Md Shahid Mia will have to serve one more year in jail in failure to pay a fine of Tk 1 lakh. Judge Md Sirajul Haque also issued an order to confiscate the cell phone of Shahid."

"Ebadullah al Mamun, managing director of Quality Re-rolling Mills, filed the case against him with Shyampur police station on May 6 last year. According to case details, Shahid demanded Tk 5,000 for a utility connection. The Rapid Action Battalion arrested him."

Shahid Mia's wife was present in the court room. Shahid Mia hugged his wife to give her some comfort after the verdict. His lawyer Rehana Alam told him that this is the list possible punishment for the crime. It can not be reduced. This is for just taking 5000 taka (73 dollars) bribe. No other crime, corruption or illegal property involved.

There is nothing surprising here. He did the crime, so he got the punishment. It could have been any other civilized country. The criminals would get similar punishment.

Now I want you to take a moment and rethink this. Just 73 dollars of corrupt money can put you 3 years in prison. Even in Bangladesh, it can. Does people in Bangladesh realized it? I am sure some people do realize it. Shahid Mia and his family realized. Many more people like Shahid Mia realize it every day.

What about big fishes, do they realize? I am talking about those people who have taken millions of dollars in bribe along with other crime, corruption and illegal property. How many thousands years of imprisonment would they get in punishment? Well, they never did. Punishment is reserved only for the little people in Bangladesh. Those who acquired millions of dollars in corruption never faced any punishment. Shouldn't they get the punishment?

Is it too unfair to say that this punishment, as justified as it is, would be an insult to the justice system if the top criminals of the nation wonder free?

I read some opinion articles in few daily newspapers with lot of amusement. I don't really understand this. How could an educated person argue in favor of those corrupt criminals? How could they do it in a civilized society? Don't they have any shame at all? Apparently they don't have any shame. What could be the reason?

Could it be that these so called intellectuals are not belongs to this civilized world? Could it be that they somehow lost the sense of what is wrong and what is right? Or, is it because that these so called intellectuals are beneficiary of the corrupt officials and politicians? Is it because that these so called intellectuals are the creation of the top corrupt circle of Bangladesh? Isn't it true that those who support the evils are indeed part of the same evil?

Is it possible that the people of Bangladesh can come out of the box of wrong doers and their evil intellectual propaganda machine? I certainly hope so.

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