

Tritiyo Matra

Episode-6522

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Zillur Rahman: Covid-19 is the panicked worldwide but it's speeding at different speeds and its intensity depends on where you live. Never in our lifetime has the world faced a challenge of this pandemic. The Global Impact of this covid-19 has accelerated dramatically. It has already taken more than 34,40000 lives. The outbreak of pandemic Covid-19 has disturbed the political, social, economic, religious and financial structure all over the world. Shantu Chinese abilities of strategy in his book the art of war emphasized that if you know your enemy, know yourself you did not fear the results of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but you not the enemy every victory you gain will also suffer defeat. Dear viewers my guest for tonight John Morrell, Regional Director for the Asia & Pacific, Center for International Enterprise. He is joining us from Washington. John welcome to our show. We have also with us Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad, Economist & Governance Analyst. He also joins with us from DC. Dr.Parvez welcome to our show Tritiyo Matra. John let me start with you. Is covid-19 a geopolitical game changer?

John Morrell: Yes. First of all as a guest of your program I want to congratulate on Bangladesh's 58th birthday. 1971 to 2021 is very exciting. Yes Covid-19 is a geopolitical game changer. We are still on the mixer. One thing we are seeing in terms of how geopolitics and how global geo-commerce is affecting the disruption of the supply chain. It's been seen in many forms all over the world. We are seeing rest in having portions of their supply chain in countries with big rules, law, countries were public World statistic campaign has been trusted. One of the facts that break down the supply chain orientation of the supply chain is the world is becoming the much more competitive place. Countries such as

Bangladesh might have been shut out of subcontracting opportunities, supply chain opportunities to the large brands who buy huge portion of supply chain locked up in china. The Global market has become much more competitive. Well place of going emerging like Bangladesh. It could be one place to benefit from some of this Global trend. We're not sure how the domestic politics Country by country will be affected by covid-19. In United States the domestic politics surrounded by covid-19 still are not settled. It's very messy. So lot of factor still need to be played out to see what new normal will be in terms of geopolitics but break down of supply chains and the reorientation of global commerce is one of fact that we are already seeing it as result of covid.

Zillur Rahman: John how do you see the See the Us, China and and the politics of covid-19?

John Morrell: Yes covid-19 has made the US China relationship even more problematic. The relationship is tense for the covid-19. Covid-19 simply added a tension and there is the actuary nature between the two countries. Example of hostel meeting United States sectary and its part from china and their meeting will be still couple of month in a last. Whether you are talking about trade, Taiwan relationship Covid-19 has simply made the us-china relationship even more tense. One concern about the whole world knows Covid-19 came from weather it came from laboratory or it came from nature, the world will know hopefully soon Where covid-19 came from. What China did in the afterwards of the outbreak. The instant that some of the territory governments try to cover it up, to deny it happened. This is not the first time the Government of China is reacted this way. The reaction of CCP, region government is to cover it up. When you're dealing with the problem of health crisis and when you dealing with the pathogen it's in the environment. That is not the time to push your head and China makes believe that nothing has just happening in the world. But the instant that the Chinese government had been denied to cover it up it's a lie. When you are dealing with ongoing Public Health crisis and which still an ongoing health crisis. I mentioned covid-19 makes already problematic Situation and it can make much horrible situation soon.

Zillur Rahman: Thank u john I will come to you again. Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad is covide reshaping the geo-politics?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: Thank you Mr. Zillur Rahman. It is my pleasure to be in this program. First I would like to express my deeper greetings to you for very detail elaborate program that you are conducted with this covid crisis, which have been very informative and graceful. And I also I like to express my pleasure to be here with Mr. John Morrell. I fully agree with him and his Very useful and insightful comments. That I do agree fully. From my side I would like to address what is most important right now at the government related issues? To express the Governments related issues. That addresses the intensity attitude of covid. Basically above from the health issues, the health related Problems and concern that reflects weaknesses in a decreases in health sector internationally and nationally. I would say I would rather Linked together it some Sort of CBR Governance democracy. The information gap of the coming health sector and in inability of the internationally health mechanism and the national Health mechanisms to draw right Knowledge and experiences from the past pandemics. In integrate is not fully off Pandemics. In adequate distribution of knowledge and insufficient coordination. Between the International health mechanism Like that World Health Organisation and the National Health systems. Another thing I would say focus for the Government side which is very important to identified the origin of problem. If the origin the reason is not identified between leak to lack of transparency, lack of adequate deposer .There is need for proper investigation to find out why it happened? So the world would be prepared for the future. The other point I would like to break is that WHO they did lot of good work under the guidance of Un. They need for a paradigm shift Two focus of the human other health centre for a better tomorrow. I think WHO may have consider structural operation of judgemental provements to address similar issues I hope not that this will that because The world has been shaken by this way to learn How can we do things better. At the moment of the government side Like to focus all they need equity and fairness of vaccine distribution especially for developing countries. I appreciate that many of the Developed countries are tried to help and the international system is also are Trying to you wake up call. And they are working on it they are constraints and limitations. But there is need to access the ensure excess and distribution of vaccine so the countries in need that vaccine as soon as possible.

Zillur Rahman: Dr. Parvez Imdad Can this pandemic effects on the geopolitics?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: Yes I agree with Mr. John Morrell I fully agree with

him. I don't want to repeat I do agree. But at the same time, I would say Geopolitics at the focus now is other government and management issues related to this. It is better now seeing how can we minimize the challenge of social economic development. The challenges globalization and deep my concern it is might Property, unemployment and inequality to turn. And lastly I would like to say If this issues at the government side did not duly adjusted at the stage then pandemic despite improvement of the health side. If the pandemic impact may the continue in the long date that will not be favorable for the interest of the national community.

Zillur Rahman: Mr. John Morrell Can you visualize the future of the security of Nato, Quat, in the pacific strategy and BRI Initiative?

John Morrell: if you are saying that will it be a happy and healthy future? We will say that nobody know the future. But if we want the positive future it needs to consist of four Ds. The first we need prefix and the second is diplomacy, third one is development and the fourth one is democracy. If Bangladesh is capitalize with some of the supply chain Opportunity Bangladeshi reforms and many factors will be getting access to in coming months and years. Having freedom of navigation and maritime security is a cruise. And that is ultimately the Quad is focused on. There is lots of misconception about the Quad between United States, India, Australia and Japan. The Quad is not Asian niddle. This is not n mutual fact or anything like that. It is the voluntary coldish of the four world democracy to s tand up for and to ensure Maritime security. Bangladesh much of the success is from export, which the government promotes all the time. That means Bangladeshi goods has to be on their boats and the boat has to be taken in other markets. Maritime security is critical. The historical data is overwhelmingly clear. With democracy with sustainable inclusive and economic development comes geo-political security and regional security. Market-oriented democracy is the worst form of government imaginable except every other form of Government you tried. SO, these four D Of course defense is going to be a part of it. We are dealing with major Military powers in a particular moment. Diplomacy, development and democracy are just critical if there's no If not more self to a prosperous, stable or specific region where freedom of navigation and maritime security are not sure.

Zillur Rahman: John in vaccine diplomacy is being used widely in the media and

the discussions about the Global distribution of various covid-19 vaccinations One of his commentary about the vaccine nationalism is vaccine diplomacy meaningfully different from earlier and practices of states to link foreign aid and loans to the diplomatic goals?

John Morrell: In concept no. The United States provides food aid, They provide corn grown, soil beans in majority. The notion of tide aid is a part of the donor community. Vaccine diplomacy the concept will be very similar. What makes this issue different from is that Come to covid it's not going to over any of us. The longer covid is in the ecosystem. South Africa variant in the UK variant, United State there is a form of variant so the longer covid is in the ecosystem. One of the variant proves resistant to the vaccine. So when it's come to covid it's not over from any of us. My colleague in the Dr. Imdad said it's not just in United States or united kingdom countries that are doing well with vaccine roll out. It is in the interest of the USA or Uk of China to be as generous as Probably in the worldwide to be Strategically possible Is making vaccines is widely available as possible globally. So we can finally put covid in a rare Humor. China just recently announced a very large ship shipment of vaccines for Nepal. Nepal actually facing a hard time right now. It's not actually over for any of us until I it's not over for all of us. Vaccine diplomacy will be critical over the coming two years. The better goals, the sooner we can wrap this up, the sooner we will return some kind of normality.

Zillur Rahman: Dr. Parvez there is a discussion going on that how USA, China and India haven taken to lead delivery that covid vaccines to lower Middle income countries particularly South Asia and Africa. Do you think this gives come with string what the receiving countries geopolitical and Economic terms?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: just in addition to Mr. John Morrell I Just like to add here the main challenges of the International community and specially the development countries now food security and deep deficiency as the core priority at the developed countries and the international development institute need to focus on immediately. One of the papers that I have written it will be useful for human convention on food security and prevention of hunger. The term food security challenges and trade deficit another emerging challenges is new poor of the many developing countries. That would be of course related unemployment, Lots of business. Lots of Small and medium enterprises business and of course direction of Sort employment Possibilities. Now in terms of International

Development collaboration I feel they could be more focus Concessional aid medium term to the long term. And Regional Corporation has mainly be political But there could be economical dimension of regional corporation could also be geared up to deliver some results in terms of Knowledge experiences to be shared by countries within respective regions to face such challenges. Finally, I would like to thank Mr. John Morrell for a very important observation of in fact I do agree on all these points on maritime securities this is extremely important. Maritime security and maritime collaboration is new dimension that could add sort of new focus on future collaboration between countries. Not much have done on that but it is quite challenge because maritime security issues differ from region to region. But this could be an important element in the context of extended international development corporation. Finally I like to suggest there could be a structure and functional change in the whole focus of international Development Corporation. Bangladesh has done very well. Move to higher per capital income. Now to move forward Bangladesh and other developing countries There is need for International development Organization to have more intensive dialogues On demand basis and result based focus To get over the challenges for covid-19 and enable this countries To move towards development. Thank you.

Zillur Rahman: John would you like to add anything here?

John Morrell: No doctor Imdad made some excellent point. Vaccine diplomacy, food security, these are interrelated issues but again I think it does set of part the provision of vaccines from the provisional food, aid or the provision of donor assistance to build School, build roads, , donor project to improve the governance these are the investment that Donor make with an intended longer-term horizon. It is in return on investment that will take several years to be realized. covid is an acute crisis. Covid is not In the Rearview mirror yet we we're still in the midst of it. It is shifting around the world. You know the Western Europe And the United States that were hit terrible horrible last year. South Asia struggling very badly. There is light at the end of the tunnel, there is reason for the optimism We're still in the thick of this. Vaccines have to be made as widely available as possible. This will not be over for any of us until it's over for all of us. Making vaccines available Is really the only way it ever will be Over for all of us.

Zillur Rahman: John Mr Parvez was talking about governance. What are the challenges for good governance across the world and what is the International

perception about these in Bangladesh?

John Morrell: The perception of Bangladesh as I will speak as a former or as an outsider. The perception of Bangladesh in western media or the United States There is only two dominant themes. Again in terms of perception Economy of Bangladesh is booming. That widely knew some remarkable development actually just in the last few months. GDP of Bangladesh is now greater than Pakistan or India. Another remarkable development in terms of Bangladesh economy The United States Chamber of Commerce has just recently earlier this year created United State of Bangladesh business counselor. American company wanting to work in Bangladesh. Economy of Bangladesh is booming and the Government of Bangladesh deserves a lot of credit. As an American I can say, The Government of Bangladesh Is done a very good job. So the Government of Bangladesh does deserve legitimate credit for stabilizing the modern analyzing rolling the economy. The second aspect of Bangladesh is emerging brand. World economy is moving in the right direction. There are few anti Corruption commission which was Establish in a decade of half ago. It's moving in a wrong direction in terms of democracy. It has a governance challenges. You must be interested in at the publication of the world economic forum. It's an annual survey of a major market to identify the main Obstacles to business. It's called the Global competitiveness. The server was operating from Bangladesh. The top 3 most problematic factor doing business in Bangladesh is off course corruption, Second poor infrastructure and the third one inefficient government that you are supporting. Top 3 challenges of doing business in Bangladesh are all directly related to the governance. As mentioned before Bangladesh has facing lot of economic success right now but the data is overwhelming. Long term sustainability Economic development cannot happen Separate from critique governance. Democracy is more in elections. How a government in between electionIs just significant to the health of democracy. Bangladesh is enjoying a some kind of success right now. other areas hopefully Bangladesh has consists of improvement. My organization we have project in Bangladesh. We have project in Bangladesh trying to address some of those things Is Bangladesh is a country on the rise. It will be ashamed to see some of Remarkable improvement Drill by going frustration, crack down of human rights and movement way from democracy.

Zillur Rahman: What are the most common governance risk that countries like Bangladesh must address?

John Morrell: That's an excellent question. Everything right now is dominated by covid. The number one priority is covid in worldwide. Everyone's priorities to rebuild and build back better. One of the longer term government challenges is Bangladesh going to face emerging market all over the world. Especially against the backdrop the need for government transparency and accountability. BRI can be a game changer in a positive way for developing country all over the world. But some of the problematic activities. The biggest and problematic attribute of China's BRI is Secrecy. Isn't it BRI not trying to cover Things but Open time it looks like it is. Because of the secrecy. China loans money to emerging market of Government and use the money to build public roads. The largest component of BRI are loans. Provided directly on the Government of China the Government of bank. Vinay government borrows money from China The common cause in the credit facilities of documents is non disclosure commitment. You borrow money from China and you are obligated according to the terms of the loan. Never disclose to the terms of a loan. Democracy is more than election. A democratic government Simply cannot borrow money On secret terms in secret sources For Secret purposes. And still consider itself is a democracy. Republic frustration there are being in general Buy the secrecy surrounding money from China Flowing into emerging market it's in general a growing cause of frustration. Satta government like Bangladesh they have lot of business with China And even do more business in China near future. Bangladesh has found the way to uphold At least a baseline level a government transparency An accountability. Because the more businesses Bangladesh will do with China the more pressure there will be to reduce Government transparency and accountability which of course completely terrible to democratic government.

Zillur Rahman: Mr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad Any remorse?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: I like to mention that since the budget have been presented before the parlement I would like to observations on the economy prince Also highlighted in the budget. The positive side with this medium pro-business Private sector and supportive to sustain an inclusive growth. Second this budget network digest the need To interventions to effectively combat covid 19 and I do feel that the budget Significant leakages To the past years budget in terms of The support needed effectively the impact of covid-19. This needs also Look at the Safety net on a more comprehensive term to see this a as a broader

wealthy and nets and allocation priority articles I think it's 1 year allocation may have a different context next year the government of course would have been justification to justify allocation priority. It does not mean one sector is giving more priority or importance than others. Other so I need it to the government to decide the Priority at the same times that ensure the emerging needs of the economy is firmly met. The third point I would like to focus on is efficient utilization of Resources which the government is trying to do. And the annual development programs this need to be effectively implemented. I have also mentioned one of my previous discussions I would like to focus on budget. The performance based and the result based Emphasis and That is also need to address emerging issues new poor and even managing deficits and also making the allocation more effectively utilize In terms of the transparency Side I would like to mention the parliamentary Standing committees are doing fairly well and There is a need for the citizen Engagement and the comment citizenship advisory committees or experts Advisory committees for the ministries so that The sector focus relevance and importance Of the program Could be better evaluated And citizens could have direct role In advising the ministry and the government Agencies concerned. In terms of other areas does need to focus in Entrepreneurship Development Creating new job would be a Challenge and it is the private sector to come up intensively with The job creation exercise. And Bangladesh I would like to Focus On doing In terms of Ease of doing Business and the Global competitive index.

Zillur Rahman: What are the biggest challenges in the horizon for Bangladesh in terms of combating corruption?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: First of all I want to say that decentralization takes place more effectively. That's one way to remove corruption and number two is accountability. In terms of visible accountability, you will have prohibitions for incentive for the good performances and quick penalties for those engaged in corruption. So there should be more actions in this regard. I am sure the government is working on it.

Zillur Rahman: Corruption has taken in a health sector in the last years for obvious Reasons Does it means that other sectors have been less affected?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: The health sector is the very important sector in

our country and this covid has shown us all these sectors are closely linked to each other. As compared to 40 to 50 years ago when sectors could become seen in separate Compartments There is now a very intensive interdependency to sectors one another. If this corruption leads one area it certainly leads to the miss allocation or misuse of Resources. When we talk about enhancing accountability, transparency and account visibility in terms of effective implementation of government Policy and program. There is a total refraction of over all the segments of the economy. So we talked about the health sector. There is certainly need for improvement and that improvement Will have income a very significant Impact on the overall Performance on the economy as We are talking A short while ago that Bangladesh is doing better as many compare Of Its neighbor Moving in terms of GDP and growth rate And managing inflections Controlling Budget deficits. There is further improvement of governance and Managerial efficiency will grow.

Zillur Rahman: the nature of corruption in Bangladesh is there anything distinctive about it compared to other countries?

John Morrell: One of the questions Should be asking About corruption Bangladesh relates to our government project. My colleague Dr. Imdad is talking about physical policy and public budget I mentioned before the need for transparency and accountability of government there are few ways effective ensuring transparency and accountability of government is transparency of budget. Knowing how your government is spending money, Transform citizen from passive Consumers of Government services to actually allow them to a able to participate. How to prioritise how to define what services are most needed. Its citizens businessman and entrepreneur don't know how the government is spending money, If they don't know have the text are being used, If you don't know what public investment have been priorities, If they don't know how much their airport actually cost, What the cost overall go, Dr. Imdad made excellent Point over how crucial Transparency is to the fighting against corruption as I mentioned The impact Is having on Transparency and accountability Governance Largely because of Inadequate budget. So much of the money comes into the Bangladesh from China that's not need in Bangladesh. Money comes from China into emerging market that money largely stays at budget. It's never reflected any capital or in budget In the country that receiving. That mean it's not subject to the parliamentary view, it's not subject to the citizen of common period. It's not subject to Right information of this because this information is never actually

recorded In Bangladesh National budget. so, transparency in budget and accountability in public financial management Is critical to fight against corruption. That's not the only thing that I should ask for. Another question the people and the business man should be asking is How can the private sector be mobilized To be able a positive change? I think there is a in natural bias amongst the lot of NGO You know businesses in private sector is facing a problem when it comes to corruption. Corruption functions like a tax. It is the mandatory Expense the citizenship and businesses face but unlike a tax it's Unofficial. It's an enforceable informal contract. There is a massive in investment. The private sector can be in very in potential to fight against corruption. If the mobilized a proper frame framework place against the businesses and Senate act ask about me the western thought For Bangladesh. Bangladesh is booming. The issue is corruption is Detrimental for Bangladesh. Bangladesh has date about 145. So the Hundred and Forty feet country in the world with the first being list Corrupt in the world. 10 years ago Bangladesh was the worst ranked country In terms of the CPI. The CPI index has grown. The issue of corruption in Bangladesh is enormous it detrimental The brand of Bangladesh around the world. Corruption is the number one barrier to doing business in Bangladesh as I mentioned before. One final point against the corruption of Bangladesh is a critical point publishing in the last year. Corruption is the Is a culture [issue. it](#) just stays at their culture. Corruption is not a cultural phenomenon. Some of the corrupt country are in world is Europe. There in Asia, there in Africa, There in Latin America People of skin color on face all forms of government corruption is now In culture. Corruption can't be addressed. One of the benefits that are mobilized in business industry is in change of public perception against corruption. One of the critical benchmark The Bangladesh has made in the fight against corruption is to change the public perception. Right now the Bangladesh perception is corruption is terrible. It's always in here and it does always will be here. It's unavailable. Everyone does it so how do you change that prevailing view. The progress is possible.

Zillur rahman: How pandemic impact women empowerment across the globe?

John Morrell: Women by huge margins have been disproportionately born. The economic cost Of thunder mix business closures the reason why that is are multifaceted and complex but the outcomes is clear women Were far more likely lose their job than men. Women were less likely to be hired. Women statistically

lost a larger percentage of their income or their wealth than did men and that in the United States the leading wealthiest economy on earth this is a global phenomenon. The economic cost of covid is disproportionately borne by women. It's not the simple explanation why that's the case and it's not going to be the simple fix. But reemerging economically and politically from covid I used the term before it's a slogan of the Biden administration build Back better and use time to make a Parisian plug but covid does the opportunity to reassess some fiscal policies to reassess some public investments. Investment in the economic empowerment of women is going to be critical to healthy and sustainable and inclusive recovery from covid.

Zillur Rahman: Mr.Parvez any comments.

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: yes I do feel that covid has badly robbed all development including women's empowerment issues. There is a need to focus on Women development related issues and women economic interests, social interests are truly protected and carried forward. I would like to add a few observations. The prime minister of Bangladesh Strongly committed to eradicating corruption and She has announced repeatedly She has mentioned a Zero tolerance against corruption. I appreciate the concern that corruption should be minimized. The other thing that I want to mention is the public private Partnership so the Private sector I agree with John Morall Play the important role of the private sector. They need to come forward to support the programs of poverty reduction. In addition to income generation. Public private Partnership was basically focus on the Infrastructure side Should now come on the social sector Side on the health side and the other related issues. The digital approach of Bangladesh Could also be further extended to easing business Processes and also the official functioning and other Process could be simplified that that will make things more accountable and more Transparent. There is a need to ensure that Capital is reached to be those who lost their job, those who need to implement for the covid. And microfinance need to be effectively coordinated the government and the NGO's who are working on it. Financial sector also need to improve Flow of resources from the country and this is also be discussed now.

Zillur rahman: John as you know Bangladesh is a role model for microfinance? How would you do to fine Microfinance and what distinguishes Micro Finance for many mainstream of Finance.

John Morrell: Bangladesh is needed a role model for microfinance. Bangladesh basically the birthplace of microfinance. When Dr Yunus of Grameen Bank came out with the concept 20 years ago somewhere around there. Microfinance is basically micro credit. The extension of micro loans of to micro entrepreneur. Microfinance has since broadened and diversified remarkably in the micro finance again the term of Microfinance. What it means now it's not just to micro credit it's now basically means the extension of commercial and banking services. To micro entrepreneur. One of the innovation that Grameen Bank came up with many years after it invented the concept is the idea of instead of giving cash loans to small farmers who owes a small shop. Instead of giving cash because the data show that vast majority of Micro loans go to inventory replenishment. I take a long from you And I buying a staff self that necessary obviously. But it doesn't fully change the productive potential of an enterprise. Grameen Bank many years ago it's much more recent than the birth of Microfinance. How can we give loan in the form of capital equipment? So instead of giving 20 entrepreneurs In one village 20 different loans Let's give the village tractor. Let's give the village of well Water purification equipments. Again reducing water borne illness Increasing agricultural loan Potential these are Investment. They are loan but the loans in form of capital not in form of cash. So, this innovation is one of the many contributions that Bangladesh has made to the development space. The birthplace of microfinance that something that Bangladesh is very proud.

Zillur Rahman: Dr Parvez what is the Nexus between microfinance sustainable developments?

Dr. Muhammad Parvez Imdad: sustainable development you see microfinance basically stems from the idea of making accessible to those who are need of capital. But I think now we look at microfinance should seems could be seen in more broader context. Now Micro Finance is not only aimed to alleviate poverty and living standards and quality of life. It could be added focus on microfinance to extend support to SMES promotions of small and entrepreneurship development in smaller forms. So that integrated approach to look at how microfinance effective to meet the current challenges social and economic development. I would rather say there could be more internship performance base result poker sweet institutional alignment and coordination between the government focus on microfinance and what the NGOs are doing.

Zillur Rahman: indeed it is a fascinating discussion. Thank you Mr John Morrell and parvez. Thanks for joining us. The novel corona virus pandemic can be the moment of the world pushes back again fear and isolation and turns into the solidarity shares in terms of Global community. People seek out the light at the end of the tunnel about show to each other that we all Stand Together. Moreover, responding to the pandemic is not about rectifying the crisis but also about building but also build are resilient word in the interest of everyone. Thank you and goodbye.