

Bangladesh waiting on Canada to try SNC-Lavalin officials in corruption case

(March 18, 2014) Regulators in Bangladesh have put an investigation of corruption allegations involving SNC-Lavalin in that country on hold until a trial in Canada involving former employees of the engineering giant is completed.

By Brady Yauch for Probe International

Bangladesh's Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) won't wrap up its investigation of corruption allegations involving SNC-Lavalin in the country until a trial in Canada involving former employees of the engineering giant is completed.

The ACC has [gone as far as it can in its own investigation](#) of the Padma Bridge project contract and is waiting for evidence from Canada to bring the investigation into the corruption case to a close. Officials in Bangladesh say they need evidence from Canada to place formal charges against those involved in the project in Bangladesh.

At the heart of the ACC's investigation, which has engulfed high ranking officials at both SNC-Lavalin and the Government of Bangladesh, is a diary belonging to ex-SNC-Lavalin VP of international projects, Ramesh Shah, one of the five employees to be charged by the RCMP in connection with the suspected corruption plot. His diary supposedly lists the names of those individuals in Bangladesh who were set to receive bribe money.

The bribery allegations on contracts related to the Padma Bridge project stretch back to 2011, when officials at the World Bank, a financier of the project, expressed concern that government officials were [using personal companies to act as a "silent agent"](#) to help bidding companies land the lucrative contract. Those allegations eventually led the World Bank to slap an unprecedented [10-year ban on SNC-Lavalin](#) and 100 of its affiliates because of its "misconduct" on the Padma Bridge and another project in Cambodia. The World Bank accused the engineering firm of a "conspiracy to pay bribes and misrepresentations when bidding for Bank-financed contracts."

Bangladesh's ACC has made several attempts to interrogate SNC-Lavalin staff in order to garner the evidence needed to proceed with its own trials, but has been stymied by the Canadian trials. The Canadian Department of Justice has said it will consider giving the ACC the necessary documents after the trial.