

# Illegal currency trade amounts to Tk 100 crore a day: ACC secretary

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**Online Desk:** Anti-Corruption Commission Secretary Mahbub Hossain on Tuesday said that the banking sector is being deprived of foreign currency equivalent to approximately Tk 100 crore every day due to illegal buying and selling of foreign currency.

The ACC Secretary gave this information in a briefing to the journalists.

He said that the ACC has found evidence that some money exchangers including Janata, Sonali, Agrani, Mutual Trust, Pubali, Prabasi Kalyan, Jamuna Bank inside the airport area are involved in illegal buying and selling of foreign currency worth more than Tk 100 crore every day and money laundering.

He also said that after receiving information from intelligence sources and following a specific written complaint, an enforcement operation was conducted yesterday under the supervision of Deputy Director of the Commission Syed Nazrul Islam. After conducting the operation, an organized syndicate of banks and money exchangers involved in the black market of foreign currency was found.

According to the ACC, the valuable remittances brought in cash and foreign currency by expatriate wage earners and air passengers at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport are supposed to be deposited in the national reserve through banking channels. But the unscrupulous bankers use the money of the bank without showing that it is collected in the banking channel and sell it in the market by themselves, which is later smuggled abroad again through money laundering. Thus the economic structure of the country is being damaged by smuggling valuable foreign currency of the country.

He also said that usually every day thousands of expatriate workers and travelers from abroad come to Bangladesh through the airport.

“The foreign currency they bring with them is encashed in local currency (Bangladeshi Taka) at bank booths and money exchangers at the airport. Foreign currency encashment vouchers are to be paid to the encasher as per laws, rules and regulations. But some officials of banks and money exchangers accept foreign currency directly without giving vouchers or with fake vouchers and give money in exchange,” he added.

He also added that they also issue unsigned, fake vouchers/encashment slips. Banks and money exchange institutions buying this foreign currency do not include it in their principal account/authorized account of the institution.

As a result, all these foreign currencies are not added to the central reserve of foreign currency, as a result of which Bangladesh has a shortage or crisis of foreign currency, the secretary commented.

The ACC raids involved Janata Bank, Sonali Bank, Agrani Bank, Mutual Trust Bank, Pubali Bank, Pravasi Kalyan Bank, Jamuna Bank etc. and some money exchange institutions, namely Etiya Money Exchange and Imperial Money Exchange, in illegal buying and selling of foreign currency and money laundering at the airport and found its authenticity.

The Secretary also informed the journalists that the ACC operation found information true regarding the illegally purchased Dollars, Euros, Rials, Ringgits, Pounds, Dinar and other foreign currencies and illegally supplying them to foreign currency smugglers, foreign currency black market and money laundering abroad from Bangladesh.

During the operation, the enforcement team of ACC has collected primary data evidence, multiple fake vouchers and unsigned vouchers related to purchase and sale of foreign currency by banks and money exchangers without encashment slips and collected important information about the institutions and other related individuals involved in illegal foreign currency buying and selling, smuggling and black market.

The suspects and the involved bank officials are under the surveillance of the commission officials. Information about their patronizers and associates is also being collected on the orders of the commission, the secretary informed.

He also informed that further legal action will be taken according to the Commission Act and Rules in this regard.