Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

An elevated corridor is being constructed to reduce traffic congestion in the capital of a particular state. You have been selected as project manager of this prestigious project on your professional competence and experience. The deadline is to complete the project in next two years by 20 June, 2021, since this project is to be inaugurated by the Chief Minister before the elections are announced in the second week of July 2021. While carrying out the surprise inspection by inspecting team, a minor crack was noticed in one of the piers of the elevated corridor possibly due to poor material used. You immediately informed the chief engineer and stopped further work. It was assessed by you that minimum three piers of the elevated corridor have to be demolished demolished and reconstructed. But this process will delay the project minimum by four to six months. But the chief engineer overruled the observation of inspecting team on the ground that it was a minor crack which will not in any way impact the strength and durability of the bridge. He ordered you to overlook the observation of inspecting team and continue working with same speed and tempo. He informed you that the minister does not want any delay as he wants the chief Minister to inaugurate the elevated corridor before the elections are declared. Also informed you that the contractor is far relative of the minister and he wants him to finish the project. He also gave you hint that your further promotion as additional

chief engineer is under consideration with the ministry. However, you strongly felt that the minor crack in the pier of the elevated corridor will adversely affect the health and life of the bridge and therefore it will be very dangerous not to repair the elevated corridor.

1. **Under the given conditions, what are the options available to you as a project manager?**
2. **What are the ethical dilemmas being faced by the project manager?**
3. **What are the professional challenges likely to be faced by the project manager and his response to overcome such challenges?**
4. **What can be the consequences of overlooking the observation raised by the inspecting team?**

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2021	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

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Answer Hint

Public safety, engineering ethics, professional integrity, quality control, political interference, conflict of interest, accountability, technical assessment, public expenditure, whistle-blowing, due process, consequences of structural failure

Model Answer

Introduction

The project manager faces a conflict between public safety and political pressure to meet a deadline. The paramount duty is to ensure structural safety, even if completion is delayed.

Options Available

- **Continue construction as ordered:** Meets the deadline but risks structural failure and violates professional responsibility.
- **Stop all work permanently:** Avoids immediate risk but is premature without a detailed technical assessment.
- **Seek an independent structural audit:** Obtain expert testing of the affected piers and determine the required repairs. This is evidence-based and defensible.
- **Document and escalate concerns:** Submit written findings to the competent authorities and seek formal review if the chief engineer refuses corrective action.
- **Recommend reconstruction where necessary:** Repair or rebuild unsafe structures despite delays, with transparent cost and schedule revisions.

Ethical Dilemmas

- Public safety versus political expediency.
- Professional integrity versus career advancement.
- Public interest versus private and familial interests.
- Financial and time efficiency versus long-term safety.

Professional Challenges and Responses

The project manager may face intimidation, transfer, loss of promotion and pressure to alter reports. These should be addressed through written documentation, independent technical evidence, adherence to engineering standards and escalation through established channels.

Consequences of Ignoring the Findings

A structurally unsafe corridor could collapse, causing deaths, injuries, property damage, traffic disruption and substantial public expenditure. It could also lead to criminal or disciplinary liability, loss of public trust and long-term reputational damage.

Conclusion

The project manager must insist on an independent safety assessment and halt affected work until safety is established. No inauguration deadline or promotion can justify exposing citizens to preventable danger.