

# Fake driving licences BRTA's clean-up drive at snail's pace

By Reaz Ahmad

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has adopted a go-slow policy as regards its plan to issue a new type of driving licence.

It has, however, taken up a drive to withdraw all fake licences.

The BRTA was set to introduce new computer laminated driving licences in February last. But it later changed the schedule to give phoney drivers a last chance to surrender their fake licences by April 30, sources concerned said. A BRTA official, requesting anonymity, however, told The Daily Star that the response to BRTA's call for surrendering forged licences was still very poor.

Explaining the reason, the official said many of the forged licence holders fear that once they surrender their fake licences they might not be able to get legitimate one by appearing for a driving test.

He said that work on preparing data base of driving licences was in progress, but

could not give any idea about the number of fake driving licences.

The official said since taking over the responsibility of issuing driving licences in 1989, the BRTA has issued some 57,000 licences. The number of vehicles plying on the roads, registered with the BRTA is 3,37,012, he added.

The BRTA in a bid to check the practices of licence forgery, had put forward its plan to the Ministry of Communication last month. The ministry sent it back on April 4 suggesting the BRTA to go ahead with the plan according to its own decision.

But some BRTA sources told this correspondent that unless mobile court inspection was fortified, only introduction of laminated licences could not ensure safety on roads. To conduct mobile court inspection more frequently more inspection staff were needed. The sources pointed out, adding, BRTA conveyed this to the ministry concerned recently. Meanwhile, BRTA reallocated only Taka 85,600 as fines from 460 vehicles during the last one year for emission of black smoke.

While the authorities are trying to ensure that vehicles abide by rules regarding fitness, the transport owners have started pressurising the authorities to relax fare.

According to Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity (BSPS), it has repeatedly urged the authorities to raise the fare of bus and minibuses. The Samity claimed that since bus-minibus fare was last increased in September, 1990, costs of vehicles and spare parts had increased. Unless fare was raised, vehicles could not be better maintained, it argued.

BRTA sources hinted that transport owners' demand for raising bus-minibus fare might find place on the agenda of the annual meeting between the authorities and transport owners' representatives next month.

## Hasina

From Page 1

She charged the ruling party with unleashing terrorism and repression against the opposition in Khulna city and different places of the district.

The Awami League chief said people have no security of their lives and property under this government. She warned that BNP would not be able to save itself by persecuting the opposition, like the past autocrats who could not protect their power by similar method.

Hasina demanded immediate recovery of Shaheen's body and arrest of the killers. In a separate statement, the AL chief condoled the death of two sisters in Monday's fire at a slum in Mohammadpur. She prayed for the departed souls and conveyed her sympathy to the bereaved family.

# ADB aid declining

From Page 1

Increased volume of assistance. "But conversely, the Bank's lending level to Bangladesh declined to 280 million dollars in 1994 from 331.1 million in 1993 while the allocation for 1995 stands at 265 million dollars against a disbursement of 380.4 million dollars in 1994," he said.

Observing that in recent years the ADB tends to take up comparatively smaller sized projects, the official urged the Bank to finance projects of bigger size in order to minimize administrative and operational expenses.

He also referred to the inordinate delay in approving loans by the Bank. The official noted that the Railway Recovery Programme loan took nearly two years to negotiate while the negotiations for the Coastal Greenbelt Project was completed in November last year, but the loan agreement is yet to be signed.

He hoped that the Bank would complete appraisal for four of the seven projects identified for the current year — the 30 million dollar Command Area Development project; the 30 million dollar

Small-scale Water Resources project; the 45 million dollar Secondary Towns Infrastructure Development-2 project; and the 30 million dollar Non-formal Education project — at the earliest. The Bank's private sector lending in Bangladesh is also quite small, totalling only 13 million dollars for three projects. The official said that this was due to the floor limit of two million dollars set for such loans. He called for lowering the floor limit to 0.5 million dollars and emphasised the necessity to raise the equity participation of the Bank in private sector projects.

Earlier in November last year, the ADB Country Programming Mission visited Bangladesh to formulate the Bank's rolling four year lending programme for the 1995-98 period. The Mission identified 25 projects with a projected loan portfolio of 1.3 billion dollars.

Over the years, the ADB has extended 114 loans to Bangladesh amounting to 4.45 billion dollars and as of December last year, the total disbursement stood at 2.91 billion dollars.



Iranian President Akbar Rafsanjani (R) and Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao listen to proceedings moments before Rafsanjani addressed parliament in New Delhi yesterday.

## Rafsanjani

From Page 1

and hailed Rafsanjani's visit as a landmark event in bilateral ties.

Rao said both countries must together face "new threats to peace and new hurdles to development" in the world. He said this shortly after the visiting US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin conveyed Washington's "extremely strong concern" about Iran to him.

Some Indian deputies and government ministers responded to Rubin's remarks with anger.

## New passport

From Page 1

thorities about the increasing number of forgeries on Bangladesh passports.

The new book has withstood a series of tests by its manufacturers in Germany and cannot be tampered with by any means, they said.

The officials claimed that if anyone tries to use any sort of chemical on ink on the pages, the colour of the particular part will change immediately, making it look different from the rest of the page.

Passport officials also added that in the address section, a new addition, 'Post Office' has been included.

The old passports will gradually be withdrawn from circulation, there is no hurry, they added.

## Fake registration

From Page 1

students of class IX or X, on pledge of managing admit cards for the exams. They allegedly took Tk 3,000 to 4,000 from each of the students.

Of them, 266 students failed to obtain admit cards from the Jessore Board because the Board found these candidates ineligible for the examination.

The disappointed students today gheraoed the residences of the headmaster and the assistant teacher in Madhupur. They also demonstrated in front of DC office here this morning.

Meanwhile, a three-member enquiry committee has been formed to investigate the allegation and suggest measures to end fake registration of candidates with the education board.

# Egypt to allow its airspace Libyan Hajj flights ready to take off defying ban

TRIPOLI, Apr 18: Hundreds of Muslims were waiting at Tripoli airport as Libyan planes prepared to head for Mecca today despite a UN air traffic embargo, officials said, reports AFP.

The pilgrimage office in the Libyan capital said around 500 Muslims would fly directly to Saudi Arabia's Red Sea city of Jeddah near Mecca on board two Libyan Arab Airlines planes later the same day.

Tripoli radio said thousands of pilgrims had gathered at Libyan airports. The planes are preparing to take off, to fly directly to Jeddah, the state radio said.

Libyan leader Moamer Gaddafi warned in April that his country would defy the UN embargo and fly pilgrims to Mecca for Hajj.

Tripoli radio broadcast interviews with several pilgrims waiting at the capital's airport. "I say farewell to my parents."

## Jubadal leader succumbs to injuries

By DMCH Correspondent

A Jubadal leader died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) Monday night.

Abdul Baten, 25, the Vice President of Laxmipur district Jubadal unit, was admitted to the hospital in a critical condition Sunday afternoon.

A group of about 15 unidentified persons stabbed Baten near Talerhat in Laxmipur sadar thana Saturday morning.

## Dolphins

From Page 1

in India, and polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), which is used in industries and in electrical goods.

The chemicals are washed into the rivers during floods and monsoons, or are clandestinely dumped by industries.

But a more serious threat is inbreeding caused by the construction of dams along the Ganges since 1960, he said. The dams hamper the annual 200-to-300 kilometre migration up the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, he said.

## Shrimp trader killed in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Apr 18: A shrimp trader was killed and three others were injured as armed miscreants attacked them in the Khobrakhal river in the Sundarban area of the district on Monday night, reports UNB.

Police said Ahammad Ali Sardar, 35, of Patuakhali village in Shyamnagar thana was shot and killed when he went to collect shrimp from the fishermen.

Three of Ahammad's companions were injured while jumping out of his mechanised boat during the attack.

## Justice Rouf

From Page 1

ment of Justice Shahabuddin held a general elections, dubbed both at home and abroad as the most free and fair in the country's history.

Under Justice Rouf's stewardship the EC also held two model elections — one in Dupunia union in Mymensingh district and another in Tongi pourashava — providing the voters with identity cards for the first time in the history of Bangladesh.

However, controversy regarding the EC and its chief emerged following a parliamentary by-election in Magura on March 20 last year.

The major opposition parties rejected the results of that election, charging widespread rigging by the ruling party.

The Opposition also blamed the Chief Election Commissioner for his role during the Magura elections.

The government is, however, yet to decide on a successor to Justice Rouf, sources said.

## ECNEC

From Page 1

dehydration plant with a capacity of processing 90 million cubic feet of gas per day, produced from the three new gas wells and supply it to the North South Pipe Line.

The SCADA telecommunication system, involving an expenditure of Taka 124 crore aims at ensuring and monitoring proper management of gas transmission system.

It will also help ensure continuous gas supply to the consumers by augmenting the supply of gas into the system. British Overseas Development Agency (ODA) will provide Taka 101 crore credit for the project.

The two gas projects to be implemented by the Energy Ministry is expected to be completed within the next three years.

The ECNEC approved two more projects to be implemented by the same ministry — the electric supply projects outside Dhaka Metropolitan Area at a cost of Taka 184 crore and emergency rehabilitation and preservation of substations and supply system under the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) at a cost of Taka 61 crore.

The ECNEC meeting also approved another project for issuance of laminated ID-cards and preparation of data based voter lists at a cost of Taka 300 crore. The Election Commission Secretariat prepared the project.

The ECNEC meeting also approved the strengthening of a rice research programme at a cost of Taka 18 crore. The project is expected to be completed by 1999.

## Gas mishaps

From Page 1

pipelines next to electric installations. This is highly dangerous because electricity's magnetic field may anytime ignite the gas, engineers and Fire Service experts pointed out.

Moreover, an increasing number of people are manufacturing gas burners and spare parts in the city. It was alleged that many of these businesses are not technically certified by any agency, this investigation revealed.

With around 4.5 lakh domestic, commercial and industrial customers, Titas Gas is yet to set up an efficient network to oversee or monitor its services in the rapidly growing metropolises.

## Fresh law

From Page 1

has been given a deadline to complete the draft," one source said.

Some sources, however, said the authorities, could not decide yet whether the existing laws concerning consumers' interests would be repealed or would continue to exist after the enactment of the new law. Some of the policy-makers believe that the old laws might exist while the new law will be complementary to those. Others maintain that there should be a single but comprehensive Act incorporating all provisions needed to safeguard the interests of the consumers.

"A decision can be taken in this regard by the Cabinet, when the draft will be placed before it," said an official.

# The Midnight File

## India signs treaty with Iran, Turkmenistan

NEW DELHI, Apr 18: India signed a trilateral treaty with Iran and Turkmenistan today to improve access of its goods to the land-locked central Asian republics. Officials said the agreement on extending transit facilities to Indian goods was signed after hectic consultations between the representatives of the three countries, reports Reuters.

# PM: Polls imminent

From Page 1

Claiming that past elections under the BNP government were free and fair, Begum Zia assured that future polls would also be fair and impartial.

"When they win any election, they don't talk about rigging but raise the allegation when they face defeat," she said. She mentioned that they remained silent after their recent victory in Tongi pourashava elections and City Corporation elections in Dhaka and Chittagong.

The Prime Minister said her government strengthened the Election Commission and was introducing identity card system for ensuring the next general election to be free and fair.

"The opposition parties have united against the BNP. So, we have to be united in the interest of the country and the party," she said underlining the need for a rock-solid unity within the party. She advised the partymen to be ready for sacrifice from now on till the next election.

Begum Zia said democracy was established in the country after a long struggle and urged all to work together to consolidate it. She laid emphasis on practice of democracy within the party also.

The conference was also addressed by Deputy Leader of the House Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, BNP Secre-

## Visits Ctg airport

CHITTAGONG, Apr 18:

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today visited the Chittagong Airport which is being developed into a full-fledged international airport to see for herself the progress of the development work undertaken for the purpose, reports BSS.

The government has taken up the project of developing the Chittagong international airport for the operations of wide-bodied aircraft to cater to the increased demand in the aviation sector.

tary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar, Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui, Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Energy Minister Dr Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain, Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdulah-al Noman, Communications Minister Oli Ahmed and Hares Chowdhury.

More than 32 thana and UP and 16 district representatives also spoke on the occasion. They highlighted party's internal problems, organisational condition and other problems.

Some 5,500 representatives from 19 districts, 164 thanas and 1231 union-level ones joined the conference.

## AL launches "Bulletin"

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League has launched a party flagship titled the "Bulletin" to speak out on the current political issues as well as to disseminate news, views and information to the party members and the public.

The four-page bulletin will be published twice a month as a counter against biased news spread by the ruling party and other political rivals, AL sources said.

Prof. Abu Sayeed, the Awami League's Information and Research Secretary, told The Daily Star that the bulletin will be distributed at the grassroots level.

Printed in white paper, the launching issue of the Bulletin, which was printed on April 16 and released yesterday, carried 11 articles and an editorial.

The articles dealt with issues like the fertiliser crisis, alleged corruption by BNP leaders and their families, Tongi inhumanity polls, the Dandy Dying, a memoir on Sheikh Kamal, son of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and a declaration by Sheikh Hasina to save the farmers and workers.

# Economic prospect bright

From Page 1

In common with many other least developed countries, Bangladesh had also sought to enhance the flow of foreign direct investment, the ESCAP survey says. The increase in investment would be greatly assisted by reforms in various areas, including the simplification of administrative procedures, the speeding up of privatisation and other measures to deal with inefficient public enterprises whose losses presently account for two per cent of the GDP, it says.

In addition, improvements in economic coordination and management to increase the implementation rate of the annual development plan (ADP) from the low rate of recent years, would be helpful, it hopes.

In this regard, the report cites several government steps including the formation of the Privatisation Board and giving it an autonomous status with an authority to recruit local and foreign consultants to assist in the privatisation process and the restructuring of several organisations responsible for export promotion under the umbrella of an export development action plan.

Recent policy reforms had encompassed all major areas of economic policy with an objective to reduce the fiscal deficits and to liberalise the trade, investment, exports and economic growth.

In the financial sector, for example, banking reform had

proceeded to firmly establish the presence of commercial banks with a view to increasing competition and efficiency in banking services. The reforms also aimed to reduce the dominance of the nationalised commercial banks in the credit market which still held the major share of banking assets and liabilities in the country, it notes.

It says the concessional lending rates were retained for agriculture, exports and small-scale industries.

Dealing with Bangladesh's external trade, the ESCAP survey points out that exports grew more than eight per cent in 1993, decelerating from above 24 per cent in 1992. They were led by ready-made garments which comprised 52 per cent of the total exports. Besides, exports of frozen shrimp and frog-legs, another non-traditional item, rose by 26.8 per cent while the receipts from the traditional exports of jute and jute products fell by around five per cent.

The export trade thus got diversified with reduced dependence on jute and jute goods, but still remained quite narrowly based.

The report continues to add that imports rose by two per cent, the main increase occurring in imports of textiles which were utilised as an input of capital goods and intermediate goods such as cement and fertiliser. Data for the first half of 1994 indicated a seven per cent growth in ex-

ports and a two per cent fall in imports over the same period of 1993.

On the country's achievements in agricultural and industrial sectors, the ESCAP survey notes that the growth rate of agricultural output at 2.6 per cent in 1994 was the highest during the 1990s and agriculture accounted for over one third of the GDP.

Mentioning that over the past two decades, a major objective of the country had been to achieve self-sufficiency in foodgrain production, the report says this objective had now been largely attained owing to a considerable expansion of irrigation, improved agricultural practices and a more favourable and supportive policy environment that had increased the access of farmers to new technology and to agri inputs and services.

However, it adds, although many sectors of the economy had been liberalised, selected forms of public intervention in food management are expected to continue for the time in order to respond to the basic needs of the large masses of the rural and urban poor living below the poverty level.

As in the case of agriculture, the growth of the industrial sector, estimated at 8.3 per cent in 1994, was the highest during the current decade, the report says. Moreover, it adds, the rate had been a consistently upward trend over the past few years.

**বিদ্যুৎ বিল নিয়মিত পরিশোধ করুন**

(১) বিদ্যুতের চলতি বিলসহ সম্মুখ বকেয়া পরিশোধ করুন।  
 (২) খেলাপী বিদ্যুৎ গ্রাহকদের সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন করার বিশেষ অভিযান চলছে।  
 (৩) বিদ্যুতের অবৈধ ব্যবহার রোধকল্পে স্থানীয় বিদ্যুৎ দপ্তরকে অবহিত করে সাহায্য করুন।  
 (৪) নতুন বিদ্যুৎ আইনে বিদ্যুৎ চুরি ও কারচুপির জন্য কারাদন্ডের মেয়াদ ও জরিমানার পরিমাণ বৃদ্ধি করা হয়েছে।  
 (৫) বিদ্যুৎ চুরি ও কারচুপি রোধকল্পে বিদ্যুৎ আদালতের সংখ্যা দ্বিগুণ করা হয়েছে।  
 (৬) নিয়মিত বিদ্যুৎ বিল পরিশোধ করে ঝামেলা মুক্ত থাকুন।

ঢাকা বিদ্যুৎ বিতরণ কর্তৃপক্ষ

**Economic prospect bright**

From Page 1

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**বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন**

**আপনি জানেন কি ?**

কর্পোরেশন বর্তমানে পাঁচ প্রকারের ঋণ প্রদান করছে

- নির্মায়মাণ ফ্ল্যাট কেনার জন্য ঋণ দেয়া হচ্ছে। ঢাকা ও চট্টগ্রাম শহরের বিভিন্ন এলাকার ১০০০, ১৫০০ ও ১৮০০ বর্গফুট পর্যন্ত আয়তনের ফ্ল্যাটের জন্য এলাকা, আয়তন এবং নির্মাণ মান অনুযায়ী সর্বাধিক ৭.৮, ৯.০ এবং ১২.৯৬ লক্ষ টাকা ঋণ দেয়া হচ্ছে।
- যৌথ মালিকানাধীন প্রুটে প্রত্যেককে পৃথক ঋণ দেয়া হচ্ছে। ঋণ শবের আওতায় চুক্তিপত্রের ভিত্তিতে জমির প্রত্যেক মালিককে ফ্ল্যাট নির্মাণের জন্য পৃথক ঋণ দেয়া হচ্ছে।
- ছোট বহুতলা বা বহু ইউনিটবিশিষ্ট বাড়ি নির্মাণের জন্য ঋণ সিলিং বৃদ্ধি। ছোট আকারের (সর্বোচ্চ ১০০০ বর্গফুট) কমপক্ষে চারটি ইউনিট নির্মাণের জন্য ১৪.৬৫ লক্ষ টাকা ঋণ দেয়া হয়।
- সেমিপাকা বাড়ি নির্মাণের জন্য ঋণ প্রদান করা হচ্ছে।
- পূর্বের ন্যায় বাড়ি নির্মাণের জন্য সাধারণ ঋণ চালু আছে।
- ঋণ সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত তথ্যের জন্য কর্পোরেশনের অফিসসমূহে (সেদর দফতর কাউন্সেলিং কাউন্সার) যোগাযোগ করুন। ঋণের নিয়মাবলী পুস্তিকা বিনামূল্যে ঋণ আবেদন ফরমের সাথে পাওয়া যায়।

**বর্তমান গ্রহীতাদের প্রতি :**

- খেলাপী গ্রহীতাদের কিস্তি রিসিডিউলিং-এর সুবিধা এখনো অব্যাহত আছে।
- জুলাই-ডিসেম্বর, ১৯৯৪ সময়ের অর্ধ-বার্ষিক হিসাব বিবরণী বিলির জন্য প্রতুত করা হচ্ছে। গ্রহীতাদের মাঝামাঝি হতে তা সম্বাহ করা যাবে।

**সময়মত কিস্তি পরিশোধ করে নিজে লাভান্বন হোন অপরকেও ঋণ পাবার সুযোগ দিন**