

# The Daily Star

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weekend  
paper

## on Friday

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BEST  
for the  
3rd Millennium

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## Delayed PSI spells trouble for importers

By Inam Ahmed

The newly introduced pre-shipment inspection system (PSI) launched in mid-February to check revenue leakage and make imports hassle-free has created trouble for the importers.

Importers say they are not receiving goods on time, and even if they do, they cannot get them cleared since the papers are not ready.

As a result, many entrepreneurs are in short supply of inventory and their production line is disrupted.

One top multinational pharmaceutical company chief executive told the Daily Star that 10 consignments of raw materials for his plant are lying at the Zia International Airport for the last 18 days due to PSI delay.

"We import active ingredients for the pharmaceutical sector by air because delays can diminish the quality of the products. But now it seems that there is no difference between shipments by air and sea," he said.

As the situation has turned grave for the importers, the PSI monitoring committee met yesterday to find a way out.

The meeting found three types of problems with the PSI system.

When banks open letters of

credit (LCs) they are supposed to send additional copies of the letters to the local PSI companies. But in most cases, this takes between three and 10 days, it was mentioned.

The PSI companies cannot issue PSI certificates unless they get the LC copies.

At the same time, the PSI companies after getting the LC copies verify the genuineness of the VAT and TIN registrations. But in 70 per cent cases, the PSI agents find the registration numbers inappropriate.

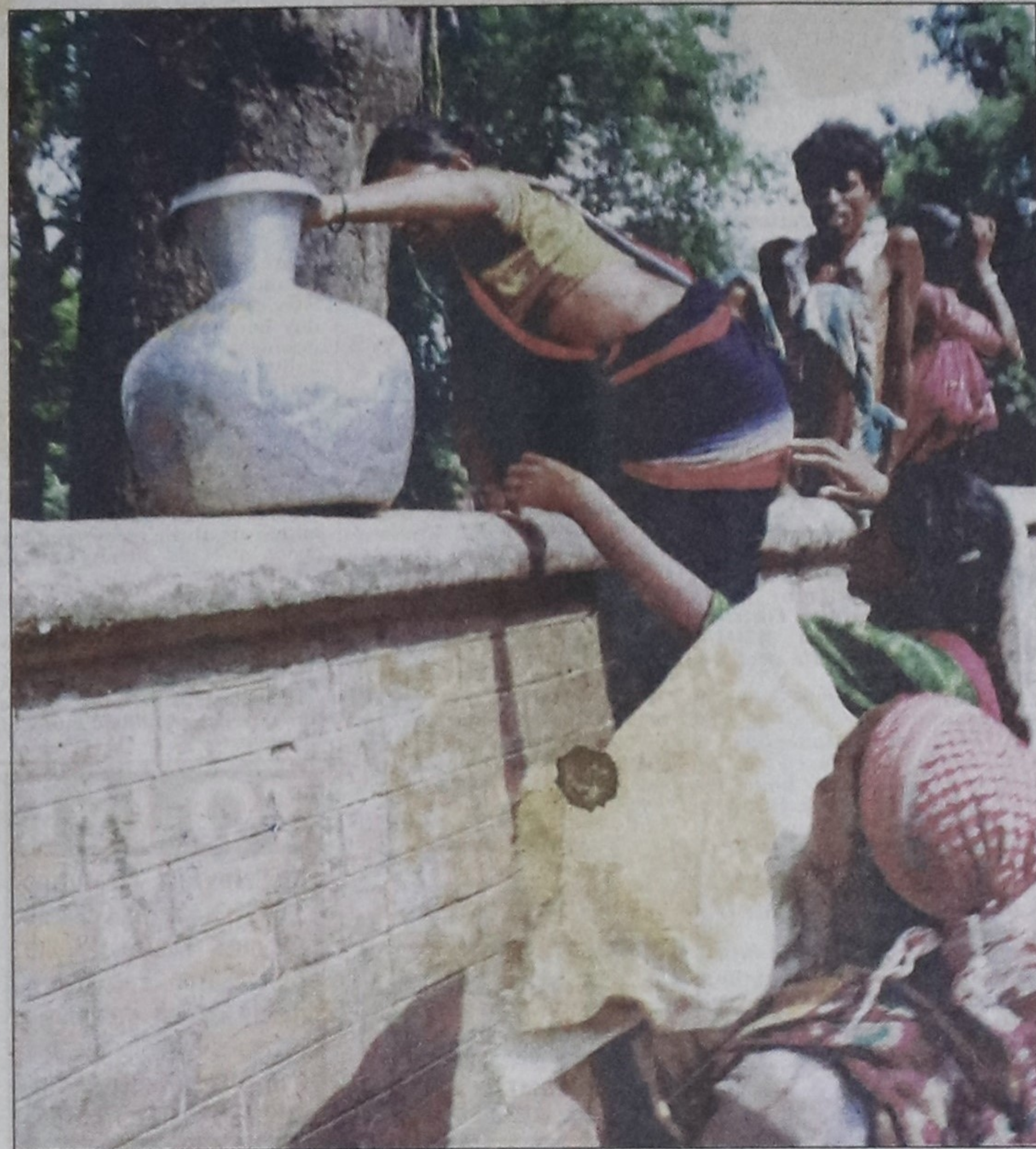
The agents then send back the LCs to the banks that cannot handle the situation.

Another problem is the non-availability of the clean report of findings (CRF) from the PSI company from the country of product origin without which importers cannot release their goods.

It was pointed out that while other developed countries exchange the CRF by coded e-mail, Bangladesh has adopted a system where the CRF is sent by courier. Four copies of the CRF are sent to the customs, importer, bank and the PSI agent.

But since CRF copies are sent by courier, it takes several days to reach here and often do not simultaneously reach to all the

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A woman climbs the wall of the Fulbaria Railway Hospital yesterday on her way into the compound to fill her pitcher up. Acute shortage has forced the city's residents to go to any length (or height) for water. Star photo: Anisur Rahman

## Dash for gifts at ZIA leaves too many doors open

Passengers regularly face harassment, intimidation from greedy officials

By Shaikh Nazrul Islam

Security at the Zia International Airport has virtually collapsed as a section of law enforcers remain busy collecting 'gifts' from both incoming and departing passengers, some passengers alleged.

Passengers are harassed, intimidated and even their valuables are taken away in presence of officials, they alleged. There are 17 different agencies for checking and maintaining security at the ZIA.

Some passengers talking to this correspondent at ZIA recently described their stories of alleged harassment by security men, and even by officials.

Passengers face trouble at every spot at the arrival and departure lounges, alleged an executive of an export oriented company who travels frequently.

For a departing passenger, the trouble starts in getting a trolley for carrying baggage, and for an incoming one, the hassle begins at the customs checking counter, he said seeking anonymity.

"You have to pay the porters to get a trolley. The gang of porters keep the trolleys under their possession. You can not get a trolley without giving tips", he alleged.

Some other passenger at the

departure lounge echoed his sentiment, wanting to know if the situation would change at all.

Another young passenger joined the conversation and said, "Even if a porter just touches your luggage, you have to pay him tips or face insult".

Then one has to pay money to the scanner operator who scans luggage, they said.

"If you do not pay the scanner operator, you will be in trouble with your luggage," said another young man.

"They may also harass you, keeping you waiting in the long queue as a punishment," he added.

Some people identifying themselves as airline staff also make money on different pleas. "I was asked by an airline staff to pay Tk 300 to avoid a long queue," he said.

"Every time I leave the country, I feel not to return", he said in disgust.

At the arrival lounge, this correspondent saw some passengers, puzzled and disgusted. Some of them said they had to part with valuables and some others said they paid money demanded by officials.

"I had to give them the din-

ner set I bought from Dubai to present my daughter in her marriage", said one of them. He returned from a Gulf country after five years.

Another passenger said, "I had to give some dollars to officials, who said, otherwise I would have to pay a heavy tax".

The security agencies at the ZIA are: Dhaka Metropolitan Police,

Armed Police, Detective Branch, Special Branch of Police, DGFI, NSI, Air Intelligence, Ansar, Department of Customs and Excise, Customs Intelligence, Customs Surveillance, Immigration, Land Protection Department, CAAB, Biman and Department of Narcotics Control.

Officials at ZIA, however, said that they were offering their best services to passengers. Asked about the allegations, they said, one or two stray incidents may occur but action is always taken against the culprits.

Regarding the allegation against airline staff, they said they are not responsible for this.

Sources at ZIA however said punitive actions are few compared to the incidents.

## CJ discusses matters relating to judiciary with President

The Chief Justice called on President Shahabuddin Ahmed yesterday evening and discussed matters relating to the judiciary amid a raging controversy over the Bangabandhu murder case, reports UNB.

In a major development in the meantime, the death references in the case were "reallocated yesterday at 3:30 pm to another Criminal Division Bench for disposal", a Supreme Court announcement said late night.

The hearing of the death-reference case that came before a High Court bench last week had become uncertain after a senior judge felt "embarrassed" to pro-

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## Our new numbers

19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215  
Phones: 8124944, 8124955  
& 8124966  
Fax: 8125155

## Fate of 2 German-aided power plants uncertain

By Rafiq Hasan

Germany has indicated delay or withdrawal of 'assured' assistance of 69 million Deutsche Mark equivalent to 35 million US dollars for the power sector in Bangladesh if reforms are not accelerated, sources concerned said.

The indication was given by a German delegation during discussions with officials at the Economic Relations Division (ERD).

The two-member delegation from German development agency KfW which visited Dhaka recently said that the assured assistance for two projects in the power sector might be delayed or withdrawn if necessary steps were not taken to gear up power sector reforms.

Germany had assured of providing 69 million Deutsche Mark for modernisation of Ashuganj Power Plant and Area Coverage Rural Electrification phase-V-B. But the delegation

mentioned that the assistance was 'conditioned with power sector reforms and corporatisation' of Ashuganj plant, the sources said.

Representatives from the Power Division, Power Development Board (PDB) and Rural Electrification Board (REB) were also present at the discussion at ERD.

The assurance of assistance was given following a Bangladesh delegation's visit to Germany last year.

The ERD had written a number of letters to the energy ministry for accelerating reforms in the power sector and corporatisation of Ashuganj plant.

The power secretary informed the ERD in March that Article of Association and Memorandum of Association were prepared for corporatisation of Ashuganj plant.

These were sent to the law ministry for vetting.

The ERD later wrote another letter to the energy ministry but it is yet to get any response, the sources said.

Finance minister S A M S Kibria informed State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Prof Rafiqul Islam about the German government's latest position as regards the assured assistance. He referred to the visit of KfW delegation and its dissatisfaction over the pace of reforms in power sector, a senior official said.

When contacted, the power secretary said the government wants to speed up the reforms through corporatisation of power plants and that a proposal for corporatisation of Ashuganj plant was adopted recently. He however declined give details.

PDB Chairman Quamrul Islam Siddiqui could not be contacted for his comments.

## Pak-Bangla World Cup tie was fixed?

SYDNEY, Apr 20: South African cricket chief Ali Bacher has claimed two matches at last year's World Cup were fixed, one international team was throwing and manipulating matches and an umpire was under suspicion, report agencies.

Bacher told Australian newspapers on Thursday from his home in Johannesburg that his information came from current and former international players and administrators.

"I am as confident as I can be, without having all available evidence for you, that it has been a common practice in world cricket," Bacher told three Sydney newspapers.

Bacher was not directly quoted about match-fixing during the World Cup in Britain or about any corrupt umpires.

He said all details would be supplied to the South African judiciary inquiry into the Hansie Cronje scandal. Cronje is under investigation after Delhi police earlier this month al-

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## City sees 3 murders in five hours

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were murdered in separate incidents in the city within a span of about five hours till 4 Wednesday night.

The dead were identified as Jahangir Alam, 25, a resident of Folder Street and Shajahan Bhiyan, 42, of Narinda in the city. The other is Selim, 25, of Mohanpur in Savar thana.

Alam's body was recovered by Dhanmandi police from 245 Free School Street at about 4:30 am. A cut rifle, a revolver and five bullets were also recovered along with the body. The arms were tied with his waist.

Alam used to supervise a motor garage owned by his father and he was missing since Wednesday evening when left the garage, police said quoting family members.

Failing to trace him, his relatives went to Dhanmandi police station yesterday morn-

ing and found his body. It was then sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for autopsy.

The victim's uncle lodged an FIR with Dhanmandi police without identifying the killers. None could be arrested.

One source said Alam was also a garments cut piece trader and trade related disputes might have led to his killing.

In another incident, unidentified gunman shot Selim in front of a hospital at Mirpur Mazar Road at about 12:30 am when he came out of the hospital after visiting a relative. He was rushed to the DMCH where doctors declared him dead.

Hospital sources said Selim was a worker in a motor workshop at nearby Aminbazar.

Police were yet to ascertain the motive behind the killing.

A case was filed with Mirpur police by the victim's brother.

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## New HC bench for Death Reference

By Staff Correspondent

Chief Justice Latifur Rahman yesterday sent for hearing the much-talked-about death reference in the Bangabandhu murder case to another Death Reference Bench of the High Court.

The Bench comprising Justice MM Ruhul Amin and Justice Mohammad Abdul Matin, earlier refused to hear the death reference on grounds of breaking serial.

Death reference in the Bangabandhu murder case was referred to the Chief Justice after a senior judge in the previous Death Reference Bench felt embarrassed to hear the matter on April 10.

Besides, four more Division Benches refused to hear the matter on different grounds when the prosecution lawyers mentioned the reference before those benches at different times in the past four months.

All the necessary files and

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## Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board

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## Unregistered vehicles on rise

BRTA urges police for immediate crackdown

By Morshed Ali Khan

Police should crack down on an increasing number of unregistered vehicles causing serious accidents, say BRTA officials.

The unregistered vehicles are manufactured in local workshops. In the city, they are called 3-ton-mini-trucks and Mad Max Tempo. In some cases, the 3-ton-mini trucks have been turned into buses and officially allowed by the Police Commissioner to ply specific city routes.

In other cases, buses and trucks have been manufactured locally to carry passengers and cargo across the country. The route permits, if any, were issued by the BRTA offices outside the capital.

BRTA officials said thousands more registered vehicles are plying the roads without any fitness certificate. In most cases, these faulty vehicles were responsible for accidents.

According to available statistics, Bangladesh has an estimated fatality rate of 58 deaths a year per 10,000 registered vehicles. Many consider the figure in reality is much higher since road accidents and casualties are highly under reported. Moreover, there is no data on thousands of unregistered vehicles.

"Fatal accidents are less frequent in the city because the

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### Mobile disaster

Locally manufactured unregistered vehicles, such as Mad Max Tempo and Vats, are endangering motorists in the capital city. These vehicles ply the Mirpur-10-Ibrahimpur route in front of the BRTA office. Star photo: Amran Hossain

## Seminar on e-commerce

Joint Organiser —

The Daily Star & Chittagong Stock Exchange

Experts on IT/Internet will speak in the Seminar

Date: 22nd April 2000, Saturday, 3.00 pm

Venue: Hotel Agrabad, Chittagong

Admission Free

Business persons, Executives, Students are invited to participate