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Dicey DCC deals

Official-outsider nexus manipulates Tk 50cr road repair work

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), working in tandem with a group of outsiders, allegedly manipulated appointment of contractors for a Tk 50 crore road carpeting work, DCC sources said. The tender committee passed the work order of the project on October 31, while the mayor was on an official tour of China. And two of the DCC officials who are allegedly involved in the scam had earlier faced disciplinary action for corrup-

tion after internal investigations.

Official sources said that on September 20 the authorities published the tender notice of the work of the mechanical engineering division-2 in five 'obscure newspapers', so that the DCC-enlisted 800 contractors were left out of the bidding.

The names of the dailies, where the tender notice was published, are The Banglar Gaurab, The Birol, The Sabuj Desh, The Dhaka Dialogue and The Capital Views. Five contractors submitted their tender

schedules to get the work on the basis of an 'understanding', added the sources in the DCC.

In the last few years, bitumen carpeting worth Taka 30 to 40 crore was done on an average.

On October 23, in a meeting of the tender committee the comparative statement of the tender schedule was submitted for approval.

Meanwhile, the executive engineer of mechanical division-2, Mostafizur Rahman Munshi, made a recommendation in favour of an organisation called Messrs Halim

and Associates Private Limited, as it was the 'lowest bidder'.

Earlier, a ruling party MP had sought intervention of the mayor in this regard as his (MP's) firm failed to get the work.

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka came to know what had happened and intervened, but while he was abroad the said group got the work order passed, the sources said.

In line with these allegations, The Daily Star investigation revealed that an organised syndicate in the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

New forum for newspaper owners

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Owners of different newspapers in the country have formed an association, named the Newspaper Owners' Association of Bangladesh (NOAB), to promote interest of the newspaper industry, said a press release.

Office-bearers and executive committee members of the organisation were elected at a meeting of the owners or their representatives in the city yesterday.

Mahfuz Anam, editor of The Daily Star, has been elected president of the NOAB, while Golam Sarwar of the Jugantor and Altamash Kabir of the Sangbad have been made vice-president and treasurer respectively.

Anwar Hossain Monju of the Ittefaq, Mahbubul Alam of The Independent, AMM Bahauddin

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

No deaths in army custody, PIO says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday flatly denied that there was any death in army custody since deployment of troops to nab criminals and recover illegal arms.

"From the very beginning, we are not admitting that any person died in army custody. None died in army custody during the current operation. But the army has formed several inquiry committees on every incident to find out if there was any negligence on the part of the army," Principal Information Officer Khandker Manirul Alam said. Briefing newsmen at the confer-

ence room of the Press Information Department yesterday afternoon, he said the probe committees are inquiring into the incidents and any body found guilty would be tried under military law.

The PIO categorically said that troops have been deployed to arrest criminals and recover unauthorised arms, as police do not have enough logistic support.

Police did not fail. The reality is that police do not have enough logistics, and so army has been deployed in aid of the civil administration. Using 303 rifle, it is difficult for police to face criminals who possess sophisticated firearms like

AK-47, the PIO said.

He said one army personnel has been terminated from service and jailed for committing crime while on duty in Kishoreganj. Any one found guilty will face trial under army law, he added.

Colonel Nazrul Islam of Inter-Services Public Relations, who was also present at the briefing, said the army usually forms inquiry committee after any incident. Even if any body is injured while playing, the matter is probed to find out whether it is due to anybody else's negligence.

Colonel Islam however could not

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5



PHOTO: AFP

A floating child sleeps while a rickshaw passes by on a road in the city yesterday. Street children live, grow up and work on the margins of society. The sleeping child sums up rural poverty that has forced many people to migrate to urban settlements in search of employment.

Army excesses at Rayerbazar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of army personnel indiscriminately beat up owners and customers of small tea stalls along the Flood Protection Embankment of the city yesterday morning.

Armed with automatic rifles and batons, about eight army men arrived in a pickup at 9.30am near the Sikdar Medical College Hospital in the Rayerbazar area and unleashed a reign of terror.

They clubbed the owners and customers at will and accused them of "spoiling the sanctity of Ramadan". The shopkeepers were selling tea behind curtains -- well away from the public eye.

The soldiers, in fatigue and helmets, grabbed passersby and asked, "Are you fasting?" They beat up everyone mercilessly.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

19 listed criminals, 22 firearms rounded up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army yesterday arrested 138 people, including 19 listed criminals, across the country during the last 24 hours ending at 8:00am yesterday.

They also seized 22 firearms along with 39 rounds of ammunition. The seizure list includes four pistols, six revolvers, two shotguns and three pipe guns.

The troops have so far arrested 6,164 people including 1,529 listed criminals since the countrywide crackdown on criminals began on October 17. They also seized 958 firearms along with 23,278 rounds of ammunition.

Our correspondent in Barisal reports that the army arrested a

listed criminal yesterday morning. Ziaul Hasan Shuhad, convicted for 108 years under the Public Safety Act (PSA), was arrested from Babuganj.

Our Chittagong correspondent writes that the joint forces raided the Rasulbagh residence of former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Jafar Ahmed Chowdhury at Satkania in the city.

His family alleged that the joint forces tossed around furniture and other valuables during the raid. No illegal firearms was recovered in the raid.

Our Ragnamati correspondent reports that the army picked up nine people including a Jatiyatabadi

Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader yesterday. Arifur Rahman Arif, president of the town unit of the ruling party's student front, was arrested from his KK Roy Sarker Road residence at around 1:30am.

He was allowed to go home after interrogation yesterday afternoon, his family said.

Six of the arrested were handed to police. Of them Zenith Tauchangya was admitted to a local hospital.

According to our Khulna correspondent, Tariq Hossain Tuhin, an armed cadre of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) who was arrested by the army, yes

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Cabinet okays arms, explosive, narcotics control amendment bills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved three bills for amendment of existing arms, explosives and drugs control laws.

The bills - the Arms (Amendment) Act, 2002, the Narcotics Control (Amendment) Act, 2002 and the Explosive Substances (Amendment) Act, 2002 - provides for completion of inquiry into relevant offences in 30 days.

If the inquiry is not complete within the timeframe due to unavoidable circumstances, a maximum of seven more days will be allowed.

In such a case, the investigation officer will have to explain in writing to the court why he or she has failed to complete inquiry within the stipulated time.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presided over yesterday's meeting at the cabinet room of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

Cabinet members and state ministers in-charge of different ministries aside, the cabinet secretary and the principal secretary to the prime minister were also present at the meeting.

AL MPs walk out over Speedy Trial bill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League yesterday walked out of the Jatiya Sangsad protesting introduction of a bill titled "The Speedy Trial Tribunal Act, 2002" in the parliament, which the opposition party described as a black law.

The AL lawmakers, led by the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, walked out of the House angrily as Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar allowed Law Minister Moudud Ahmed to introduce the bill amid noisy protests in the opposition bench.

Moudud tabled the bill seeking speedy trial for certain offences, four days after a presidential ordinance on the same issue was laid in the House. The ordinance promulgated on October 24 would be cancelled as soon as the bill is passed.

The AL said the proposed law would be violative of the constitution and would create discrimination in the process of trial in the country.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

Not enough gas to export, citizens' body claims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Nagorik Committee has said the country's proven gas reserve is about 6.2 trillion cubic feet (tcf) and projected reserve around 5.8tcf. With this amount it is possible to meet domestic demand only till 2014.

Whatever amount of gas the country may decide to export, it will only bring forward the time for importing the same at a higher cost since the total volume of gas is quite low, the committee members said at a press briefing at the Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the city yesterday.

"Interestingly, the Nagorik Committee found that the National Gas Reserve Committee (NGRC) did not (deliberately or otherwise) disclose the proven gas reserve estimate. Perhaps the NGRC

w a n t e d

Ramadan	Nov	Sehri	Iftar
13	19		5-15
14	20	4-53	5-15
15	21	4-54	5-15

Four alleged Pak secret agents arrested in West Bengal

SAKYASEN MITTRA, Kolkata

Four persons alleged to be Pakistani secret agents were arrested yesterday in Murshidabad of West Bengal.

They were arrested from the Durlavpara village under the Jalangi Police Station.

The four are Ziauddin Biswas and his wife Ismatara Biswas, Ahsan Habib and Gulam Mustafa. Police recovered some defence documents and maps from them.

The arrested persons are reported to have said they used to obtain important defence documents and then send them to their contacts in Dhaka. From there, the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

Mosquitoes strike back



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With mosquito menace taking a nasty turn once again, the cash strapped Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has almost run out of adulticide.

And the slothful corporation is sitting on a file to okay purchase of 50,000 litres of insecticides for over one and a half months.

The result could be dangerous, entomologists warn, as the breeding season for culex mosquito that spreads filaria is just round the corner.

But the DCC never runs out of its tricks. In an eyewash move, it is now fogging whatever adulticide is

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2