

WB condition for inter-district bus terminals

DCC in trouble as lessees dodge dues

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is struggling to meet the World Bank (WB)'s condition for private operators to run inter-district bus terminals, as the lessees are not paying up their dues.

According to the contractual agreement between the private enterprises and the DCC, the lessees has to pay Tk. 11.90 lakh per month for Sayababad terminal, Tk. 3.70 lakh for Mohakhali and Tk. 11.5 lakh for Gabtali terminal.

The DCC had leased out the three inter-district bus terminals to two private firms—Rura Enterprise and Diba Enterprise Ltd. Rura is responsible for Sayababad and Mohakhali terminals while Diba got the lease of Gabtali terminal.

"We had leased the three bus terminals from October 2003 but still we haven't received the fixed amount from private operators," said a high official of the DCC.

The World Bank had provided Tk. 55 crore to DCC for the development of these inter-district bus terminals on condition that they

had to be run by private organisations. WB imposed the prerequisite to curb extortion, human and drug trafficking and illegal toll collection from the terminals.

There are allegations that influential gangs control every terminal, where hundreds of buses arrive and depart daily. Extortion and toll collection are rampant at these places and the beneficiaries reportedly include the police and hoodlums patronised by political leaders and different associations.

The operation rights require the lessees to provide passenger services along with revenue collection for the DCC. In the past, the DCC maintained the passenger service and the toll was collected privately.

Now the private operators are responsible for total management of the terminal. According to the agreement with the DCC, the lessees are entitled to collect Tk. 30 from each bus and truck.

The private operators complained that the DCC violated clauses in the contract by not handing over the ticket counters, public toilets, restaurants, and bus washing facilities to them. There are other problems too that

are making it impossible for them to pay up, claimed the operators.

"The DCC has given the operation right for ticket counters, toilet, restaurant, bus washing etc. to its chosen people and not to us which is a direct violation of the contract," said Matur Rahman, the chairman of Diba Enterprise Ltd.

Construction work is still going on for bays for boarding and disembarking, ticket counters, parking space, waiting rooms, toilets, security room etc.

"If we are not equipped with all the facilities how can we pay the lease amount to the DCC?" asked Rahman.

"There is no garage facility for the buses which is creating a big problem as most of the bus owners don't have their own garages. Buses are therefore staying at the terminals," said Rahman.

Meanwhile, the DCC is thinking of canceling the lease agreement to sources said.

"For the last three months, we have received nothing from the two private operators. We will re-tender the lease if things continue like this," said a DCC high up on condition of anonymity.

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Day Two at the Book Fair

At the beginning there was a good number of enthusiastic visitors. But soon they became disappointed to see that most of the stalls at the Ekushey book fair remained unfinished. Most of them then silently dispersed.

TOWER HAMLETS MAYOR ARRIVES TODAY

Mayor of Tower Hamlets in London Abdul Aziz Sarder arrives in the city today leading a seven-member delegation. During their 7-day tour, they will hold meetings with Dhaka city Mayor Sadeq Hossain Khoka and State Minister for Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Major (rtd) Kamrul Islam. The mayoral delegation is expected to call on the President and the Prime Minister during their stay in Dhaka. Photo shows the mayor (sitting) flanked by commandant John Ludgate (left), Councillor Motin Uz-Zaman and (standing, from left) Al-haj Shafique Miah, Monirul Alam, Ms Patricia Bairagee and Derek Cox OBE.



Fines, jail term proposed for noise pollution

SULTANA RAHMAN

The environment and forest ministry will announce the draft of Noise Pollution (Control) Rules, 2003 toward the end of the month, which recommends fines and jail punishment to violators.

"We talked to the law ministry for immediate steps approving the draft, as noise pollution is rising," said Environment and Forest Minister Shahajahan Siraj.

The proposed law calls for a fine of Tk 5,000 for primary violators or two months' imprisonment in failure to pay the fine or both.

If the primary violators are found repeating the offence, they will be fined Tk 10,000 or a six-month imprisonment in failure to pay the fine or both.

"The use of machines including generators, stone grinders and welders in residential areas create high-pitched noise," the minister said.

Earlier, the Department of Environment (DoE) sent the draft for approval to its ministry. The draft has classified the areas of a city, town and others and fixed the noise limits—45 decibels for silent, 50 for residential, 60 for mixed, 70 for commercial and 75 for industrial zones in daytime—from 6:00am to 9:00pm.

The night-time decibel limits are 35 for silent, 40 for residential, 50 for mixed, 60

for commercial and 70 for industrial areas.

The rules will not be applicable to Azan, religious and public meetings, the army activities, fire services, electioneering and

aircraft.

The existing motor vehicle rules can charge up to Tk 2,000 for noise polluters or six months in jail in failure to pay fines.

The DoE director general or his

appointed persons will be entitled to execute the rules.

"We will persuade the civil society, NGOs, bus owners and drivers to make the law effective," Shahajahan said. "We hope people from all walks of life will accept the law as they did when the government banned polythene bags," the minister hoped.

The environment ministry held meetings to scrutinise the draft with different stakeholders of home, public works and housing, local government, religious affairs and information ministries, the Election Commission and environment experts.

Experts say city dwellers have lost a little of their hearing ability because of extreme noise. The traffic noise in much of the city is above the 80-decibel limit the US Environmental Protection Agency suggested as safe average for 24 hours.

The experts said the use of horn is impulsive and has a damaging impact. Noise over 35 decibels can be detrimental to schoolchildren and can primarily increase their heartbeat and blood pressure.

Other manifestations are nausea, dizziness, gastrointestinal problems, fatigue and behavioural troubles such as aggressiveness and sleep disturbances.

marketprice

Daily Market Summary

Dhaka New Market, Dhaka

CEREALS

Rice(HV) Aman Mediumkgs17.33

Rice coarse(HV)kgs14.33

Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)kgs33.33

Wheat Grain (Local White)kgs11.83

PULSES

Masuri Dal (Deshi)kgs49.00

Masuri Dal (Imported)kgs39.00

Khesari Dal (Deshi)kgs21.00

SPICES

Onion (India big)kgs22.33

Garlic Deshi (common)kgs39.00

Garlic Big (Imported)kgs34.00

Ginger (Imported)kgs43.33

Turnericgs7.67

Turneric (India)kgs7.33

Chili Greenkgs27.33

Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)kgs96.67

VEGETABLES

Potato (Holand)kgs 23.67

Cauliflower Average Sizepcskgs 7.67

Cabbage Average Sizepcskgs 7.33

Tomato Ripe (Deshi)kgs13.00

Carrot Mediumkgs 9.33

Local Bean Greenkgs12.00

Lau (Water Gourd)pcs 27.67

Brinjal (Long purple)kgs14.33

Pumpkin (Sweet)kgs 9.00

Radish Whitekgs 5.67

FRUITS

Banana Sagar (Medium)4 pcs 7.00

Apple (Australia)kgs 65.00

FISH

Ruhi (Deshi)kgs158.75

Shahab Bazar, Rajshahi

CEREALS

Rice coarse(HV)kgs13.85

Wheat Grain (Local White)kgs12.90

PULSES

Rice(HV)kgs 30.00

Coconutpcsk15.00

FISH

Ruhi (Deshi)kgs115.00

Hilshakgs185.00

Mesua Bazar, Mymensingh

CEREALS

Rice(HV) Aman Mediumkgs14.50

Rice coarse(HV)kgs13.25

Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)kgs31.00

SPICES

Onion (Deshi)kgs19.40

Garlic Deshi (common)kgs 39.20

Garlic Big (Imported)kgs 36.00

Ginger (Deshi)kgs 33.80

Turnericgs5.00

Chili Greenkgs19.20

Chili Dried (Deshi Bogra)kgs101.00

Turnericgs53.50

Brinjal (Long purple)kgs 7.20

Potato (Holand)kgs 5.00

Bitter Gourdks 26.00

Okraeks 22.00

Garlic Deshi (common)kgs 41.20

Ginger (Deshi)kgs 39.50

Turnericgs10.00

Brinjal (Long purple)kgs 5.00

Cabbage Average Size100 pcs 5.50

Tomato Ripe (Deshi)kgs 5.00

Carrot Mediumkgs13.00

Local Bean Greenkgs10.00

Lau (Water Gourd)100 pcs13.40

Brinjal (Long purple)kgs 8.00

Papaya Greenkgs 6.00

Radish Whitekgs 5.00

FISH

Ruhi (Deshi)kgs140.00

Hilshakgs154.00

Rangpur Municipal Market

CEREALS

Rice(HV) Aman Mediumkgs15.65

Rice coarse(HV)kgs14.65

Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)kgs 33.60

Rice coarse(HV)kgs12.70

Rice Chiniguri (Aromatic)kgs 10.70

PULSES

Masuri Dal (Deshi)kgs 44.60

Masuri Dal (Imported)kgs 41.60

Khesari Dal (Deshi)kgs 20.60

Masuri Dal (Deshi)kgs 43.60

Masuri Dal (Imported)kgs 40.40

Khesari Dal (Deshi)kgs 20.80

SPICES

Onion (Deshi)kgs 23.40

Onion (India big)kgs 24.4