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Top brass to get Tk 46,300; lowest staff Tk 5,896

Pay Commission finalises report; measures will need Tk 5,249 crore in addition

INAM AHMED

The top most civil servants should get Tk 27,500 in basic salary and those at the lowest rung Tk 2,800, according to the National Pay Commission which will submit its recommendations to the government by month-end.

This means a 57.87 percent rise for the top brass and 70.17 percent for those at the bottom from the

existing pay structure, according to commission sources.

When added with all allowances, the highest salary of a civil servant would come to Tk 46,300 and the lowest Tk 5,896.

The lowest salary has been fixed keeping in mind the calorie intake of a household of four persons.

The new pay scale will take effect from January 1.

The commission, headed by

former cabinet secretary Mujiburul Haq, has estimated that the cumulative inflation increased by 31.76 percent since 1997 when the last pay scale was implemented. But during this time, the government staffs received only 10 percent dearness allowance in 2003.

The commission has also recommended that civil servants should pay their own income tax. Staffs will

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2-day holiday, paternal leave suggested

STAR REPORT

The National Pay Commission has recommended two days of weekly holiday on Saturday and Sunday.

It also wants the office timing to be from 9:00am to 5:00pm with break between 1:00pm to 1:30pm for lunch and prayers.

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Saarc Summit likely to be curtailed

India proposes Feb 6-7

PTI, Islamabad

The Saarc summit is likely to be curtailed by a day with India suggesting February 6 and 7 for holding the meet in Dhaka which was earlier postponed due to the tsunami disaster, official sources here said yesterday.

India has informally conveyed the dates to Pakistan, which is the outgoing Chairman of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (Saarc), the sources said.

Other members of the grouping have also given their consent to the dates and an official announcement

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TRI-NATION ENERGY MEET

Dhaka agrees to gas pipeline transit

MoU to be signed in Dhaka

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh, India and Myanmar have agreed to co-operate in gas exploration and an overland pipeline project to pump offshore natural gas from western Myanmar to energy-hungry India through Bangladesh.

The understanding was reached at a tripartite meeting of the energy ministers concerned in Yangon that ended yesterday, according to a joint press statement received here through fax.

A techno-commercial working committee will be formed to identify the areas of co-operation, collaboration and investment to develop natural gas resources, infrastructure and marketing in the region.

The statement said an international consortium to be formed on the basis of a tripartite agreement would export the Myanmar offshore gas to India through a pipeline across Bangladesh.

The route of the pipeline will be mutually finalised ensuring each

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In the coming years, we commit to serve our readers even better and to protect their "Right to Know" with greater professionalism and our characteristic courage. We look forward to a more fruitful partnership with them to make our beloved Bangladesh a better country for us all.

-Editor

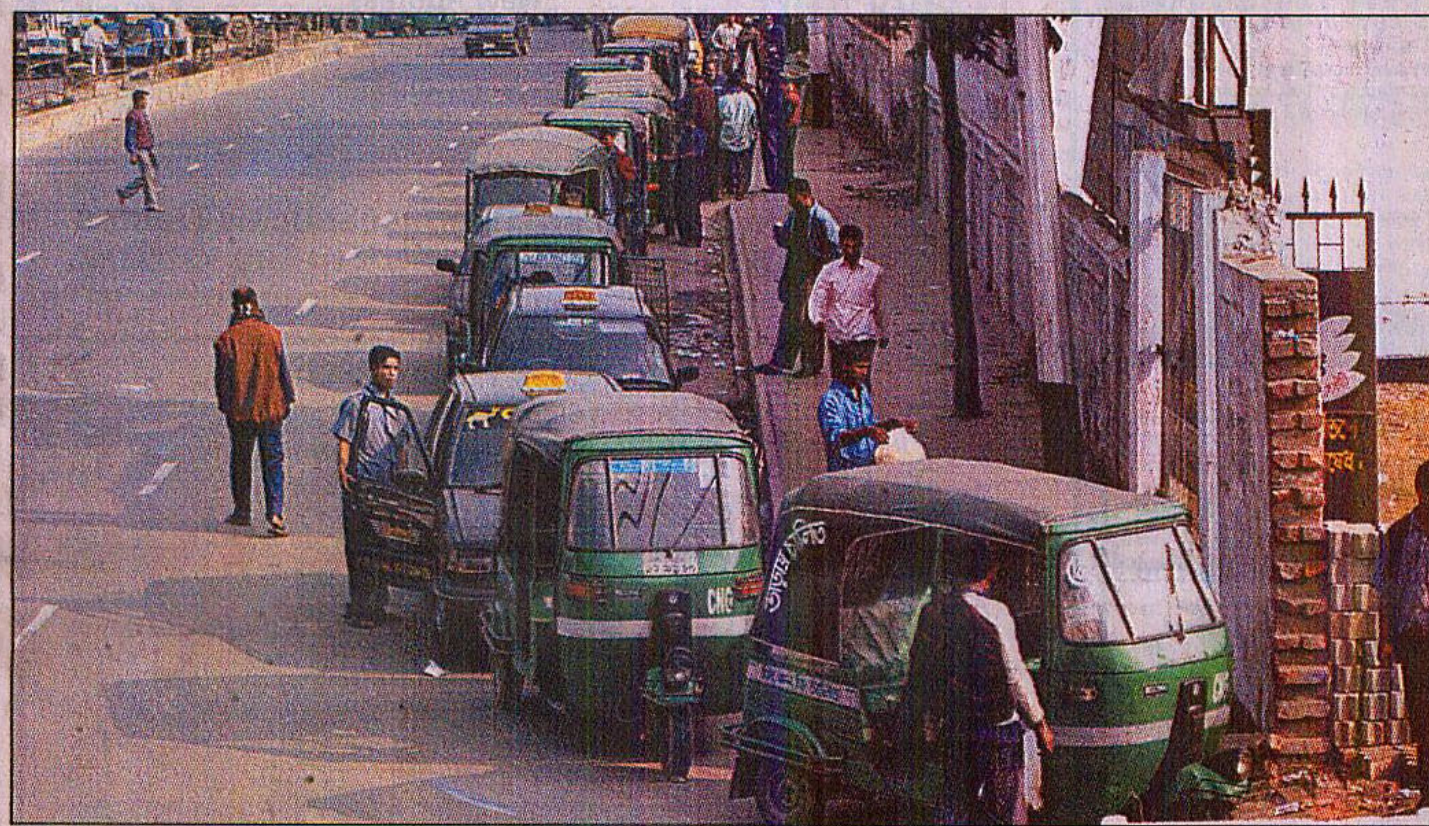


PHOTO: STAR

A number of CNG-run three-wheelers queue up at a filling station in Mirpur and spend hours waiting for gas yesterday as an acute shortfall in the gas supply crippled some areas of the capital for the last few days.

Poor gas supply hits homes, businesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The gas-run industries and household users and gas stations in the capital and adjacent districts have been facing acute shortage of gas for the last few days due to shortfall in production against the rising demands.

Meanwhile, against the backdrop of the crisis, the government has decided to increase the gas prices with effect from the current month.

The energy ministry has set the monthly tariff for a single burner gas oven at Tk 350 from its current price of Tk 340 while for the double burner it is upped to Tk 400 from Tk 390. Domestic consumers who use meters have to pay Tk 130 for every 1000 cubic feet of gas. The earlier rate was Tk 126. For power generation the rate will be Tk 73.91 upped from Tk 72.45.

Gas price for commercial use has been upped to Tk 233.12 from Tk 228.50. For the use of fertiliser industry the rate has been fixed at Tk 63.41 while for industrial use at Tk 148.13 from Tk 145.20 for per 1000 cubic feet of gas.

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5,000 on-trial graft cases run into snags

ACC to serve letter on 22 more ministries about missing vehicles

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Over 5,000 on-trial corruption cases filed by the former Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) have run into snags, as former Bac officials are not appearing in court because of their present status as 'reserved government employees'.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) is now supposed to run the cases after the dissolution of Bac, but it is facing difficulties due to the row between the government and the ACC over the status of former Bac employees.

The commission is considering seeking urgent government directives to continue the cases.

The ACC will, meantime, send a letter tomorrow to 22 more ministries, asking them about several thousand missing vehicles.

It has also begun investigation into eight other corruption complaints including three in the mobile phone project of the state telecoms

monopoly Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board, the shipping ministry and the forest department.

The government yesterday withdrew Reza-e-Rabbi who it appointed as ACC Secretary on December 22.

The fate of the on-trial corruption cases was thrown into uncertainty immediately after dissolution of Bac on November 21 with the formation of the commission.

Uncertainty loomed over the fate of 1,107 Bac staff due to the ongoing debate about whether they would be absorbed in the commission.

On taking office on November 23, ACC Chairman Justice Sultan Hossain Khan declared them as ACC staffs, saying a screening would be conducted later to finalise who would continue in the commission.

But the government, on January 3, ordered them not to work with the ACC until formulation of necessary rules and regulations and declared

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US bill to allow free access of LDC goods soon

MONJUR MAHMUD

A bill granting duty-free access for all products from 15 least developed countries including Bangladesh to the US market is going to be tabled in the US Congress by February 2.

An influential Democrat senator and a Republican one have agreed to sponsor and four others to support the bill styled the Least Developed Economies Economic Development

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2nd Test from today

SPORTS REPORTER

Habibul Bashar's men will look forward to a series victory when they take on Zimbabwe in the second and final Test at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

Bangladesh are leading the series 1-0 following their 226-run rout of the visitors and although a draw will hand them a series victory, the Tigers are upbeat to complete a

whitewash.

In front of a holiday crowd the match will start at 9:30am with Bangladesh Television and ESPN beaming live coverage from the Big Bowl.

The home side, buoyed by their maiden Test win, will field an unchanged side on a wicket that is expected to help the spinners as the five-day game progresses.

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