

# Builders with forged documents rush to Rajuk for plan pass

TAWFIQUE ALI

An organised syndicate of forgers and brokers at Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakha is making money providing the aspiring builders with counterfeit clearance certificates of various agencies for approval of building plans, according to sources.

"Around 70 to 80 percent of the intending builders, particularly commercial builders of high-rises, are taking the advantage from the forgers' syndicate to get their building plans passed as quickly as possible," said a highly placed source at Rajuk.

As effectiveness of the new construction rules has been delayed, aspiring builders are resorting to gross irregularities in submitting building plans and getting them approved under the flawed construction rules of 1996 with the help of the syndicate.

Both the forgers, active in every agency, and employees' union leaders at Rajuk are making money out of the 'business of plan pass,' said Rajuk sources.

They said dishonest builders are submitting as many plans as they can, availing the counterfeit certificates to get the plans passed within January 2007. The forgers, brokers and employees' leaders are facilitating the plan approval through underhand dealings.

"The syndicate is also hindering formation of One-Window

Service Cell at Rajuk and activities of other committees to execute the new rules," a Rajuk official said. "Once these bodies start functioning, the syndicate of forgers will lose its business."

The plans are now being submitted so hurriedly to get approval under the existing rules since the new rules will be made effective six months later and the builders do not want to 'waste time' in

said forgery of clearance certificates occurs mainly in the Department of Environment (DoE) and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAAB) since it is usually difficult to obtain certificates from these two agencies.

The DoE is the agency that issues a clearance certificate after all other agencies clear a plan. "If the DoE certificate is found genuine, we usually con-

clearance certificate is crosschecked calling an agency over telephone because written query takes longer time, Rahman said. "We need to be sure of the genuineness urgently because of time constraint," he added.

But, Rahman pointed out, sometimes officials concerned of the other agencies get annoyed and ask Rajuk officials to make queries in writing, which takes time.

Rahman also said that Rajuk officials remain under enormous pressure of workload in disposing of thousands of building plans and the situation makes the lengthy checking of papers impossible.

It is not the commercial builders alone who indulge in such fraudulent practice, he said, private builders too take advantage of certificate forgery, adding that a plan is rejected if found to have been submitted with fake papers.

According to sources, the forgers supply counterfeit certificates either by copying papers of different agencies in colour scan machine or just by making fresh forms and monograms.

The clearance certificate scrutiny committee is now facing a mad-rush of builders seeking approval for building plans, said a member of the committee.

The scrutiny committee is the body that examines authenticity of certificates while the BC committee ensures compliance with building rules and issues final approval.

getting genuine certificates from agencies concerned.

"We are aware of the malpractice," said Nurul Islam, authorised officer of one of Rajuk's four building construction (BC) committees.

"We crosscheck genuineness of clearance certificates produced along with a building plan tallying with the memo number over telephone," said Islam.

The builders need to produce certificates from nine agencies for approval of their plans. Sources

sider that certificates taken from other agencies are genuine. Actually, it is quite often difficult to detect and check such fraudulent practice, as we are time-bound to dispose of thousands of building plans," said Shamsur Rahman, another authorised officer at Rajuk.

"We have to pass a plan within 45 days or reject it within 30 days," said Rahman, also a member of clearance certificate scrutiny committee of Rajuk.

Usually, genuineness of a



A section of builders are allegedly getting their plans passed in a hurry with counterfeit clearance certificates at Rajuk turning Dhaka into a more unplanned city than it already is.

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN



Mirpur bus terminal at Ghatoli gets a new look. As part of a renovation project, the terminal with its new concrete sheds and proper management should reduce the inconveniences faced by the passengers in the past.

## DTCB's existence shrouded in dark clouds

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The Dhaka Transport Coordination Board's (DTCB) existence is under threat as the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), its funding source, ended on June 30, but the board's organisational structure has not been absorbed under revenue sector due to a bureaucratic tangle.

Shutting down DTCB activities might interrupt foreign aid in the transport sector fear officials of communication ministry.

"Implementation of metro rail project under Strategic Transport Planning (STP) and 20 year-long multipurpose transport planning for Dhaka would be severely interrupted," said a DTCB official.

"World Bank (WB) is expected to

fund the projects and if DTCB does not exist WB might lose interest," he added.

In 1997 the government initi-

ated the DUTP funded by World Bank (WB) to develop a traffic system and modernise the overall transport sector in the capital.

WB, at the time imposed the formation of a high-powered board to coordinate and implement DUTP worth Tk. 1,100.

Following WB's condition, the government in 2001 formed the DTCB under the communication ministry after passing a law in parliament.

Since then all DTCB's expenditure including salaries, bonuses of employees were met by DUTP funds and with its expiry DTCB activities have literally come to an end, as the government has not absorbed the board under the revenue sector.

The communication ministry's effort to absorb the board under the revenue sector is still in a limbo as the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) sent back the file three times showing lame excuses said officials of commu-

nication ministry.

After approval from the Establishment Ministry, Finance Ministry and Cabinet Division the file was sent to the PM office for the first time in March this year.

But one of the directors at the PMO sent back the file to the ministry raising the question 'What was the reason to establish DTCB?'

"We were surprised at such a question about a board that was formed with a law passed in parliament," said an official of the communication ministry. "In May we sent the file again to the PMO answering the question and this time he raised new questions and returned the file again," the official added.

It is alleged that the Roads and Highways Department (RHD) is opposing DTCB, as they believe it has been interrupting RHD's work.

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## Sri Lanka trade show attracts visitors

SILVERINE SHRIKANTHAN and IMRUL HASAN

Show 2006 held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in January this year, could help bring down import taxes gradually and assist in the promotion of further business.

The trade show, organised jointly by Sri Lanka's Export Development Board (EDB) and the Sri Lanka High Commission in Dhaka showcased items from 33 companies and services of two educational institutions.

Items ranged from the very famous Sri Lankan tea, to herbal/natural medicines, electrical and garment accessories, cables, food and beverages and canned food items, air ducts, fishing utensils, trawlers, nets, rubber products, tyres and tubes, cosmetics, telephone units, colour products, education and banking.

"We are looking forward to introducing our products to



Items ranged from the very famous Sri Lankan tea, to herbal/natural medicines, electrical and garment accessories, cables, food and beverages and canned food items, air ducts, fishing utensils, nets...

Bangladesh," said Amal Karunatilaka, director (production), Colour Products Ltd, producers of Homerun Pas pastels. "Our products are far better in quality than Indian and Chinese as the raw materials are balanced, non-toxic and we have been in the Sri Lankan market for over 40 years," he added.

But visitors to the fair who were keen on buying displayed products were disappointed as none of the items were for sale.

"What is the point in looking at the items, if we cannot have any one of them," asked Mustafa Kamal, a 55-year old government employee.

"I was impressed with the quality of the mosquito nets, raincoats and umbrellas and almost begged the person in charge of the Sri Lanka Umbrella Industries Rainco (Pvt) Ltd stall to

sell a raincoat," said Amran Hossain, another visitor to the exhibition.

But Priyanka Aponsu, Asst Brand Manager, said that they were unable to bring many items, as import restrictions did not permit them to bring in large quantities of their products.

"We are looking for distributors, so that we would not disappoint Bangladeshi customers," he added.

Nilhan Ekanayake, export manager, Lanka Canneries Ltd said that their products were already available in India, but it is for the first time they were introducing their products in this country.

"As it is the first time, we are very keen in familiarising our products to the people of this country," said Fazal Mushin,

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