

BRTA VEHICLE INSPECTION CENTRES

Private operators to run business

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

... Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) will hand over its five vehicle inspection centres (VIC) to private operators within next two years.

Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing Tk 3.54 crore for the operation and maintenance of the centres, which failed to serve the BRTA since their establishment in 1997.

The VICs could play a vital role in examining the fitness of vehicles but it could not be possible as the centres are poorly managed and equipped with faulty machinery.

BRTA is widely blamed for providing fitness certificates to unfit vehicles due to corruption of a section of officials and "visual testing" of vehicles.

As the system proved useless, the government set up eight computerised vehicle-testing centres, five in Dhaka and three in divisional cities, funded by the ADB. The centres were supposed to examine fitness of vehicles using camera and report it automatically.

But the centres could not work properly due to faulty equipment installed there by a Dutch company along with a local company. The equipment cost more than Tk 44 crore.

Humayan Rashid, director (operations) of BRTA told Star City that BRTA cut 10 percent of the suppliers' performance allowance as fine for installing

"Modern vehicle inspection centres are essential for testing vehicles accurately. Fit vehicles will reduce fuel consumption, road accidents and air pollution. We believe this time we could get services from these modern centres," Humayan said

the faulty equipment.

But a source at the BRTA told Star City that the amount of penalty was too little compared to BRTA's loss due to the defective equipment.

Besides, a section of officials who inspect the fitness of vehicles played a key role in keeping the VIC inoperative, as it would reduce their illegal income, the source added.

Failing to get expected service from the centres, the BRTA again sought ADB funds to make the centres capable under the Road Network Improvement Maintenance Project-2.

Under this project, the Infrastructure Investment Facilitation Centre (IIFC) is soon going to appoint a consultant for repairing the equipment of the centres and outlining the

maintenance and operating regulations for private operators.

Humayan said: "We have sent all the papers to the ministry to sign contracts with the IIFC in this regard. After the project approval, BRTA will hand over the centres to private operators within two years of signing the contract."

"We hope the VICs will enhance BRTA's fitness-testing capability and remove unfit vehicles from the roads," he added.

"Modern vehicle inspection centres are essential for testing vehicles accurately. Fit vehicles will reduce fuel consumption, road accidents and air pollution. We believe this time we could get services from these modern centres," Humayan said.



The idle VIC at BRTA premises in Mirpur.



A 15-year old teleprinter at the Gulistan International Telegraph office.

USE OF TELEGRAPH

A matter of forgotten technology

DURDANA GHIAS

... Once upon a time telegram was a vital mode to send message overseas and within the country quickly. With the passage of time that role of telegram is almost nonexistent.

There was a time when the telegraph offices used to buzz with activities all the time. But now the telegraph offices wear a deserted look with workers spending relaxed hours.

With the advent of fax and internet the purpose of sending telegram has dwindled. But still there are several telegraph offices in the city. There are two types of telegraph offices -- central and international.

Central offices deal with telegrams at district levels. The only international telegraph office of the country is in Gulistan in the city. For any international telegram, all district level offices send messages to this office through fax. The messages are then sent abroad through tele-

Business firms have stopped sending telegrams a long time ago. At present, bank correspondence, international tenders and some foreign government office deals are sent through telegrams because these jobs need documents

grams.

On Sunday morning workers and officials were seen working at the International Telegraph Office at Gulistan. Some of them were typing telegram messages in F13 format, a code used for sending telegram. Some were working with telephone bills.

"It is not true that telegram is not sent at all now. We do send

deals are sent through telegrams because these jobs need documents.

Till 1965 Morse code was used to send telegram but now F13 format is used.

In 1965, there were 11 international circuits in this office including 2 for London but now there are only 3 -- for Kolkata, Dubai and Rome. The number of circuits started going down since 1995 with the advent of modern technology.

It costs Tk 4 per word to send a message to Dubai and Rome and Tk 1.5 to Kolkata. In case of urgent telegram the charges are double.

Last time a circuit designated for Japan was closed down on May 1 this year because telegram services in Japan were shut down. If a country shuts down its telegraph services then telegram can be sent to that country via other countries but that is more costly.

Earlier, there was over 200 staff working in this office including 10 engineering supervisors

whose job is to supervise the whole thing. But now there are only around 75 staff in this office including 2 supervisors.

"If we retire, which is imminent, there will be no successor to replace us as the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications has stopped recruiting new people since 1980," said the official.

"We were not told anything officially about closing down recruitment but we can guess it is the demand of telegram services that is going lower every day," he said.

Previously, Overseas Correspondents Association Bangladesh was one of the main customers of telegraph office. There was a special section to serve the reporters.

At present the monthly traffic of telegram from this office is around 1,500, both incoming and outgoing, through 4 teleprinter and 3 fax machines. The office is open 24 hours a day.

health,busservices,airlines&traintiming

OSPITALS & CLINICS

- Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital

9008919, 8051618
- Apollo Hospitals Dhaka

9891680-4, 01713046684/85

Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000
- Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital

9118202, 8115843
- Central Hospital

9660015-19,
- China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd

913674
- Dhaka Medical College Hospital

8626812-16
- Gana Shasthyo Kendra

8617208, 8617383, 8620178,
- Greenland Hospital

8912663
- Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic

8822738, 8812992
- Holy Family Hospital
- 8311721-25
- Islami Bank Hospital

9333739
- Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital

8828855, 8827575
- Labaid Cardiac Hospital

8610793-8
- Marie Stopes Clinic

8821874
- Medinova Medical Services Ltd

8620353,
- Monowara Hospital

8318135, 8319802
- Pangu Hospital

9112150, 9113041
- PG Hospital (BSMMU)

9614545-9, 9612550-4
- Rashmono General Hospital

8317606, 9557354, 8317819
- Ratan's Dental Clinic

9111090
- Salimullah Medical College Hospital

7319002-6
- Samorita Hospital Ltd

9131901
- Shahid Suhrawardy Hospital

9122560-78
- Shishu Hospital

8116061-2, 9119119
- United Hospital

8836444, 0194001234

BLOOD BANK

- Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank

9116563
- Modern Clinic & Blood Center

9883948
- Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College

9668690

BUS SERVICES

- Drooti

8014563
- Eagle Paribahan

7101504
- Green Line Paribahan

9339623, 9342580, 8353005
- Hanif Enterprise

9120116
- Keya Paribahan

7101894, 7101250, 9121280
- Modern Enterprise

9123743
- Neptune A/C Coach Service

7101945, 7101951, 9123092
- Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd

9334152, 8316766, 8126293
- Shoukhin Paribahan

8014397, 9001796
- Silk Line

7102461
- Shyamoli Paribahan

9333803

AIRLINES

- lines

Aeroflot

9559930, 9559111, Fax: 9563787
- Air India

8617783, 8611929, Fax: 9670591
- Biman Bangladesh Airlines

8917400-19 9560151, 9559610

Airport Office: 8917400, Fax:8913005
- British Airways

8815111, Fax: 8815346,
- Cathay Pacific

9557117, Fax: 9562667
- Druk Air

9862243, 9892862,
- Emirates

9892801, 9885574-75
- GMG Airlines

8825845-9, Airport Office:

8960404,8915699, Fax: 8826115
- Gulf Air

9130123-5, Airport Office: 8914573
- Indian Airlines Ltd

9555915, 9557813,
- Kuwait Airways

9115182, 9118829
- Malaysia Airlines

9888211-20

Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478
- PIA

9349293-5, Fax: 9345300
- Singapore Airlines

8811504-7, 9883259

Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503
- Thai Airways

8314711-18, 8914343
- Virgin Atlantic Airways

8816324-5, Fax: 9896481
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm

Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am

Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm

Reaches Sylhet at 4-20 pm

Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm

Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15

Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am

Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm
- TRAIN TIMING
- Subarna Express

Mahanagar Prabhathi

Mahanagar Godhuli

Turna

Parabat Express

Joyantika Express

Upaban Express

Tista Express

Ekata Express

Upakul Express

Agnibeen Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am

Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am

Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am

Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm
- LIBRARY & INFO-
- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,

Shishu Academy- 9564128

Shilpakala Academy- 8614673

Bangla Academy- 8619550

Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407

Nazrul Institute- 9114602

Ford Foundation- 8116133

Alliance Francaise- 8611557

Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9

British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7

Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604

Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6

Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2

The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314

Drk Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

Press Institute of Bangladesh