

BRTA income all time high this year

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Revenue earning of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) in 2006-07 fiscal year hit all time high as vehicle owners are pouring in for registration or fitness certificates, said sources in BRTA.

BRTA earned Tk 401 crore in FY 2006-07, which is around a hundred crore taka more than the year's target. Half of the total income comes from Dhaka. In the previous fiscal year (2005-06), the earning was Tk 335 crore.

Main sources of BRTA's earning are fees collected for car registration, driving licence, fitness certificate, route permit for bus, hologram stickers and the annual tax paid by the vehicle owners.

BRTA officials attributed the remarkable increase in income to the recently introduced one-stop service, which increased the pace of work and encouraged the vehicle owners to seek services from BRTA.

The one-stop service is being provided from BRTA's Mirpur 13 office premises.

Since May 15 this year, 10 counters open there are delivering driving licences, fitness certificates, vehicle registration and

renewal.

The scenario has now totally changed. The middlemen have disappeared after a few raids by the joint forces who picked up 30 of them in May from the BRTA office premise. Delivery is also

faster than ever.

"We did not increase the fee since 2002. But our income this year is all-time high. There are various reasons behind the success," said Humayun Rashid Khalifa, director (engineering), BRTA.

"Introduction of one-stop service increased the pace of our work. Before we started the service people did not know what to do. Waste of time was a common experience," he added.

"Now it is simple because they have to visit just one desk for their required service. Because of one-stop service it is now possible to deliver a particular service within 2 hours," he added.

Earlier, an applicant needed at least three months to get a driving licence. Now it takes about one month. All the exams are taken in one day.

Khalifa said absence of 'dalals' (middleman) is another factor for the success. "Because of the middlemen we did not receive a considerable amount of revenue each year. Now that they are gone, it is adding with our income."

Vehicle owners however said that they are simply not taking any chances to confront the law enforcers in the changed political situation.

Khalifa agreed. "It appears that owners are keeping the papers updated to avoid any incident with the law enforcers. Presence of vehicle owners for fitness certificate or driving licence is also highly encouraging. Earlier they used to depend on the middlemen," he added.

During the last one month around 15,000 vehicles received fitness certificates while more than 1 lakh driving licences were issued in last one year.

According to BRTA, currently there are around 10 lakh registered motor vehicles in the country including about 4 lakh or around 50 percent in Dhaka.



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Illegal parking keeps choking all the important areas of the city. The problem aggravates during peak hours in areas like Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Paltan, Motijheel, Banani and other areas with offices, shopping centers and business houses. The picture shows pedestrians passing through illegally parked vehicles on the pavement at Paltan intersection, opposite Paltan police box.

BTTB fails to reap benefit

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snapped accidentally. BTTB officials believe that the scheme would come in effect within the third quarter of this year.

According to BTTB sources, the highest bandwidth used by an ISP each month is 40 Mbps -- allocated to Global Connections Ltd. Bandwidth used by other ISPs ranges from 15 Mbps to 30 Mbps. Among their users, Grameen Phone Ltd uses the highest bandwidth -- 55 Mbps.

With their limited capacity, the ISPs are having a hard time coping with the ever-increasing demand for internet service.

Interestingly, most ISPs are more or less using the catchy phrase of 'high-speed submarine cable connection' to entice new subscribers. But in reality, their general users are putting up with inconsistent surfing speeds caused

by poor allocated bandwidth, erratic connectivity along with ridiculous charges.

Tanvir Karim, a visiting business student from Australia, was trying to connect to the university website to register for his courses for the next semester. After several attempts, he managed to access the university website only to get disconnected moments after -- while he was in the middle of signing up for his desired courses.

Karim slammed his desk with agony as he would have to redo the entire process.

"It is really frustrating to use the internet [here in Bangladesh] to upload or download files as it is more likely that I will have to redo the process several times.

University applications or updates on reading materials for exams are usually large document files and take longer to upload or download with this sluggish internet speed," said an annoyed Tanvir Karim.

Connectivity with the submarine cable made everyone believe that it would make internet facilities available for all at a reasonably lower price, but frustratingly, the price has remained mostly unchanged. Experts believe that absence of any official pricing policy for the ISPs is the reason why the prices did not change.

Although BTTB officials admitted that pricing policy for the use of internet services is essential, they failed to provide any information on when they would introduce such a policy.

ISPs on the other hand also complained that BTTB does not provide any technical assistance after office hours. Moreover, BTTB does not even have a help line to provide assistance to ISPs.

Contaminated water

FROM PAGE 21
In Nurjahan Road, Bashbari and Shahjahan Road areas have been most affected.

In Mirpur, the households in sections 10, 11, 111/2 and in some parts of New Eskaton have been frequently receiving tap water that reeks of sewage and chemicals.

"Wasa experts tested our water and said they found nothing wrong, though gooey black substances coagulate at the bottom of every bucket of water we collect from our taps, and on and off, there is a sort of rotten smell," said Tasneem Binte Rahman of New Eskaton, who brings drums of water from her mother's house for drinking and cooking every day.

Govindo Shil, who lives in Section-12 of Mirpur, said, "For 15 days now we have been continuously getting tap water mixed with sewage including human excrement. Although we have complained twice, Wasa has not yet sent anyone to resolve our problem."

Officials from Wasa drainage division denied the possibility of sewage from their lines leaking into the water pipes, and offered the explanation that some houses had used cheap flexible pipes to connect their water supply, illegally in many cases, and that these pipes are easily infiltrated by sewage when they pass through the sewerage canals.

The Wasa water division officials said that they were working to fix the problem, but the job was difficult and time-consuming.

BDR fair price

FROM PAGE 21
"Now-a-days, we are going out after midnight around the city to select sites for our shops, which would be completed before the Ramadan to enable citizens to buy commodities at fair prices," said Ahmed.

Ahmed said that they would set up shops over an area of around 4,000 square feet at Eidgah and convert the remainder of the approximately 20,000-square foot plot into a park, where benches, and a coffee shop would be set up.

The structure, which has not been constructed with involvement of any architect at Dhanmondi Eidgah, will remain as it is for time being for next six months, Ahmed said on 11 July.

"Later, we will reconstruct it," he said.

Public Works Department has earmarked the spot for a public park. Its design was finalised last year but delay in getting allocation has held back initiation of work. The Department of Arboriculture is supposed to do the job.

The 350-year-old Dhanmondi Eid congregation is one of the two similar Eidgahs built in mid 17th century during the Mughal period in the subcontinent. The other Eidgah can be found in Delhi.

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