

# Buyers' rights to stay less protected

## Govt unlikely to ratify real estate ordinance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is unlikely to approve the real estate development and management ordinance promulgated during the tenure of immediate past caretaker government to protect the rights of buyers and reduce their sufferings.

Sources said if the government ratifies the ordinance, then the provision of criminal offence preventing real estate owners from deceiving the buyers will not be included.

"Ordinances relating to finance, elections, and law and order will get priority. The Real estate development and management ordinance does not fall within the priorities," said Awami League lawmaker Suranjit Sen Gupta, a member of the 15-member committee formed by the government to scrutinise the ordinances.

"The caretaker government cannot formulate so many ordinances that are illegal and unconstitutional. The government will think later whether any law is necessary in this regard or not," said lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon while talking to The Daily Star.

The ordinance was promulgated in December last year with a view to protect the rights of buyers and reduce their sufferings following demands from different quarters.

The ordinance includes the provision of criminal offence if a buyer and a real estate owner fail to resolve a dispute between them due to deception by the real estate owner. It also terms deception by any real estate owner as a criminal offence if the real estate owner fails to resolve the matter either through negotiation or arbitration.

According to the ordinance, real estate owners shall be punished with imprisonment of maximum three years or fine if they do their business without registration and government's approval or they are found cheating the buyers.

To protect the buyers from deception, the ordinance also set some conditions for the real estate owners while doing business.

The ordinance also mentioned that a real estate businessman could not hand over a plot or flat before a housing project is approved by the government.

Once the price of a plot or a flat is paid, the real estate owner will be bound to hand over the property in next three months or repay the money to the buyer if there is any discrepancy in the size of the plot or flat.

The ordinance also made it mandatory for the real estate businessmen to complete construction in accordance with the deadline mentioned in the agreement. Real estate businessmen will have to renovate his construction if required because of faulty construction within two years from the date of handing over the property.

Every real estate owner will have to maintain the construction for one year after handing over the property to buyer, according to the ordinance.

It is also mandatory for the real estate businessmen to follow structural design and architecture in accordance with the building construction rules and Bangladesh National Building Code. A design also cannot be changed without the approval from the authorities concerned.



An elderly man reads about the author of a book while a youngster (not in picture) takes a peek inside a book about popular cartoon characters Tom & Jerry at a stall of Amar Ekushey Boli Mela yesterday.

# Stimulus bill 'major milestone on road to recovery': Obama

AP, Washington

President Barack Obama, savouring his first major victory in Congress, said Saturday that newly passed \$787 billion economic stimulus legislation marks a "major milestone on our road to recovery."

Speaking in his weekly radio and Internet address, Obama said, "I will sign this legislation into law shortly, and we'll begin making the immediate investments necessary to put people back to work doing the work America needs done."

At the same time, he cautioned, "This historic step

won't be the end of what we do to turn our economy around, but rather the beginning. The problems that led us into this crisis are deep and widespread, and our response must be equal to the task."

The bill passed Congress on Friday on party-line votes, allowing Democratic leaders to deliver on their promise of clearing the legislation by mid-February.

Obama "now has a bill to sign that will create millions of good-paying jobs and help families and businesses stay afloat financially," said Sen. Max Baucus, a Montana Democrat who was a leading architect of the measure.

"It will shore up our schools and roads and bridges, and infuse cash into new sectors like green energy and technology that will sustain our economy for the long term," he added in a statement.

Hours earlier, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell offered a different prediction for a bill he said was loaded with wasteful spending.

"A stimulus bill that was supposed to be timely, targeted and temporary is none of the above," he said in remarks on the Senate floor. "And this means Congress is about to approve a stimulus that's unlikely to have much

stimulative effect."

In a struggle lasting several weeks, lawmakers in the two political parties both emphasized they wanted to pass legislation to revitalize the economy and ease frozen credit markets. But the plan that the administration and its allies eventually came up drew the support of only three Republicans in Congress - moderate Sens. Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

Their support was critical, though, in helping the bill squeak through the Senate on a vote of 60-38, precisely the number needed for passage. Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown cast the 60th vote in favor in a nearly deserted Senate, hours after the roll call began. He arrived after a flight aboard a government plane from Ohio, where he was mourning the death of his mother earlier in the week.

The House vote was 246-183. The legislation, among the costliest ever considered in Congress, provides billions of dollars to aid victims of the recession through unemployment benefits, food stamps, medical care, job retraining and more. Tens of billions are tucked for the states to offset cuts they might otherwise have to make in aid to schools and local governments, and there is more than \$48 billion for transportation projects such as road and bridge construction, mass transit and high-speed rail.

Democrats said the bill's tax cuts would help 95 percent of all Americans, much of the relief in the form of a break of \$400 for individuals and \$800 for couples. At the insistence of the White House, people who do not earn enough money to owe income taxes are eligible, an attempt to offset the payroll taxes they pay.

In a bow to political reality, lawmakers included, \$70 billion to shelter upper middle-class and wealthier taxpayers from an income tax increase that would otherwise hit them, a provision that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said would do relatively little to create jobs.

Also included were funds for two of Obama's initiatives, the expansion of computerized information technology in the health care industry and billions to create so-called green jobs the administration says will begin reducing the country's dependence on foreign oil.

Friday's events capped an early period of accomplishment for the Democrats, who won control of the White House and expanded their majorities in Congress in last fall's elections. Since taking office on Jan. 20, the president has signed legislation extending government-financed health care to millions of lower-income children who lack it, a bill that President George W. Bush twice vetoed. He also has placed his signature on a measure making it easier for workers to sue their employers for alleged job discrimination, effectively overturning a ruling by the Supreme Court's conservative majority.

# Corrupt unionism starts

FROM PAGE 1

"The situation is taking a worrying turn day by day as the group claiming themselves as Awami League supporters are becoming desperate to establish authority in the organisation," says a TGTDC official wishing not to be identified.

It is learned that they have submitted a list of people to the authorities for transfer, he said, adding, "We are very concerned that anything dangerous may happen anytime if such trends continue."

Activities of unionists came to a halt during the last caretaker government's rule as the army-led Task Force against Serious Crimes and Corruption launched massive drives against the TGTDC staffs involved in illegal activities including meter tampering and other irregularities.

Many of the supervisors, meter readers and other staffs were transferred to different districts following discovery of astonishing level of corruption.

Some of them have eaten away the Titas revenue and become millionaires through illegal connection, tampering with bills, and depriving the government of crores of taka in revenue income. Their stories of becoming millionaires were also appeared on different newspapers.

Talking to The Daily Star, many officials said they did not face interruption in their work in the last two years.

System loss in the state-run organisation, which has its franchise area in greater Dhaka, greater Mymensingh and Brahmanbaria, decreased significantly during the caretaker rule. It earned Tk 4,410 crore revenue by selling 12,239 million cubic metres gas in 2007-08 fiscal year, according to the annual report of 2007-2008. The revenue in 2006-07 was Tk 3,840 crore and Tk 3,408 crore in 2005-06.

The corrupt nexus of some Titas unionists and officials, meter readers and industrialists annually stole gas worth around Tk 200 crore for many years. Such pilferage made many petty

meter readers and staffs overnight millionaires and some of them even became industrialists themselves.

With the new government coming to power, the group that took advantages during the BNP-led alliance government started returning to office and giving the impression they belong to ruling AL and had always belonged to it, the sources point out.

Though the corrupt trade union's base is small in number and has no support among the employees and workers, it is trying to establish authority at TGTDC to protect its illegal mechanism of plundering, they continue.

"A CBA election has become urgent to end such corrupt trade union practices in Titas. If the CBA is elected properly, healthy trade unionism will return," says an official.

Lawmaker Israfil Alam, who won from Naogaon-6, joined Titas as a junior meter reader in 1987 and became assistant general secretary of Titas Gas Karmachari Union, an affiliate of the AL's labour front Jatiya Sramik League. Later, he was expelled from the union due to his alleged link to corrupt activities, the sources add.

But Israfil managed to convince a section of employees and some leaders of Sramik League to form the convener committee in which he was made the adviser.

There are four registered trade unions in TGTDC. Of them, the oldest Titas Gas Karmachari Union is backed by AL, while the rest -- Titas Gas Sramik O Karmachari Union, Titas Gas Employees Union and Titas Gas Jatiyatabadi Sramik O Karmachari Union -- are backed by BNP.

The sources add had the CBA election taken place, the pro-AL trade union would have sweepingly won as it has the biggest popularity base. But the election could not take place even during the past AL rule due to a pending case and other complications.

Contacted, Abdul Motaleb Hawlader, convener of 'Titas Gas Sramik League', dis-

missed the allegation of staging showdown saying some leaders in connivance with BNP-backed unions are doing it.

Jatiya Sramik League approved us with a view to restoring democracy in Titas as the AL-backed unionists were faced with different conspiracies during the BNP rule. We just follow the directives of Sramik League," he added.

Asked whether he belongs to any trade union, he said he belongs to Titas Gas Employees Union, which is backed by BNP.

On allegation of the Naogaon lawmaker's patronisation, he said this is not true and Israfil does not belong to the committee any more since he is an MP.

Talking to The Daily Star, lawmaker Israfil claimed none of the allegations are true. "I have little interest in the organisation as most of people working there are bad in nature," he said.

He also claimed he worked in TGTDC for a short period of time and left the organisation soon after being released from jail on bail in connection with a case filed for murder of a TGTDC employee named Bellal Hossain Bepari in 1992.

According to official documents, he resigned from his job as a supervisor in 2001 for taking part in the eighth parliamentary elections.

"None came to me for any kind of cooperation and even I don't have any scope to cooperate anyone since I left the job long ago. I have got no business there," he added.

On the convener committee, he said Jatiya Sramik League formed the committee to fill the vacuum of party activities, as there were no party activities at that time. "I was made an adviser of the committee, but the post was nothing effective."

Though Israfil denies the allegation of meddling with Titas affairs, after he became an MP he made several phone calls to the Titas high officials saying if anyone creates any problem, he would like to help, sending

them the message that he has influence and something to do with Titas.

Israfil was given protection by some pro-BNP unionists during the last BNP rule and now they want a return from him to make Titas their stronghold once again, the sources add.

## SSC exams

FROM PAGE 1  
exams in 1,888 centres under Dhaka, Rajshahi, Comilla, Jessore, Chittagong, Barisal, Sylhet, Dinajpur, Madrasa, and the technical education boards.

Seven more centres were also set up in foreign countries for expatriate examinees.

The number of candidates for SSC and equivalent certificates is 50,183 more than last year's.

The Dhaka board has the highest number of 2,40,198 examinees while the Sylhet board has the lowest number of candidates, which is 37,544.

Around 8.01 lakh students of 15,216 high schools will take the SSC exams under eight general education boards, 1.86 lakh students of 9,424 madrasas will sit for the equivalent Dakhil examinations, and 75,057 students of 1,599 technical institutes will appear at the SSC vocational exams.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid has recently said that the exams this year would be free of unfair means and any attempts to adopt such dishonest means will be handled sternly.

The authorities have taken measures to provide sufficient security and ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity at the exam centres, sources said.

Some 2.4 lakh students are sitting for the exams from the Dhaka Board, 1.14 lakh under Rajshahi Board, 88,523 under Comilla Board, 1.07 lakh under Jessore Board, 62,037 in Chittagong, 48,808 in Barisal and 1.02 lakh in Dinajpur, according to the education ministry.

This is the first ever SSC examinations being held under the Dinajpur board.

Under the Madrasa board 1.86 lakh students are sitting for the Dakhil exams and 75,057 for the SSC vocational exams under the technical education board.

Another 254 students are sitting for the exams from seven overseas centres.

**Bangladesh Bridge Authority**  
**Setu Bhaban**  
New Airport Road, Banani  
Dhaka-1212  
Website: www.bba.gov.bd

**Invitation of Re-Tender**

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Communications (MoC).
2	Agency	Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA).
3	Procuring entity name	Deputy Director (Road), BBA, Dhaka.
4	Procuring entity code	N/A
5	Procuring entity district	Dhaka
6	Invitation for	Installation of KPI Security Fencing of Bangabandhu Bridge Area, Bhuapur, Tangail.
7	Invitation Ref No.	Tech/Jb-22/2007-135
8	Date	February 08, 2009.
<b>KEY INFORMATION</b>		
9	Procurement method	Open tendering method.
<b>FUNDING INFORMATION</b>		
10	Budget and source of funds	GoB/BBA
11	Development Partners (if applicable)	Nil
<b>PARTICULAR INFORMATION</b>		
12	Project/program code (if applicable)	Not applicable.
13	Project/program name (if applicable)	Not applicable.
14	Tender package No.	1 (one)
15	Tender package name	Installation of KPI Security Fencing of Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Area, Bhuapur, Tangail, during the year 2008-2009.
16	Tender publication date	Date: February 15, 2009 Time:
17	Tender last selling date	Date: March 09, 2009 Time: During office hours.
18	Tender closing date and time	Date: March 11, 2009 Time: 12:00 noon.
19	Tender opening date and time	Date: March 11, 2009 Time: 12:30pm.
20	Name & address of the office	
	- Selling tender document	Assistant Director, Accounts Section, BBA, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka.
	- Receiving tender documents	Conference Room, BBA, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.
	- Opening tender documents	Conference Room, BBA, Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.
21	Place/date time of pre-tender meeting	March 08, 2009 at 11:30am Chief Engineer's Office Room, BBA, Setu Bhaban, Banani, Dhaka.
<b>INFORMATION FOR TENDERER</b>		
22	Eligibility of tenderer	i) Potential tenderers who have experience in similar or civil construction type of works: at least 1(one) No. of value not less than Tk 30 (thirty) lakh during the last 5 (five) years. ii) The intending tenderers shall have to apply through their letterhead to the Deputy Director (Road), BBA to obtain permission for the issuance of the tender documents.
23	Brief description of the works	Installation of KPI Security Fencing of Bangabandhu Bridge Area, Bhuapur, Tangail.
24	Brief description of related services	Nil
	Lot No.	Identification of lot
		Location
		Tender price
		Tender security amount (Tk)
		Completion time in weeks/months
25	1	Installation of KPI Security Fencing of Bangabandhu Bridge Area, Bhuapur, Tangail
		1000.00
		1,90,000.00
		06 (six) months.
<b>PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS</b>		
26	Name of official inviting tender	Md. Liaquat Ali.
27	Designation of official inviting tender	Deputy Director (Road & Bridge), BBA.
28	Address of official inviting tender	Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), Setu Bhaban, New Airport Road, Banani, Dhaka-1212.
29	Contact details of official inviting tender	1. No.: 8854720 Fax No.: 9888414
30	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders.	

**Md Liaquat Ali**  
Deputy Director (Roads & Bridge)

GD-806

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