

ACC to investigate BRTA corruption

STAFF CORRESPONDENT The Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday formed a three-member committee to investigate corruption in Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

will particularly investigate the processes of car registration and issuance driving license, fitness certificate, and route permit.

Deadline for the committee to submit its report is April 30 this year.

The ACC also asked the body to examine whether the recommendations the commission had made earlier to curb corruption in BRTA has been implemented.

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Meanwhile, ACC Assistant Director (admin) Hritik Saha filed a case with Kafrul Police Station yesterday against some unnamed BRTA officials on charge of forging registration number of the car used by the commission's chairman.



Sewerage works in progress in the city ahead of the monsoon. The photo was taken at Maniknagar yesterday.

Power to get

FROM PAGE 20 kilowatt-hour (kWh), 19.22 percent for 101-300kWh and 20 percent for 301-500 kWh and above at domestic level.

It also proposed an increase in the minimum monthly bill from existing Tk 65 to Tk 105 for households and also a rise from Tk 6 to Tk 8 in service charge and from Tk 12 to Tk 20 in demand charge.

The board proposed 10 percent tariff hike for the commercial and charitable users while 9.93 percent for irrigation.

Before placing the proposal, REB Chairman Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam said the bundle supply tariff for its 70 Palli Bidyut Samity (rural electricity cooperatives) was increased several times in 2002-11 but the retail tariff was unchanged.

In February, the retail price was increased by 5 percent on an average,

exempting the irrigation sector, charitable organisations and the consumers who consume less than 100 kWh.

The REB in its proposal said the operating deficit at the 70 cooperatives is Tk 485 crore in the year 2010-2011. Once the proposed tariff hike comes into effect, there will be a surplus of Tk 101.97 crore even after meeting the operating costs.

BERC member Md Emdadul Haque said the commission has taken the proposal into cognisance and fixed April 28 for the hearing.

BERC Chairman Syed Yusuf Hossain said the government and the BERC has a responsibility towards the consumers and the tariff must be set considering the consumers' ability and also the management efficiency of the Palli Bidyut Samity.

Hashem family

FROM PAGE 1 Mahmud, Aziz al Masud, Shawkat Aziz, Ashfaq Aziz and Rubel Aziz, the company's Accounts Officer Mozammel Haque and General Manager (finance and accounts) Peyar Ahmed.

Of Hashem's sons, Rubel is the company's incumbent managing director and the others are directors.

Earlier, defence lawyer Sanaullah Miah submitted a petition saying that the accused held a meeting with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) on April 6 to settle the matter. But the NBR fixed June 6 for further discussion.

So, the hearing of yesterday's charge framing should be postponed, Sanaullah said in the petition.

The court, however, framed charges saying that if the accused settle the issue with the NBR on June 6, the case will be withdrawn.

The NBR filed the tax evasion case on February 27. After scrutinising documents relating to tax evasion, the court issued arrest warrants against the accused.

In the case statement, NBR Deputy Tax Commissioner Ayesha Siddiqua Shelly said the accused concealed information of around Tk 597 crore income from the company in their tax returns for fiscal years 2005-06 and 2007-08. Moreover, they provided false information about the company's expenditure.

Meanwhile, the same court charged Hashem in another tax evasion case.

SANITATION CONFERENCE

Saarc nations to form nat'l body

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The South Asian nations, in the 4th Saarc sanitation conference that concluded in Colombo yesterday, have decided to establish a national body in each member country to tackle the sanitation challenge in the region.

Some 45 percent of South Asians still defecate in open spaces, and over 700 million people in the region remain out of sanitation coverage with a vast majority in India.

The countries also signed the Colombo Declaration at the end of the 4th South Asian Conference on Sanitation (SACOSAN IV), according to official sources.

In the declaration, the Saarc states decided to "develop time-bound plans and to allocate and mobilise resources for delivering on all the previous SACOSAN commitments."

The delegates also came up with three important issues -- the need for dedicated funding, increasing available funding, and using the available funds within stipulated timeframe.

The delegations from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal,

Pakistan and Sri Lanka participated in the conference held on April 4-7.

Over 300 professionals representing government, civil society, and private sector of Saarc countries attended it.

The objective of the SACOSAN was to tackle the sanitation and hygiene challenges in South Asian region. A five-year drive for sustainable sanitation will be its ultimate aim.

The Colombo Declaration on sanitation has set to implement government and private projects to meet the challenges. Sanitation and hygiene projects set out in the previous declarations such as Dhaka-2003, Islamabad-2006, and New Delhi-2008 will be implemented as a joint mechanism together with the Colombo Declaration 2011.

Barbara Evans Peal, spokesperson of SACOSAN Water, Sanitation, and Development, said Sri Lanka is relatively in better place than other South Asian countries.

Bangladesh and Pakistan also have had significant growth on sanitation, she said, adding that Sri Lanka has already achieved its MDG targets and has committed to overcome the sanitation problems.

Indian Navy wants to assist in disaster management

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Navy wants to assist Bangladesh in the field of disaster management, said Indian Navy officials here yesterday.

"Bangladesh has been a victim of cyclones in its coastal areas. We are also looking forward to strengthen ties by offering them our assistance in disaster management," said one of the officials.

Aiming to enhance defence ties with Bangladesh, Navy Chief Admiral Nirmal Verma is on a five-day visit to Bangladesh where he will attend the raising day ceremony of the Bangladesh Navy.

A naval tanker INS Airavat was also sent to Bangladesh to participate in the function.

The ship will showcase its capabilities in disaster management and relief operations during cyclones and other natural calamities.

Saima for innovation to combat autism

NEW YORK, Bss

Autism expert Saima Wazed Hossain has appealed for an intensified awareness campaign along with innovative and sustainable programmes based on local culture and available resources to combat the neurobiological disorder.

Speaking at panel discussion at the United Nations headquarters here on Wednesday, Saima Wazed, the daughter of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and chairperson of Bangladesh National Advisory Committee on Autism, also sought media supports to create awareness about autism.

The UN Department of Public Information (DPI), US-based development organisation Autism Speaks and United States Mission in collaboration with Bangladesh Permanent Mission in the UN organised the discussion "Solving the Autism Public Health Puzzle: Regional and International Collaboration."

"We (in Bangladesh) aim to make the autism affected person to a productive one and establish them in society by extending cooperation and ensuring coordination among the ministries of education, health and social welfare," Saima said.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon opened the discussion that coincided with the 4th annual United Nations World Autism Awareness Day.

He called for working unitedly to create awareness about autism issue.

Ahead of the panel discussion, Saima Wazed joined a luncheon with permanent representatives of SAARC nations in the UN and the other panelists when she informed them about the scheduled three-day regional autism conference in Dhaka from July 26, this year.

HIV awareness among RMG workers vital: Minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday said awareness on HIV/AIDS should be increased among transport and garment workers, as they live close together.

He also stressed the need for open discussion on AIDS to aware people, as the number HIV patients is increasing day by day despite the number remaining low now.

Shahjahan was addressing as the chief guest a roundtable organised by Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation at BIAM Foundation in the city yesterday.

The government is aware about HIV and trying to ensure healthcare facility for all through community clinic across the country, said the minister.

Lawmaker Israfi Alam said the number of HIV/AIDS patients in the countries surrounding Bangladesh remains high and it is increasing.

"We are, therefore, under high risk considering the situation."

The roundtable attended by around 100 labour leaders from across the country was presided over by Abdus Salam Khan, chairman of the labour foundation.

Labour leader Wilma Roje, ILO programme officer Shahbuddin Khan, Jatiya Sramik League president Abdul Matin, Trade Union Kendra acting president Lutfor Rahman Khan, and BLF secretary general ZM Kamrul Anam also addressed the roundtable.



Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, third from left, addressing a discussion on HIV/AIDS at BIAM Foundation in the city yesterday.

Plot hatched in Hawa Bhaban

FROM PAGE 1 Sources in the CID said in the first confessional statement Hannan admitted carrying out the attack but in the new statement he said the attack was planned in meetings held at the Hawa Bhaban.

Hawa Bhaban was widely regarded as the alternative powerhouse of the then BNP-led coalition government.

Hannan said the meetings were held in presence of some then BNP ministers and businessmen close to BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami top brass.

However, the CID sources declined to disclose names of the people Hannan mentioned.

Hannan said fugitive Maulana Tajuddin, brother of detained former BNP deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu, had coordinated the attackers and the people of different agencies who aided them.

In the first confessional statement, Hannan said they had smuggled in the grenades from Afghanistan, where Hannan had joined the Mujahideens to fight against the Soviets in the 1980s.

nades came from Pakistan via Chittagong.

In the first statement, Hannan said they planned the attack in a Badda house in the capital a few days ahead. He had said around 12 militants carried out the attack.

He had said they wanted to kill Sheikh Hasina because she had slapped a ban on religious edict when she was in power, the sources added.

CID Special Superintendent Abdul Kahar Akand, investigation officer of the case, declined to make any comment on the new statement of Hannan.

So far, 12 accused have given confessional statements admitting their involvement in the attack. They are Mufti Hannan, his brother Mohibullah alias Mafizur Rahman alias Ovi, Sharif Shahidul Islam alias Bipul, Maulana Abu Sayeed alias Abu Zafar, Abul Kalam Azad alias Bulbul, Arif Hossain, Rafiqul Islam Sabuj and Jahangir Alam, Islamic Democratic Party leader Sheikh Abdus Salam, Pakistan based LeT leader Abdul Majid alias Yusuf Butt, LeT leader Abdul Malek alias

Golam Mohammad and Abdur Rouf.

The eight absconding accused are Pintu's brothers Maulana Tajuddin and Maulana Liton, Anisul Mursalin and his brother Mahibul Muttakin, Iqbal, Maulana Abu Bakar alias Selim Howlader, Jahangir Alam Badar and Khalilur Rahman.

On June 11, 2008, the CID submitted a charge sheet accusing 22 people, including top Huji leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and BNP leader and former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu.

But the court asked police for further investigation into the attack to find out the sources of the grenades used in the attack, the suppliers of the grenades and also to unfold the mystery behind defusing the unexploded grenades soon after recovery.

During the rule of BNP-led coalition government, the then investigators allegedly staged a drama to mislead the investigation and protect the real culprits.

Advertisement for Mujibbojda's 92nd anniversary celebration, featuring a portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and text in Bengali.

Advertisement for UCB (United Commercial Bank) in remembrance of Late Humayun Zahir, featuring a portrait of the late founder and text in Bengali.