GOING TOUGH AGAINST OVERCHARGING

1) A mobile court checks whether passengers of this bus were overcharged in front of Tejgaon College in the city yesterday. 2) The court fines offenders. 3) A Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation bus was stopped on allegation of overcharging but later released. 4) Bus passengers take back bus fares to board another. 5) This bus attempted to swerve away when the mobile court asked it to stop but ended up ramming into the motorcycle in front.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Garbage piles up in Ctg as tender game goes on

Bidding for buying 2 excavators cancelled twice for 'no good reasons'

Prabir Barua Chowdhury, *Ctg*

The project for purchasing two long-boom excavators to clean up the wastage from congested area of canal and drain sides has been delayed by two years due to cancellation of tenders two times "without any grounds".

The ministry of environment and forests sanctioned the project for Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) in 2009.

The CCC and the Department of Environment (DoE) called tenders for three times in this regard, rejecting both the lowest bidder companies for three times in this regard, rejecting both the lowest bidder companies without showing any cause in first two tenders.

Due to absence of long-boom excavators, congested areas in city cannot be cleaned properly.

Officials said the CCC has a 32-feet-long excavator, which was bought from a second hand. This excavator is not capable of cleaning the wastages in congested area of canal and drain sides because of its small size.

To solve the problem, the city corporation decided to buy two 60-feet long-boom excavators capable of cleaning one side standing from the other side.

Sources in the CCC and the DoE said earlier the environment ministry sanctioned Tk 3.97 crore from its climate fund to the CCC to buy the two new excavators.

The city corporation called tender for the first time during the tenure of former mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury in 2010. A construction company, Jubilee Trades, offered the lowest in the bid, they said.

After being elected, Mayor Manjur Alam cancelled the previous tender and handed over the project to the DoE to float tender again.

The DoE said the second tender was floated on January 23 this year, and for some faults of the traders in tender they cancelled it. At last on April 26, the DoE called for tender for the third time. Like previous two times, Jubilee Traders came as the lowest bidder in the last time also.

Jubilee Trades, in last tender, quoted the price Tk 2.88 crore whereas another construction company Crescent Traders quoted the price Tk 3.84. And the rate of M/S Shahbuddin Ahmed Company, the third one, was about Tk 3.85 lakh.

Some CCC officials on condition of anonymity alleged the CCC authorities have been showing reluctance to give the construction work to Jubilee Trades "from the very beginning."

Sajjad Hossain, one of the owners of Jubilee Traders, told The Daily Star that "I have fallen victim to revenge as I had good relations with former mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury."

"The CCC and the DoE cancelled my bid without showing any cause although I submitted all documents each time," he said, alleging "One engineer of CCC mechanical department, who is connected with the DoE and very close to the mayor, is obstructing us to get the work."

Denying the allegations, DoE (Chittagong) Director Md Jafor Alam said, "Now technical evaluation committee has been assessing the tender hoping to give the work order within a week."

Asked about the second tender, he said, the DoE had to cancel the tender as they failed to fulfil the DoE's criteria.

Bus passengers made to pay extra fare

Staff Correspondent

Many bus operators continued realising extra fare from passengers yesterday, a day after the communications minister warned that route permit of the errant bus operators would be cancelled.

Seven mobile courts of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and several teams of Dhaka Metropolitan Police caught a number of buses in the city for charging passengers extra fare yesterday.

They fined some buses and dumped several others although the Motor Vehicle Ordinance, 1983 has provisions to cancel route permit of the buses and imprison their owners for not following government-fixed fare.

During the drives, the police teams filed a total of 91 cases against different bus services for not displaying government-approved fare chart and charging extra fare. They also seized eight buses.

The mobile courts realised Tk 32,000 in fine from errant bus services. They also recommended the Regional Transport Committee (RTC) for cancelling route permit of five bus operators.

A magistrate of a mobile court said that they would strictly implement the ordinance from next week. "The authorities can not take tough action against the errant bus services and their owners fearing transport strike," said the magistrate.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samity (DSPS), the largest body of private transport owners in the city, said that no bus service would take extra fare from today.

Speaking at a press briefing in the city, Secretary General of DSPS Khondokar Enayet Ullah admitted that some bus operators are charging extra fare. He also urged the government to take actions against the errant bus owners as per the ordinance.

Owners belonged to the Samity also held a meeting yesterday and agreed to display the new fare chart in each bus counter and not to use old ticket books from today. They also decided not to operate any direct or seating service buses.

"We have formed four monitoring teams who will be deployed on different city routes to check whether the government-approved fare chart is being followed," said Enayet.

Meanwhile, a good number of private buses and minibuses remained out of the city roads yesterday to avoid the government drives.

MiG-29 graft case verdict on June 1

Court Correspondent

A Dhaka court yesterday fixed June 1 for the delivery of judgment in the MiG-29 purchase graft case filed in 2001 against five accused including Air Marshal (Retd) Jamal Uddin Ahmed.

On completion of the arguments from the prosecution and defence, Judge Mohammad Abdul Majid of the Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday set the date for the verdict.

The court had earlier recorded statements of 34 prosecution witnesses including the complainant and investigation officer of the case.

On August 20, 2008, a special court dealing with graft cases framed charges against Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and five others.

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

Risking the threat of accidents, vehicles take a U-turn despite the presence of a traffic sign saying not to make U-turn at Moghbazar Rail Crossing on Dhaka-Tongi road in the city yesterday.

Housemaid, worker 'commit suicide'

Staff Correspondent

A female house help and a garment worker allegedly committed suicide in the city's Sabujbagh and Darussalam yesterday.

Police recovered the hanging body of the teenage house help from a flat in the city's Sabujbagh area.

The deceased Setu Mandol, 13, daughter of Khidish Mandol of Kotalipara of Gopalganj, was employed for the past ten months at Subodh Mandol's house in East Basabo.

Meanwhile, the female garment worker allegedly committed suicide by hanging from a ceiling fan at her house in the city's Darussalam area.

The deceased Suraia Begum, 20, wife of Kamrul Hasan of Second Colony of the area, committed suicide following a row with her husband, said OC Abdul Malek of Darussalam Police Station.

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