

Bribery rampant in land offices

TIB study says service seekers have to pay Tk 100 to Tk 20 lakh in bribes; gov't initiatives to check graft inadequate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Massive corruption prevails in the land offices and people have to pay bribes starting from Tk 100 to Tk 20 lakh in every step to get land related services, according to a report of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) reveals.
Though the government in the last five years has taken some positive initiatives but there is a lot more work to be done to check graft and ensure hassle-free services in the offices, said the report titled "Land Management and Services: Challenge of Good Governance and Way Forward."
Corruption and lack of good governance in the sector have a long term social impact as still 60 percent of all pending civil cases -- meaning around 18 lakh -- are related to land, added the report presented in a press conference yesterday.
The TIB also found sometimes influen-

tial political leaders make underhand dealings with land officials to record khas land, vested and abandoned properties or properties of courts of wards in their name.
"There is nothing new to say about the corruption in land sector. Graft in land related services has taken an institutional shape," said Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of TIB.
Though the government has initiated digital land management, still a lot more is needed to be done, he said.
The TIB boss explained: people have to follow eight steps for land registration and another 10 steps for mutation of a land. "But we have checked that it is possible to make the process easy. Once the process becomes easy, corruption will also come down."
The watchdog has shared the report with the top officials of the ministry of land and found a positive attitude of the ministry

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It is a rare scene on the city streets that a monkey takes over the job of a driver's assistance. When a rickshaw or any other non-motorised vehicles comes in the way of this human hauler, the animal starts screaming and grimacing. However, animal rights activist might bring allegations of cruelty to animal as the monkey is chained from inside the cabin. The photo was taken in front of Bangladesh Bank in the capital recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Scrap section 57 of ICT Act

Editors' Council urges gov't
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Editors' Council yesterday demanded immediate scrapping of section 57 (1) and (2) of the Information and Communication Technology Act.
It made the demand in a proposal adopted unanimously at a meeting chaired by Editors' Council President and Samakal

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PIPELINE IN BAY FOR OIL IMPORT Cost up 5 times in 5yrs

SHARIER KHAN
The government is set to sign a contract with a Chinese company to build a 110km oil pipeline in the Bay of Bengal to facilitate smooth unloading of oil from large ships in deep sea to storage facilities in mainland.
Presently, large oil importing ships anchor in deep sea and smaller ships unload and bring the oil to storage facilities of Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL) in Chittagong. This process called

"lightering" is an expensive operation and it takes 11 days to unload 1 lakh tonnes of oil. Other than time and cost, a lot of oil is systematically stolen during the process, officials say.
But if a pipeline known as Single Point Mooring (SPM) is installed to replace lightering, it would take just two days to empty a vessel carrying such a volume of oil. This will cut down cost and stop pilferage.
A commercial contract with China Petroleum Pipeline Bureau (CPPB)

following an unsolicited negotiation may be signed during the upcoming Chinese prime minister's visit in September. A memorandum of understanding with CPPB was signed in September last year.
The CPPB is a large Chinese pipeline company that has wide experience in installing pipeline on land. It, however, lacks the experience of installing pipelines in the sea.
However, the cost of this important

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DEATH IN 'SHOOTOUT' BCL leader's brother sues 3 Rab officials

Suranjit critical of 'crossfire'
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The family of Arzu Miah, a Bangladesh Chhatra League leader accused of killing a teenager and later killed in a "gunfight" with Rab, filed a murder case with a Dhaka court yesterday accusing three Rab officials.



Arzu Miah

The Rab officials are Lt Col SM Masud Rana, commanding officer of Rab-2; Shahidur Rahman, deputy assistant director of Rab-2's Shia Masjid camp; and Inspector Wahid of the same camp.
Arzu's elder brother Masud Rana in the case filed with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, also mentioned one Ratan, a Rab source, and three to four unnamed people.
A magistrate was to pass an order on August 25 whether the murder charges brought against the Rab officials would be taken into cognisance, said court sources.
Contacted, Rab Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Mufti Mahmud Khan said he had heard about the allegation raised before a court against some Rab personnel.
"It is a legal process. It starts and hopefully will end through appropriate legal procedure," he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.
Arzu was the prime accused in a case filed with Hazaribagh Police Station in connection with the killing of 16-year-old Raja Miah. Raja was beaten to death allegedly by Arzu and his associates on August 17 over claims that he had stolen a laptop and mobile phones.
Arzu, 28, was killed in what the elite force termed "gunfight" in the capital's Hazaribagh on Tuesday.
Four leaders and activists of the AL and its associated bodies died in "shootouts" with the police and Rab between August 18 and August 21, much to the ruling party's concern.
Awami League senior lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta

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IGP defends police over 'gunfights'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The inspector general of police yesterday defended the incidents of "gunfights" involving law enforcers, a day after an Awami League lawmaker hit out at Rab over the killing of Hazaribagh Chhatra League President Arzu Miah in "crossfire".



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Even the barbed-wire fence can't stop them from illegally crossing the streets. Though there is a footbridge nearby, two pedestrians attempt to slip through the gaps in barbed wires on the road divider of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in the capital's Farmgate yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

TOP! QUOTE

"It's the government that should say why it is applying crossfire to maintain law and order. These [law and order issues] will have to be tackled through ideals and principles."

AL LAWMAKER
SURANJIT SENGUPTA
AFTER A MEETING ON PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW

Mass graves found again in Malaysia

24 bodies believed to be of trafficking victims from Bangladesh and Myanmar

STAR REPORT
Three months after the migrant crisis in Asia, Malaysian authorities on Saturday found 24 bodies in mass graves near the country's border with Thailand.
The remains believed to be of Rohingyas from Myanmar and Bangladeshis fallen victim to human trafficking were recovered from 19 graves in Wang Burma hill area of Malaysia's northern state Perlis, reported Malaysian newspaper The Star yesterday.
They were suspected to have died of abuse or malnourishment.
The heavily forested Thai-Malaysian border has been a transit point for human traffickers bringing people to Southeast Asia by boats from Myanmar and Bangladesh.
Migrants are often held for ransom at squalid detention

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