



The same old complaints, same answers

Service-seekers at public hearing tell BRTA about their harassment

PANKAG KARMAKAR

Zahidul Islam bought a used motorcycle and went to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority's (BRTA) Mirpur office in September to have the ownership of the vehicle transferred to his name.

The resident of the capital's Pallabi area completed some paper work that day and BRTA officials asked him to return on October 31 for completing the rest of work.

As per their instructions, Zahidul went to the BRTA's office on that day but was told his application and other necessary documents were missing.

"Then I started moving from door to door of different officers to find the application. In the last one and half months, I had gone to the office over a dozen times. But I had no result," he said.

"Finally, I contacted a deputy director today [Wednesday] who helped me to file a fresh application," he said while describing to the BRTA chairman the sufferings he had endured. He was speaking at a public hearing organised by the BRTA at its Mirpur office yesterday.

Like him, over a dozen people went there with an array of complaints on BRTA's poor services.

In response to the complaints, BRTA Chairman Nazrul Islam said they would take necessary steps for improving services and consider their suggestions.

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A truck carrying an excess load of pallets gets stuck under a foot bridge in Fakirhat of Chittagong city yesterday. Authorities concerned often turn a blind eye to overloaded trucks and trucks carrying oversized loads which not only increase the chances of accidents but also damage road infrastructure.

PHOTO: MIHAJ UDDIN

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NATORE MP Election code violation, once again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Shafiqul Islam Shimul of Natore met representatives of the local government and party men on Tuesday, and asked them to ensure victory of AL-backed candidates in the district council elections, violating electoral code.

Several people who were at the meeting at Natore Circuit House also said they were told to cast their ballots in favour of the ruling party-backed member candidates.

As per the electoral code of conduct, the Speaker, opposition leader in parliament, ministers, MPs, city corporation mayors and other VIPs enjoying government facilities are not allowed to campaign or take part in other election activities.

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CHEVRON BANGLADESH

Staff benefit dispute could delay its exit

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

The management of Chevron Bangladesh and its 600 employees are at loggerheads over the workers' profit participation fund (WPPF), which may delay the global energy giant's planned exit from Bangladesh.

The conflict has intensified in recent days as the employees have decided to take the issue before a court getting no responses from Chevron on a legal notice served on November 21.

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) and the Department of Labour have also sent letters to Chevron asking it to deposit the money to the welfare fund as per the Bangladesh labour laws.

"They [Chevron] are within the purview of Bangladesh labour law and there is no way to avoid it," said Syed Ahmed, inspector general of DIFE.

He said his office was well aware of the issue and ready to extend all sorts of cooperation to Chevron and its employees.

Syed said earlier the management of Meghnaghat and Haripur power plants refused to pay their employees five percent of their net profit as WPPF, and the issue went to court, which gave a verdict in favour of the employees of the two power plants.

According to the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, any company with a minimum paid-up capital of Tk 1 crore or immovable assets worth minimum Tk 2 crore will have to pay five percent of its net profit to WPPF. Regulations of the law have been formulated and approved in 2013. Since then, some companies, including Grameenphone, have been paying their employees five percent of their net profit each year.

Eighty percent of the fund goes to the employees, 10 percent to the

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Tough year for journos worldwide

Arrests in 2016 at 30-year high: CPI

AGENCIES

More journalists have been jailed this year by governments around the world than at any time in nearly three decades, according to a media rights watchdog.

The report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), a nonprofit group that works to defend press freedoms, says a total of 259 journalists have been jailed in 2016, compared with 199 at the same time last year.

That is the highest number since the group began keeping detailed records in 1990.

The numbers do not include journalists who have disappeared or are held captive by non-state groups.

After Turkey and China, Egypt, with 25 journalists incarcerated, is listed in third place by the report - the CPJ's annual census of imprisoned journalists.

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Lost Vinci drawing found in France



AFP, Paris

A lost drawing by the Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci has been discovered in the papers of a French provincial doctor, a Paris auction house said Tuesday.

The dreamily sensual sketch of Saint Sebastian is thought to be worth around 15 million euros (\$15.8 million) and is an "extraordinary discovery", the Tajan auction house said.

It has been authenticated by the French specialist Patrick de Bayser and Carmen C. Bambach, curator of Renaissance drawings at New York's Metropolitan Museum and a Da Vinci expert, it added.

The dramatic study, which it is thought Leonardo did in his late twenties or early thirties

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2 abducted, killed in Rangamati

A CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Two members of Juba Samiti, an associate organisation of PCJSS (MN Lama) were killed allegedly by UPDF members in Baghaichhari upazila yesterday.

Both of the deceased -- identified as Juddho Chandra Chakma, 35, and Nayanjyoti Chakma, 30 -- were residents of

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PRAYER TIMING DECEMBER 15
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5:20 12:45 3:45 5:22 7:00
JAMAAT 5:55 1:15 4:00 5:25 7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Don't allocate 'scale' as polls symbol

SC writes to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court has asked the Election Commission not to allocate "daripalla" (weighing scale) as polls symbol to any political party or individual candidate in elections.

In a letter sent to the EC yesterday, the apex court said weighing scale is used as the symbol of justice in its monogram. Therefore, the use of weighing scale as the election symbol of any individual or political organisation is unwanted and unexpected.

The SC also asked the commission to cancel the allocation of the symbol if it had already been allocated to any political party or any candidate in any election.

The letter, signed by Abu Syed Diljar Hussain, registrar of the High Court Division of the SC, was sent to the EC yesterday, two days after the decision was made at a full court meeting of the apex court.

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MV Labs-1 sinking near the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port in the Karnaphuli river. Three other lighter vessels also capsized over a span of four hours yesterday at the anchorage of the port and the Sandwip and Hatiya channels of the Bay of Bengal. Officials concerned say dense fog and human error might be behind the incidents in which two crew members also went missing.

PHOTO: STAR

TIME MAGAZINE

Muslim insurgency being waged in Myanmar

STAR DESK

Important new details about the situation in western Myanmar have been revealed through International Crisis Group's interviews with several members of the armed group that carried out attacks against government forces in October and November and also other sources, says a report of Time magazine.

The group, which refers to itself as Harakah al-Yaqin or Faith Movement in Arabic, was established after the deadly riots between Buddhists and Muslims in 2012.

Some 200 people were killed and more than 120,000, almost all of them Muslim were displaced in the conflicts. Most have long been denied citizenship and they face draconian restrictions on freedom of movement.

This new armed group is overseen by a committee of Rohingya émigrés based in Mecca. The public face of its operations in northern Rakhine State is Ata Ullah (known by several aliases), who is the main speaker in several videos released by the group.

He was born in Karachi to a Rohingya father and grew up in Mecca. He is part of a group of 20 Rohingya who have international experience in modern guerrilla warfare and are leading operations on the ground in northern Rakhine. Also with them is a senior Islamic scholar, Ziaur Rahman, a Saudi-educated Rohingya mufti with the authority to issue fatwas, according to the report.

To enhance its religious legitimacy further, al-Yaqin has obtained fatwas from senior clerics in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and elsewhere, giving backing to its cause under Islamic law.

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