

7 app-based transport services apply for BRTA registration

More than 24 available in Dhaka

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Although over two dozen app-based transport services are available in Dhaka, only seven companies have applied for registration with Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) within the one-month deadline which expired on May 18.

"We are now verifying the documents they [companies] submitted to us and will complete the registration process as soon as possible," Mahbub-E-Rabbani, spokesperson for BRTA, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The seven companies that sought registration are: Pathao Limited, Shohoz Limited, Chaldal Limited, Akash Technology Limited, Golden Ring Limited, Obhai Limited and Uber Limited, said Faruque Ahmed, assistant director (engineering) of BRTA.

The cabinet on January 15 approved "Ride-sharing Service Guidelines 2017" validating the operations of app-based transport services, which is becoming popular in Dhaka.

As per the guideline, which came into action on March 8, any company which seeks the BRTA permission must have at least 100 vehicles in its fleet for operating in Dhaka, 50 for Chittagong, and 20 for other cities. A company will have to pay Tk 1 lakh and submit other relevant documents, including trade licence, to the BRTA to get "enlistment certificate".

On the other hand, a driver will have to pay Tk 1,000 and a biker Tk 500 as yearly enlistment fee, and they have to renew the "enlistment certificates" every three years, the

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A patient is pushed across a flooded street in front of Savar's Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CRP). The road leading to CRP -- the prime non-government organisation for patients with paralysis -- has poor drainage and is easily inundated by rainwater. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ACC sacks asstt director for misusing power

Suspends another

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has sacked one of its assistant directors for professional misconduct, negligence in duties and misusing power.

The official is SM Shamim Iqbal.

The commission also suspended another Assistant Director Bir Kanto Roy over the same allegations, says ACC's Public Relations Officer Pranab Kumar Bhattacharya.

"To prevent officials from getting involved in corruption and misusing power, ACC took the punitive measures," said Muhammad Munir Chowdhury, its director general.

Currently, ACC is inquiring into similar allegations against seven officials, according to sources.

In 2015, ACC approved a charge-sheet in a corruption

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Energy security a national concern

Experts discuss SDG 7 and its achievability

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy efficiency and implementation of a well-coordinated national energy policy are key to Bangladesh achieving universal energy target of sustainable development goals, said leading energy experts at a discussion in the capital yesterday.

"The SDG goal of universal access to power would not be achievable without implementation of a consistent national energy policy," said Dr M Asaduzzaman, former research director of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

With solar and wind energy efforts yielding no significant results, biomass and energy efficiency are the vital options for Bangladesh to focus on to achieve the energy goal, said Dr Ijaz Hossain, a professor of chemical engineering at Buet.

Solar energy could not make much headway due to land constraints and expensive installation, he said, at the discussion on "International financial institutions' opportunities and challenges" jointly organised by The Daily Star and Oxfam at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

Against this backdrop, import of hydro electricity through Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal network remains an impor-

tant solution for the country's increasing energy demand, he said.

Among four sources of renewable energy -- solar, wind, hydro and oceanic surge -- solar panels are still not affordable for the common people, said Golam Safiuddin, the assistant secretary to energy and mineral resources division. It requires three acres of land for one megawatt solar energy, an option not viable in a land-constrained country, he said.

Bangladesh has set a target officially to generate 10 percent or 2,400 MW of its energy from renewable sources by 2020 and committed to achieving universal access to electricity by 2021, said Siddique Zobair, member of Sustainable and Renewable Energy Development Authority.

To achieve the goal of universal access to energy, more energy efficiency is the answer, he said, adding that the country will need 40,000 MW electricity by the year 2030 but 8,000 of it can be saved by efficiency in production and consumption pattern.

As Bangladesh is moving towards achieving the status of middle-income country by 2021 and high-income by 2041, meeting the growing needs for power remains a foremost challenge, the speakers were of the view.

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Speakers at the roundtable, held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Guard found dead inside ATM booth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A security guard was found dead with his throat slit inside an ATM booth of a private bank in the capital's Cantonment area yesterday.

The body of night shift guard Sheikh Touhidul Islam, 17, was found inside the ATM booth of Eastern Bank Limited near Dhaka Cantonment Post Office, said Mahbub Hossain, officer-in-charge of Cantonment Police Station.

"... A security guard in the morning shift found the body around 8:00am and informed the police," the OC said, confirming that the victim's throat was slit.

The OC, however, could not confirm if any money was stolen from the booth.

Confirming the incident, EBL authorities in a statement said, Touhidul was killed "during his duty at the ATM booth between 3:45am and 4:00am" and he was "a security guard of Global Security Services."

According to the statement, no money was taken out of the ATM machine during the incident.

Police sent the body to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Young Touhidul, who passed the SSC exam last year, was the only earner for his family as his father became ill with kidney

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Sultana Kamal questions legitimacy of 'shootouts'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid a spree of so-called shootouts, noted rights activist Sultana Kamal yesterday raised question about its legitimacy, demanding fair investigation into each incident.

"We need to know whether firearms have been misused," she said.

She was addressing a Meet the Press at Dhaka Reporters Unity, arranged by rights and development organisations on a review of Bangladesh's Universal Periodic Review before the UN Human Rights Council.

Centre for Social Activism (CSA), Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), Kapaeng Foundation, and Network of Non-Mainstreamed Marginalised Communities arranged the meet-the-press.

In the past two days, 14 persons, most of them alleged drug peddlers, have been killed in "shootouts" across the country.

The drives come on the heels of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and other government high-ups expressing a firm stance

against the drug menace.

"It is a pity to see five to six persons have to die in 'shootouts' each day," said Sultana Kamal, chairperson of CSA.

She lauded the government's anti-narcotics stance, but said there are laws in the country to try criminals.

However notorious the criminals are, the state will formulate some rules and justice has to be done as per those rules, she said.

"And if he is proven guilty, he has to be handed due punishment," she said.

"Despite having laws for trying accused persons in illegal drug-related cases, some people have been labeled as drug peddlers and they were put in 'shootouts' or got killed," said Sultana.

She said rights activists have repeatedly been demanding proper investigation into each of the "shootout" incidents, to know whether people are actually dying in shootouts.

Firearms are being used in an alarming number of occasions each day now, she added.

Arrest warrant against BNP vice chairman Salima Rahman

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued arrest warrants against BNP vice chairman Salima Rahman and nine others in case filed for hurling explosives in the city's Mugda area in March 2015.

The other accused are BNP leaders Maruf Kamal Khan, Shirin Sultana, and former BNP ward commissioners Md Kayyum and Abdul Latif.

After accepting the charges against 29 BNP leaders and activists, Judge Kamrul Hossain of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court of Dhaka issued arrest warrants against the 10.

The investigation officer of the case showed them fugitives in the charge sheet, and appealed to the court to issue arrest warrants against them.

The court also fixed July 3 for submitting reports on execution of the arrest warrants.

According to the case statement, a group of BNP leaders and activists led by Salima Rahman, Maruf Kamal Khan and Shimul Biswas created anarchy among people by throwing crude bombs at Amtala Zero Point in the city's Mugda area at about 8:20am on March 17, 2015.

It took place during the nonstop movement by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

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BNP criticises PM for praising Khulna polls

UNB, Dhaka

BNP yesterday criticised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for praising a "flawed" election to Khulna City Corporation.

The party said it would not be sensible to join any national election under her leadership. BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi said this at a press conference at the party's Nayapaltan central office.

"The prime minister's high appreciation [of Khulna polls] has proved that the government high-ups are order-givers for rigging votes in the election. Her comments also showed that the next national election will be held following the Khulna

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HC to hear Khaleda's bail petitions today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday fixed today for hearing the petitions filed by BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia seeking bail in three different cases.

The bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice JBM Hassan fixed the date after Attorney General Mahbubey Alam sought time for taking preparation for placing arguments on the petitions.

The bench was scheduled to hold the hearing yesterday. Khaleda filed the petitions on May 20.

Her lawyers including Advocate Khandker Mahbub Hossain and Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali, however, were present before the bench for placing arguments.

Among the three cases, two were filed in Comilla. One was filed on the charge of vandalising vehicles on January 25 in 2015, and the other on the charge of killing seven persons and injuring 25-26 others by setting a passenger bus on fire at Chaudagram on February 2 of the same year.

The third case was filed by Raihan Faruki Imam with a Narail court on September 24, 2015, against her for making a statement about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the number of freedom fighters.

Khaleda made the comment on December 21, 2015, at a meeting at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) in Dhaka where she said Sheikh Mujib did not want the

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