

They want it, they get it

DCs to oversee dev projects at district level; other professionals threaten agitation if govt doesn't withdraw the directive

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

A recent government directive authorising deputy commissioners to monitor and evaluate development projects at the district level has caused an uproar among officials of project implementing agencies. The officials – engineers and other professionals – said the move would increase complexities and cause delays in the implementation of the projects.

They warned they will abstain from work if the directive is not withdrawn immediately. They also threatened a tougher agitation. Although the public administration ministry issued the directive at the request of the planning ministry's Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, IMED officials themselves are aggrieved.

They said the move would squeeze their authority over project evaluations.

Issuing the directive on January 18, the public admin ministry asked the DCs to open a wing under an additional deputy commissioner for monitoring and evaluating the projects, and send reports to the IMED.

The move came at a time when DCs, during their annual conference this year, proposed that they be given the power to oversee project implementation in their respective districts through creation of a separate wing.

Planning Minister MA Mannan, however, turned down the proposal at that time.

"We told them [DCs] that there was no need for it [separate committee]. They have the right to look after work in their respective areas," he told reporters on January 18. But the directive was issued the same day.

Irked, the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh, a national platform of engineers who play a key role in implementation of projects, has already asked its members not to follow the directive.

Terming the government decision "a conspiracy against the country's development", IEB has called a series of protest programmes, according to its statement.

Engineers will form human chains across the country today to press home their demand – cancellation of the decision.

"This is not the right decision. Monitoring and evaluating development projects can't be done by a specific sector."

Shahadat Hossain Shiblu, honorary gen secy of IEB

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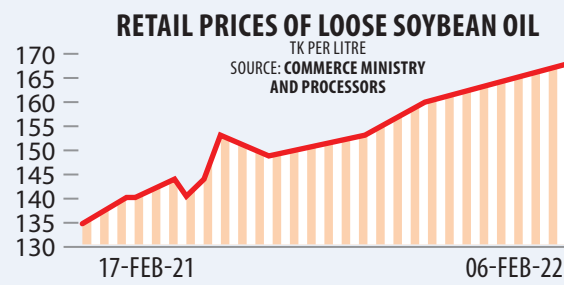


WATER TARIFF

YEAR	COMMERCIAL PRICE PER UNIT	RESIDENTIAL PRICE PER UNIT
2018	Tk 35.28	Tk 11.02
2019	Tk 37.04	Tk 11.57
2020	Tk 40	Tk 14.46
2021	Tk 42	Tk 15.18
2022 (PROPOSED)	Tk 55	Tk 21

(UNIT= 1,000 LITRE)

EDIBLE OIL PRICE



Now water getting costlier

Dhaka Wasa wants at least 20pc hike; businesses hint at further rise in edible oil price

HELEMUL ALAM and MD NAZRUL ISLAM

Water prices in the capital are set to see a sharp rise after Dhaka Wasa yesterday said that it wants the government to approve a "20 percent hike" in tariffs.

The potential increase in water prices is expected to add to the woes of Dhaka residents after last November's diesel and kerosene price hikes and the continued rise in edible oil prices, which according to traders may increase

further ahead of Ramadan.

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) can increase the water tariff by five percent each year in consultation with the government as per Section 22 of the Dhaka Wasa Act, 1996.

On February 7, it placed a proposal with its board to raise tariffs for residential use to Tk 21 per unit (1,000 litres) from Tk 15.18 per unit and for commercial use to Tk 55 per unit from Tk 42 per unit – hikes of 38.8 percent and 31 percent respectively.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the proposal placed with the Wasa board.

Dhaka Wasa Managing Director Taqsem A Khan, however, told reporters yesterday that they want the government to approve at least a 20 percent hike.

"[price hike of 5 percent as per the act] is not sufficient and that's why we want a 20 percent rise [in tariffs]. If the government wants, it can raise tariffs more than that, but we need at least a 20 percent hike."

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EC SEARCH PANEL Invites sent out for talks; names sought

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

The cabinet division yesterday invited civil society members, election experts, media personalities and a cross-section of people for talks with the search committee constituted to make recommendations for the formation of the next Election Commission.

The invitations were made through WhatsApp messages and phone calls.

The division contacted eminent personalities over the phone and told them the invitations were sent on WhatsApp due to time constraints and a hard copy of the invites will be sent to their addresses soon.

The six-member search committee will hold three meetings on February 12 and 13 – from 11:00am to 12:30pm and 12:45pm to 2:15pm on Saturday and from 4:00pm onwards on Sunday – at the Supreme Court Judge's lounge.

The cabinet division also sent letters to the 39 registered political parties, asking them to propose names for the posts of chief election commissioner (CEC) and other ECs.

Any individual can also submit their own name as a potential candidate for the EC either physically to

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Students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology in Sylhet marching the streets of the campus holding placards with images of the violence unleashed on students by police on January 16. The students continued their demand for the resignation of Vice-Chancellor Farid Uddin Ahmed. The photo was taken yesterday. Story on Page 5.

What will happen to my grandkids? Asks mother who lost 5 sons to road crash; case filed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Plabon Shil, a sibling of the five brothers who were run over and killed by a pick-up truck in Chakaria upazila, filed a case on Tuesday night accusing unnamed people.

Plabon along with his sister Munni Shil survived the accident unhurt while his two other siblings were undergoing treatment at two local hospitals for injuries.

Visiting the house of the deceased in Hasinapara village near Malumghat Bazar of Chakaria, this correspondent found relatives trying to console the grieving family members.

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On the road for 3 years illegally

Truck that killed 5 on Monday was unfit since May 2018

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The pick-up that ran over and killed five brothers on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway on Tuesday had no updated papers at all.

Validities of all three important papers – fitness clearance, route permit and tax token – were expired around three years ago but the pick-up was still in operation.

Highway Police seized the pick-up after its driver fled the scene leaving it following the incident which also left two other siblings injured.

And such cases of vehicles or their drivers being found without proper documents after fatal road crashes

are by no means isolated ones.

The Anabil Paribahan bus that ran over and killed SSC examinee Mainuddin Islam in the capital's Rampura in November last year amid student protest seeking road safety had neither a route permit nor an updated tax token.

Two of the three buses that were vandalised following the incident, as mentioned in documents of cases filed with police over the death of Mainuddin on November 29, were also without route permits.

Five days ahead of Mainuddin's death, Notre Dame College student Nayeem Hasan was killed in the capital, warranting the student protest.

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