



"We have information that Russia is planning a long-term attack using Shahed (Iranian) drones. It is probably banking on exhaustion. Exhausting our people, our anti-aircraft defences, our energy."



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky



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Two export items fared well so far



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Mahmud emphasises need for revenue sharing in BPL



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I want my father, brother back, says Prince Harry



P6

Farin lends voice for Bangla dub of popular Korean drama

Govt all set to jack up fees for vehicles

Transport owners hint at hiking fares

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is going to increase fees for most of the services provided by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, putting additional financial burden on private and commercial vehicle owners.

Fees for 75 services, like registering vehicles and issuance of fitness certificate, route permit, and driving licence, would be increased by up to 233 percent.

Once the decision is put into effect, which could happen within two weeks, the people will have to bear the additional expenses, transport operators have said.

The BRTA will also levy charges for nine new services, like registration of motor workshops, licence for conductors, and reviews of points on driving licences.

Charges for three services, including registration of two types of motorcycles, will remain the same, indicating the government's favourable policy towards two-wheelers, a major reason for the rise in crashes and deaths.

The fee hike comes after the government issued the rules for Road Transport Act-2018, for which a gazette was published on December 27.

Apart from the additional fees, vehicle owners will have to pay a certain amount to a to-be-made government fund for road accident victims.

According to the rules, the owner of a bus, truck, lorry, and articulated lorry will pay Tk 1,500 a year to the fund. The amount will be Tk 750 for a minibus, minitruck, and pickup; Tk 500 for a car, SUV and microbus; and Tk 300 for a three-wheeler.

A motorcycle owner will pay a one-time Tk 1,000, read the rules.

Registration of a three-wheeler, up to 100cc, will be Tk 1,000, from the current Tk 635. All three-wheelers above 100cc will require a flat Tk 1,800 registration fee instead of Tk 1,150.

Fees for registration of bikes of up to 100cc remain at Tk 2,000, bikes above 100cc still at Tk 3,000, and special vehicles for people with disabilities have been kept at Tk 25.

Driving schools will have to pay Tk 23,000 for a licence. They used to pay Tk 15,000. Instructor's licence will be Tk 2,000 instead of Tk 750.

BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder said the rules and the new rate of fees came into effect immediately after the gazette was issued. He told The Daily Star yesterday that the BRTA might take a few days to reconfigure their system for collecting the fees.

However, a top official said the BRTA was going to start collecting the money for the fund from next Sunday and the new fees in about two weeks.

Last fiscal year, the BRTA registered 5.23 lakh vehicles and issued 7.84 lakh driving licences, 5.64 lakh fitness certificates and 2.05 lakh route permits, shows BRTA documents.

The transport authority last hiked fees in 2014 but halved motorcycle registration fees in early 2021.

A BRTA high official said they had sent the draft rules for Road Transport Act-2018 to the Road Transport and Highways Division where officials suggested hikes in some fees. The official claimed that

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- ➔ BRTA provides 87 services
- ➔ New fees for 9 services
- ➔ Fees to increase for 75 services
- ➔ 13pc to 50pc fee hike for 32 services
- ➔ 51pc to 100pc fee increase for 32 services
- ➔ 101pc to 233pc fee hike for 9 services
- ➔ Fees for 2 services now depend on registration fees



IN THE WARMTH OF LOVE ... A woman living on a footpath in the capital's Sadarghat Road, near the CMM court, shares her lone blanket with the street dog she takes care of to help him stay warm amidst the bone-chilling cold wave. Despite having very little for herself, this woman shows that one doesn't need much to have a big heart.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Biman failing to tap into its sleek fleet

A lack of proper plans, marketing strategy, professionalism to blame, say experts

RASHIDUL HASAN

Despite having a fleet of 21 modern aeroplanes, the largest in its history, Biman has spread its wings to just three new destinations in the last five years.

Aviation experts say the national flag carrier's lack of planning and poor marketing policy are to blame for this.

Biman currently flies to 20 mostly short- and medium-haul international destinations. Whereas, with fewer planes in the early 2000s, it used to fly to 29 international destinations, including New York, Tokyo, and several major European cities, according to officials.

After 2006, Biman gradually stopped flying to New York, Frankfurt, Rome, Tokyo, Brussels, Amsterdam, Libya, and several other major destinations largely because of financial problems, shortage of modern planes, and routes becoming unviable, experts say.

Although it has six Boeing 787s now, Biman keeps losing money and delivers lackluster service.

In 2022, Biman started operating flights to three new destinations: Toronto, Sharjah, and Guangzhou.

Despite having a large number of loyal passengers, its market share has shrunk and the new aircraft remained underutilised.

Since its inception in 1972, Biman Bangladesh Airlines lost money throughout most of its life. In the last five fiscal years, Biman incurred losses in three, according to records.

Aviation experts say Biman made money in two of those years, but those can hardly be called profits because the airline owes over Tk 3,500 crore to different organisations and pays instalments of around Tk 250 crore for the new planes every year.

Aviation expert Kazi Wahidul Alam said

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Retaliate if you come under attack

PM tells cops on first day of Police Week 2023

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked police officials to retaliate if attacked.

Speaking at the welfare parade on the first day of the police week yesterday, she said many people, including 29 police personnel, were killed in arson attacks by opposition activists from 2013 to 2015.

The PM said her government increased facilities for police and asked them not to indulge in corruption. "Corruption destroys a country," Hasina said, adding that stability is needed for a country to develop.

She asked the police and Rab officials to remain vigilant so that militants cannot resurge and instructed them to increase exchange of intelligence among agencies, said officials who were present.

Inspector General of Police Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun gave the welcome speech.

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Fakhrul, Abbas get six months' interim bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir and standing committee member Mirza Abbas have secured bail in a case filed over the December 7 clashes between police and party men in the capital's Nayapaltan area.

The High Court bench of Justice Md Salim and Justice Riaz Uddin Khan yesterday granted them interim bail for six months after hearing a petition filed by the defence lawyers in this regard.

In the petition, the defence said the lower courts concerned have not granted bail to Fakhrul and Abbas though their names were not mentioned in the first information report (FIR) of the case.

But other FIR-named accused have been granted bail, they added.

Fakhrul and Abbas have
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Heaps of garbage litter the Kamrangirchar embankment of the Buriganga, contributing to the ever-lasting pollution of the river. Dumping of wastes has been an ongoing issue at the original channel of the river, with authorities concerned turning a blind eye.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ADANI GODDA POWER PLANT Bangladesh likely to get 750MW by March

Says Nasrul Hamid during visit to the plant in India's Jharkhand

ASIFUR RAHMAN, from Jharkhand

Bangladesh will start getting electricity from India's Adani Godda Power Plant in March, said Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources.

According to the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) signed between Bangladesh Power Development Board and Adani Power (Jharkhand) Ltd on the import of 1,600MW electricity, the first unit of the power plant was supposed to be in operation on January 5 last year.

But commercial operations of the plant were delayed and the date for starting commercial operations was moved to December 16.

Visiting the under-construction power plant in Godda district of India's Jharkhand, Nasrul said the first unit was producing around 250MW during a test run yesterday. "By mid-March, we will hopefully get around 750MW from the power plant."

Anil Sardana, the managing director of Adani Power, said he wanted to start supplying power on March 26, the Independence Day of Bangladesh.

Adani Group constructed a 106km dedicated transmission line from Godda to Chapainawabganj's Rohanpur, connecting the plant to the national grid of Bangladesh.

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