



COMMERCIAL VEHICLES 74,000 set to go under crushers

BRTA data shows their economic life expired as per new govt rules

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Over 74,000 registered buses, trucks and other commercial vehicles are past their economic lifespan set by the government.

According to a circular issued by the Road Transport and Highways Division (RHD) earlier this month, these vehicles will have to be scrapped now.

At least 36,123 buses and minibuses are past their 20-year economic life while 38,123 trucks, lorries and tankers are past their 25-year life, according to BRTA data.

Such vehicles account for over one-fourth of the total 2.83 lakh commercial vehicles registered with the BRTA as of April.

Although the government set the economic life of commercial vehicles, a guideline on scrapping them has yet to be finalised. The gazette setting the economic life has not been published either.

Nevertheless, the authorities said they would start dumping these vehicles once the gazette is published.

However, BRTA officials still do not know where to dump the vehicles and for how long the vehicles should be kept in their custody.

Apart from finalising the guideline, the authorities will have to hire contractors to scrap the outdated vehicles. This is why the authorities are not able to tell when the process of scrapping will start.

The RHD set the economic life of commercial vehicles with an aim to improve road safety and reduce pollution.

As of April, 81,424 buses, minibuses and 2,01,976 trucks, lorries and tankers are registered with the BRTA.

The Road Transport and Highways Division on May 17 issued a circular setting the economic service life of commercial vehicles aiming to improve road safety and reduce environmental pollution.



Of these, 74,246 are expired, meaning 26.20 percent of these vehicles are outdated, according to BRTA data.

BRTA officials believe many of the vehicles are no longer on the streets as some of them were registered even before the Liberation War.

"We assume that around half of the outdated vehicles are not running now," BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the number of those in operation would still be big and there was no alternative to scrapping them.

The division has also prepared a draft guideline for scrapping old vehicles. The draft mentions that no vehicle owner will be able to register a new vehicle if they own a vehicle that has gone past its economic life.

According to the draft Motor Vehicle Scrapping Guideline-2023, the government will be outsourcing the job of vehicle scrapping to enlisted private firms that will carry out the task under the BRTA supervision.

However, questions have been raised about the rationale of setting economic life without approving the scrapping guideline and hiring a firm to scrap the vehicles.

The BRTA will try to finalise the draft as soon as possible, said its chairman, adding that hiring a vendor would take some more time.

There is a scarcity of scrapyards in Dhaka and Chattogram.

Officials said the draft guideline and the circular contained some discrepancies regarding the way private vendors would be hired. These issues should be fixed before scrapping of vehicles starts, they said.

DRIVE AGAINST CASINOS 'Influential man, his 3 brothers worked Rab to get us arrested' Claim 2 ex-councillors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two former councillors of the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday said they were wrongly arrested during a 2019 crackdown on casinos because an influential man and his three brothers wanted them out of local Awami League politics.

Habibur Rahman Mizan of ward-32 and Tarekuzzaman Rajib of ward-33 made the allegations at a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday.

They didn't name the influential man, but said that his brothers were Tofail Ahmed Joseph, Haris Ahmed and Anis Ahmed.

The former councillors alleged that the Ahmed brothers had Rab members arrest them so that their nephew Asif Ahmed could become a councillor.

Rajib said the Ahmed brothers, who had been known as thugs since the 1990s, were looking to make a political debut.

When asked about the name of the

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A firefighter works at a site of a tobacco factory damaged during Russian suicide drone strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

This recent photo of the third terminal of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport shows construction work in full swing. Around 70 percent of the work has been completed. The 2.30 lakh square metre terminal will have 115 check-in counters, 64 departure and 64 arrival immigration desks, 12 boarding bridges, and 16 carousels. The soft opening is expected in October.

Russia unleashes massive drone attack on Kyiv

Two killed; Ukraine downs 52 out of 54 drones; Moscow warns West 'playing with fire' over F-16 jets

AGENCIES

Russia unleashed waves of air strikes on Kyiv overnight in what officials said appeared to be the largest drone attack on the city since the start of the war, as the Ukrainian capital prepared to celebrate the anniversary of its founding yesterday.

Ukraine's Air Force said it downed 52 out of the 54 Russia-launched drones, calling it a record attack with the Iranian-made 'kamikaze' drones. At least two people were killed in the air strikes.

In what also appears to be the first deadly attack on Kyiv in May and the 14th assault this month, falling debris killed a 41-year-old man, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

The pre-dawn attacks came on the last Sunday of May when the capital celebrates Kyiv Day, the anniversary of its official founding 1,541 years ago. The day is typically marked by street fairs, live concerts and special museum exhibitions - plans for which have been made this year too, but on a smaller scale.

"The history of Ukraine is a long-standing irritant for the insecure Russians," Andriy Yermak, the head of President Volodymyr Zelensky's office, said on his Telegram channel.

"Every time you shoot down enemy drones and missiles, lives are saved... you are heroes!"

Zelensky told his air defence forces yesterday morning, also thanking rescuers.

Air Force said on Telegram that Russia had targeted military and critical infrastructure facilities in the central regions of Ukraine, and the Kyiv region in particular, reports Reuters.

With a Ukrainian counteroffensive looming 15 months into the war, Moscow has intensified air strikes after a lull of nearly two months, targeting chiefly military site and supplies. Waves of attacks now come several times a week.

The overnight attacks came after Kyiv said that combat clashes eased around the besieged city of Bakhmut in southeastern Ukraine, the site of the war's longest battle.

Serhiy Popko, the head of Kyiv's military administration, said the attack was carried out in several waves, and air alerts lasted more than five hours.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov yesterday said Western nations were "playing with fire" by agreeing to supply Ukraine with advanced US F-16 fighter jets, reports AFP.

It was "an unacceptable escalation" of the conflict, Lavrov said in an excerpt from a Russian TV interview posted on social media, denouncing an attempt to "weaken Russia" by "Washington, London and their satellites in the EU".

"Every time you shoot down enemy drones and missiles, lives are saved... you are heroes!"

Volodymyr Zelensky tells his air defence forces

ANCIENT BURIAL GROUND Egypt unearths mummification workshops, tombs

REUTERS, Saqqara

Egypt unearthed human and animal mummification workshops as well as two tombs in the ancient burial ground of Saqqara, officials said on Saturday, marking the latest in a string of discoveries that the country hopes can help revive its vital tourism industry.

Mostafa Waziri, the head of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, told reporters that the two large "embalming workshops" date back to the 30th dynasty (380-343 BC) and the Ptolemaic (305-30 BC) eras.

The discovery was made after a year-long excavation near the sanctuary of the goddess Bastet, which is home to the catacombs of mummified cats in Saqqara, some 30 kilometres (18.6 miles) south of Cairo.

It was the same spot where hundreds of mummified animals and statues were uncovered in 2019.

"We found embalming workshops, one for humans and one for animals. We found all the tools that they used (in mummification) in ancient times," Waziri said.

Both workshops featured stone beds, clay pots, ritual vessels, natron salt, which is one of the main ingredients for mummification, and linens among other mummification instruments.



RAJSHAHI CITY POLLS Liton's income rises fourfold

Fish cultivation main source of earnings, shows his affidavit to EC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

AHM Khairuzzaman Liton, the Awami League nominated mayoral candidate in the upcoming Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) polls, has declared a significant increase in both his assets and annual income since the last time he ran for the post five years ago.

Liton's annual income has increased from Tk 78 lakh in 2018 to Tk 2.98 crore in 2023, an almost four-fold increase.

Besides, his movable assets have more than doubled in value since 2018, when they were worth Tk 1.75 crore. As of now, they are worth Tk 4.17 crore.

For his immovable property, he has shown 4.63 acres of agricultural land and his fish farm worth Tk 70 lakh. In 2018, the agri land amounted to 1.63 acres and he had no fish farm.

The source of this data is a comparison between his affidavits for the 2023 and 2018 RCC elections.

This time, fish cultivation has been shown as his main source of income, which accounts for over 80 percent of his total earnings.



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