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Tk 2.21cr extorted daily from city transport

Finds govt probe; sector now controlled mostly by BNP-linked influentials

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and ZYMA ISLAM

A staggering Tk 2.21 crore is extorted daily from 53 transport terminals and stands in Dhaka city. The figure goes up to Tk 66.3 crore and sometimes Tk 80 crore per month, a government probe has found.

The investigation by an intelligence agency done after the fall of the Sheikh Hasina government also found that local influentials and political party leaders, especially those linked to the BNP, are involved in the extortion, according to sources in the Roads and Highways Department.

The report was submitted to the department on February 11.

During the Awami League rule, the party's leaders and activists had established a system of extortion, which apparently was risky as they used a "token" that left a paper trail. However, after the toppling of the AL regime, the system was taken over by locally influential people, especially leaders of the BNP and its front organisations, it said.

Currently, there are 95 types of terminals and stands, including for bus, truck, microbus, pickup, human haulier (Leguna), and autorickshaw, in the capital and surrounding areas. Of them, 66 terminals and stands are in the capital.

They include 37 Leguna stands, seven local bus stands, five pickup stands, four local and inter-district bus stands, four autorickshaw stands, three inter-district bus terminals, three CNG-run autorickshaw stands, two truck stands and one microbus stand.

The inquiry was conducted in 56 terminals and the agency found extortion taking place in 53 of them.

CONTROL SHIFTS

After August 5, 2024, the control of the transport sector changed hands, with BNP-aligned leaders taking over certain key posts of different owners' associations as well as terminals.

Khandaker Enayet Ullah, owner of Ena Paribahan, who was secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association for fourth time in a row, has been replaced by Cumilla (North) unit BNP Convener Saiful Islam.

Saiful was a two-time general secretary of Dhaka Road Transport Owners' Association during the previous BNP tenure.

On the other hand, Haji Alauddin, owner of Star Line Group and director of FBCCI, was elected president of the transport owners' organisation. He replaced Jatiya Party top leader Moshir Rahman Ranga.

Alauddin has been involved with both Jatiya Party and Awami League, becoming the Feni municipality mayor in 2016 on AL ticket. Since then, he has turned his back on the Awami League, said sources in the transport department.

Both Ranga and Enayet Ullah are on the run since the political changeover.

Bangladesh Road Transport Workers' Federation, the most powerful organisation for transport workers, also saw similar changes in its leadership.

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Tk 1.07cr extorted daily from Gabtoli, Sayedabad, Mohakhali terminals



Tk 1.17cr extorted in the name of Transport Owners Association



Tk 80 lakh extorted per day from local, inter-district bus stands



Police mostly left out from the cuts since Aug 5



Franchise-based mass transport proposed to stop extortion



Female students of Dhaka University bring out a torch procession on campus last night, demanding justice for the recent spate of rape and sexual harassment of women and children. Early today, a rally was held in front of TSC where students chanted slogans demanding the home adviser's resignation.

PHOTO: STAR

CONSENSUS COMMISSION

Critical issues picked for party feedback

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

To seek political parties' opinions, the National Consensus Commission has picked the "most crucial" proposals from a wide range of recommendations made by the reform commissions.

The parties will be able to give opinions on entire reports of the reform commissions, but their answers to questions from the Consensus Commission will steer the direction of the talks to be held afterwards.

"We definitely want to know their opinions on these matters to ensure the discussions proceed smoothly," Prof Ali Riaz, co-chairman of the Consensus Commission, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Badiul Alam Majumdar, a member of the Consensus Commission, said the questions are on the important proposals and the political parties naturally have their opinions on these issues.

"The perspectives of the political parties are crucial. We hope they will provide their responses," he added.

The Consensus Commission, headed

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DOCTORS AWAITING PROMOTIONS

Govt creating 7,000 supernumerary posts

Protests postponed for now

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The government is set to create supernumerary posts to accommodate over 7,000 government doctors and medical college teachers who have been awaiting promotion.

structure to facilitate promotions or workforce adjustments. This practice is common in the administration, police, and foreign service cadres and has recently been introduced in a few other sectors.

This correspondent learned about



Of the proposed 7,122 posts, more than 550 are for professors, over 1,900 for associate professors, and the remainder for assistant professors.

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Recent attacks on women are 'deeply concerning'

Says Yunus

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the recent reports of heinous attacks on women are "deeply concerning" and is completely contrary to the dream of a "New Bangladesh".

"We are committed to establishing equal rights for all men and women in this 'New Bangladesh'. We will use all our strength to establish these rights," he

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Security guards can now arrest people

Says DMP boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private security personnel deployed in residential areas, markets and shopping malls will now serve as members of the "Auxiliary Police Force" with the authority to make arrests.

The initiative has been taken to enhance security during Ramadan and Eid shopping as many shopping centres will remain open late into the night, said SM Sazzat Ali, commissioner of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

"Since we have a limited number of police officers, I am exercising my authority under the Metropolitan Police Act to appoint private security personnel as part of the Auxiliary Police Force," he said at a media briefing.

The personnel will wear a designated band labelled 'Auxiliary Police Officer'

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130 camps to be set up for women's safety

Says Sharmeen Murshid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The interim government has decided to establish 130 surveillance camps across the country, starting with Dhaka, to ensure the safety of women and children, Women and Children Affairs Adviser Sharmeen S Murshid said yesterday.

"The camps will involve [officials from] the home, social welfare, and women and children ministries, alongside guardians and activists of the July uprising."

She made the remarks while visiting an eight-year-old rape victim from Magura at Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Sharmeen further stated that the initiative aims to strengthen the role of the home ministry by equipping it with more information while also providing communities with a reliable support system.

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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

The sky is overcast by the plumes of smoke from the brick kilns in the Fatulla area of Narayanganj. Most of these kilns burn wood, coal and other fossil fuel using traditional method, which creates more smoke and deteriorates the air quality. The photo was taken last week.

RAPE OF 8-YEAR-OLD Disturbing details emerge

Sister's father-in-law rapist, family also had a hand, says case filed yesterday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eight-year-old girl, who is now battling for her life in the capital's CMH, was raped by her sister's father-in-law when she was visiting their home in Magura, police said.

The sister's husband allegedly abetted the crime, they said, adding that the rapist's wife and elder son were also aware of the incident and later even attempted to kill the child to cover it up.

The victim's mother brought the allegations in a case filed with Magura Sadar Police Station yesterday.

The case was recorded under sections 9(4)(a) and 30 of the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

The victim's sister's father-in-law, husband, mother-in-law, and brother-in-law were made accused, and police have already arrested them.

"Primarily, we have learned that the victim's sister's father-in-law raped the girl, and the victim's brother-in-law assisted the father. We'll be able to give more details after further investigation," Belayet Hossain, additional deputy inspector general of Khulna Range, told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the girl, whose condition is now critical, has been transferred to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) from the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for better treatment.

She was taken to CMH in an ICU ambulance from the DMCH around 5:00pm yesterday, DMCH Director Brig

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