



DHAKA WEDNESDAY MARCH 26, 2003

THE WEEK THAT WAS

Installation of Ctg Bar: The installation ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of Chittagong District Bar Council was held here on Thursday.

While addressing the ceremony as the chief guest Justice Khademul Islam Chowdhury said there was a dearth of justice everywhere in the present world.

He said that dispute over appointment of judges and freedom of judiciary even after 30 years of independence was undesirable.

He called upon the Bar Council as well as other concerned to work unitedly to protect fundamental rights of the people through ensuring rule of law and freedom of judiciary.

Barrister Amir Ul Islam, Chittagong District and Sessions Judge Justice Md. Abdur Rahman Patwary and Chittagong Metropolitan Sessions Judge Justice Fazlul Karim attended the ceremony as special guests.

Monk convention: The two-day annual convention of Parbatya Vikmu Sangha ended with a call for ending confrontation between the two CHT regional political organisations of hill people.

The convention was held at Tapoban Buddha Bihar of Dighinala upazila in Khagrachhari on March 16-17.

With *Guru* (religious teacher) Srimot Tilokananda Mohasthobir from Baghaichhari Bhuddhist temple in the chair the convention decided to take initiative for making the hill people of grass-roots level alert against envy, division and confrontation and announced an eight-point declaration.

It also declared the year 2003 as the "Year of Non-malignance". The convention demanded inclusion of three Buddhist monks in Bangladesh Buddhist Welfare Trust as its members.

Besides, a 21-member committee was formed with *Vedanta* Sumanananda Mohathero and *Vedanta* Satyananda Mohathero as its president and general secretary respectively.

CU Golden Jubilee ends: The two-day programme to mark the year-long celebration of Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh Chhatra Union ended here on Friday amid festivity.

The speakers at a seminar held on the closing day of the programme said that US-led attack on Iraq revealed the imperial and inhuman character of the USA.

They said that the human civilisation finds its fulfilment and significance through humane initiatives, activities and approach, not through any barbaric act.

Workers Party central president Rashed Khan Menon, Gono Forum central presidium member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Prof M M Akash of Economics Department of Dhaka University and Communist Party central presidium member comrade Shah Alam addressed the seminar as guests.

Journalist Abul Momen presented the key-note paper in the seminar titled "the new phase of crisis of the present world and civilisation".

Workshop on EEF: South Asian Enterprise Development Facility (SEDF) and Bangladesh Bank (BB) jointly organised a day long workshop titled "Equity and Entrepreneurship Fund (EEF)" here on March 17.

The workshop organised with the cooperation of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) at CSE conference room put up details about the EEF and procedures and rules required for getting the fund. It informed entrepreneurs of the benefit of EEF and sought cooperation from local banks for increased use of the fund.

The first session of the workshop called upon commercial banks to motivate their clients for use of the fund in agricultural and IT projects.

BB Executive Director Khondoker Mozharul Haq and SEDF senior consultant Ziauddin Ahmad addressed the session among others.

The evening session was addressed by CCCI president Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury and CSE vice-president O R A Rasul Nizam. CSE vice-president Habibullah Khan presided over both the sessions.

Construct bridges on Karnaphuli: Local Awami League leaders at a rally demanded immediate measures for renovation of dilapidated Kalurghat Bridge and Shah Amanat Bridge and construction of a third bridge on the river Karnaphuli.

The rally was held at Pashchim (west) Kadirkhil under Boalkhali thana on the other bank of the Karnaphuli here recently.

Chittagong (south) district unit of Awami League Moslem Uddin Ahmed addressed the rally as the chief guest. Local union AL president Rafiq Talukder presided.

Inter-bank Cricket: The Inter-bank Cricket Tournament began at Dampara Police Line ground in the city here on Friday.

National Credit and Commerce Bank Ltd. (NCCBL) managing director M Anisuzzaman inaugurated the tournament as the chief guest releasing balloons and festoons in a colourful ceremony.

M Anisuzzaman announced award money of Tk.10,000 and trophy for the man of the tournament, Tk. 5000 and trophy for each of the highest wicket taker and highest scorer of the tournament.

In the opening match Bank Asia defeated National Bank by six wickets. Md. Zobaer was adjudged man of the match. As many as 20 teams of different banks are participating in the tournament.

7th Sun-crest Golf: The 7th Sun-crest Cup Golf Tournament ended at Bhatary Golf and Country Club on Friday.

Senior Vice-president of the golf club Major General Moyeen U Ahmed PSC inaugurated the Sunman Group-sponsored tournament as the chief guest. Sunman Group chairman Major (ret'd) A Mannan MP also addressed the inaugural ceremony.

A total of 136 participants from both home and abroad including 11 female players took part in the tournament.

The winners were: Winner- Hazimi Itu, Runner-up - R Tahsin Parash, Best gross S S Rahman, Ladies winner - Sara Aziz Shelly; Senior winner - Shamsul Huda, Ladies runner-up - Miss Crockee, Best front nine - Hafizur Rahman, Best break nine - Md. Ikramul Haq, Nine hole winner - Dr. Omar Faruq Yusuf, Longest drive - K Ibisawa and Nearest to pin - Brigadier General Tausif Ibrahim.

Tournament committee chairman Captain (ret'd) Ahsan Aziz Shelly conducted the prize giving ceremony.

Seminar on child trafficking: A seminar on Child Trafficking was held at Nhila UP office in Cox's Bazar on Thursday.

Cox's Bazar Samaj Poribartan Kendra (SPK) organised the seminar under Child Development: Child Trafficking Resistance Coordination Programme of Sarothi Project.

Cox's Bazar district coordinator of SPK Leonard Rosario and Havilder Sher Ali Khan were the chief guest and special guest respectively. Community organiser Abdur Rahman conducted the seminar chaired by Hakim Uddin Pahari.

Teachers' convention: The 3rd triennial convention of Bangladesh Teachers' Association Chittagong (north) district unit, was held here on Thursday.

While addressing the convention as the chief guest Whip Syed Wahidul Alam called upon the teachers for sincere efforts for improving the standard of education.

Bashis Vice-president Naresh Chakraborty inaugurated the convention where its general secretary Chowdhury Khorsid Alam was the principal discussant.

Syed Ahmed presided over the convention while Ranjit Kumar Saha, Atiar Rahman, Quazi Abdul Gani Saber, Sunil Chakraborti, AHM Fazlul Quader and AK Mahmudul Haq spoke.



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

A devastating fire engulfs a slum at Bakolia Bou Bazar in the city recently.

Incidents of fire on rise

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

When maxi driver Habib returned to his home at a shanty called Burma Colony after three days, it was too late.

A devastating fire had swept through the slum killing his mother, sister and three younger brothers the day before.

"For whom should I live now? The fire spells a doomsday to my life," sobbed 19-year-old Habib.

Habibur Rahman had a misunderstanding over a trifling matter with his mother Hazera Begum. He left the house at city's Baizid Bostami thana on the night of March 7. He passed three nights outside home.

As his emotions subsided he returned to the house in the morning on March 10 and found nothing but devastation. He fainted and fell down within no time. His sweet

'little world' was over. The fatal fire at the dead of night took the lives of his mother, sister and brothers.

The misery of Habib apart, about 400 shanties were gutted. The incident rendered nearly 3000 people homeless at the Burma Colony on that nightmarish early morning. Seven people, including six from Habib's family, were roasted alive in the fire.

More than 150 shanties were gutted and 500 people made homeless in another incident of fire occurred within five days at Jute Colony in the city's Bakalia area.

Incidents of fire originated from different sources or man-made faults and vengeance or sheer destiny is on the rise taking severe toll over the poor people especially the slum-dwellers in Chittagong.

Over one thousand incidents of fire occurred between January 2002 to mid-March this year (2003) in the

port city and the Chittagong district, the statistics available from fire sources said.

About 25 thousand people were rendered homeless, property worth over Tk.45 crore gutted and at least 10 people burnt to death.

The beach town of Cox's Bazar was also not far behind in this regard. At least 1500 incidents of fire occurred, property worth Tk. 50 crore were damaged and 80 people killed at eight upazilas under Cox's Bazar in the last five years, sources said.

About 725 incidents of fire occurred and damaged property worth Tk. 30 crore in 2002, unofficial sources said.

Of the fires, 248 originated from electrical fault or short circuits, 219 from lamp, 151 from kitchen oven, 62 from cigarette butt, 35 from revenge or vengeance and 13 from violence last year. The break up was

210, 200, 134, 60 and 26 respectively in the previous year. A total of 630 fire incidents occurred during that year (2001). However, there was no fire incident from violence.

Some incidents of fire in the city slums recently were outcome of vengeance and violence between crime lords and criminal groups over supremacy, sources said. Sources said the fire fighters in Chittagong had recovered properties worth Tk. 100 crore and Tk. 80 crore in 2002 and 2001 respectively.

Random filling of ponds and other water bodies around the city, unplanned construction of residential structures and shopping malls, obsolete and back-dated technologies of the authority and narrow roads and lanes mainly hinder fighting fire in Chittagong, sources said.

Measures to check cheating

SSC exams begin tomorrow

ATAUL GANI SUMON

The Chittagong Education Board has taken all measures to check cheating in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations scheduled to begin tomorrow simultaneously with six other education boards, sources said.

The board officials are now also alert to check the leakage of question papers. The education ministry has sent a letter to the board in this regard. The ministry in its letter asked them to be careful during distribution of question papers from the offices to examinations centres, sources said.

The formed 100 vigilance teams comprising board officials, magistrates and teachers to monitor the 99 examination centres.

A total of 69,161 students will appear in the SSC examinations under the Chittagong Education Board, sources said.

Chittagong Education Board increased six centres this year—three in the city and three others at the upazila level.

Meanwhile, the State Minister for Education Ehsanul Haq Milon recently asked the local administration and secretaries of the examination centres to take the video of the vulnerable centres of the public examinations under the board. He also asked them to send the lists of the vulnerable centres to the local administration, board and the ministry immediately.

The board sources said if any examinee was caught with the copy in the examinations centre will be expelled and will be handed over to law enforcers for summary trial.

The examinees who will carry the copy to the entrance of the examination centres will not face only expulsion but also imprisonment up to two years according to the rules of the Public Examination (offence) Act, 1980, sources said.

'We will enforce the act properly this year,' one official said.

The teachers will also face imprisonment and Monthly Pay Order (MPO) of their schools will be cancelled if they help examinees in adopting unfair means, the education ministry sources said.

'The teachers who will carry out their duties sincerely will be rewarded while anybody found tempering mark sheets or tabulation sheets will face five years' imprisonment.

The ministry of Education said development budget of the educational institutions would be suspended for failure to check cheating in public examinations.

Meanwhile, about 30 thousand examinees from different schools under the Chittagong Board would not be able to appear in the SSC examination as they failed in minimum one subject in their school test examinations.

But the examinees who failed in maximum subjects in the board final examinations would get opportunity to appear in the examinations following year, many guardians said.

The board officials said that it was decided according to the policies relating to the SSC examinations.

'But the rule was not effective in many schools. School authorities gave the permission to the students to sit for examinations those who even failed in two or three subjects in the tests,' sources said.

'If schools followed the rules the number of examinees would be half, they added.

The examinees from 40 schools under the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and their guardians laid siege to the city corporation office recently demanding opportunity to appear in the board final examinations those who have failed in at least one subject in school tests.

They alleged that many government and non-government schools of the city and in the district give the opportunity to their students to appear their Board final examination who were failed two or three subjects in their school test examination.

When contacted one of officials of city corporation told the correspondent 'Some of the schools give the opportunity to their students to appear their examination by adopting unfair means to show them pass to the board.'

City dwellers clamour for water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The city dwellers voiced strong resentment over acute water crisis, no increase in water supply for over a decade and its uneven distribution.

The speakers at World Water Day programmes in the city on Saturday said the Chittagong WASA is beset with massive irregularities and corruption and has failed to overcome the acute water crisis.

They demanded immediate and permanent solution to the crisis and ensure proper and equitable supply of water.

They called for making WASA, Chittagong, accountable. They urged the authorities concerned to give responsibility of WASA to City Corporation for quick implementation of the projects pending for years. They suggested creation of proposed water reservoirs and envisaging ways and means to use rain water as alternative to drinking water.

The speakers at a roundtable discussion on "water crisis in the

port city and its solution" criticised WASA for failure in discharging its responsibility.

The water generation of WASA, Chittagong, could not be raised since 1988. Its capacity rose to 4 million gallons daily and it was producing around 3.6 million gallons till date. The demand of water is now around 12 million gallons per day, they said.

The speakers resented that a huge area had been acquired for proposed reservoirs at Fateyabad for decades while the Madunaghat project could not be started as a note of the ministry took over a year. The note was required before sending the project papers to the Italian firm.

The roundtable was jointly organised by the Bengali daily the *Dainik Jugantor* and ActionAid Bangladesh at Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE). They said WASA, Ctg, was rather beset with corruption.

It was not giving the subscribers meter connections. It harassed them through over-billing to show

revenue in an "unethical way".

The influential people control and use street hydrants of the city commercially depriving the common people of water.

Slum people in the city do not get drinking water following this.

Besides, the water crisis even forced some intended foreign investors fly away elsewhere from Chittagong Export Processing Zone, they said.

The speakers also said that control by City Corporation could play a significant role in even distribution of water as well.

Prof Moinul Islam moderated the discussion. Former WASA, Ctg, chairman Sultan Mahmud Chowdhury, former superintendent engineer AKM Fazlullah, CPA chief engineer Dr. Shafayet Hossain Khan, and former CUJ president Mohammad Idris spoke. ActionAid Bangladesh country director Nasreen Haq, Pro-VC of BGC Trust University Prof Noorjahan Bhuiyan, Prof Mahbubul Haq, Engineer Shafiqul Islam, Jugantor Chittagong Bureau



PHOTO: STAR

City dwellers wait in a long queue to collect water from a street hydrant at Enayet Bazar Goalpara area.



PHOTO: STAR

Sharmili Bandopadhyaya along with another artiste is performing at a cultural function at Muslim Institute. The function was organised on the occasion of two-day silver jubilee programme of Bangladesh Chhatra Union.

Move to recruit fake sailors

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A move has reportedly been taken by a vested circle in the shipping sector to recruit unskilled seamen with fake sea experience certificates in the ocean-going vessels, sources said.

Such a move was aimed at making money against the recruitment, sources said.

There are over 5,000 registered seamen under the shipping office here. Of them, about 1,500 people were employed through proper channel in different ocean-going vessels.

Rest of the registered seamen holding Continuous Discharge Certificate (CDC) with professional experience and training certificates

remained unemployed, sources said.

Those unemployed seamen have to remain in waiting list for their chance to get the job, sources said. Meanwhile, the vested circle is reportedly trying to obtain CDC from the Department of Shipping with fake certificates against the passports of some unskilled sailors to recruit them out of the way, sources said.

When contacted the shipping office here expressed ignorance about such a move.

The move on the other hand, angered the registered seamen who lodged a protest to the authorities concerned and demanded probe in this regard.