

Scanning system at Ctg port gets a go-ahead

NURUL ALAM

The plan for introducing scanning system at Chittagong port at an estimated cost of Tk 400 crore received a 'go-ahead' from the higher authorities, official sources said.

The scanning system is aimed at ensuring smooth examination of import and export cargoes carried by containers.

A committee was formed with representatives from the National Board of Revenue (NBR), Chittagong port, Chittagong Customs House and some intelligence agencies to spear-head the move.

Headed by the NBR chairman, the

committee was asked to complete all formalities for installation of the scanners by December.

Process is underway to prepare a project concept profile (PCP) in this regard. After completion of PCP, tenders will be floated for procurement of scanner machines, sources said.

The plan was taken with a view to checking entry of smuggled weapons through containers and tax evasion by a section of unscrupulous traders who submit false declaration against the consignment.

With the growing threats of terrorism worldwide, many countries, especially the United States, became very alert while receiving container cargoes from other countries. And the

Chittagong port authority was also advised to scan the containers properly before export, officials said, adding that the inland container depot (ICD) in Dhaka would also be brought under the scanning system.

At the initial stage, three scanners are likely to be procured for installation at the Chittagong port and three more will be purchased later.

Commissioner of Chittagong Customs House Dr Rashidul Ahsan Chowdhury said, "We are badly in need of this scanning system to ensure thorough examination of container cargoes." The containers are now being examined through a manual process.

"Besides, the scanning system will

help us give a faster delivery of containers from the port after quick examination and assessment. As a result, the trend of tax evasion by false declaration of goods will be checked and revenue earnings will go up," he said.

"On the other hand, the scanning system will effectively check carrying of weapons or any illegal goods through containers," he added.

"In fact, it is difficult to examine all the goods inside the containers through a manual process," the commissioner said, adding that all the advanced countries examine the containers with scanners.

Chittagong port Chief Engineer Shafayet Hossain Khan said, "With the introduction of scanning system,

all unethical practices in import and export business through Chittagong port will be stopped. Even carrying of smuggled weapons by containers will never be possible if examined with scanners".

"We have also been advised by foreign countries to introduce scanning system immediately," he added. "However, it will never affect our trade activities at all."

Chittagong port now handles over five lakh containers a year and the consignees also prefer shipment of cargoes through containers for safety and security of their goods, port sources said.

Airport management to go into pvt hands

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Process is underway to hand over management of Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong to private sector by this year, sources said.

The international tender floated

in this regard scheduled to open today (September 10) has been extended till September 30.

The time has been extended at the request of the intended bidders to facilitate them in finding more investors and operators, sources at Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) said.



Front view of Shah Amanat International Airport, Chittagong.

It would also help the bidders come forward with better offers for us, they said.

Some 22 foreign firms including those from Thailand and Malaysia took the concept forms of the tender where any country other than the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) enlisted ones was allowed to participate.

But many of them stepped back and refrained from submitting the tender due to number of flights which they reportedly found insufficient, sources said.

At present only the southern hemisphere is open for the private operators and the bidders urge for opening the other hemispheres as well, they said adding, the CAAB has already conveyed the demand to government.

Opening of all the hemispheres for the private operators could have increased the number of flights and revenue through different charges such as landing,

The time for opening international tender has been extended till September 30.

parking, boarding and lodging as well, they said.

The private sector will take control of overall management except the regulatory works such as operation and control of flights, sources said.

The initiative was taken to increase income of the airport and start paying back the return of Japanese loan of Tk. 511 crore in an annual instalment of Tk. 36 crore from the next year.

The CAAB took the loan from Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for modernisation and expansion of the airport that was completed in early

2001.

The airport manager Khorshed Alam Sarker said since its journey as modern international one on March 24, 2001, the airport was earning revenue of around Tk.13 crore on an average a year. But after meeting the expenditures the neat profit amounted to around Tk. 6 crore, he said.

As such payment of an annual return of Tk. 36 crore would be difficult for the authorities, Sarker said.

The international tender was floated for the first time shortly after the decision on private management in 2001. The offer for private management did not get sufficient response from the concerned quarters. It forced the authorities to extend time for floating the international tender for the second time in May last year. The time was extended at the request of some foreign firms, sources said.



Shuvalong, 30km off Rangamati, is a scenic spot frequented by tourists from home and abroad. A channel branching from a river streams through hills of Shuvalong, making it a place of wonders. The hills have been experiencing landslides in recent years.

theweekthatwas

CCC survey on sanitation

Chittagong City corporation (CCC) began a survey on sanitation in all the 41 wards on Friday to conform with countrywide government programme.

The survey was aimed to gather data about the users of hygienic, non-hygienic and open toilets within the purview of CCC.

In this regard, view exchange meetings were held separately in 41 wards on Friday. Respective commissioners chaired the meetings attended by cross-section of people and representatives from CCC and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

Speakers said unhygienic and open toilet gives rise of the various water-borne diseases for which city dwellers are to suffer a lot. Besides, environment is being affected badly, they added.

UPDF condemns attack on tribals

United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) leaders at a rally here condemned the attack on tribal people at Mahalchhari in Khagrachhari district by

'Bangalee settlers'.

They demanded judicial inquiry into the incident, exemplary punishment to the culprits responsible for the attack and immediate rehabilitation of the victim families.

The protest rally was held in front of the Zila Parishad in the city on Thursday with Mohammad Mamun in the chair. Ali Haider, Sanchay Chakma, Amir Abbas Tapu, Apu Chakma and Sonali Chakma addressed. The speakers also condemned the role of administration and 'so-called' people's representatives for the incident.

Court orders reinstatement of journalist

Joint secretary general of BFUJ and former sports reporter of Daily Azadi AZM Haider won a legal battle against the daily's management recently. The chairman of Chittagong Second Labour Court Ashraf Hossain in a verdict ordered the Azadi management to reinstate Haider with full payment of all the dues and arrears.

The Azadi management in a job order terminated Haider from his job on October 30, 2001 without paying him salaries and other dues. Later, the



Artists of Rakta Karabai, a cultural organisation, present a musical programme on 'Rabindranath Barsha Gaan' at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy on Sunday evening.

aggrieved journalist lodged a case against the management with the Labour Court seeking justice.

Senior lawyer Amiyo Bhushan Poddar and Sukhamoy Chakravorty appear for the plaintiff while senior lawyer Subhash Chandra Laia for Azadi management. Chittagong Union of Journalist (CUJ) president Mostak Ahmad and general secretary Shahid UI Alam in a statement on Thursday urged the Azadi management to reinstate Haider and pay his dues immediately. They also thanked the lawyers concerned.

Special allotment demanded

Leaders of Greater Chittagong Development Action Committee at a meeting sought special government allotment for Chittagong to help make it the 'commercial capital' of the country in true sense.

"We won't believe in hyperbole and razzamatazz any more. Please act promptly and effectively to implement the long-cherished dream of the Chittagong-people," they urged the ministers from Chittagong district.

Committee leader Md Ilias presided over

the meeting at EPZ Square on Thursday. Committee chairman SM Jamaluddin, Vice Chairman Mamtazuddin Chowdhury, committee leaders Laila Ibrahim Banu, Majibul Haq Shukkur, Dr Sultan Sikder, Kamaluddin Ahmad and engineer Md. Ibrahim spoke at the meeting.

Speakers warn of AIDS spread

Speakers at an advocacy meeting said AIDS could spread all over the country in an epidemic form due to lack of proper knowledge and consciousness to prevent or combat the fatal disease.

"HIV can easily be spread into the country from neighbouring Myanmar and India, the two most vulnerable nations. Therefore strict monitoring and scanning is needed in border points," they said.

The meeting was organised by Suraksha, Chittagong, an AIDS-STD Prevention Programme of Social Marketing Company (SMC), at a city restaurant on Wednesday. With Deputy Director (Health) of Chittagong Division Dr. Nurul Alam in the chair, Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian as chief

guest and an AIDS expert Dr. AQM Sirajul Islam as special guest attended the meeting.

SMC area manager Mirza Muhammad Azam, programme manager Dr. AZM Jahidur Rahman and Suraksha programme officer Mohiuddin Hafiz also addressed the meeting.

World Vision employees form human chain

The Employees Welfare Parishad of World Vision, a non-government organisation (NGO), formed a human chain protesting closure of World Vision school and termination of its teachers empty-handed on Wednesday in front of Chittagong Press Club.

They also placed five-point demand to the World Vision authorities and urged them to meet the demands immediately.

Rural areas have great potentials

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury said the rural

areas in Bangladesh have great potentials to be developed as self-reliant and development-oriented projects can change lifestyle in remote regions.

The minister was speaking as chief guest at a cheque distribution ceremony to different welfare organisations and distressed people at Muslim Institute Hall on Friday. Jatiya Samajkalyan Parishad organised the function.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Chittagong Md Shafiqul Islam presided over the function. Divisional Commissioner in-charge Md Quamrul Islam, Social Welfare Department. Deputy Director Kabir Uddin and Neaz Mohammad Khan also addressed. Later, commerce minister distributed cheques worth Tk7.46 lakh to 214 people and organisations.

Workshop on tremor-tolerant building

A workshop on 'earthquake-tolerant building and application of Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC)' was held at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong Centre on Thursday. Engineering Staff College,

Bangladesh and IEB jointly organised the daylong workshop.

Speakers urged to strictly follow the pros and cons of BNBC, soil test and check the structural aspects before preparing the designs to have tremor-tolerant buildings. "Civil engineers can play a pivotal role in this regard," they said.

Clinic-plus - Prothom Alo Debate

"The overall standard of our education in the country is being degraded day by day and such a frustrating standard will be of no benefit for the future generation. A change is badly needed to get rid of the dismal situation quickly as well as gain good."

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury said this while he was speaking as chief guest at the inauguration of Clinic Plus-Prothom Alo Parliamentary Debate Competition at the Public Administration Training Centre (PATC) on Saturday. Dristi, a cultural organisation, arranged the event.

CCCI president praised the debate saying it had enriched and enlight-

ened human being. Many of our students are not well versed even in his or her mother tongue, he said.

Dristi President Hasina Reza Soma presided. CCCI Vice President Monzurul Amin Chowdhury, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Joint Secretary Dr. Shahadat Hossain, Lever Brothers Production Manager Mahmud Hasan Khan, Personnel Services Manager Md Shahabuddin, Dristi Debate Club Chairman Safia Rahman, Director Masud Bakul and General Secretary Saif Chowdhury also spoke.

Later, two quarter finals were held. Dr. Khastagir Quirs High School and Meron Sun School moved to the semi-finals.



National Board of Chairman (NBR) Chairman Dr Shoyeb Ahmed (2nd from right) speaks at a meeting on 'Existing problems in VAT payment and solution' at Chittagong chamber auditorium on Wednesday. Immediate past president of FBCCI Yusuf Abdullah Harun (1st from left), Chittagong chamber President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury (2nd from left)



Chittagong Chamber president Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury addresses the inaugural ceremony of Clinic-plus - Prothom Alo Inter-school Parliamentary Debate competition organised by Dhristy, Chittagong, a cultural organisation, at Public Administration Training Centre in the city recently.