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## Blackmail of ships plagues Chittagong Port

### Importer-shipping agent-stevedore nexus fleeces ship owners on various pretexts

RAFIQ HASAN

A powerful nexus has for long been fleecing foreign shipping lines by chartering and then detaining their ships on various pretexts for months at Chittagong Port.

Sources said usually the importer-shipping agent-stevedore racket first demands money from the ship owners making cooked-up charges, like delay in shipment or damage to cargo, else, it threatens to hold up the vessels for long spans of time by lodging cases with the admiralty courts.

If the ship owners negotiate and

settle with the crooks, their ships are let to depart the port on time. Otherwise, the gang carries out the threat by filing lawsuits and harassing the owners for a long time.

Captain Abdul Kader, former master of an ocean-liner, said this way the racketeers at the country's premier seaport bag crores of taka every year.

Right now, MV Dragonis, a cargo ship operated by Singapore-based Prominent Shipping Services Ltd, is suffering this evil. Since its arrival from China laden with over 17,000 tonnes of cement clinker six months ago, it has been forced to

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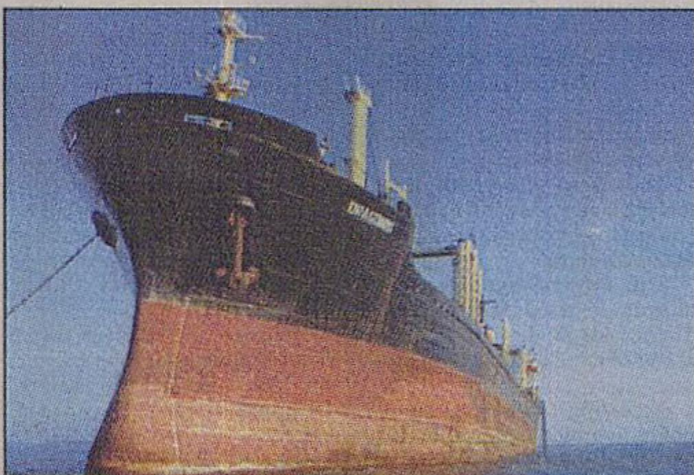


PHOTO: STAR

Singapore-based cargo ship MV Dragonis, forced to lie anchored in the Chittagong Port for the last six months, is still unsure of its departure.

## 4 murdered in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people including a trader and a college student were killed in the capital in nine hours till 6:00am yesterday while police recovered the slaughtered body of an unidentified youth from Baistek early yesterday.

Criminals gunned down medicine shop owner Humayun Kabir alias Dhanu at Shyampur late on Thursday night and took away his mobile phone and money.

A gang of four waylaid Dhanu, who is also a former union parishad member, at around 11:30pm when he was returning to his Nama Shyampur house after shutting down his shop in the area, witnesses said.

"Hearing some gunshots I turned around and found Dhanu collapse on the ground," said a grocery shop owner.

Relatives rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

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## Manufacturing industries post post-MFA boom

### 10.21pc growth in large, medium industries, 9.51pc in small ones in July-Sep 2005

REJAU KARIM BYRON

The growth rate of large and medium manufacturing industries, which hovered below 7 percent during the last three fiscal years, soared to 10.21 percent in the first quarter of FY06, due mainly to an investment hike to counter the adverse impacts of the quota phase-out.

In the same quarter, the small manufacturing industries also saw a 9.51 percent growth compared to a mere 6.72 percent in July to September of FY05.

However, experts warned that if the government's current tight monetary policy brings in any further interest rate hike it might

retard the boom.

Among the large and medium industries, paper, ceramics, plastic goods, wood products, garments and textiles marked the highest growth, according to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).

In July-September of FY06, the category comprising newsprint, paper, and books and periodicals scored the highest 21.21 percent growth from that in the first quarter of FY05. The industries of non-metallic products including ceramics, cement and glass posted a 17.20 percent growth, wood products 16.59 percent, the category comprising food, beverage, tobacco etc 16 percent and the

group containing jute, cotton, apparel and leather 10 percent.

The other categories of medium and large industries registered an 8 to 9 percent growth in that quarter.

Among the small industries, those of non-metallic mineral products grew by 28.26 percent in the first quarter this year, while textiles, leather, apparel, paper and printing etc witnessed growths ranging from 10 to 16 percent. The BBS categorises an industrial unit employing 10 or less than 10 workers as a small industry.

A BBS source said usually the industrial growth remains relatively slower in the early months of a fiscal year and begins to pick up

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## 2 Bangladeshis killed, 6 missing

### Makkah death toll climbs to 53

AGENCIES, Makkah

At least two Bangladeshi nationals were killed and six missing in Thursday's hotel collapse in the holy Saudi city of Makkah as the death toll rose yesterday to 53.

"We've learnt that two Bangladeshis are among the dead, while six others are missing," Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Major General (ret'd) SM Ikramul Haque told BDNEWS.

Among the six missing pilgrims,

three are from one family and two from another.

The dead are Abdur Razzaque, 35, a pilgrim, and Mohammad Shafiq, 36, a salesman at a shop in the building that housed a pilgrims' dormitory.

Razzaque, son of Ruhul Amin, hailed from Raipara in Rajshahi. His body has been kept at the King Abdul Aziz Hospital.

"He (Razzaque) was not a resident of the dormitory that

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## Rab busts third JMB den in 24 hours

### Arms, explosive materials seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday busted a third militant factory producing arms and bombs at Ashkona in the capital several hours after unearthing two other factories in Uttara and Tongi Thursday night.

The Rab recovered huge amount of bomb-making chemicals, four packets of LDD powder, five integrated circuit boards, 100 capacitors, 60 iron balls, 70 switches, watches, wires, resistors,

safety fuses, maps, books and audio cassettes on jihad.

The elite anti-crime agency raided a house at Ashkona in Uttara following leads from two Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) militants - Wahidul Islam and Shafiqul Islam alias Russell - arrested Thursday night, Rab sources said.

On Thursday at about 8:00pm, the Rab members held Wahid, who at first introduced himself as Habib, from Courtbari of Moinartek and

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## Rohingya refugees drafted in voter list

### Fresh electoral roll goes on defying HC directives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Suspicion arose that over 50,000 Rohingya refugees have been enrolled for the fresh voter list in Cox's Bazar as the voter's registration forms supplied to the enumerators have allegedly exhausted, only in five days since the enumeration began.

Meanwhile, enumerators continued collecting information

across the country for the fresh voter list yesterday, ignoring Wednesday's High Court (HC) directive to revise the existing voter roll.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent reports: The district election officer said the number of voters according to the 2000 voter list is 9,75,009 and the district EC office supplied 10,38,500 voter's registration forms

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## 2006 a crucial year for HR, democracy

### Irene Khan tells The Daily Star about Bangladesh

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and SHAMIM ASHRAF

Amnesty International (AI) Secretary General Irene Khan who has just been offered a second stint in office sees 2006 as a crucial year for political developments centring the forthcoming general election as uncertainty is rife about the election being held in a free and fair manner.

"This year is crucial for Bangladesh also economically and



Irene Khan

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