

CTG PORT CONTAINER TERMINAL

Unfair practice on to avail priority berthing

RAFIQ HASAN

Certain ocean-going ships are taking advantage of priority berthing at Chittagong sea port container terminal declaring themselves as gearless.

This is a very recent trend and it created conflict between the shipping agents and feeder service operators, said a high official of the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA).

The Chittagong Port Authority recently issued a circular giving priority berth for gearless (without cranes on board) vessels for using recently installed gantry cranes.

One out of only three terminals for container handling at the port has been allocated for gearless

vessels.

But sources said to avail priority berthing some vessels are declaring themselves as gearless though they had cranes earlier. In these cases, they either dismantle the cranes or make the cranes inoperative and submit a false certificate concealing the facts.

The safety authority of the port's Mercantile Marine Department recently noticed the trend and informed the port authority. The department also investigated the matter and caught a Hong Kong flag carrier ship M V Yong Xing indulging in the practice.

The ship managed to get berth in container terminal on March 25, through false declaration as a

gearless ship. The local agent of the ship managed the declaration and got priority in berthing allegedly by paying a good amount of bribe.

Investigators found that the accused ship had four cranes and out of which three were dismantled in Singapore and the remaining one was made inoperative.

The shipping agents at yesterday's berthing meeting raised the issue and demanded stoppage of such practice.

If only the declaration gearlessness gives them priority berthing then all the ships will seek to obtain this, they said, adding that then there would be ship congestions at the terminal.

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ADB plans to lend \$500m for power sector

UNB, Dhaka

A \$500 million project planned by Asian Development Bank (ADB) for developing Bangladesh's power sector is likely to come up within this year, as the country faces serious electricity crisis.

"The project is waiting for being placed with the ADB's Board of Directors for consideration," ADB Resident Representative Hua Du told reporters after a meeting with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman at his Planning Ministry office yesterday.

She was accompanying visiting ADB Executive Director Emile Gauvreau who called on the minister to exchange views on Bangladesh's socioeconomic situation with a special reference to major development problems and prospects.

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PHOTO: AKM MOHSIN

Brick kilns are proliferating unchecked due mainly to fast urbanisation, often eating up croplands. Hundreds of such kilns have already swallowed up vast farmland around the capital. This aerial photograph shows a kiln at Amin Bazar.

JCD leader shot in Motijheel

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals shot and wounded a Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader while 10 Jubo League activists were injured in a clash between themselves at Pallabi yesterday in the capital.

Morshed Khan Ejaz, 26, general secretary of JCD Motijheel thana unit, was having tea at a roadside tea-stall around 11:15am when the criminals sprayed bullets on him, police said.

Ejaz, also an undergraduate student of a private university, received eight bullets in both of his legs and was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Police suspect Ejaz, who claimed he did not know why he was attacked, was assaulted due to a feud inside his group.

Meanwhile, hundreds of Jubo League activists gathered in front of Mollah Market at Mirpur section 12 to get information about the

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Big powers creep toward elusive deal on Iran

REUTERS, United Nations

UN Security Council powers held out hope on Monday for agreement this week on a statement to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions, but a deal still appeared elusive before a forthcoming ministerial meeting.

"It is now three weeks since the International Atomic Energy Agency board took this matter up and we are going to try and resolve it in the next

day or so," US Ambassador John Bolton said, referring to the Vienna-based UN nuclear watchdog.

He spoke after another meeting with the other four permanent council members -- Britain, France, Russia and China -- and after a briefing to the full 15-member council.

Russia, backed by China,

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Eden College to open tomorrow after 16 days

DU CORRESPONDENT

Eden University College will resume its academic activities from tomorrow after 16-day closure with the college dormitories still closed for the students.

Consequently, the sufferings of the students will increase since many of them have no other place to stay in the capital from where they can attend the classes.

In the wake of students' demonstration against the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) college unit's involvement in distributing residential seats in exchange of money, the college authorities suspended all the classes for indefinite period and ordered the students to vacate the dormitories on March 13.

The next day, the JCD activists launched an attack on the agitating students who defied the authorities' orders and forced them out of the dormitories.

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Prayer Timing		
March 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-20	6-25
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

OUST-THAKSIN AGITATION Protesters threaten to paralyse Bangkok

AFP, Bangkok

Thai protesters seeking to oust the prime minister threatened yesterday to paralyse downtown Bangkok with a new demonstration, as a new poll found dwindling support for their movement.

The protesters have camped out for two weeks outside Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra's princely offices in Bangkok's historic district, calling for him to resign over claims of corruption and abuse of power.

But with just days to go till snap elections on Sunday, protest organizers said they will move their sit-in Wednesday to Siam Paragon, the city's biggest and newest mall, located along one of the most congested streets in a city notorious for its traffic.

"If the protest stays there and blocks the road, traffic throughout the capital would be paralysed," traffic police chief Panu Kertlapphol told AFP.

The protesters say they will not

stage their sit-in on private property but will camp in the street, which Panu said would be grounds to arrest them for blocking traffic.

"We would like take action against the protesters but the penalties (for traffic violations) are minimal and could lead to conflicts. So we will just let them face the public and social criticism, that will hurt them more," he said.

The protesters' decision to move downtown quickly soured the city's opinion of their drive to force Thaksin to resign, according to a poll released Tuesday.

Some 71 percent of 1,116 people surveyed Monday disagreed with the move, respected pollsters at Assumption University said.

The poll also found support for Thaksin rose sharply after the move was announced, while more people said they would vote on Sunday.

Nearly 65 percent of Bangkok residents said they planned to vote, up 24 points from a poll just two days earlier. And the number of

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Charges to be framed against Sunny April 18

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday set April 18 for hearing on the charge-framing against the military commander of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) Ataur Rahman Sunny and four others in two cases.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court directed the authorities concerned to produce Sunny and four others before it during the hearing of the cases.

The two cases were filed with Sabujbagh Police Station, one under Arms Act and the other under Explosive Substances Act, against Sunny and six others on December 14 last year.

On March 14, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) pressed charges against Sunny and four others.

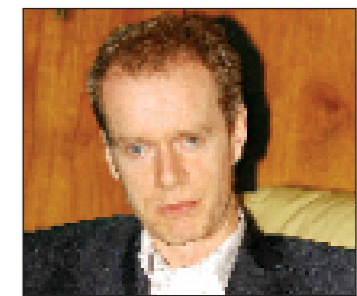
The other accused are Sunny's friend Fariduzzaman Swapan, JMB regional commander of Gazipur Enayet Ullah (Jewel), Kamrul (Sumon, also known as Zahidul) and Alamgir (Bijoy).

Sumon and Alamgir are absconding while the others are

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A year of test for democracy

BBC Hardtalk presenter talks on Bangladesh debate



Stephen Sackur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The current year is a significant test for the democracy of Bangladesh, said Stephen Sackur, the presenter of Hardtalk of the BBC World

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Announcement

Readers are invited to send in their views and comments on the CPD, Prothom Alo and The Daily Star supported civil society initiative for an accountable development process in the context of the upcoming national elections. Your comments on "An accountable development process and the national election

2007," and the need to elect "clean candidates" should not exceed 500 words and will be published on the Op-ed pages of The Daily Star. Please send in your views and make your voice count in our democracy.

- Editor

