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HC SHOW-CAUSE NOTICE ABOUT CONGESTION SURCHARGE Exports halt as feeder vessels stop operation

Import to suffer as no goods loaded in foreign ports

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Country's export trade came to a halt as most feeder vessel operators suspended their operation from yesterday following a High Court (HC) show-cause notice about imposition of congestion surcharges.

No shipping company under the banner of Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), except the HRC—the largest Bangladeshi-owned company with 10 ships—loaded any export cargo from Chittagong Port yesterday.

At the same time, no Chittagong-bound import cargo was loaded at ports in Singapore, Colombo and Klang.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Chittagong Port comes to a standstill yesterday as feeder vessel operators went on a strike following a High Court show cause notice about congestion surcharges.



PHOTO: STAR

5 JMB men held with jihadi books

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested five JMB (Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh) leaders and workers who had been regrouping in Gomostapur upazila in Chapainawabganj.

They are Rajshahi regional JMB commander Abdur Rahim, 40, Abdul Quayyum Bin Ikramul Haq.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

New EC rebuts claims of bias, dubious past

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Newly appointed Election Commissioner Mahmood Hasan Mansur yesterday denied the allegation against him of misusing the public office for personal gain while he was the post and telecommunications secretary.

He also dismissed the main opposition Awami League's accusation that he has involvement

with the ruling BNP.

In an interview with a private television channel, the former bureaucrat said, "The government can explain the rationale behind my appointment. I think they've appointed me to the post, considering the neutrality and efficiency that I have proved in my previous services."

Different national dailies

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

'Black day' observed in Phulbari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Phulbari, Dinajpur

The people of Phulbari, Dinajpur, observed a 'black day' yesterday by wearing black badges and hoisting black flags protesting the August 26 carnage.

Black flags were hoisted atop shops, schools, colleges, government and private residential buildings yesterday morning.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

PHULBARI INCIDENT Minu terms it an opposition conspiracy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu yesterday said the opposition combine's conspiracy to create anarchy over Phulbari incident was thwarted.

"The conspirators who tried to gain politically by creating anarchy have been let down," Minu, also a ruling BNP legislator, told reporters after returning from Phulbari, Dinajpur.

Minu had led the government team in negotiations over the Phulbari crisis at Parbatipur and gave assurance to people in Phulbari on August 30 that Asia Energy would wrap up their

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

MEGHNAGHAT-3 POWER PROJECT

Yet another move to favour rookie company

SHARIEF KHAN

The power ministry has finalised a fresh summary with misleading information seeking approval of the Cabinet Purchase Committee for secretly awarding contract for the 450 MW Meghnaghat-3 power project to a novice company in violation of rules and regulations.

Sources said the proposal will be sent to the committee next week for approval.

The ministry and the Power Cell had tried to resist this irregular project for long but the 'alternative centre of power' of the ruling BNP,

which is backing this deal, had thrown its weight behind the project to get it approved before expiry of the tenure of the present government.

The summary tried to show that awarding of the contract to US-Irish joint venture Cadogan-Manning Group (CMG), which has no experience in power projects, will make this project less costly than the AES Meghnaghat-1 power project.

The CMG's 22-year levelised offer for power is US 2.78 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh), which is one cent lower than in the case of the

1998 AES Meghnaghat project.

But the summary did not mention some vital financial aspects of the AES project that include AES paid the PDB \$ 37 million upfront instead of giving free electricity of equal amount, plus \$ 5 million for land and \$ 12 million for building an inter-connection transfer facility (ITF). These make the AES deal much less costly while the ITF built by AES will be used by the Meghnaghat-2 and 3 power plants in future.

Experts noted that on 'net present value' (NPV) calculation of real

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Experts against deal, not coal extraction

No question of compensation to Asia Energy as mining contract not signed, roundtable told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academics, politicians and energy experts at a roundtable yesterday said they are not against extraction of coal or foreign investment in the country, but they oppose any investment or development project that goes against national interest.

They also demanded formation of an investigation committee led by a Supreme Court justice to find out the persons and organisations

involved in the process of signing gas and coal mining contracts that went against national interest and the economy.

The Shaptahik 2000, a Bangla weekly, organised the roundtable on 'recent incidents in Phulbari and mineral resources of Bangladesh' at the National Press Club.

"We are not in favour of keeping coal under the ground, but we are against its sale after extraction."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

UNFULFILLED POLL PLEDGES Ruling parties must explain failure before election

Demands regional dialogue

RAFIQ HASAN and MIRZA SHAKIL from Tangail

The political parties should give explanation before a general election in case of failure to fulfil election pledges while in power, said speakers at the regional dialogue in Tangail yesterday.

They suggested introduction of modern education system and bringing necessary changes in the society for ensuring good, honest

and dedicated leadership. Identity card and electronic voting system will help to reduce election related corruption, they said.

The speakers also demanded the provision of spending at least 10 days in every month by a member of parliament in his or her constituency.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the discussion at

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