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SHAH CEMENT

Money pit of Ctg customs

CHC wants to pour more money into broken boats it could not repair almost a decade ago

MOHAMMAD SUMAN, Ctg

The Customs House Chattogram bought two patrol boats for Tk 2.86 crore in the mid 80s to monitor the outer anchorage of Chittagong port and end illegal loading and offloading.

Nine years ago from now, the boat became unusable and remained out of use for four years. The authorities then tried to make those usable spending Tk 5 crore five years ago, but the boats did not function even for a day after the repair. The Customs House now want to repair one of the two boats with Tk 3.11 crore again, scrapping the other.

Earlier in January, the Customs House authorities sent a draft proposal to the National Board of Revenue and the Ministry of Finance for approval in this regard.

Meanwhile, the outer anchorage of Chittagong port remained unwatched by the customs, said insiders.

Documents obtained by The Daily Star showed the Ministry of Finance allocated Tk 5 crore to the customs house to buy new boats in 2014-15.

The customs house, however, spent the entire money on repairing the boats and a jetty where it was planned to dock the boats.

Employees of the boats -- PB Safen and PB Somikha -- feared if the ministry provides the Customs House with money this time, it would be wasted again.

Contacted, Customs Commissioner Fakhrul Alam said the decision of scrapping one boat was made as that could

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A broken patrol boat of Custom House Chattogram is beached near Jetty-1 at Chittagong Port. This is one of the two vessels bought by the Custom House in the mid-80s. The boats have been of no use for almost a decade and attempt to repair have failed.

PHOTO: MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Eskaton fire victims laid to rest

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

With one of his legs in a cast, Jahangir Alam was at the funeral of his beloved daughter in his ancestral home in Sherpur yesterday. With him was his wife, who was also injured in their attempt to get away from the fire in Eskaton early Thursday.

Their daughter Afrin Jahan Juthi, 17, an HSC examinee from Viqarunnisa Noon School & College, was among the three dead in the fire that broke out in a five-storey building.

She was killed while trying to exit the building using the stairs, said her family.

"We wanted our daughter to become a doctor. But all our hopes and dreams were shattered," Jahangir, a public works department official, said in an emotion-choked voice while talking to this correspondent over phone.

After the fire broke out around 4:00am, Jahangir came out of their fourth-floor flat and took shelter

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Three killed in 'gunfights'

STAR REPORT

Two suspected robbers were killed in a "gunfight" between two groups of robbers in Feni's Sonagazi upazila early yesterday.

Their family members said the two had been missing since Thursday afternoon.

In Jashore, another alleged robber died at a hospital in Monirampur upazila early yesterday, hours after he was hit by bullets during a "shootout" between police and his associates in the upazila.

Saifuddin, sub-inspector of Sonagazi Police Station in Feni, said a police team went to Mangalkandi area around 4:00am yesterday on information that a "gunfight" broke out between two groups of "robbers".

Sensing the presence of law enforcers, the criminals fled the area firing blank shots, he added.

Police later found two bullet-hit youths lying

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

Gratitude and goodwill for Soviet people

FEBRUARY 29, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

BANGABANDHU LEAVES FOR MOSCOW

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman leaves today on a five-day state visit to the Soviet Union carrying a message of friendship from the people of Bangladesh. It is his first state visit to the Russian capital.

Described as a 'goodwill tour', the Soviet visit is expected to see a wide range of talks between the two governments with the topic of economic assistance to Bangladesh set to feature prominently.

As for the political significance of the tour, the Prime Minister will personally convey the good wishes and gratitude of the people and the government of Bangladesh to the people, government and leaders of the

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Bangabandhu is waving to the cheering crowds that saw him off as he boarded the plane to begin the marathon flight to Moscow.



Ten bodies worried over New Delhi violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine cultural organisations in Bangladesh yesterday expressed grave concerns over the clash and violence that erupted in Indian's capital New Delhi between people for and against a new citizenship law.

The violence, which claimed the lives of 42 people as of last night, is not desired by the civil society, leaders of the nine cultural federations said in a joint statement.

Democracy and peace-loving people of the world expect the true reflection of the message of secularism enshrined in the India's constitution, the statement said.

"We are making a clarion call to the Indian government to immediately take effective steps to stop the violence," the cultural leaders said.

They also urged

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Earth captures new 'mini moon'



AFP, Washington

Earth has acquired a second "mini-moon" about the size of a car, according to astronomers who spotted the object circling our planet.

The mass -- roughly 1.9-3.5 meters (6-11 feet) in diameter -- was observed by researchers Kacper Wierzbos and Teddy Pruyne at the Nasa-funded Catalina Sky Survey in Arizona on the night of February 15.

"BIG NEWS. Earth has a new temporarily captured object/Possible mini-moon called 2020 CD3," likely to be a C-type asteroid, Wierzbos tweeted on Wednesday.

The astronomer said it was a "big deal" as "this is just the second asteroid known to orbit Earth (after 2006 RH120, which was also discovered by the Catalina Sky Survey)."

Its route suggests it entered Earth's orbit three years ago, he said.

The Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory's Minor Planet Center, which collects data on minor

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BURDWAN BLAST CASE Bangladeshi JMB man convicted in Kolkata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A Kolkata court has convicted two JMB men -- a Bangladeshi and an Indian -- for money laundering and terror financing in connection with the Burdwan blast case of October 2014.

The Bangladeshi, Rahamatullah alias Sajid, and the Indian, Mohammed Burhan, were convicted on Wednesday, said India's Enforcement Directorate officials.

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 29

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-15 12-45 4-30 6-05 7-30
JAMAAT 5-50 1-15 4-45 6-10 8-00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

One dies as mob beats 'cattle thieves' in Bogura

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogura

A man beaten by a mob in Bogura's Dhunat upazila early Thursday died at a hospital yesterday.

Shree Bania, 35, of Choukibari village in the upazila, died at Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital.

Two other men, Shafi, 45, and Salam Islam, 42, who were also attacked by the mob, are being treated at the hospital with serious injuries, said police.

Villagers beat them up when they were stealing a cow and a bicycle from someone's home around 3:30am, locals said.

The mob handed them to police hours later and accused them in a case for stealing. The men were sent to a hospital by police, said Ismail Hossain, officer-in-charge of Dhunat Police Station.

Police will file a case against the mob if Bania's family doesn't do so, the OC said.

Bania's body was sent to a morgue for autopsy.



Discarded plastic, inset, being used as fuel for a makeshift burner to heat tar and stone chips for road repair. The toxic fume engulfed the area near the FDC level crossing in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

AIR STRIKE BY SYRIAN REGIME Alarm after 33 Turkish troops killed in Idlib

Russia sends warships to Bosphorus Strait

AFP, Istanbul

The leaders of Russia and Turkey held crisis talks yesterday to try to scale down tensions after 33 Turkish soldiers were killed in a regime air strike in Syria.

The international community voiced fears of a rapidly-rising risk of escalation after the attack by Russian-backed Syrian forces in the province of Idlib, where President Bashar al-Assad is waging a bloody campaign to oust rebels from their last holdout.

Hours after the strike, Turkey warned it was opening the gates for refugees to flee to Europe, a move that could have major repercussions for its western neighbours and prompted Greece to double its border patrols.

The deadly bombardment added to weeks of mounting tensions between rebel supporter and Nato member Ankara and Damascus ally Moscow, and stoked international concerns about the plight of people living in the battleground province.

ROOM FOR DIALOGUE

It was the highest single death toll since the Turkish army first intervened in Syria in 2016, and brought the total number of Turkish troops killed in Idlib this month to 53.

Turkey said it retaliated to Thursday's deaths by hitting more than 200 regime targets in drone and artillery bombardments.

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