

Corruption at Benapole Land Port alleged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, JESSORE

Extra-income in terms of service charge at every stage of business in Benapole Land Port has nowadays become a common practice.

Service charge is extracted from all the port users including the exporters, importers and clearing and forwarding (C&F) agents.

The slapping of unofficial service charge begins right during the release of bills from the billing section. Then comes the term of storekeeper.

When any consignment is received from the warehouse the service charge in bigger amount is needed.

The service charge is allegedly channelled from top to bottom and the ceiling is fixed.

When contacted a number of port users told this correspondent that bribes or tips whatever it is in term of service charge, is an accepted way to get things done in this port office. This has become compulsory, they added.

It is also alleged that any person who wants to break the practice, is taught a good lesson and that may cost losses to his consignment by way of pilferage or damage.

This service charge is nothing new here. It is as old as anything, port users told. But none can oppose for reasons unknown.

However, Deputy Traffic Manager (DTM) of Benapole Land Port Delwar Hossain denied his knowledge when this correspondent asked about the allegations.

He said corruption is a big term and abstract in nature. Nobody can prove it, he said.

He also said that the situation inside the port is not as grave as a section of people make it sound, he added.

Incidentally Benapole Land Port is 150 kilometres away from the Mongla Port Authority (MPA).

The chairman runs office sitting at Mongla and is not supposed to know what is happening here. He depends on file and correspondence.

Detractors remarked that lack of checks and balances and regular supervisions from the higher authority, have encouraged the DTM office to work in free style.

A source of Benapole C&F Agents' Association told that in a bid to change the traditional system in the port office by creating pressure of personality, they have elected a political leader as the president of the Benapole C&F Agents' Association this year.

They are confident that the prevailing situation will largely be improved soon as a result of the change of leadership.

UNB reports: There is nothing new in smuggling out skeletons from Bangladesh through India. But this time it has marked an alarming rise, particularly through southwestern region.

An organised gang of international racketeers is engaged in smuggling out skeletons from Bangladesh through India due to its increasing demand for medical purposes worldwide.

According to a competent source, the skeleton smugglers prefer buying the bony remains of youths and teenagers. Indian smugglers buy one skeleton at Tk 3000 to Tk 4000.

Skeletons are smuggled out to India in sacks under cover of essential goods.

BDR jawans recently recovered 13 skeletons, all of youths and teenagers, from Bora Achra village while those were being smuggled out to India.

Similarly, BDR personnel recovered 10 skeletons last year but investigation into the matter is slow for reasons unknown.

With the rise in skeleton smuggling, villagers here started guarding graveyards so that the smugglers cannot dig out the bodies of their relatives.



PHOTO:STAR

Civic sense is so poor among some town dwellers of Jhenaidah that most others have to suffer a lot due to their irresponsible activities. As this picture shows, these people have piled up building materials on this busy road near Azad Rest House of the town creating public nuisance. However, the local municipality or members of the law enforcing authorities are also quite reluctant to enforce law properly resulting in untold sufferings to the town dwellers.

Certificate case State minister's pledge remains unfulfilled

HOSSAIN SERAJ, Magura

The four children and their mother, accused in a certificate case in Magura district, are still passing hard days, as the pledge made by the State Minister for Jute to repay the children and their mother.

The four - Moina, 6, Chaina, 8, Phul Mia, 11, and Rahela, 13, and their mother Hasina - were made liable for the debt after the children's father, who actually borrowed the money from Bangladesh Krishibank, died before repaying the farm loan.

Nayeb Ali, who hailed from village Kalinagar at Kosundi union under Sadar upazila, died of hydrocephalus on October 7, 1993. He only repaid Taka 600 out of the total loan of Tk 10,000. He borrowed the money from main branch of the bank in Magura town on October 7, 1989.

A report in connection with the sufferings of the unfortunate accused was published in The Daily Star on September 9, 1999. After

the publication of the report, AK Faizul Huq, State Minister for Jute, talked to this correspondent over telephone and expressed his desire to repay the bank loan in favour of the children and their mother.

Later the state ministers also sent a letter to the then deputy commissioner in Magura and enquired about the actual figure of the loan with bank statement, a copy of which was supplied accordingly.

But nothing had so far been done in this regard till filing of this report yesterday (Monday).

The bank authorities filed a case (No. 49/97, Dated 26/1/97) in 1997 against Nayeb's children and wife to recover the loan, which now stood at Tk 32,561 with interests.

List of terrorists being prepared

UNB, Pabna

As the general election is due in a couple of months, Detective Branch of Police has started preparing a list of terrorists of the northern region.

As of Friday, names of 1,012 terrorists involved in extortion, kidnapping and violence in the last general election have been enlisted, according to competent sources.

They said terrorists of Pabna, Natore, Bogra, Rajshahi, Sirajganj, Rangpur, Naogaon and Kurigram districts top the list.

The list is likely to be given to the next caretaker government for taking necessary steps so that the election can be held in a fair and peaceful manner.

Police said the names of underworld criminals enjoying the blessings of the major political parties are also in the list.

NEWS SNAPS

Attack on invigilators condemned

UNB, Bhola

Teachers and students brought out a silent procession in Bhola town on Sunday condemning the attack on two invigilators at a sub-centre of Banglabazar Fatema Khanam College.

"Two teachers of Bhola Government College were assaulted by out-siders at Joynagar High School centre on the second day of the HSC examination Saturday. The teachers, wearing black badges, also submitted a memorandum to the deputy commissioner demanding exemplary punishment to the culprits. Sources said despite strict measures by the board and district administration the mass copying could not be checked due to undue interference by ruling party cadres."

Miniature answer books seized

UNB, Pabna

A few hours ahead of HSC examination that began on Thursday, Sadar police arrested three people while they were making miniature answer books suitable for adopting unfair means in the examination.

Police said Abdul Alim and Helal Uddin were arrested from New Market area and Rafiqul Islam from in front of Govt. Edward College between 8 pm and 9 pm when they were making the books using photocopiers. During the drive, aided by a magistrate, police seized nearly five sacks of such miniature answer guides along with three photocopy machines.

Cut-off head of man recovered

UNB, Kushtia

The cut-off head of a day labourer, who was missing for the last few days, was recovered from a sugarcane field at Chaiabari in Sadar upazila on Sunday.

The victim was identified as Shaheen who is believed to have been slaughtered. On information, police recovered his cut-off head and continued search for the beheaded body. Meanwhile, police arrested a young man, Hasan Ali, in this connection.

Shrimp farmers issue ultimatum

UNB, Bagerhat

Bagerhat Shrimp Farmers' Association and Bangladesh Krisak Samity (Farmers' Association) have threatened to launch vigorous movement, including staging demonstration in front of the government offices, if their 8-point demands are not met by May 16.

The ultimatum was issued at a press conference held at Bagerhat Press Club in Bagerhat town Wednesday. Their demands include providing interest-free bank loans to the shrimp farmers, providing shrimp fries at low price and setting up of hatcheries, service centres and cold storage by the government in all upazilas of the district. The leaders of the two associations also threatened to go for a fast-unto-death strike if the government does not pay heed to their demands. Later, they submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner.

6 spars under construction

UNB, Bogra

Bangladesh Water Development Board is constructing six spars in Shariakandi and Dhunot upazilas of Bogra district to protect some riverside areas from erosion.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak inaugurated the construction work on the project on Friday. Upon completion of the project, thousands of acres of land in the two upazilas will be saved from erosion by river Jamuna.

Shrimp depot damaged

UNB, Bagerhat

Juba League activists allegedly damaged a shrimp depot at Gourambha Bazar in Rampal upazila in Bagerhat Friday night in a bid to set up a party office there.

Altaf Hossain Akunjee, owner of the depot, alleged that eight Juba League men attacked his depot constructed two years ago on a khas land.



The Mymensingh centre of Aptech held a seminar on Information Technology at the local Anandamohan University College on Monday. Among others, business head of Aptech Bangladesh Ltd Ramakanta Bhattacharya, principal of the college Shusil Kumer Ganguly and other teachers attended the function. Students of Aptech Computer Education also exhibited a multimedia based website titled 'Bangladesh' on the occasion.

Danish Embassy team meets BAU VC

UNB, Mymensingh

A 3-member delegation of Danish Embassy in Bangladesh recently met the Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU).

Led by Ambassador Finn Thilsted, the delegation discussed with VC Dr Mohammad Anwarul Islam the bilateral cooperation in the fields of research and education. They later visited various departments and labs of the university, including Field Laboratory and Water Quality and Pond Dynamics Lab of Fisheries Department.

Three motorbikes stolen

UNB, Jhalakati

Three motorcycles were stolen from BRAC office in Jhalakati town Saturday night.

Police said the thieves broke into the office at the dead of night and took away the bikes. A case was filed.

Smuggled goods seized

UNB, Khagrachari

Army men seized smuggled goods, including huge Indian currency, in a drive at Boroitoli in Guimari upazila in Khagrachari on Friday.

The haul, including Rs 17.10 lakh, Tk 400, five sophisticated knives, and Indian cigarettes was handed over to local police.

1,569 arrested last month in Comilla

UNB, Comilla

Police, in separate drives, arrested 1,569 people from different parts of the district on various charges in the month of April.

Police also recovered three revolvers, three LGs and 92 rounds of bullet from the district during the drives. Seven people were arrested and five cases filed. During the period, police seized 1,030 bottles of phenisidyl syrup, 780 litres of local liquor, 700 grams of ganja (hemp) and five bottles of foreign liquor. Twenty-three people were arrested and 12 cases were filed in these connections.

Five held from college hostel

UNB, Tangail

Five youths were arrested from the hostel of Government Sadar University College of Korota on charge of terrorism and extortion last week.

The arrested were identified as Mohammad Selim, Arif, Mizanur Rahman, Syed Shahinur Hossain and Kabir Miah. They had been wanted in several cases under the Public Safety Act.