

THE WEEK THAT WA

Homage to Russian sailor: Chittagong City mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury paid homage to the Russian sailor UV Redkin placing wreaths at his grave at Potenga sea beach area here in the city on December 18. The Russian sailor was killed while he was removing mines from sunken ship planted by the Pakistani occupied forces at the Karnaphuli estuary after the War of Liberation. Russian Consul General in Chittagong Nechoal Ichhakin also joined the city mayor in paying homage to the Russian sailor. They observed silent and prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Mayor Mohiuddin said sacrifice of the sailor for the cause of Bangladesh people would be ever remembered and it set up an instance of a strong brotherly ties between the peoples of Russia and Bangladesh. On behalf of Bangladesh Naval Academy, chief Executive officer Lt. Commander Hasan Tarik Mondal, architect Ashiq Imran and other high officials of Russian Federation Office in Chittagong were also present at the function.

Meat and cattle traders resent: The meat and cattle traders of Chittagong in a memorandum here on December 23 expressed resentment over sealing of Bangladesh border that stopped import of Indian cattle through corridors. They demanded immediate opening of the border to facilitate import of Indian cattle before Eid U'Azha.

In the memorandum submitted to Chittagong City Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at his office the meat and cattle traders said before sealing of border immediately after Eid Ul Fitr a huge number of Indian cattle were imported in the country through 22 corridors along the border. It earned huge revenue with a government fixed tax of Tk. 500 on each ox or buffalo.

But after the sealing some dishonest traders are bringing Indian cattle illegally paying tolls at different points. This illegal practice is not only depriving the country of revenue but also resulting in an exorbitant price hike of beef and cattle.

The signatories include Md. Jahangir Alam, Md. Nasir Sawdagor, Bodulul Alam, Abdul Mannan, Zakir Hossain, Md. Solaiman, Yusuf Babul and Mozfarur Rahman.

The City mayor assured them of informing the concerned ministry of their demands through DO letter.

Grant for temple development: The Minister for Food Abdullah Al Noman handed over cheques for Tk. 3 lakh to the temple authorities for development of 24 temples of the Hindu community in the port city on December 27.

Noman who is also the MP from the city, gave away the cheques to the authorities as a government grant.

After handing over the cheques, the minister in his address at the conference hall of local circuit house said Chittagong enjoys a traditional communal harmony for hundreds of years. He wished uninterrupted flow of this harmony and called upon all to remain alert against any conspiracy that might hamper the brotherly ties among different communities living here.

Passing-out Parade : The passing out parade of the 59th recruit batch of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) was held at BDR Training Centre and School at Baitul Izzat of Satkania under the district on December 19.

The Director General of BDR, Major General Rezakul Haider NDC, PSc took the salute at the ceremony as the chief guest. While addressing the soldiers of the newly passed out batch, he called upon them to discharge duty they are entrusted with remaining above all greed and nepotism. The commander of the training centre and school Col. Faruq and other high officials of BDR, Chittagong region was also present at the ceremony.

Md. Kamrul Hasan was awarded the All-rounder title for his best performance among 627 newly passed soldiers of the batch.

Poem writing competition ends: Poem writing competition organised by the British Council, Chittagong centre for the school students ended here recently. Eleven schools of the city including Chittagong Collegiate School, Ispahani Public School, Chittagong Grammar School, Sunshine Grammar School, William Carry International School, Sider International School, Mastermind School, Bangladesh Navy School, Bay View International School, Green Dale School and Play School took part in the competition.

In the 7 years 9 years age group Jumana Yusuf of Green Dale School secured the first place while Zafar Hilary of William Carry and Nazifa Chowdhury of Sider International were second and third respectively.

In the age group of 10 years-12 years Asjabeen Wadood of Green Dale got the first prize, Fardin Ahmed of the same school stood second while Nafisa Tabassum of Green Dale and Joshi/William Carry jointly gsecured the third place.

In the age group of 12 years-13 years Saif Alam of William Carry secured the first place while Rafayet Chowdhury and Savera Nazim both from Sider International were second and third respectively.

Chiranjib gets ADB Award: Chiranjib Barua - the project director of the Primary Education Promotion Project (second phase) got ADB award for the year 2002 for his outstanding performance.

The project is being implemented in Chittagong, Sylhet and Barisal divisions under the supervision of Primary and Mass Education department with ADB assistance.

The Asian Development Bank resident representative Taru Shibuci handed over the best performance crest and certificate to Chiranjib at a ceremony organised by ADB at BRAC centre on December 17.

Joint-secretary Chiranjib Barua who hails from Madhyam Joara of Chandanaish in Chittagong was appointed the director of the project in 1997.

ADB introduced the system for awarding the project director after assessing the progress in implementation of ADB financed projects since 2001.

Cox's Bazar JCD convention: The biennial convention of Cox's Bazar unit of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) the student wing of BNP, was held at Cox's Bazar on December 18. While addressing the convention the first Joint Secretary General of BNP Tareq Rahman underscored the need for study side by side with implementing political programmes.

He called upon the JCD men to study for building human resources for developing suitable education, health and foreign policy in the country.

State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Aman Ullah Aman and State Minister for Communications Salah Uddin Ahmed were present at the convention as special guests.

JCD convener Shahabuddin Lalit inaugurated the convention with District JCD president M Mokter Ahmed in the chair.

BSJA, Ctg unit: The new committee of Bangladesh Sports Journalists Association (BSJA), Chittagong unit was elected with Debashish Barua Debu (Purbokone) and James Rehman Chowdhury (Jugantor) as its president and general secretary respectively here on Thursday.

The committee was elected at the biennial general meeting of the organisation at its office on Chittagong Stadium premises.

Other office-bearers are: Vice-president Saifulah Chowdhury (Karnaphuli), Treasurer Nazrul Islam (Azadi), Executive members Tamal Chowdhury (Daily Life), Sultan Mahmud Salim (Karnaphuli) and Majumder Nazimuddin (Manob Jamin). #

Bus Owners' AGM held: The 24th Annual General Meeting of Inter-district Bus Owners Limited was held at its office here recently.

Addressing the meeting the Limited chairman and former deputy city mayor Alhaj Dostogir Chowdhury called for making relentless efforts to ensure standard service for the passengers and keeping the communication system above controversy.

The Managing Director of the Limited Alhaj Sekander Ahmad, Inter-district Bus Owners Association president Alhaj Kafil Uddin Ahmad, General Secretary Zahurul Haq, Alhaj Rafiqul Islam, Engineer Falullah, Nurul Alam Chowdhury, Shah Alam Chowdhury and Abdul Malek also addressed the meeting.

Rush for admission in city schools

ATAUL GANI SUMON

Thousands of students and guardians crowded government and non-government schools in the port city for procuring and submitting admission forms.

As the new academic year begins, parents and guardians are having a tough time this year than that of the previous years, to get their wards admitted to the schools of good repute in the port city of Chittagong.

There are as many as 20 reputed schools in the city.

There is a heavy rush for admission in the schools as the guardians are naturally eager to see their wards in one of those so that they need not change school till Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations and even Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

The guardians put rigorous efforts in this period of the year and prepare their children with hectic study to get them admitted into reputed schools in the city.

The students taught by the house tutors, coaching centres and guide books round the year are now counting days to fight for accommodation in the reputed schools.

Though the annual examinations of many schools have just finished, those institutions have already started distributing admission forms.

Admission tests for classes 1 to IX in different government and non-government schools have started



PHOTO: STAR

Admission test... the first hurdle for a child.

from the last week of December and will continue till January.

'Competition for the admission is tougher this year than the previous years as the number of candidates has increased,' a guardian said.

The process of admission was completed by December last year but it might be delayed this year due to Eid-ul-Fitr, Martyred Intellectual Day, Victory Day and Christmas Day holidays.

Meanwhile, admission test for the KG-1 at the Ispahani School and College, a school of good repute, in the city held on December 24. Some 1800 children sat in the admission test against 100 seats in both Bangla and English medium. The school sold some 1900 admission forms, sources said.

Besides, there are around 50 seats in class VI of the school and the admission test will be held this month, sources added.

Admission test at Bangladesh Women Association School, another leading non-government school, would be held today (January 1). The school authorities started distribution of admission forms for KG-1 from November. The school already sold 1200 admission forms against 220 seats.

The admission test in the kindergarten and English medium schools in the port city will be completed by this month.

On the other hand, admission test of nine government schools in

the port city will take place on January 11.

It is estimated that about 15000 admission seekers will sit for the test for class IV, V, VI and IX against 500 seats. As per rule, one applicant could appear at the admission test for one school.

Distribution of admission forms began December 21 and would continue till January 7. The last date for submission of the admission forms is January 8.

Though the students will sit in the tests to get admitted themselves in class IV, V, VI and IX in these schools but there is no rule for admission in other classes.

'Dr. Khastagir Government Girls' High School will take admission test only for class IV.

Government Muslim High School is distributing admission forms for class IV, V, VI and IX while Chittagong Government High School for class V only, Nasirabad Girls' High School for class VI, Nasirabad Boys' High School for class V and VI and Collegiate High School for class VI and IX.

The admission test in the government schools for class IV and V will be held on January 11, class VI on January 12 and class IX on January 13.

The admission tests will be begin at 10.30 in the morning everyday and one applicant will get chance to sit for admission test in one school.

As per rule 120 students will have chance to get admitted themselves in each class of the government schools. But the authorities will take admission test only for the vacant seats.

Some seats become vacant following failure of students in the final examinations.

'But the number of this kind of seats is very few. The number of vacant seats in class IX in most of the government schools is not more than 15. All the government schools have two sections and each section has 60 students.

Most of the teachers of the government schools in the port city said the competition for admission would be tougher this year as the number of applicants is more than that of previous year.

The nine government schools are Chittagong Collegiate School, Government Muslim High School, Chittagong Government High School, Haji Muhammad Mohsin Government High School, Bakolia Government High School, Nasirabad Government Boy's High School, Nasirabad Government Girl's High School, Dr. Khastagir Government Girls High School and Agrabad Government Colony High School.



PHOTO: STAR

Parents and guardians wait in front of Ispahani Public School and College while their wards sat for the admission test.

Chiang Mai-Chittagong connection

MOHIT UL ALAM

The Thais seem to have found a springboard in Chittagong, Thaksin Sinawatra, their prime minister, in a most hospitable gesture in recent diplomatic history, has flown all the way from Chiang Mai to Chittagong, and gone back, not alone, but with our prime minister as his royal guest in the same plane. The plane itself was making a historic flight, a Thai Airways Boeing 747, inaugurating the route between Chiang Mai and Chittagong.

A few weeks before this, another air route to Thailand was opened from Chittagong -- Chittagong to Phuket by Phuket Airlines. These two new routes give strong credibility to the newly built Shah Amanat International Airport of Chittagong against the doubts raised in some quarters about its efficacy as it lay in very close proximity to the sea.

Our geographical sense is not as poor as the Americans, most of whom, as it was published the other day in a newspaper, do not know that Washington D. C. and Washington state are two different geographical locations, but then it is not so strong either as to know that

there are other cities in Thailand than Bangkok. In fact, many people are there amongst us who think Bangkok is the country, and Thailand is its capital. So, few may have heard of Phuket, an island resort, and fewer have heard of Chiang Mai. And this Chiang Mai, no joke, is the second biggest city in Thailand.

Yes, Chiang Mai is in northern Thailand, probably surrounded by hills, and a city of hospitals and missionary schools. Geographically, Chittagong and Chiang Mai are located on either side of the same 20-degree latitude, Chittagong to the north and Chiang Mai to the south, and are longitudinally separated by Myanmar in between or two hours' flight.

On the day, when Thaksin and Khaleeda Zia inaugurated the Chittagong-Chiang Mai flight, it was accompanied by much fanfare, and some of the programmes extended well into the evening. At the Chittagong Club, the Thai Airways arranged a buffet dinner on the hilltop lawn and an exhibition down at the swimming pool. The buffet savoured of the most delicious cuisine that the Thais are famous

for, an eight-course dinner (original Thai soup, shred chicken, fried or plain rice, vinegar-soaked olives, meat balls, sliced sea fish and grilled lobsters, salad and chutney, and ice-topped fruit desserts and custard) and free drinks, lavish servings of fruits and cakes, and for the general entertainment, a dance troupe, probably consisting of the fair Thai Airways stewardesses, performed the most exquisite Thai dances that many present were simply enthralled to watch. They also sang in a Keatsian nightingale's full-throated voice. These girls all wore typical red sarong-type Thai skirts and when they danced on the green lawn the movement of their white legs and the curving of their supple bodies produced enough proof why the Thai Airways carried the slogan: "Smooth as Silk." No airline in the world has a more apt expression. "Swasti ka" that is, "good morning" in Thai language.

This fine dancing show was followed by a lottery session in which five tickets for Chittagong-Chiang Mai-Chittagong flight by Thai Airways were given away to the winners. Interestingly enough, two of the guests, out of five winners

were foreigners one an Indian, another, probably, a Japanese.

After the lottery show the guests were requested to visit the exhibition at the swimming pool. The exhibition was an eye opener for many to realise what superior business acumen should mean. Of about two dozen stalls there at the exhibition, fifteen were just kiosks offices for different hospitals in Chiang Mai. Each stall was equipped with a laptop screen running a video tape of the hospital it was promoting. The video showed the picture of the compound of the hospital, its clinical and technical facilities, its rates and charges and many other amenities that should make the patients rush there for treatment (or for their final destination).

One felt that Chiang Mai was actually competing against Bangkok in its attempt to advertise its hospitals. Rich Bangladeshis must be falling sick in greater numbers, and in their choice for places of treatment, they have long ago learnt to abandon the Indian hospitals and turned to Singapore and Thai hospitals. In fact, at the Bangkok airport anybody arriving with a Bangladeshi

Shutki popular food in Ctg, earns foreign currency

ABDULLAH -AL MAHMUD

The smiling young housewife in an advertisement on TV screen perfectly introduces the Chittagong people and one of their traditional and popular food items as she says, 'Chatganyara Shutki Khaitey Pochhanda Korey' (Chittagonians love to eat dry fish).

'Shutki' (dry fish) is a popular item of Chittagong people. It also has a wide popularity throughout the world and Chittagong is now well known for its splendid dry fish exported to far eastern and south eastern countries bringing foreign exchange for the country.

The people who visit Chittagong, never forget to take dry fish with them when return home. At the same time those staying at home request the frequenters to bring some dry fish of Chittagong for them.

Thousands of people of coastal areas of this region are involved in making dry fish as well as salted and dehydrated fish for their livelihood. Though most of the fish the fishermen catch are sold as raw, yet a huge quantity of it is made shutki. After meeting the internal demand it is exported.

The shutki makers and sellers said it has a huge demand in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, United Kingdom and the Maldives and around Tk. 200 crore could be earned exporting Shutki.

The shutki is being produced

here for decades. The fishermen of this region started producing it as part of process preserving the huge surplus of fish they caught in a most natural way. They went to the vast sea in small local boats and went on fishing for months. During this long stay, they gathered their catches on different islands and shores. They dried the huge surplus of fish of different species spreading them in the hot sun on the beaches or even on the boats. Thus the shutki was made to be sold later.

In course of time this traditional process of preserving the surplus fish started to take shape of a small industry. The people living in the vast coastal areas of Cox's Bazar and Chittagong are mostly involved in making shutki.

In Cox's Bazar (known as the fish reservoir of the country) the coastal areas of Luniachhata, Khurukul, Moheshkhali, Kutubdia, Sonadia, Teknaf, Shahparir Dwip, Saint Martin, Nazirtek, Dhalghata, Ghati Bhanga, Baroghope, Ulter Durang and Baharchhara are renowned for shutki production.

The shutki is also produced in a great quantity at different coastal areas of Anwara, Patiya and Banshkhali upazila in Chittagong.

The persons involved in making shutki are locally known as 'Bahodders'. With the onset of the dry season the shore areas of the said

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PHOTO: STAR

Women at work at a dry fish producing farm.

Bomb scare at CU

CU CORRESPONDENT

A bomb threat over telephone sent a wave of panic among the students, teachers and employees of the Chittagong University (CU) here on Sunday.

An unidentified person called at the CU chemistry department at about 8.30 in the morning. He told the peon of the department that several explosives were planted at the department and those would go off at any time, sources said.

But the threat was later proved a hoax as an extensive search by police could not find any bomb.

The on duty police as well as the university employees carried out an intensive search for around two and a half hours in vain.

The incident disrupted the academic activities of the universities for around three hours. During the search on the laboratories, classrooms panic gripped the students. Panic eased when the police did not find anything unusual like the explosives. The academic activities were disrupted for the three hours.

Release of Saber, Muntasir, Shahrir demanded

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Chittagong Omar Gani MES College brought out a procession and held a rally demanding unconditional release of Prof Muntasir Mamun, Mukul Bosh, writer Shahrir Kabir and Awami League (AL) leader Shaber Hossain Chowdhury.

They took out the procession from the college compound and ended on the Shaheed Minar premises parading through the different streets of the port city. Later they held a rally there.

Terming the arrests as the 'violation of human rights', the leaders said the present government has done everything denying democratic and human rights of the citizens of the country.



PHOTO: STAR

The Dhaka-based Chittagong Samity organised a mejban and get-together at Sohag Community Centre in the capital city on December 25.