



Star Chittagong

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JULY 2, 2003

Move to allow 300 unfit watercrafts to cross Bay

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The department of shipping has taken a move to permit over 300 inland watercrafts to cross the Bay in defiance of Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976.

If the department allows them, frequent accidents may take place in the Bay and block port channels, Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) sources said.

A proposal was placed in this regard at a meeting of the Inland Shipping Council in the Ministry of Shipping on May 22.

This proposal will only jeopardise the entire water route from Chittagong to Dhaka and will surely benefit the influential group, sources said.

A four-member committee

was also formed to give permission for those watercrafts examining proper fitness.

A ship named Inland-1 (M-20121) was surveyed recently as per decision of the committee and a lot of defects were found. But that inland ship was permitted for Bay crossing, sources said.

There are evidences that the deficiencies were tactfully avoided. Following this incident, three more ships, namely Gazi (M 6905), AL-SAMIT-2 (M 6914), AL-SAMIT-3 (M 6867), were permitted for the service.

Seven thousand registered and around 12000 unregistered watercrafts are to comply the regulations of Inland Shipping Ordinance 1976, sources said. As per ordinance they are entitled to ply within inland waterways.

The ships are built locally without supervision of the naval architect. Most of them are built with used steel and are not fit to ply in the rough water like Bay of Bengal, sources said.

Though the Inland Ship Safety Administration (ISSA) is not implemented yet, a powerful vested quarter in the department is lobbying for permission of 300 inland watercrafts to ply between Chittagong and Dhaka via Bay of Bengal.

The incident of sinking of the inland ship 'Evana' on June 5 this year near Chittagong coastal area proves that inland ship safety issues are totally neglected by the shipping department, an expert at the Mercantile Marine Department (MMD) told this correspondent.

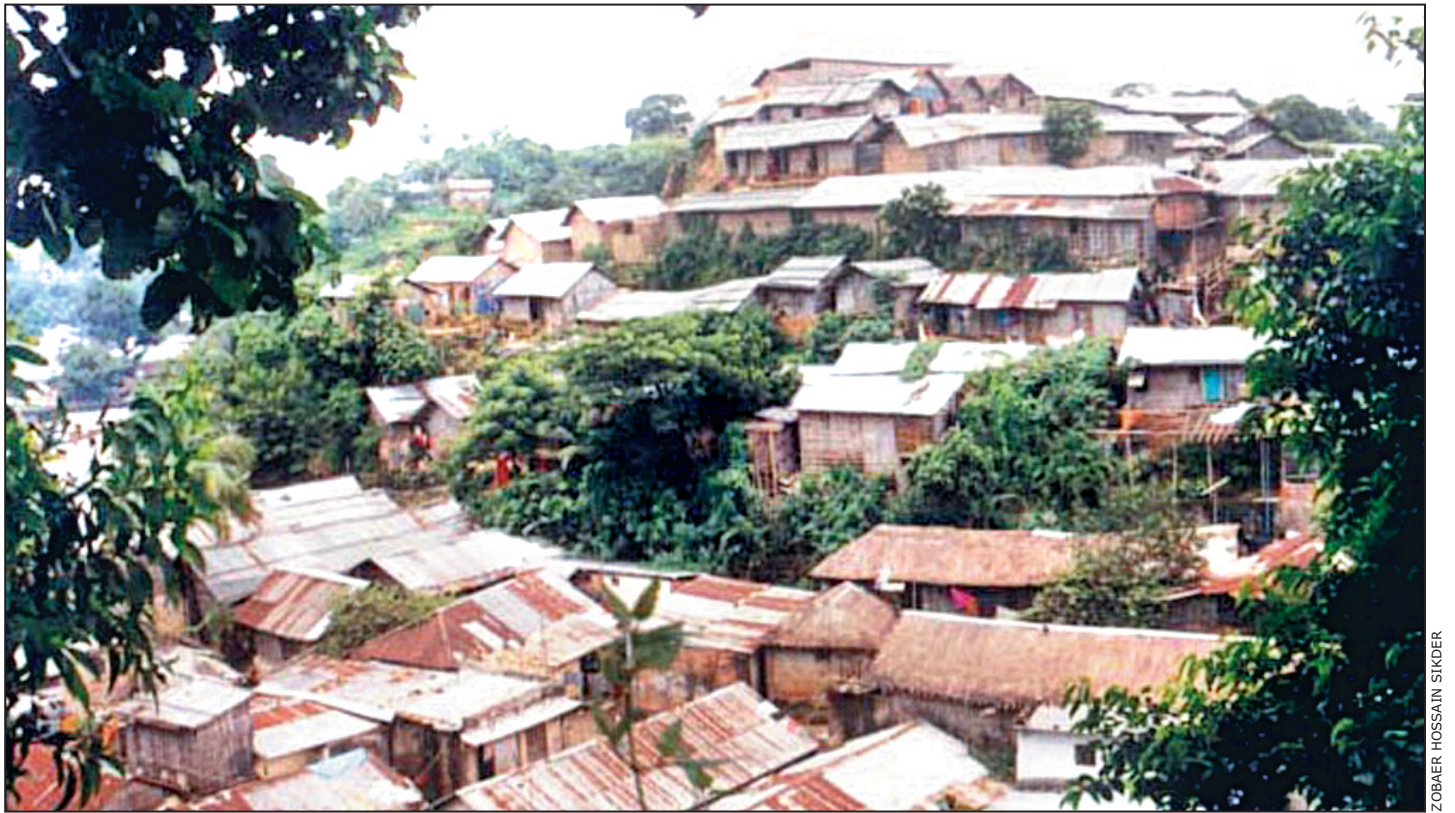
As there are no legal ground for this type of bay crossing, the

vested group was trying to find an alternative way. They evolved a means that ships having 'boat note' and other receipt of dues by Chittagong Port Authority would be permitted to cross the Bay without survey and round the year. A top official issued an office order on April 20 in this regard, sources said.

The MMD expert said it has been highlighted in many accident reports that the inland ships are unfit even for inland water and as such the initiative by the department is alarming.

Recent statistics shows that Fazilat-1, C-1063, Hang Gang - 3, Fairtech-1, Queen of Firoza sank in anchorage in the Bay of Bengal within port limit. Foreign going ships with deep draft are barred from anchoring in that area, he said.

RISKY HUMAN HABITATION



Risky human settlements on the slope of Batali Hill at the slum area at Lalkhan Bazar in the city. Casualty is feared any time in case of landslides due to torrential rain.

Sexual behaviour in slum

MOHIT UL ALAM

In June 27 seminar of Bangladesh Research Society, Prof Qudus of Sociology from Chittagong University presented a paper on the sexual behaviour in the slums of Chittagong, a paper which quizzed and puzzled many present.

Prof Qudus explained that he had collected the data by interviewing 208 males, and not a single woman, who felt shy confessing to their sexual acts. Probably because, as he said, sex is a pleasure for men, and an obligation for women.

He, quite understandably, discussed occurrences of sexual acts in three categories: Pre-marital sex, marital sex and extra-marital sex. Much of his information was extraordinary as

to remove our long-held notions about sexual relations. He said that while pre-marital sex between cousins is well over 50 per cent in the village, in the city slum it is less, mainly because here the cousins are not nearby. That is not really an eye-opener, but what he found about sex along the in-law line is interesting: The debar-bhavi (brother-in-law and brother's wife) connection, contrary to our notion, is not phenomenally strong. He also found out that in the case of pre-marital early sex, most occurrences took place between young males and their elderly female relatives who belonged to the aunt group. Since he could not interview the womenfolk, it was not known how it went with the fairer sex.

Prof Qudus related that the interviewees hardly showed any knowledge of AIDS, or if they did,

they did not know how the disease expressed itself on the human body. But he affirmed that a big percentage of the interviewees were suffering from some kind of sexual transmitted diseases (STD).

Here, as he pointed out, the males were prompt to blame the women for suffering from typical female diseases, whereas the women could have been actually infected by STD through their male partners.

From his findings it also came to light that having travelled to the city for jobs, the village young men enjoyed their liberty out of the clutch of guardians for the first time, and this easily led them to commit sexual misadventures.

Prof Qudus also specified that he did not notice any big difference between the Hindus and the Muslims in respect of proliferating sex illegally.

Most extra-marital sex in the slum occurred when the husband went out for work and the wife stayed home, which implies that a lot of illicit relations thrive on diurnal opportunities rather than nocturnal.

Prof Qudus's findings could have been more substantial, if he had mentioned how the sexual behaviour in the slum area was different from that in the larger society, or which particular slum he had chosen to collect his data from.

Another omission in his assessment was that he did not seem to realise that much of the sexual activity in the slum was related to organised crime syndicate that manages the slum life from behind the scene. He also failed to mention the percentage of children involved in pedophilia or child-sex trade in the slum.



Flash flood caused by torrential rain and onrush of hilly water submerged eight unions, out of twenty, of Fatikchhari here this week. The picture was taken from Fatepur area on Sunday.

the week that was

Call to increase export of vegetables, fruits

Speakers at a seminar emphasised on expanding the market of vegetables and fruits for multifaceted export to survive global competition by 2005. Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), Chittagong, organised the seminar titled, "Export of Frozen Vegetables & Export Packaging of Vegetables and Fruits" at the BGMEA office, Chittagong at Agrabad on Sunday.

The speakers said vegetables and fruits are potential export sectors and have large markets in East Europe, North America, Far East, Middle East and Southeast Asian countries. They called for bringing fallow lands under vegetable and fruit cultivation and developing international standard packaging to get the huge market.

M Shahabuddin, former first vice president of the BGMEA, was the special guest. Md. Akmal Hossain, Managing Director of Hortex Foundation, Dhaka and former Director General of EPB, was the resource person.

EPB, Chittagong, Director Kazi Mahbubur Rahman made the address of welcome. Around sixty exporters, representatives from Agricultural Extension Department, directors of BGMEA and 20 members of Women Entrepreneurs (WE), Chittagong led by its chairperson Monowara Hakim Ali, were present.

Unplanned Firingee Bazaar expands

Unplanned expansion and ill management of Firingee Bazaar fruit wholesale depot causes untold suffering for local

people.

A forum of local people at a view exchange meeting on development of the busy and densely populated area of Firingee Bazar observed this here on Friday.

The speakers said unplanned expansion of the depot created regular traffic congestion and hindered public movement there. Besides, the wastes of the depot created an unhygienic atmosphere in and around the locality. They called for immediate measures to address the menace.

Advocate Abu Hanif was present as chief guest at the meeting on the Bistaron Club premises with social worker MA Halim in the chair.

ISOS Children Village Day observed

The fortnight programme of SOS Children Village, Chittagong, in observance of the International SOS Children Village Day, ended here on Friday. Addressing the concluding function as the chief guest State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasir Uddin called for following the service of SOS Children Village, Chittagong that offered distressed children opportunity to build up their lives.

SOS Children Village project director Md. Foyzul Kabir in his presidential speech said they introduced Harman Miner Scholarship award from this year. Under the scholarship the students securing first places would be awarded with scholarship of Tk. 6500 each while the best teacher would receive Harman Miner Academic Award money of Tk. 15,000.



Chittagong city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury addressing a seminar titled, "Parliamentary Democracy: Press Freedom & Rights of Journalists" organized by Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) at Chittagong Press Club auditorium on June 28.

Resist drug peddlers

Initiative is being taken to spot drug sale centres and resist peddling and use of drugs socially under the leadership of ward commissioners in the port city.

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury announced this while he was addressing a seminar at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) auditorium on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse on June 26.

The mayor said CCC directive for winding up drugs sale centres went in vain as the drug peddlers got court verdict in favour of them following loopholes of law. He called for introduc-

tion and application of strict law to check drug abuse.

Mohiuddin also called upon all politicians irrespective of party affiliation not to pursue release of any person held for drug peddling.

Dr. Md. Shahjahan, Vice-Principal of Government Mohsin College and Shahidur Rahman, Deputy Director of Drug Control Department also spoke with CCC Chief Executive Officer Md. Abul Basher in the chair.

Help combat crime

Justice KM Sobhan attributed politicians for the onslaught of criminal activities in the society. He called upon the politicians as well as civil society to come forward to save the nation from

clutches of criminals.

Justice Sobhan was addressing a reception accorded to elite persons at Chittagong Club as the chief guest on Friday. The Fatikchhari, a monthly newspaper from the violence prone Fatikchhari, organised the ceremony to mark twelve years of its publication.

The Jugantor editor Golam Sarwar and FBCCI director ASM Kamal Uddin were present as special guests with the Fatikchhari editor Syed Tarequl Anwar in the chair.

Later, 12 personalities of Fatikchhari were awarded for contribution to their respective fields.

Therapeutic thea-

tre workshop begins

The first National Therapeutic Theatre Workshop began here on Friday with a call for identifying issue-based problems of the society through Psychodrama conception and Psychophysical change with the participation of mass people.

Julia Crockette, Director of the British Council, Chittagong, inaugurated the 8-day workshop organised by the United Theatre for Social Action (UTSA). Two American therapeutic theatre experts Herb Proper and Jennifer Lloyd were special guests at the inaugural function at the British Council auditorium. UTSA chairman Prof M Mostain Billah chaired the inaugural ceremony where UTSA executive director Mostafa Kamal Jatra made the address of welcome. About 30 representatives from different development agencies dealing with disabled participated in the workshop.

Pharmacy Festival ends

A three-day Pharmacy Festival '03 ended here on Friday putting up the objectives of pharmacy education and its benefits.

Department of Pharmacy of University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) organised the festival on the campus.

The speakers at the closing ceremony said pharmacy education was the source of medicine industry that earned huge revenue. It was also an important and potential sector for earning foreign currency, they added.

USTC Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr. Nurul Islam attended the function as chief guest while syndicate member Abdullah Al Harun was special guest. USTC Pharmacy Department chairman Associate Professor M Mohiuddin Chowdhury presided.



Enthusiastic youths crowd Computer Fair at Chittagong Stadium Gymnasium organised by the Micro-bangla



Tree lovers at month long tree fair on Chittagong Stadium Gymnasium complex premises. Chittagong City Corporation organised the fair.