

Piracy headache for CPA

NURUL ALAM

tors hardly lodge complaints with police fearing further attacks," he added.

The pirates attacked a local coaster vessel named 'Barvina' recently and looted goods worth Tk 10 lakh after keeping the crew members hostage at Chittagong port.

The gangs frequently attack the cargo vessels anchoring there, sources said.

They posed a threat to the security of the cargo ships calling at Chittagong port to carry import and export goods.

A senior port official on condition of anonymity said the cargo vessels were facing frequent incidents of piracy and theft at the outer anchorage for the past two months.

"But affected vessel opera-

tors hardly lodge complaints with police fearing further attacks," he added.

The pirates attacked a local coaster vessel named 'Barvina' recently and looted goods worth Tk 10 lakh after keeping the crew members hostage at Chittagong port.

CPA Chairman Shahadat Hossain said, "we have intensified patrolling at the outer anchorage and port areas to check attacks on ships and as a result, the situation is under control now.

"But sometimes, we get information of attacks on ships beyond our port limit area," Shahadat said.

"We are very much careful to ensure safety and security of the

attended the meeting.

The meeting decided to take prompt measures to curb piracy at the port channel, jetties and outer anchorage in order to ensure safety and security of the vessels calling at Chittagong port.

CPA Chairman Shahadat Hossain said, "we have intensified patrolling at the outer anchorage and port areas to check attacks on ships and as a result, the situation is under control now.

"But sometimes, we get information of attacks on ships beyond our port limit area," Shahadat said.

"We are very much careful to ensure safety and security of the

vessels calling here as any untoward incident can create image problem for our port," he said.

The CPA chairman said regular patrolling at the outer anchorage was stepped up with the help of navy and coastguards.

Navy source said a patrol ship was engaged to keep watch over the outer anchorage regularly.

The coastguards also patrol at the outer anchorage to check the acts of pirates and other miscreants.

"We think that if proper surveillance can be ensured at the outer anchorage, caught 12 people along with their unauthorised boats.

The shipping agents were

advised to take members of ansars to ships at the outer anchorage for security. But shipping agents avoid hiring of ansars as they find it costly, port sources said.

Bangladesh Shipping Agents Association (BSAA) Chairman Farid Ahmed Chowdhury said, "it will be very expensive to afford ansars on board the vessels. That is why we are not taking ansars to the vessels. Instead, we engage some watchmen on the vessels for security purpose".

"We think that if proper surveillance can be ensured at the outer anchorage, caught 12 people along with their unauthorised boats.

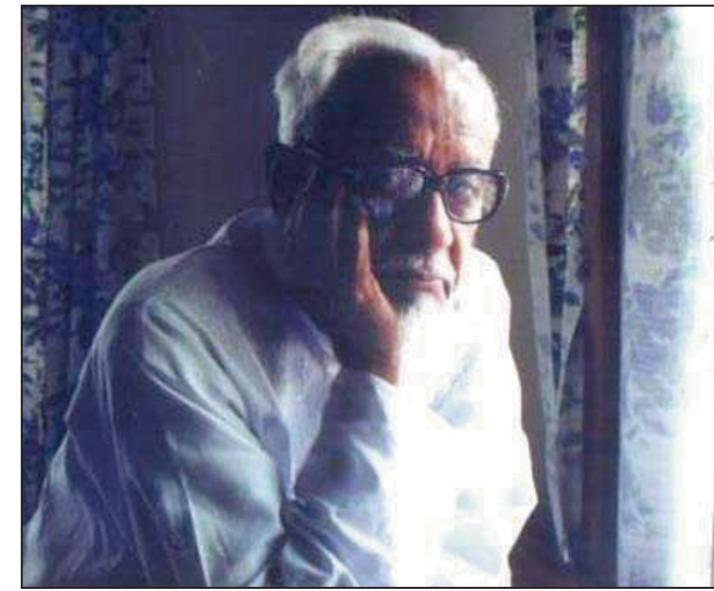
The shipping agents were

advised to take members of ansars to ships at the outer anchorage for security. But shipping agents avoid hiring of ansars as they find it costly, port sources said.

Cutting of ropes from most of the ships at the time of anchorage at port area is a common phenomenon. Some organised rope dealers in the city reportedly maintain clandestine links with the pirate groups to get the supply of ropes, sources said.

CPA Deputy Director (Security) Lokman Hossain said a high speed boat was procured this month to intensify patrolling in the river Karnaphuli to check piracy and pilferage.

Besides, some other patrol boats were engaged for the purpose to ensure safety and security in and around the port, Lokman added.



A Homage to Prof Khaled

MOHIT UL ALAM

Chittagong.

Wherever there was a political, social or cultural crisis in the nation, it was Professor Khaled who always was found to be at the helm of things in the port-city. In his leadership, there was an unobtrusive quality for which people of several ages and several opinions would accept him as the leader.

The Liberation War taught Professor Khaled what it meant to be a truly democratic man. His democratic values were imbued with a great sense of patriotism that actually arose from his faith in the Bengali nationalism. This explains, why Professor Khaled, in spite of his role as a leader of the people, had to struggle very hard to retain his democratic ethos in the face of a rising politics of deceptions and chicanery.

In his long career as an editor, for 40 odd years, he made his paper The Daily Azadi, a newspaper that really valued only news, cutting off the non-news portion from an item. With his death, the editorial voice exercised with an impeccable sense of neutrality, which has defined Azadi for so long, may be sadly missing.

With years Professor Khaled grew bigger than Azadi, and with years he also grew bigger than his image as a 'young Turk', which started with his stupendous victory in the 1970 national election over Fazlul Quader Chowdhury in Raozan.

When Professor Khaled died last week, already shaken by the mortal blow of his son's death (also from cancer), he was not merely the editor of Azadi, or an erstwhile politician, but the greatest citizen of Chittagong. He embodied whatever were the positive, the progressive, and the modern in the cultural world of Chittagong, and he also defined the civic sense that went across party affiliations and groupings.

His kind of neutrality, deployed without sacrificing his own views, enabled Professor Khaled to become the spokesman of

In his later years he was gradually wearing down, his stout build hunched, one could see that; and he was at battle with himself regarding the prolonged illness of his son; his spirit may also have been daunted, as he knew his own time was closing down; but, then, true to his spirit, he almost remained the last true living Bangabandhu.

So, as he was invited to be the chief guest at a seminar on Bangabandhu held in August this year, he stood up in his enormously frail health, but spoke, his voice still retaining that old power, forcefully to an audience, most of whom were young university teachers, to cultivate nationalistic values.

With the departure of Professor Khaled, Chittagong surely lost its most conscientious child, whose place will remain empty for a long time to come.

A LONG WAIT FOR PENSION



ZOBAER HOSSAIN/SIKDER

A visit to Pay & Cash Office of Bangladesh Railway in Chittagong during this time of the year is sure to get one stunned with a most pitiable sight. The annual hazira (attendance) of the pensioners of eastern zone is going on at the Pay & Cash Office adjoining the old railway station building here. Several hundred pensioners, mostly old and infirm or helpless, struggle for hours to get the earnings of their last days. At the normal time when the pensioners draw their money through representatives each month or at a time after several months, the crowd is in tolerable limit. But during this time of hazira, each of them has to appear before the officials in person from different parts of the country. The crowd caused immeasurable sufferings. Two small waiting rooms with poor sitting arrange-

ments and two dilapidated latrines giving off bad smell are all for the elderly men and women. With the waiting rooms outside the main building of Pay & Cash Office always remain overcrowded, they wait for hours for pensions in a long queue in open space being exposed to sun and rains. The authorities concerned have fixed December 1-24 for annual hazira of about 6000 pensioners to draw their money from the headquarters and 2000 through postal department from January 1 to 22. Though the crowd would be less during the second phase of hazira, the scenario would be more pitiable when they would be receiving pensions through postal department as they would be arriving from remote areas of different districts including Dhaka. Besides long journey, it would take at

least two days to register their attendance. To reduce sufferings of the elderly pensioners, the Cash Office with its inadequate staffs sometimes runs even in night. The pensioners said payment through banks like some other civil departments could mitigate their ordeal. Manager Pay & Cash Office, Quazi Sayedur Rahman said considering the condition of the pensioners we are now making payment throughout the month and pensioners are divided into several groups. Separate dates have been fixed for payment for each group, he said. "Besides, we are now thinking of setting programme for registering attendance in different groups and in different dates as done during the usual payment of pension," he added.

Story by Abdullah -Al Mahmud

CHT Trade Fair begins

A fifteen-day Second CHT Trade Fair began at Bandarban on Friday.

Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury inaugurated the fair at Bandarban Stadium as the chief guest.

He called upon the local farmers to

avail the opportunity for expanding the markets of products of the three hill

districts to the national and international levels through this fair.

"Despite being of international standard the products of the hill districts could not get expected market due to absence of proper planning and developed marketing system," he said.

Khosru said a project for tea cultivation in smaller scale will be taken on experimental basis in CHT districts through plantation of saplings on January 8.

State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafurul Islam Chowdhury, also

the district minister and Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapon Dewan were present as special guests with Fair Committee President Md.Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan, also the DC of Bandarban, in the chair.

CHT Development Board Chairman Wadood Bhuiyan MP, chairman of three hill district councils, high officials of concerned administrations and political leaders were also present at the ceremony.

Nasir for proper

education

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin stressed the need for proper education to have the real acceptability of students in society.

"Nevertheless, it is the quality at the end that matters most not the quantity," Mir Nasir said while he was speaking as chief guest at the annual prize-giving ceremony of Chittagong Port City School and College at Halishahar on Friday.

Controller of Chittagong Education Board Professor AWM Obaidul Akbar and Director of Sadharan Bima Corporation MA Latif were the special guests in the function chaired by Principal Mohammad Ruhul Amin.

Chairman of Chittagong Port City (Pvt) Ltd Nurul Alam Pintu, Managing Director Din Mohammad Majumder and Vice-Principal Mohammad Ahsan Kabir also addressed the ceremony.

Speakers emphasised on the learning of English language to keep pace with the competitive world.

Tribute paid to Prof Khaled

Speakers at a condolence meeting paid rich tribute to the Daily Azadi Editor Professor Mohammad Khaled and recalled his contribution to journalism.

Former Chief Advisor of Caretaker Government Justice Habibur Rahman called Prof Khaled a successful personality and a role model for all.

Chittagong Press Club organised the meeting on Saturday with its president Abu Sufian in the chair.

Justice Habibur Rahman said,

with his demise both Chittagong and the country lost a true editor and an emulating personality. "Like his profession Prof Khaled had emerged triumphant in politics also by winning hearts and respect of rival parties."

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFU) President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, resident editor of Prothom Alo Abul Momen, new editor of Azadi MA Malek, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) President Mostak Ahmad, former club presidents Akhtarker Nabi, Ataul Hakim and Obaidul Haq, former CUJ president M Nasirul Haq, Club Vice-President Ali Abbas, General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) President Helaluddin Nizami, Chittagong Bar Council General Secretary Mujibul Haq, Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) Chittagong General Secretary Dr Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury and Kabirul Miah, son of Prof Khaled.

Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury said Prof Khaled devoted his pen for the well-being of people. "He was acceptable to all irrespective of groups or parties and a true guardian of Chittagong people."

Prof Abul Momen called Prof Khaled a bold and transparent man who never compromised when ideology, responsibility and commitment matter. "Besides, his world of thought was also very much rich and enlightened," he said.

Eye camps for poor patients

Chittagong Eye Infirmary and Training Complex organised three free eye camps for poor patients. The camps were held at Maizdi Zila School, Katchchara Child Medical Centre at

Mirersarai Upazila and Garangia Madrassah at Sankaria Upazila last week. Eye specialists and surgeons conducted the eye camps, operations and gave prescriptions to the patients.

Maizdi Jonaki Club, Maizdi Administration, Mirersarai Badhan Club, Naozan, Bangladesh Work Camp and Socio-economic Development Agency provided necessary assistance.

Classical music programme

A programme of classical music was held with a call for practice of scriptural music at Chittagong University (CU) here on December 24.

Chittagong University Classicals (CUC), a student organisation of students and artists of classical music, organised the programme at CU Library auditorium.

The speakers at the inaugural



function recalled the great contribution made to scriptural music by famous artistes Ustad Alauddin Khan, Ustad Ali Akber Khan, Ustad Nirod Baran Barua.

CUC convenor Professor SM Anser Ali made the address of welcome. A message of renowned scientist Professor Jamil Nazrul Islam was read out by Professor Nasima Banu at the programme conducted by Dr. Rashida Khanom.

Pandit Bijon Chowdhury, a renowned drummer of the sub-continent, Guitarist Dolan Kanongo, artiste Swarnamoy Chakraborty enthralled the audience.

Kaiser Uddin, Taposh Datt, Kamonashish Sengupta, Sudhakar Sengupta, Banu Shil, Umme Habiba, Shalpi Bhattacharya, Noushin Farzana Nazia Quayum, Hoimontee Banerji also performed at the function.

Invest in



Over 1800 children vied in the admission test for 100 seats in KG 1 of Ispahani Public School and College this year. Like every year the school authorities were under a tremendous pressure when admission seekers along with their guardians arrived at the school compound (left) on December 27. The situation went beyond the control when some unruly guardians broke the bamboo-made fence of the school. As the children were stranded inside the school, some

agro-based industries

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman here on Wednesday called for investment in agro-based industries to ensure overall development of the country.

He was addressing the biennial conference of BADC Employees Union at BADC Bhaban as the chief guest.

Noman underscored the need for envisaging newer technologies and reaching them to the doorsteps of the farmers for increasing agricultural production.

BADC Employees Union President Kamal Pasha presided. Nazim Uddin, Anowar Hossain, MA Halim, Nurul Islam Khan, MA Motaleb and Khondoker Azizur Rahman also spoke.