

## Tanneries face uncertainty

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

The tannery industry in the port city faces uncertainty due to huge financial loss.

Most of the tanneries already are no more in operation.

Being unable to withstand the loss and failing to realise arrears, at least 10 out of 15 leather processing tanneries in Chittagong have kept their shutter down, sources said.

Besides, a slump in export has frustrated 200-plus wholesalers.

Three foreign buyers -- Hong Kong, Italy and Germany -- have stopped importing leather from Bangladesh.

The slump began in the first quarter of last year when Hong Kong, the largest importer, had stopped buying leather from the country following the outbreak of SARS virus in different countries of the region.

Two other importers, Italy and Germany, followed suit for the same reason and reduced import volume.

Another reason for collapse of the industry here is lack of modern technology and machinery, said Mohammad Lokman, a

tannery owner at city's Aturer Depot area.

"We are accustomed to exporting wet blue (hair-free) leather. But the scenario has been changed abroad as the

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international demand for wet blue leather has reduced significantly," he said.

"Foreign buyers have been importing finished leather or crust instead of wet blue for the last few years and thus kept

Bangladesh far behind in the race," he added.

Six tanneries located at Kalurghat area and four at Aturer Depot, the largest market for raw leather in this region, were closed being unable to install modern technology in their industries, sources said.

The wholesalers of Chittagong who supplied unfinished (raw) leather to the exporters in Dhaka were not getting their sales proceeds back, sources added.

"The Dhaka-based traders owe Tk 105 crore to these wholesalers," said a tannery owner at Kalurghat. "This huge unpaid amount was another reason that forced some of us to close our industries," he added.

He said, "Three Dhaka-based parties owe me Tk 25 lakh for long, which is creating a problem in running my industry smoothly."

"I will be compelled to close down my tannery if they do not pay my money within six months or so," he said.

The tannery owners urged the government to provide backup facilities, including modern technology, to help sustain the industry.



### Plight of workers

Unsafe working conditions at ship-breaking yards in Sitakunda have put the lives of hundreds of workers at risk. Explosions during the ship-breaking has killed many labourers in the last few years but no measures have been taken to protect them. In addition, environmental pollution caused by the ship-breaking poses serious health hazards. The ship-breakers are also accused of non-compliance of rules and regulations but the authorities seem indifferent. Taking measures to protect the environment as well as workers will help the industry grow and prosper, many believe.



ZOMER HOSSAIN SHIDER

## the week that was

### Workshop on agribusiness development

Asian Development Bank (ADB) specialist Donald M Taylor said that the five-year 'Agribusiness Development Project' would be implemented at a cost of 10 million US dollar (about Tk 60 lakh) to boost agriculture sector in Bangladesh.

The ADB specialist was speaking as guest of honour at a workshop jointly organised by Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) and ADB at the CCI auditorium on Saturday.

CCI President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury was present as chief guest. Chamber director Mahfuzul Haq Shah, Rafiq Sarker, Bonoful Managing Director Mohammad Motaleb and women entrepreneurs Monwara Hakim Ali, Umme Fatema, Bilkis Dada, Ayesha Dada and Rahima Mahmud also spoke.

Earlier, another ADB specialist Khairul Bashar briefed about the main objectives and strategies of the project.

### BCL protests govt attitude

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), Chittagong south district unit leaders at a rally blamed the government for 'step-motherly' attitude towards Chittagong and for not keeping any allocation in the budget for the proposed third bridge on the river Karnaphuli.

Mohammad Faruk presided over the rally held on the central Shaheed Minar premises on Saturday. Nurul Huda, Kutubuddin Al Azad, Borhanuddin Chowdhury Murad, Shafiqul Islam, Jahid Akbar, Saidul Alam and Rajib Mallik spoke at the rally. Earlier, a procession was brought out from in front of the BCL office in city's Anderkilla.

### 28 poor families get CI sheet

It was a special day for 28 poor families, mostly destitute, living in Badurtala, Sholak Bohar, Muradpur, Rahman Nagar, Maizpara, Tulatoli and Nasirabad Rehabilitation area of the Sholak Bohar Ward when they received Corrugated Iron (CI) sheets from ward commissioner's office on Friday.

Ward commissioner and city

Awami League leader Mamunur Rashid Mamun distributed the sheets at a simple ceremony at his residence. He hoped that the hardship these poor people often face especially during the monsoon would be reduced to some extent.

Ward Awami League president Nazrul Islam Chowdhury, elderly person and social worker Osman Ali Chowdhury, former jailor Iftekhar Uddin, journalist Khailur Rahman and Jubo League leader KBM Shahjahan also addressed the function.

### Unicef projects discussed with mayor

Chief of water and environmental sanitation section of Unicef in Bangladesh Paul Edwards called on Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at his chamber on Thursday.

They discussed about different aspects of Unicef-backed projects including supply of drinking water and construction of sanitary latrine in the slums.

Responding to a proposal, Paul Edwards assured the mayor of his cooperation in implementing another garbage recycling plant in Chittagong. He also assured him of necessary help in mitigating the crisis of drinking water in the city.

The Unicef official earlier visited the garbage recycling plant in Halishahar built by CCC.

Awami League leader Nurul Islam, CCC Secretary Mostafa Kamaluddin, ward commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun, Unicef's divisional officer Alamgir Hossain and its local representative Monzurul Islam were present.

### Mobile treatment clinic organised

Bangladesh Rehabilitation Centre for Trauma Victims (BRCT) organised a mobile treatment clinic for victims of torture and organised-violence at Mirsarai Upazila in the district recently.

A total of 38 victims received psychosomatic treatment and medicine free of cost in the daylong programme.

BRCT provided the treatment with its doctor, physiotherapist, clinical psychologist and social counsellor to address the physical and mental injuries.

Dr Mohammad Rafiqul Mowla,

BRCT regional coordinator Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman, physiotherapist Laila Arjumand Banu, clinical psychologist Saria Mahima, supervisor Iqbal Mahmud and Anwar Hossain conducted the mobile treatment clinic.

### JS committee members visit KPM

Members of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Industries visited Karnaphuli Paper Mill in Kaptai on Saturday. Whip and standing committee advisor Ashraf Hossain led the team.

Committee members discussed present condition and future planning of the mill with the top officials.

Committee member Shahidul Alam Talukder MP, jute expert Abdul Hai, Director (Finance) of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) Azizul Hoque Siddique, Khulna Newsprint Mill Managing Director Captain (Retd) Nowsher Alam, North Bengal Paper Mill Managing Director Mir Mozaffar Alam, KPM Managing Director Muhammad Shamsul Haq and chief engineer Ragib Ahsan attended the meeting.

### Pool and snooker tournament ends

The Hit and Score Pool-and-Snooker tournament organised by Bangladesh Billiard Centre (BBC) was ended here on Wednesday.

Milan Khan and Taif Bin Yousuf became the champions in pool and snooker events respectively. Other winners are: Faridul Islam Palash (first runners up both in pool and snooker), Abul Mansur (second runners up in pool) and Niaz Morshed (second runners up in snooker).

The Daily Azadi Editor MA Malek distributed prizes among the winners. Mir Kashim Chowdhury, CM Shahidul Alam, Khondakar Ikram Ahmed, Taif Bin Yousuf and Milan Khan addressed the function.

### Citizens' committee to stop crime

Cross-section of the people including businessmen, journalists, servicemen, writers and cultural activists formed a citizens' committee to

resist extortion and criminal activities at city's Momin Road area.

The committee was formed at a meeting at Lusal Bhavan on Saturday with social worker Mohammad Yakub in the chair. SM Hakim, Mohammad Ali Reza, Kalam Chowdhury, Mohiuddin Al Faruque, Lakshan Chowdhury and SM Jahedul Haq addressed the meeting.

The speakers at the meeting said that different types of criminal activities increased alarmingly in recent time posing a serious threat to the area and urged the residents to come forward and unite to resist such activities.

### Blood group identification programme

Vice Chancellor of Chittagong University Professor Dr AJM Nooruddin Chowdhury said, "Every conscious citizen should know his or her blood group."

He was speaking as chief guest at a free blood group identification programme at CU Commerce Faculty on Wednesday. Voluntary students' organisation 'Life' organised the programme in cooperation with Executives Care.

"Many of us don't know our blood groups, which is vital for all of us," he said.

Life president Ishrak Hossain, chief executive officer of Executives Care Mehrib Masuk and president of Rotaract Club, Chittagong Monzur Morshed were present.

### Rally against crime

Jatiya Oikya Moncha, Chittagong unit organised a rally on Shaheed Minar premises on Thursday as part of a countrywide programme against growing crime.

Jatiya Oikya Moncha central leader and Gono Forum presidium member Pankaj Bhattachariya spoke at the rally as chief guest with former lawmaker and unit convener M Kafiluddin in the chair.

Advocate Emdadul Islam, Jane Alam, Mohammad Shafiqul, Ranjit Sikder, Adil Ahmad Majumder and Noor Tahera Khanam also addressed.

Pankaj Bhattachariya blamed the four-party coalition government for harbouring criminals across the country. "No criminal can evade legal action without backing from the government," he said.

## CU crisis looms large

The university authorities and Cuta are at loggerheads over selection boards formed by the tenure-expired syndicate

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

The Chittagong University (CU) is apparently heading for a fresh crisis as the authorities and the Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) are at loggerheads over the selection boards formed by the syndicate whose tenure expired on May 13.

At a meeting on Sunday, the Cuta urged the university authorities to cancel the selection boards by today.

"If our demand is not met, we will go for a vigorous action programme, including indefinite work abstention," Cuta President Professor Dr Md. Nurul Anwar said. "Formation of selection boards through tenure-expired syndicate is 'unlawful'," he said.

CU syndicate at a meeting on June 9 formed four-member

selection board for each department and institute to appoint teachers amid protest by Cuta. Cuta observed two-day work abstention on June 9-10 protesting formation of the boards.

The pro-Jamaat teachers took classes in some departments of science and commerce faculty defying Cuta decision. They opposed the Cuta work abstention programme to back the selection boards reportedly to get appointed their fellow followers as teachers in the university, sources said.

The CU authorities had appointed around 95 teaches in last two years violating the planning commission recommendation. Of them, 70 teachers reportedly belong to the Jamaat and its students' wing Shibir and 20 were from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

"The authorities have already made the university a hub of Shibir cadres appointing them as teachers. And it is the most odious thing that the authorities have formed the selection boards only to appoint the Shibir men through the tenure-expired syndicate, Cuta General Secretary Professor Dr. Gazi Saleh Uddin said.

Some teachers on condition of anonymity said that the selection boards were formed based on only political consideration.

"Junior teachers have been included in the boards as member even as expert as they are being backed by the ruling BNP or Jamaat depriving senior teachers, they said. Though there were professor level senior most teachers in the department of Anthropology, expert teachers under the category of external and inter-

nal member have been taken from Sociology and Economics department, a teacher of social science faculty said seeking anonymity.

Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. M Shamsuddin declined to make any comment on formation of the selection boards.

Vice-Chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that tenures of different bodies including the registered graduate representatives of syndicate have already expired. "It is common practice of taking decision through the tenure-expired bodies as it is not possible to hold their elections timely due to various reasons," he added.

He said that the schedule of syndicate election has been announced and the election will be held on June 30.



STAR PHOTO

Jewel Aich, right, performs magic tricks at a show at the Institution of Engineers auditorium on June 11, organised by Renata Limited.



STAR PHOTO

Artistes perform a dance number at the prize giving ceremony of the Lever Brothers Sports Recreation Club at the Muslim Institute Hall on June 11.