

NEW MOORING CONTAINER TERMINAL
Tender for privatisation postponed

CPA seeks suggestions from port users

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shipping Minister Lt. Col. (retd.) Akbar Hossain yesterday postponed the tender floated earlier with regard to the privatisation of the under-construction New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT).

He announced the postponement at a meeting with the trade union leaders of the Chittagong port held at the Chittagong Port Training Centre.

The port users and workers have been demanding cancellation of the tender terming it flawed as it set some conditions the interested bidders in the country find it difficult to meet.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) is apparently trying

to go ahead with the plan to privatise the NCT.

On Thursday, it urged the Chittagong port users and all concerned to submit their suggestions in this regard within next seven days, sources said.

In a letter, CPA Chairman AMM Shahadat Hossain asked the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry to submit recommendations from the port users.

Earlier on the day, the CPA organised a meeting to exchange views with workers' organisations and stakeholders of the port, with the shipping minister in the chair.

All the users and most workers of the Chittagong port spoke in favour of privatisation of the NCT, but Chittagong City Corporation Mayor

ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury was the only person at the meeting to oppose the move.

The CPA's letter sent to the CCCI president reads "In view of today's (Thursday) open discussion regarding management of New Mooring Container Terminal, the honourable minister for shipping expressed his desire that as a representative of all the port users including FBCCI, Shippers Council of Bangladesh, BGMEA, Bangladesh Shipping Agents' Association, Bangladesh Master Stevedores' Association and C&F Agents' Association, you send well thought opinions/suggestions (regarding the management of NCT)."

He said even in the urban areas, they had to cut short their programmes at the instruction of the administrations.

As part of the festival, playwright Mamunur Rashid's 'Rarang' will be staged in the three districts.

Mamunur Rashid, Barendra Development Organisation Executive Director Abdur Rauf and Bibhash Chakrabarti of Oxfam also spoke.

SPRING FESTIVAL
Admin asks indigenous people to shorten programme

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Indigenous leaders yesterday said the local administrations have forced them to trim their spring celebration programmes in the northern districts.

Addressing a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club, indigenous leader Albert Saren said the administrations of northern region denied them permission to hold programmes in the rural areas on security ground as a large crowd might gather in those programmes.

The three-day festival, Baha O Fagua Parab, will begin today in Naogaon, Chapainawabganj and Rajshahi districts simultaneously.

He said though huge gatherings are not uncommon in these types of programmes in rural areas, but by no means there could be any problem of security.

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Amendment to Compensation Act 1923 demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammlita Garment Sramik Federation yesterday demanded of the government to amend the Compensation Act 1923 by making it time-befitting.

The demand was made from a human chain formed by the federation at Muktangan in the city.

According to century-old act, an injured labourer would receive Tk 30,000 while the family of a deceased labourer would get Tk 21,000.

Speaking on the occasion, federation leaders said the compensation must be much more higher than Tk one lakh of present time.

Federation President Nazma Akhter said a total of 20 lakh workers are engaged in garment industries and earn more than 76 percent of foreign currencies.

She said the old compensation act is totally ineffective to provide any meaningful help to labourers and ensure their rights.

Federation General Secretary Nahidul Hasan Nayan said there is also no provision in the act to compensate the labourers who are affected by the diseases related to their profession.

He also urged civil society and professional bodies to extend their supporting hands to meet the demands of the federation.

Federation Adviser Advocate Fowzia Karim, Office Secretary Khadiza Akhter, Joint Secretary Mohammad Ali Hossain, and President of Bangladesh Jatiya Garment Sramik Kamochari League Sirajul Islam were present on the occasion.

Properties worth over Tk 7 lakh gutted in Ctg

CU CORRESPONDENT

Properties worth over Tk 7 lakh were damaged when fire broke out at a sawmill and an auto-rickshaw garage at Rahattar Pool area under Panchlaish Police Station in the port city yesterday.

Fire Service sources said the fire broke out at around 8:00am originated from an electric short-circuits. It spread fast to the adjoining CNG-rural auto-rickshaw garage.

A huge stock of logs and valuable machineries were damaged in the fire.

Later, four fire fighting units extinguished the blaze after a one-hour effort.

Bhuiyan criticises AL for comment on militant arrest

BSS, Narsingdi

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday criticised the Awami League for its failure to bring the bomb attackers to book during the tenure of previous AL government.

"You have utterly failed to bring the culprits to book. But now you see the arrest of militants as 'drama' when we are making our sincere efforts to arrest the culprits," he said while addressing the foundation laying ceremony of Jasore Union Parishad Complex in Shibpur.

The LGRD minister said the government did not receive any support from the opposition in its endeavour to carry out development activities. "Rather, they ridiculed our successes and development efforts," he added.

Presided over by Jasore union Chairman Tofazzal Hossain, the function was also addressed by Rokeya Ahmed Lucky MP and local BNP leaders Arif Islam Mridha, Sultan Hossain Mollah, Shahidul Islam, Abul Haris Rikabdar and Tofazzal Hossain Master.

Referring to the AL's pledge to shun the politics of hartal, the minister said, "People know how the AL betrayed them by enforcing hartals one after another during the last four and a half years."

He said the country is now free from terrorism as BNP is committed to stamping out terrorism.

"Now you will find no acts of extortion, robbery or vandalism in the country, which were rampant during the period of AL government," he said.

Mannan Bhuiyan said the country has witnessed massive development over the last four and a half years as BNP believes in politics of progress.

Apart from taking steps for expansion of female education, the government has raised the amount of the allowances for the freedom fighters and elderly people, he added.

The minister also alleged that the Awami League is hatching conspiracy to foil next general election sensing its defeat.

Earlier, the minister inaugurated the construction work of four roads, new academic building of Jasore Girls' High School and rural electrification at Khain Kut Bazar area.

'Ensure safe workplace for garment workers' Hunger strike observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A platform of 16 garment workers' associations yesterday observed a token hunger strike across the country protesting the death of around 400 garment workers since 1990.

The five-hour hunger strike was observed in Dhaka, Chittagong, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Savar from 11.00am to 4.00pm.

Political leaders, civil society members, academics and lawyers expressed their solidarity with the programme.

Addressing a rally after the hunger strike at Muktangan in the city, the speakers demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to garment owners responsible for the killings.

They also demanded Tk 5 lakh in compensation for family of the each deceased and treatment cost for the injured.

The speakers said the brutal killings of the workers are taking place due to corruption in the labour ministry.

Noted intellectual Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said the garment workers are the assets of the country and the government must ensure safe workplace for them.

Demanding immediate arrest and exemplary punishment to garment owners, Dr Kholiquzzaman, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, questioned why the owners remain out of reach of the law enforcement agencies.

General Secretary of Bangladesh Communist Party Mujahidul Islam Selim, SKOP Coordinator Dr

Wajedul Islam Khan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Economic Association Dr Abul Barakat, M M Akash of Dhaka University, and Ruhin Hossain Prince of Left Democratic Front also spoke.

Among the garment leaders, Amirul Haque Amin, Md Touhidur Rahman, Ruhul Amin, M Delwar Hossain, Shamima Nasrin, Kazi Md Ali, Selim Reza, Md Abu Taher, Shahidullah Badal and Shafiqul Islam spoke on the occasion.

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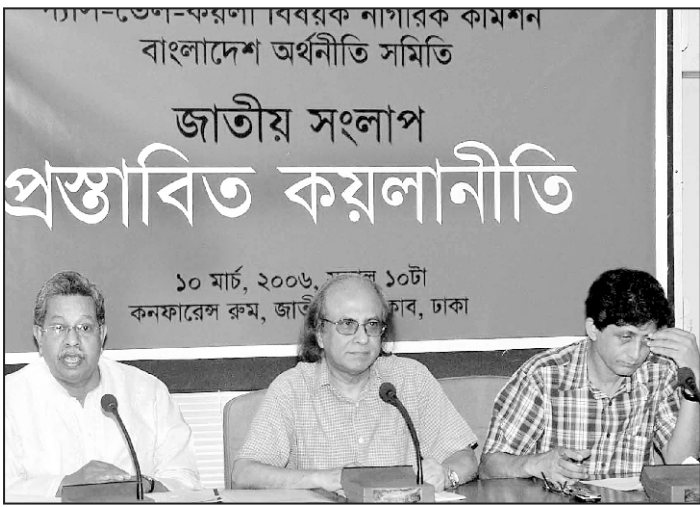


PHOTO: STAR

Energy expert Nuruddin Mahmud Kamal speaks at a dialogue on the Proposed National Coal Policy at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are BEA President Dr Kholiquzzaman Ahmad and General Secretary Dr Abul Barkat. Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA) and Citizens Commission on Gas, Oil and Coal organised the dialogue.



PHOTO: STAR

Bikkhubdha Deshbashi stages a demonstration in front of the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday to protest against the fundamentalism and militancy.

10 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and 21 injured in separate road accidents in Kushtia, Sirajganj, Chittagong, Jessore and Dinajpur yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Kushtia reports: Three people were killed and four others injured in a road accident in the district early yesterday.

The accident took place at Jugjialpalpara in sadar upazila on Kushtia-Pabna road at about 3.30am.

Police said a Joypurhat-bound truck from Khulna rammed a road-side tree when its driver lost his control over steering and fell into a ditch. Three labourers sleeping on top of the truck were killed on the spot.

The victims are Sabdul Alam, 40, Naimat Ali, 22, of Bagmara in Rajshahi and Jalal Uddin, 28, of Chuadanga.

The injured were rushed to the Kushtia General Hospital.

Our correspondent from Sirajganj adds: Two people, including a journalist, were killed and 17 others injured in two separate road accidents at Ullapara upazila in Sirajganj district yesterday.

Police and witnesses said Abdul Kuddus, 45, of Paikpara village and Ullapara upazila correspondent of the Dhaka-based daily Bhorerdak Patrika died on the spot and 17 others were injured at around 11:00am when a Pabna-bound coach of Badal Paribahan coming from Dhaka lost control over the steering and fell into ditch at Paikpara More on the Dhaka-Nagorbari highway.

The bus crushed passer-by Kuddus when he was crossing the road. The injured were taken to

Ullapara health complex and local clinics.

Abdul Momin, 17, of Giala village and student of a local high school, died on the spot as a speeding truck hit his vehicle from behind at 10:00am at Sree-Khola intersection in the upazila.

Police sent the bodies to hospital morgue for autopsy.

BDNEWS from Chittagong says: Two people were killed in a road accident at Billapara under Kamaphuli Police Station in the port city early yesterday.

They died were identified as Abul Bashar, 26, and his cousin Abdul Karim, 13.

The accident occurred when a pick-up van by which they were returning home at Patiya upazila from a bridal party was hit by a speeding truck at around 3:00am.

They succumbed to their injuries at the Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, A man was killed in a road accident at Gorpapa area of Kaharol upazila in Dinajpur yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident occurred when a speedy minibus hit Kheatra Mohan, son of Nandanath of Gorpapa, while he was returning home riding a bicycle.

Kheatra Mohan was rushed to the hospital in a critical condition where he succumbed to his injuries.

Our Correspondent from Jessore reports: Two people were killed in a road accident at Benapole land port here yesterday.

The dead were identified as van-puller Nasir, 25, and passenger Laily Begum, 27.

Police and witnesses said The accident occurred when a van carry-

ing passengers was going to Baropota village under Sarsha upazila from Benapole. A truck from the opposite direction hit the van leaving van-puller Nasir and passenger Laily dead on the spot.

Angry people damaged the truck but the driver managed to escape.

The police sent the bodies to Jessore General Hospital for autopsy.

FCHD COMPETITION
6 children get 'Best painter' awards

Six children received 'Best painter' awards at an award giving ceremony of a drawing competition at the Children's Art Gallery at Bhuiyapara in the city recently, says a press release.

Forum for Culture and Human Development (FCHD) organised the painting competition for children on the occasion of Mother Language Day. A total of 46 school-children took part in the competition.

Afroja Parvin, executive director of Nari Unnayan Shakti, gave away prizes among the winners as the chief guest.

Dr Azam Ali, country representative of NICARE, attended the ceremony as special guest.

Assign Rab to help protect Sundarbans, tigers

Experts urge govt

UNB, Dhaka

Naturalists have called on the government to assign a special contingent of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) to help conserve the mangrove forest and protect the endangered tigers in the Sundarbans.

The demand was placed at the inaugural session of a two-day workshop titled 'Teachers for tigers: Advanced technique refresher course' at Dhaka Zoo auditorium yesterday.

The Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh (WTB), Dhaka Zoo, Zoo Outreach Organisation of India, and Wildlife Conservation Society of New York have jointly organised the workshop. Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, principal secretary to the prime minister, was present as the chief guest while Prof M Harunur Rashid, a trustee of the WTB, chaired the inaugural session.

Inaugurating the workshop, Dr Siddiqui said the forest should be preserved for the sake of human beings and to do so, the first thing to be done is to stop issuing entry permits.

Using such entry permits, a section of people creates noise and puts the survival of the endangered species like tigers at risk, he added.

The authorities should think of banning entry of people into the forest for next one decade, Dr Siddiqui said.

Such a ban might create unemployment for a section of people like Bawali, Mawali and others, but the government has enough scope to find alternative employment for a few lakh people, he added.

Prof M Harunur Rashid said immediate recruitment of a special contingent of Rab for the Sundarbans would help prevent attacks by poachers and other threats to the mangrove forest and its animals.

To get the best from such a special contingent, they should be given absolute authority and be answerable only to the prime minister, he said.

Fisheries and Livestock Secretary Kamrul Hasan said preservation of wildlife is a must to maintain balance of nature and for the very existence of the human race.

CEO of Banglalink Lars P Reichelt expressed his optimism to extend the hands of cooperation of his company in preserving the wildlife and the endangered species of tiger.

"We, along with a few local wildlife activists, are working on raising a fund for the endangered Royal Bengal Tigers of the Sundarbans," he said, adding: "Banglalink is very much linked with the symbol of tiger and its majestic approach, which bind us to do something for the tigers."

DG of Fisheries and Livestock Directorate Dr Salahuddin Mahmood, Chief Conservator of Forests Mohammad Osman Gani and Curator of Dhaka Zoo Kazi Fazlul Haque also spoke.

Experts and wildlife conservationists from home and abroad also deliberated on the advanced techniques of tiger conservation at the technical sessions of the workshop.

South Assian economics students' meet begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

A two-day meeting of the economics students of South Asian (S A) countries began in the city yesterday.

The slogan of the meeting is : Sharing ideas for better understanding of South Asian Development.

A number of economics students from different renowned universities of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh are taking part in the meet.

Organised by the economics department of Dhaka University (DU), the meet has been sponsored by Prime Bank Limited while Channel i and The Daily Star are the media partners.

DU Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz inaugurated the Prime Bank 3rd South Asian Economics Students' Meet- 2006 at BIAM auditorium.

The 1st meet was held in India in 2004 and the 2nd was in Pakistan in 2005.

Shoeb Akhter, a student of DU economics department, delivered the welcome speech while Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, chairman of the department and chair of the meet, made the introductory remarks.

A web site on the meet was launched after the inaugural function.

Technical sessions on different issues were held at three venues.

The closing ceremony of the meet will be held today where Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Saleh Uddin Ahmed will deliver thanksgiving speech.

Mason electrocuted

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mason was electrocuted at a village in Patiya, Chittagong, yesterday.

Md Nurul Absar, 17, son of Md Nurul Haque, died on the spot after he accidentally came into contact with a live wire while working at a building at Shuchakradandi village around 11:30am, police said.

An unnatural death (UD) case was filed with Patiya Police Station.

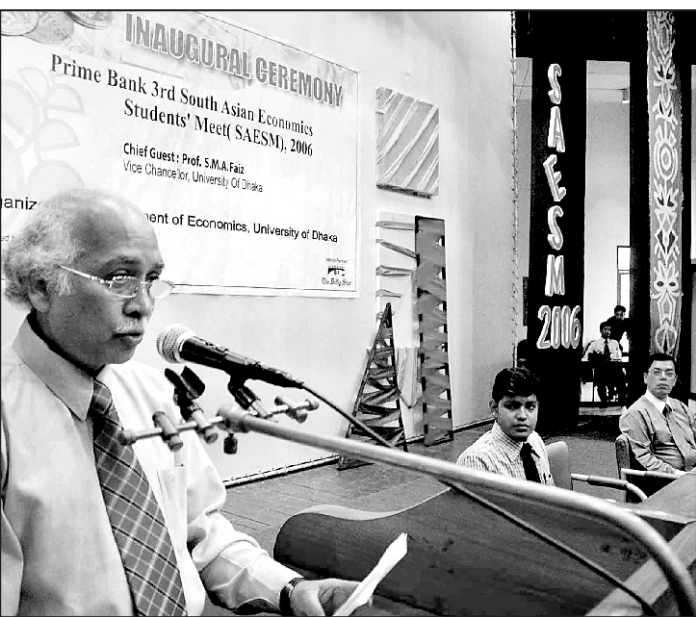


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz inaugurates the Prime Bank 3rd South Asian Economics Students' Meet- 2006 at the Biam auditorium in the city yesterday.



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Tangail and Mymensingh in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country. Met Office said in a forecast.

It said that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 37.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 18.7 degree Celsius at Srirangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:06pm today and rises at 6:11am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	35.2	23.7	49	39
Chittagong	36.5	23.0	61	57
Rajshahi	35.0	20.2	60	50
Khulna	35.0	22.5	69	60
Barisal	35.5	20.4	71	84
Sylhet	35.0	20.9	60	46
Cox's Bazar	37.4	23.7	53	47