

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 privatisate 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)."

The three-day festival, Baha O Fagu 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.

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.

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Amendment to Compensation Act 1923 demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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

The demand was made from a human chain formed by the federation at Muktangon 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 Akther 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 Nafidul 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 Khadija Akther, Joint Secretary Mohammad Ali Hossain, and President of Bangladesh Jatiya Garment Sramik Karmochari 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 Rahatgarh Pool area under Panchlai 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-run 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.

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

Masud Ahmed Rumi

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The third death anniversary of noted sports journalist and freedom fighter Masud Ahmed Rumi will be observed today.

Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association (BSJA) will offer fete at Banani graveyard at 1:00pm.

Later, a Qurankhwani will be held at the BSJA office at 2:00pm while a milad mahfil at 4:30pm.

BSJA President Manjul Hoque and General Secretary Syed M Mamun requested all members of the BSJA and admirers of Rumi to attend the programmes.

Masud Ahmed Rumi died on March 11 in 2003.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury attends the gayebana janaza of Dalia Nasir, wife of former state minister for Civil Aviation & Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin, at Laldighi Maidan in the port city yesterday. On his left is Jamaat lawmaker Shahjahan Chowdhury and on his right is BNP lawmaker Giasuddin Kader Chowdhury.

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