

Prof Yunus to open Grameen Trust India in Mumbai

UNB, Dhaka

Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Muhammad Yunus will inaugurate the first ever Grameen Trust India (GTI) in Mumbai on February 1.

The next Grameen Trust is likely to be inaugurated soon in Beijing, according to Grameen Trust officials here.

Grameen Trust India (GTI), which began operations on January 1 this year, is a liaison office supporting the micro-finance activities in India. Dr BN Kulkarni, former general manager of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) of India, heads GTI as its director.

A "Grameen International Conference on micro-credit in India" and a "Training Programme on Grameen Generalised System (GGS)" will also be held in Mumbai February 1-3.

Prof Yunus will inaugurate the conference being organised by Grameen Trust India (GTI).

The conference will highlight keynote addresses on present status and future prospect of

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Tender ignored for Ctg port jobs

Authorities spend Tk 80-100cr a year on shore handling contract

RAFIQ HASAN

The country's premier Chittagong seaport spends Tk 80 to 100 crore every year through awarding private stevedoring agencies the shore handling job without floating any tender.

The awarding of jobs to private contractors without tender is a gross violation of Public Procurement Regulation (PPR) 2003, sources said.

Of the 55 stevedoring agencies, who handle the loading and unloading of export and import cargoes inside the Chittagong Port jetty, around 20 are very active and they get the job through negotiation with the port authority without any tender. But after proclamation of PPR in 2003 there is no scope for awarding such contract without tender, said a source.

The Chittagong Port Authority

(CPA), however, is claiming that the existing system of awarding job to stevedores is a very old and proven practice for the last 100 years.

A high-powered committee at the CPA appoints the stevedores for two or three years on the basis of price rate, said Captain Quamrul Hasan, member (Operation) of the CPA.

"But we are now seriously thinking of going for floating tender for the job as different trade bodies have been creating pressure on us for this after proclamation of the PPR2003," he told The Daily Star last week.

Around one third of revenue expenditure of the Chittagong Port goes as shore handling charge. As the contract is awarded in an opaque way the tariff and charges of the port become much higher compared to other ports in the neighbouring countries, the source

said.

This also enhances the cost of business and slows down the economic growth of the country.

In the 2005-06 fiscal year, the CPA earned Tk 743 crore and from the revenue earning it spent Tk 375.96 crore that includes Tk 79.76 crore paid as shore handling charge.

In the preceding two years, the port spent Tk 83.19 crore and Tk 100.22 crore as shore handling charge. The Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) in a letter requested the shipping ministry to instruct the CPA for awarding the shore-handling contract transparently and as per the PPR guideline.

The CCCI thinks transparency in awarding shore handling contract would enhance the productivity and efficiency of the port by

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BSF FIRING

Indian cattle trader killed in Joypurhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

An Indian cattle trader was killed in BSF firing in Bangladesh territory near zero line of Hatkhola border under Panchbibi upazila of Joypurhat district on Friday night.

The dead was identified as Niranjan Munia, 29, son of Makhon Lal Munia of Mankar Union under Hili Police Station of South Dinajpur, India.

Immediately after the killing, the Indian border guards took away the body.

According to BDR officials, the BSF troops of Mathura camp opened fire on Niranjan when he entered Bangladesh territory, crossing the zero line with some cattle at 9:10pm. He died instantly.

An official of 29 Rifles Battalion under Dinajpur sector urged the BSF authorities to stop such unprovoked firing, which creates tension among the people of the frontier villages.

Meanwhile, the BSF yesterday released a Bangladeshi whom they picked up from Thakurgaon border recently.

Locals said the BSF personnel picked up Mohammad Rahim

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PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka district team players celebrate as Ansar and VDP lose their sixth wicket in the opening match of the first women's cricket championship at Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Dhaka won by 34 runs. Story on page-17.

15 killed in twin Iraq blasts

US airstrikes kill 14

REUTERS, AFP, Baghdad

Two car bombs killed 15 people in a mainly Shia area of Baghdad yesterday in the latest in a series of attacks by militants on crowded shopping areas in the Iraqi capital.

has further disrupted life in Baghdad, spreading fear among the city's 7 million residents awaiting a planned US-backed offensive to tighten the government's fragile grip over its largely lawless capital.

Meanwhile, US air strikes killed 14 militants northeast of Baghdad

yesterday and also destroyed a suspected hideout for foreign fighters, the military said.

A statement said 14 "terrorists" were killed as ground troops supported by aircraft raided a building south of Baquba, the flashpoint capital of Iraq's confessionally

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Manpower export to Canada to start soon

PORIMOL PALMA

For the first time, Bangladesh is expecting to send workers to Canada, a lucrative job market that ensures high salaries and workers' rights at low service charges.

Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL), a state-owned recruiting agency, has already prepared a draft contract with a Canadian outsourcing company that was attested by the Canadian High Commission in Dhaka recently.

Once the contract is approved, BOESL can start sending workers

of various technical professions, including plumbers, truck drivers, electricians and welders, within the next few months, sources in the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment said.

A worker has to pay only 4,000 Canadian dollars or Tk 2 to 2.5 lakh to get to Canada, while he can earn around Tk 1.5 to 2 lakh every month, a high official of the ministry pointed out while talking to The Daily Star.

"There are opportunities for the Bangladeshi workers to earn even more than that as they usually work

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Lankan navy sinks 3 rebel boats to foil port attack

AFP, Colombo

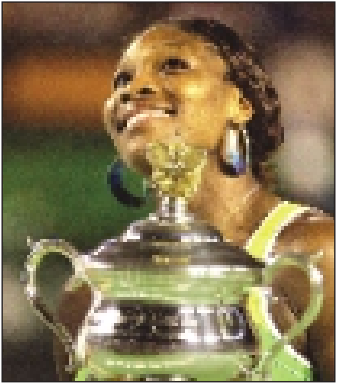
Sri Lanka's navy attacked and destroyed three Tamil Tiger boats yesterday as the rebels launched their first assault on the main port of Colombo in 10 years, the defence ministry said.

Naval craft blew up one boat after the three were spotted near a

restricted zone before chasing and sinking the other two, leaving an unknown number of casualties.

"Navy foils an LTTE attack at Colombo harbour, one LTTE boat destroyed at 5:30 am," the defence ministry said in an initial statement on its website, before later reporting the other two boats had

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Serena wins Australian Open

AGENCIES, Melbourne

Serena Williams won the Australian Open title with a 6-1, 6-2 win over Russian top seed Maria Sharapova on Saturday.

The American became only the second unseeded woman to win the Australian Open crown in the professional era after Chris O'Neill

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Prayer Timing		
January 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-35	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-46	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		