

# Rotation system again on Dhaka-Barisal river route?

## BIWTA warns of action against vessel owners

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

Launch owners have decided to resume the rotation system in operating vessels on Barisal-Dhaka route, defying a BIWTA order to follow timetable and conditions of route permit.

The decision was taken at a meeting of Bangladesh Launch Owners Association, held in Dhaka on Monday, according to association leaders here yesterday.

This correspondent talked to Golam Mawla, central vice-president of the association and its Barisal district president and its leader Manzurul Hassan Ferdous.

They said letters have been sent to the advisor in charge of communication ministry and BIWTA explaining the reasons for resumption of rotation system.

As per the decision scheduled to be effective from yesterday, three launches each, belonging to the same company, would leave Barisal and Dhaka against at least seven from each destination as per the BIWTA timetable and route permit conditions.

The rotation system was introduced on February 14, 2005 to compel passengers to avail any launch the owners offer, leaving no choice for them.

It was withdrawn on January 14 after a tripartite meeting in Dhaka.

BIWTA Deputy Director (passenger transport) Rafiqul Islam, Assistant Director Reazul Islam and Port Officer in Barisal Saiful Islam said they received a letter from the launch owners regarding its Monday's decision.

Higher authorities have been informed of the violation of official order by launch owners he said, adding action will be taken according to decision of the authorities.

Manwar Hossain, secretary and Motahar Hussein, director (port and transportation) of BIWTA, said a reminder letter (vide memo no. BPC/JP/Barisal/vol-3/346, dated 13-03-2007) has been issued to launch owners to follow the decisions of tripartite meetings held on December 10 last year and January 20 this year.

The owners association should place at least four launches at Barisal and four in Dhaka and these should depart the ports at 7-30PM, 8-00PM, 8-30PM and 9-00 PM every day from each end. More than one launch of the same company or owner should not be placed

at any end to give passengers scope for choice, he said.

BIWTA authorities will go for legal action and may seek help from joint forces to enforce the law, the officials said.

Passengers and legal aid groups organised demonstrations and filed cases against the rotation system. However the owners did not withdraw the system even after it was declared illegal by court.

Talking to this correspondent, Dr. Mizanur Rahman, joint convener of Barisal Bivag Unnoyon O Swartha Sangrakkhon Parishad (Committee to Protect Interest of Barisal and its Development) said resumption of rotation system proved again that launch owners are more powerful than the government and BIWTA.

ADULTERATED FERTILISER

## Two BADC godowns sealed in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

An investigation team of Bangladesh Agricultural Development

Corporation (BADC) from Dhaka led by its joint secretary Khorshed Alam on Tuesday sealed two BADC godowns with six tones of urea and five tonnes TSP fertilisers at Lakutia on the outskirts of Barisal city.

When contacted yesterday A M Maniruzzaman, senior assistant director of Barisal BADC, acknowledged sealing of the godowns but declined to give details. Maniruzzaman is also additional director in charge of the seed production centre here.

Sources said that following complaints, the probe team came to Barisal Monday morning and visited the godowns and the seed production centre at noon. There they found sacks of the fertilisers with out mark of producing company. The team sent a report to higher authorities.

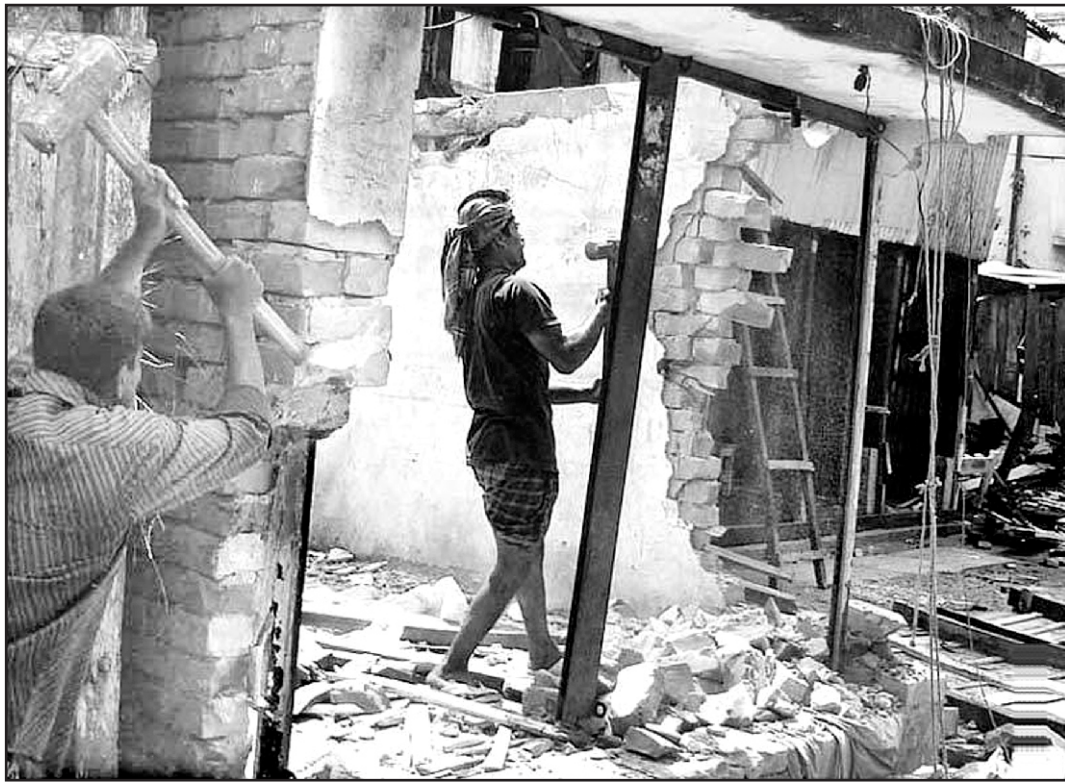


PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

The Barisal City Corporation demolishing illegal structures in Nazir Moholla in the metropolis yesterday.

## POLITICAL APPOINTMENT 70 sacked from Milk Vita Co in Baghabari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sirajganj*

At least 70 workers and employees of Baghabari Milk Vita company were retrenched on charge of political appointment, official sources said.

They got appointments in various posts violating the official rules in October last year.

Official sources said some officials allegedly in collaboration with influential leaders of 'Karkhana Porichalona Parishad' recruited them in exchange of bribe. The posts included those of supervisor and office assistance.

At that time, allegations of corruption and irregularities were brought challenging the appointments, but to no effect.

Informed sources said four people were appointed against lone post of office assistance under Mineral Water Affairs Project. Some others were recruited against fictitious posts in projects which were already closed long ago.

Following takeover of caretaker government, the complaints were investigated and corruption was detected in appointment of 70 posts.

On receipt of retrenchment order, the workers and employees were suffering from frustrations. Uncertainty prevailed just after the incident.

While contacted, Shariful Islam, manager of Baghabari Milk Vita company declined to elaborate although he has admitted the incident of retrenchment.

## CORRUPTION IN LAST 5 YRS 3,000 out of 4,550 CI sheet bundles stolen in Bogra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Bogra*

BNP led four-party alliance leaders and activities here have allegedly stolen 3,000 out of 4,550 corrugated iron (CI) sheets by preparing fake documents, district administration sources said.

Bogra District Relief and Rehabilitation Office (DRRO) sources said the office distributed 4,550 bundles of CI sheets in 12 upazilas as per recommendations of seven former BNP lawmakers during the alliance rule.

A large number of the CI sheets were used in making offices of BNP and its front organisations in different areas of the district, DRRO sources said. The sources cited an example of Dhupchanchia upazila unit of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal.

Noongola Degree College principal of Sadar upazila said he did not submit any prayer for CI sheets for the college but he received two bundles of CI sheets for the college from the DRRO warehouse as per recommendation of former BNP lawmaker Noor Afroze Begum Joyti.

Shibganj M H Degree College also got two bundles of CI sheets according to her recommendation.

DRRO sources said two bundles of CI sheets were allotted against a NGO named Bogra Shanirvar Shangha of Katnarpara area in the town. But actually the NGO did not exist in reality, a district administration official said.

On contact, Shibganj Thana

Mohila Dal president Beauty Begum admitted that her relative Belal of Dopara village of the same upazila got two bundles of CI sheets from the relief fund under former lawmaker Noor Afroze Begum Joyti's quota.

Shariakandi Police Station sub-inspector (SI) Khairul Baswar said cases were filed against five BNP leaders and activists for their alleged involvement in taking CI sheets illegally under Special Powers Act on Tuesday night.

The BNP leaders included Fazlur Rahman Haider, brother of Abdus Sobhan, Organising Secretary of Shariakandi Poura BNP, BNP leaders Shaidul Islam, Mazidur Rahman Sona and Fazlur Rahman Haider

More than six bundles of CI sheets were recovered from a warehouse of Shibganj upazila BNP president ABM Kamal Selim on March 6. A case was filed against him with Shibganj Police Station in this connection.

A senior official of Bogra district administration said a special drive will start soon against the culprits soon after completion of a primary investigation.

DRRO sources said 400 bundles of CI sheets were distributed in 2001-'02 and 1,763 bundles were distributed in 2005-'06.

Last year 1,167 bundles of CI sheets were distributed as per recommendation of local lawmakers.

## 7 BNP, JCD men in Sylhet given one month's detention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

Seven leaders of BNP and JCD including Sylhet city JCD president Ziaul Gani Arefin Zillur and secretary of Roads & Highways Contractors

Association and BNP leader Milad Ahmed were sent to jail hajat with one

Month's detention yesterday.

A magistrate of Sylhet Sadar cognizance court passed the order when police produced them before the court.

They were arrested on Monday by joint forces, who later hanaded them over to police.

The law enforcers caught the seven people from the Roads & Highways office complex at Chouhatta area. Liquor and other things were recovered from their possession during the arrest.

The others arrested during the raid include vice-presidents of Sylhet district JCD Omar Ashraf Imon and Hisham Ahmed Chowdhury, BNP leader Mollik Ahmed Chowdhury alias Lollik repeat Lollik, contractor Mozammel Hossain Nantu and Nazat Kabir.

Meanwhile, the executive engineer of R & H, Sylhet, Mostafa Kamal, filed a case with the Kotwali police yesterday against the arrested people for forcible entry into the office of Diploma Engineers Association in the complex.

The complainant in the case also alleged that the accused persons had entered the building in the past also ignoring restrictions.

There had been allegations of grabbing contracts in the name of BNP and JCD.

## Tension on Benapole border

A CORRESPONDENT, *Benapole*

Tension mounted on Salkona Bajitpur border in Benapole yesterday when BDR resisted an attempt by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) to construct a road by digging soil near the main pillar no. 31-2-S of Bangladesh, violating international rules.

The situation became calm after a flag meeting at Company Commander level.

When asked, BDR 22 Rifles Battalion Chief Lt Col Badrul Huda said BSF stopped construction work of road after the meeting.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Rab members yesterday seized about 4.5 tonnes of scrap iron, wigs and other materials from two boats on the Padma in Rajshahi while those were being smuggled out of the country.

## CLASH OVER DEMOLITION 5 hurt at Crescent Jute Mills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Five people were injured in a fierce clash between workers and security guards of Crescent Jute Mills at Khahishpur yesterday morning.

The injured included deputy chief security officer Nurul Haque who was admitted to Khulna Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

The clash occurred over demolition of 400 shops constructed by workers inside and outside the mills premises with permission of the management.

Later, angry workers demonstrated at about 11 am demanding immediate removal of the general manager (GM) of the mills, Shamim Ahmed and security officer Nurul Islam.

Workers who are also owners of the

demolished shops said the GM threatened their retrenchment for protesting the drive. They alleged over Tk 1 lakh were looted by the persons involved in the demolition drive.

When asked, the GM said the shops were constructed by workers illegally. He denied allegations of looting money from cash boxes of the shops.

The GM said, 'I did not need help of members of law enforcing agencies in the drive to demolish the shops due to sufficient staff in the security section of the mills'. Besides, I took prior permission of the BJMC authorities for the drive, the GM said.

Tension prevailed in Khalishpur industrial belt following the incident.

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