

Ctg still a costly port in region

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Although the efficiency of Chittagong Port has improved remarkably in recent time because of reduction in ship turnaround time to three and a half days from 11 days, it still remains a costly port with time-consuming port clearances in the region, speakers at a workshop said yesterday.

They also underscored the need for fast-track modernisation of all seaports, including the Chittagong Port, and also called for coordinated efforts of the government, port management and labour and

development partners for maximising economic benefits to reduce poverty in the country.

The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and the shipping ministry jointly organised the workshop on 'Improving Port Efficiency: Sharing International Experience of Private Container Terminal Operations', at a city hotel. The World Bank supported the workshop.

"Our ports need to enhance capacity by improving the productivity of terminal facilities to meet the growing demand," said Adviser to the shipping ministry Maj Gen

(retd) MA Matin as the chief guest. He also said that a private investor-cum-operator on SOT (Supply, Operate and Transfer) basis would be appointed through bid solicitation to manage and operate the newly built New Mooring Container Terminal.

He said some major changes have taken place in the Chittagong port since February 2007, which include improvement of operational efficiency and development of personal management.

The ship turnaround time reduced to 3.5 days instead of 11 days, cost of cargo handling by the port has reduced by Tk 20 crore per year and surplus revenue has increased by additional Tk 50 crore in comparison to the previous financial year, the adviser said.

Speaking at the programme, Mohamed A Toure, acting country director of the World Bank, stressed the need for institutional reforms in Chittagong Port and suggested introducing competition from the private sector operators to improve public sector operators' efficiency.

"The cost at Chittagong port is higher than several ports in the region," he said.

Sheikh Enayetullah, secretary to the ministry of Shipping, also spoke at the inaugural session of the workshop chaired by CPA Chairman Commodore M Farooque.

'Save Rajshahi Adivashi Palli'

RU CORRESPONDENT

Adivashi leaders yesterday alleged that some local influential people are trying to evict them from their traditional Haripur Paharia Adivashi Palli under Poba upazila in Rajshahi.

At a press conference at Rajshahi Press Club, they alleged that they are being threatened and tortured both physically and mentally to leave the land.

In a written statement, Adivashi leaders said one Alhaj Lokman Hossain and his two sons Abdul Halim and Abdul Mottaleb along with their supporters have threatened them to vacate their land immediately and planted some fruit trees over

there to prove their illegal occupation.

Following the threat, Adivashi people of Haripur Palli filed a case with Rajshahi court against them.

They also alleged that Lokman Hossain has prepared false papers and managed police and local administration in his favour.

They urged the government to save their Haripur Palli from illegal grabbing and protect several hundred Adivashi people.

The press conference was attended by Adivashi leaders Uttam Kumar Khalko, Nironjon, Ranjit and Blast Advocate Siraj Sirajul Haq.



PHOTO: STAR

A relative attends to the daughter of slain lawyer Sayma Khanam as the girl nearly fainted after seeing the blood-drenched body of her mother. Sayma was slaughtered by a criminal at her house at Elephant Road in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 16)



Mutual Trust Bank-Daily Star debate begins in Ctg July 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A five-day debate competition titled 'Mutual Trust Bank-The Daily Star Debate Championship' will begin in the port city on July 24.

Organised by Drishti, the competition will take place at the auditorium of Theatre Institute, Chittagong.

At least 20 schools, eight colleges and eight universities will take part in the contest under three categories.

Drishti members and teachers of the participating institutions will hold a preparatory meeting for the competition at the TIC auditorium at 4:00pm today.

Think of alternatives to arrest: B Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday said the government should think of alternatives to arrests while trying to distinguish persons.

"To bring distinguished persons like former president and prime minister to trial, alternatives to arrest should be devised," said Badruddoza while speaking to the journalists after a views exchange meet with divisional-level LDP leaders at the LDP office in the city yesterday.

On Awami League President Sheikh Hasina's arrest, he said, "Every citizen of the country in principle should agree that nobody is above the law."

Badruddoza termed the Election Commission's (EC) recently declared roadmap to parliamentary elections 'an appreciable move'. He also said despite EC's reconstitution, a lot of work is still needed to be done in the EC.

"The EC is yet to have its own independent secretariat," he said adding that it should have a court and the court would hold trials of cases filed in connection with electoral rules violations.

"We want to see that the government creates a congenial atmosphere for holding free and fair general elections soon," he said, adding, "The government should implement our pre-January-22 election demands."

Speaking about the powers the presidential office has, he said the office of the president should have more powers.

"It is unfortunate that the president is the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, but the defence ministry is not under his office," said the former president of Bangladesh.

Illustrating how titular the post of president of Bangladesh is, he said the president grants mercy to convicts but his office does not deal with mercy petitions. Bureaucrats get promotions on Presidential Quota but the president does not select them, he only signs the orders, he added.

Earlier, the LDP president spoke

at a views exchange meeting with its divisional-level leaders of Khulna. They held similar meetings with leaders of Chittagong and Barisal divisions on July 12. After a meeting with LDP's Dhaka division leaders, they would finalise their reforms proposal and submit it to the EC and make it public, party leaders said.

LDP Secretary General Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan, its Vice-president Abu Muzaffar Ahmed, Planning Secretary Sabera Begum, Joint Organising Secretary Maj (retd) Sheikh Nadir Ahmed were also present at the views exchange meeting.

Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital opens 2nd Cath Lab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second Cath Lab of Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute was formally inaugurated recently with a view to providing cost-effective and up-to-date cardiac treatment in the country.

The Dutch-Bangla bank limited sponsored the Cath Lab equipped with state-of-the-art technology from Philips. The lab would offer all sorts of diagnostic and interventional treatments and the technologies would enable electrophysiological study.

The lab has been operating since last month and it appeared very user-friendly.

AK Azad Khan, president of Bangladesh Diabetic Association, presided over the inaugural ceremony while Dutch-Bangla Bank Managing Director Mohammad Yasin Ali was present as the chief guest.

Executive Director of Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital Dr MA Rashid, chief of the Cardiology department Dr Maksudul Haque and Executive Director of Hema Enterprise Mir Mohammad Imam Hossain Jahangir were also present.