

Ordinance by next week to revitalise 2 seaports

Anwarul Iqbal tells 6th CAFAXPO 2008

UNB, Chittagong

The government will promulgate an ordinance within next week abolishing port dock management board and all but one trade union for revitalising two seaports, Labour and Employment Adviser Anwarul Iqbal said yesterday.

"Due to the arbitrary role of the trade unions and other organisations in the two ports before 1/11, it used to take at least 12 to 13 days to complete loading or unloading operation in a ship.

But at present it takes on an average two to three days to complete the operations as the government has managed to remove most of the irregularities there," he said.

He was addressing the concluding ceremony of the 6th Chittagong Apparel, Fabric and Accessories Exposition (CAFAXPO) 2008 as chief the guest at Engineers' Institution auditorium in the afternoon.

Anwarul Iqbal said there are some 30 trade unions at present in Chittagong port though provision in the existing Labour Law allows only three unions for an institution.

"Chittagong Port had lost its international reputation to the globe due to pervasive corruption committed by the trade unions and dock management. It also became an economic burden to the exporters and importers as efficiency of the port declined alarmingly," he said.

Differing with the comment of BGMEA President Anwarul Alam Parvez on the implementation of minimum salary structure in most of the garment factories, he said there are scores of factories in the country which are not member of BGMEA where the minimum salary has not yet been implemented.

"Following the recent unrest in

the garment sector, I in person visited a number of garment factories in Mirpur area which are conducting their operations on sub-contract from you (the BGMEA-member garments).

There the workers complained to me that the factories are giving them salary on previous scale," he said.

In response to a query regarding construction proposal of four-lane Dhaka-Chittagong highway, Anwarul Iqbal said ECNEC has already approved the highway from Daudkandi to Chittagong. "Also fund has been allocated. The construction work is expected to begin within the current fiscal year," he said.

BGMEA president presided over the meeting. Commerce secretary Firoz Ahmed, acting CCC Mayor Manjur Alam and BGMEA founding vice president MA Salam attended the meeting.

Illegal VoIP equipment worth Tk 50 lakh seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) seized huge illegal VoIP equipment worth about Tk 50 lakh at Mirpur in the city yesterday.

Action on tip-off, a team of Rab raided the house of Jasim Uddin, a tenant in the fifth floor of the six-storied building, at Senpara and seized the illegal VoIP equipment.

The seized equipments includes six channel box, six quantum, two fib ridge, 1 bay networks, 2 computer monitor, 2 CPU, 2 key board and 179 mobile SIM card.

Rab official said Jasim was involved with illegal VoIP business during last eight months.

CPU training on environmental reporting begins today

UNB, Dhaka

A five-day training course on environmental reporting for Bangladesh journalists with the theme 'Environment-reporting the issues currently threatening the globe' kicks off at the UNB training room in the city today.

Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) in partnership with CPU Bangladesh Section will organise the training course.

Chief Adviser's Special Assistant for Environment and Forest Ministry Raja Devashish Roy will inaugurate the course.

Amanullah Khan, president of CPU will deliver the welcome address while CPU members Mahbubul Alam, editor of The Independent, Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, Zaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, managing director and chief editor of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) and Enayeturrahman Khan, editor-in-chief and chief executive of United News of Bangladesh (UNB), will address the participants on various environmental issues.

John Vidal, environment editor of the Guardian, London will be the course facilitator.

Sri Lankan deputy minister calls on DU VC

BSS, Dhaka

Visiting Sri Lankan Deputy Minister of Higher Education Mohammed Mustaffa yesterday called on Dhaka University (DU) Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz at the Senate Bhavan in the university.

During the meeting they discussed matters of mutual interests specially the issue of admission of Sri Lankan students into the DU.

They also discussed possibilities of exchanging collaborative programmes between the DU and the universities in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lankan High Commissioner to Bangladesh Vaidel Krishnamoorthy, DU Pro-Vice Chancellor AFM Yusuf Haider, dean of the Arts Faculty Prof Sadrul Amin, dean of the Social Science Faculty Prof Harun-or-Rashid, dean of the Science Faculty Prof Tajmeri SA Islam, dean of the Business Faculty Prof Serajul Islam and dean of the Pharmacy Faculty Prof Abdur Rashid were present on the occasion.

DHAKA TODAY

Roundtable

Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (CDMP) under Ministry of Food and Disaster Management will organise a roundtable on contingency planning for earthquake response management and preparedness. Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Photo exhibition

The opening ceremony of the 1st solo photography exhibition of Mohammad Wayes will be held. The exhibition will remain open till February 23 everyday from 3:00pm to 8:00pm. Venue: Drik Gallery. Time: 5:00pm.

Roundtable

Dhaka Language Club organises a roundtable on 'Bridging the gap between civil and military through language'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.

Report launching

The launching ceremony of the World Development Report 2008 will be held. IFC, SEDF and World Bank Dhaka office jointly will organise the event. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Roundtable

The weekly Shapthahik 2000 organises a roundtable on rationalising quota in BCS exams and rights of the people with disability. Venue: The Daily Star seminar room. Time: 10:00am.



Sector commanders of the War of Liberation along with others place wreaths at the Nathpara killing field in South Kattali of Chittagong yesterday to pay tribute to the martyrs. (Story on Page 16)

Nat'l Math Festival ends with hope for greater success in future

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day National Mathematics Festival 2008 ended at St Joseph's Higher Secondary School in the city yesterday with a hope to achieve greater success in future in the field of maths and science internationally.

Sponsored by the Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd and the Prothom Alo, Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee organised the festival to form a team for the 49th International Mathematical Olympiad to be held in Spain this July and promote exercise of mathematics among the students.

Seventy-one students won in the final Maths Olympiad Competition. As many as 725 students, who won at divisional and regional levels, took part in the final competition namely Sixth Bangladesh Mathematics Olympiad.

They also participated in the key part of the Olympiad at primary, junior, secondary and higher secondary categories. Among the winners, four students, one from each category, were given awards as Champion of The Champions at the prize giving ceremony.

They are Dhruba Joty Sen of Khulna South Herald English School, Dhananjay Biswas of Chittagong Collegiate School, Masudur Rahman of Dhaka Ideal School and College, and Abirul Islam of Dhaka City College.

Each of them received a medal, a certificate and a cheque for Tk 10,000.

Besides, the committee initiated Tazima H Majumder prize in Math for the first time for best female student.

Rubaba Hasan of Viharunessa School and College won the prize. She also received a medal, a certificate and a cheque for Tk 10,000.

Talking to The Daily Star, Abirul Islam, an HSC examinee, said he participated in the national mathematical festival for the first time.

He said endeavour and passion for maths are imperative to be good at maths.

Rubaba echoed the same sentiment and said she likes maths and

her mother helps her doing maths. Speaking at the prize giving ceremony, noted writer Prof Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, vice chairman of Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee, advised the students not to memorise maths, rather love maths and try to do maths.

Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, chairman of the committee, said, "We have three dreams and the main one is that the Bangladesh team will bring medals from International Mathematics Olympiad by 2010."

"We have achieved a lot but we have to be more prosperous in the field of maths and science," he added.

Mohammad Yeasin Ali, managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd, Anisul Haque, deputy editor of the Prothom Alo, Brother Leo Pereira, principal of St Joseph's Higher Secondary School and Munir Hasan, general secretary of Bangladesh Math Olympiad Committee also spoke on the occasion.

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'Use Bangla in every sphere of life'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for using Bangla in every sphere of life.

They said it is unfortunate that we being a nation that sacrificed blood for language pay little attention to enrich our mother tongue.

The roundtable titled 'Development of Bangla in post-independent era' was organised jointly by the Amar Desh and BSB-Cambrian at the National Press Club in the city.

Director General of Bangla Academy Syed Mohammad Shahed said, "We have no unified education system which is necessary for the development of language."

He said private universities of our country use English as a medium of instruction.

Prof Mansur Musa, former director general of Bangla Academy, said "The UK government is doing everything to spread English but we are doing nothing for our own language."

"It is impossible to do well in English without learning Bangla properly," he added.

"We express our emotion about Bangla only in February," said Dr Bishwajit Ghosh of Dhaka University.

He proposed to form a joint language commission comprising Bangladesh and West Bengal for the development of Bangla.

Journalist Mohammad Jahangir said only mass media play an important role regarding correct and appropriate use of Bangla.

Amar Desh Editor Amanullah Kabir moderated the programme which was also addressed by Dr Korunamoy Goswami, Prof Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq of Dhaka University, Bashir Al Helal, M K Bashar, chairman of Cambrian College and BSB global network, Mostafa Jabbar, IT specialist, Hayat Mahmud and Dr Arup Ratan Chowdhury.

Trader shot by extortionists in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists shot a businessman at Mirpur in the city yesterday when he refused to pay them toll.

The businessman identified as Mazharul Islam, 30, owner of Sheetal Furniture at Manipur in Mirpur, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with a bullet in his left arm.

Mazharul told reporters at the DMCH that two extortionists came to the shop in a motorbike at about 3:00pm and shot him. He said during the incident they asked him why he did not pay them toll. The criminals fled the scene firing two blank shots, he added.

Staffs of the shop rushed him to the hospital.

He said three the extortionists called him over mobile phone demanding Tk 3 lakh as toll three days ago. He said refusal to pay toll enraged the criminals.

He, however, refused to give identity of the extortionists.

India opens massive arms fair, denies arming for war

AFP, New Delhi

A massive defence fair opened in India's capital yesterday with hundreds of global weapons firms competing for billions of dollars of sales to one of the world's largest armies and biggest spenders.

Some 450 firms from countries including the United States, Russia, Britain, Russia and Israel are displaying their latest hardware to technology-hungry India, the top arms buyer among emerging nations and expected to shell out 30 billion dollars over the next four years.

The four-day 'DefExpo' in New Delhi is also expected to see several big-ticket deals confirmed, with US firms hoping to take a slice of a market that was traditionally the domain of India's Cold War ally Russia.

India's Defence Minister AK Antony insisted the event did not signal that his country was engaged in an arms race with its nuclear-armed neighbours and rivals Pakistan and China.

"India is buying equipment so that we can offer a deterrent. We are not preparing for war," he told reporters.

Since 1999, nuclear-armed India's military purchases have been worth 25 billion dollars.

And the country, which has the world's fourth largest military and is Asia's second-fastest growing economy, will be spending even more in the coming years to modernise its Soviet-era weaponry.

Up for grabs are deals for six submarines worth 2.3 billion dollars, an artillery contract tagged at three billion dollars and a global tender for helicopters.

'Issue of nat'l consensus govt raised to delay election'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The issue of the formation of a government of national consensus has been brought to the fore to cause confusion in a bid to delay the parliamentary election, leaders of major political parties, including Awami League, BNP and Jatiya Party, said yesterday.

Strongly opposing any form of extra-constitutional government, they said a government of national consensus could be formed after the election if the winning party or coalition wants so.

"If the election is delayed over this issue, the people would not accept it," BNP chairperson's adviser Mofazzal Karim said at the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap held at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital.

The other panellists were JP Acting Chairman Anisul Islam Mahmud, AL's Women Affairs Secretary Dr Dipu Moni and Prof MM Akash of Dhaka University.

BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with BBC World Service Trust organised the event moderated by Kamal Ahmed.

Prof Akash said that if any government of national consensus is formed, it would be a "unity of convenience" and would not have any ideological base.

However, such government

could be formed after the election, he added.

Responding to a question, Anisul Islam Mahmud said the people are now facing a crisis of confidence over the issue of holding the election in time.

He also said that the political parties should hold dialogue among themselves, not with the government, to make parliament effective.

Mofazzal Karim said the election should not be delayed over any excuses, as it is currently the main

demand of the countrymen.

Dr Dipu Moni said there is doubt whether the election will be held as per the electoral roadmap, as the work to prepare ID cards is going on slowly.

Prof Akash also echoed similar views.

All the panellists, however, hoped that the election would be held in time as the chief adviser, the army chief and the chief election commissioner have repeatedly pledged to hold the election by 2008.



Ananda Alo, a fortnightly entertainment magazine, in collaboration with Citibank NA, Bangladesh introduces an award titled 'Citi-Ananda Alo Literary Award' at a press conference recently. Sitting from left are media personality Md Jahangir, Director and Head of Global Transaction Services of Citibank NA Rashed Maqsood, Director General of Bangla Academy Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed, film personality Amzad Hossain and poet Asad Chowdhury.

Citi-Ananda Alo Literary Award introduced

Ananda Alo, a fortnightly entertainment magazine, in collaboration with Citibank NA, Bangladesh has introduced an award titled 'Citi-Ananda Alo Literary Award', says a press release.

The award will be given under five categories -- novel, poetry, child literature, non-fiction and book cover.

Only the books published on the occasion of Amar Ekushey Book Fair 2008 will be eligible for the awards, said the organisers at a press conference recently.

The awards will be presented to the winners at 'Lekhak Kunja' at the book fair on February 18. Each award carries Tk 30,000 and a crest.

A panel of jury nominated by Ananda Alo and Citibank NA will select the winners.



No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain mainly dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild to moderate cold wave sweeping over the regions of Rajshahi, Ishwardi, Sitakundi, Srimongal, Satkhira, Jessore and Kushtia may continue, Met Office said.

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, it said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 27.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Barisal and lowest 07.6 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:54pm today and rises at 6:31am 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	25.1	11.0	65	43
Chittagong	24.6	12.3	61	54
Rajshahi	24.4	08.7	82	67
Khulna	26.0	12.0	87	55
Barisal	27.0	10.5	69	54
Sylhet	24.4	11.5	72	55
Cox's Bazar	26.8	12.3	51	60