

Decision on transit facility thru' Ctg port after talks with India

Says shipping minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Shipping Minister Afsarul Amin yesterday said the government would take the decision on any transit facility for India through the Chittagong port after high-level discussions between the two countries.

"Currently there is no barrier to transporting goods through roadways, railways and waterways between Bangladesh and India as per the existing bilateral trade agreement signed and renewed by former governments earlier," he said.

The minister said this while talking to reporters after a view exchange meeting with the officials of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) at the CPA Board Room.

The minister also said the bilateral trade deal is not a new issue as it was executed during the BNP rule in 1980 and the deal was later renewed in 2006 when BNP was in power.

"The world has advanced a long way. We are also trying to further develop the international relationships and hope to strengthen the ties with our neighbouring countries," he said.

About the Chittagong port, he said all necessary steps for the infrastructural development of the port would be taken gradually.

At the view exchange meeting, the shipping minister assured the CPA officials that there would be no interference from the ministers, lawmakers and civil and military officials in the port activities.

He asked them to work sincerely with a view to turning the port into a modern one by removing all negative impressions.

Termining the Chittagong Port 'heart of country's financial activities', he said the government would provide all necessary supports to keep the port vibrant.

CPA Chairman Commodore RU Ahmed chaired the meeting while Awami League lawmaker and Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI) President MA Latif, Shipping Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder and senior officials of CPA were present at the meeting.



US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A Boucher calls on Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Help implement Vision 2021 Education minister urges young generation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Energy of youth and direction from the old together can implement the Vision 2021 as announced by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

This was stated by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at a seminar in the city yesterday.

The seminar titled 'Role of young generation in the implementation of Vision 2021' was organised by Sammito Tarun Peshajibi Parishad at the National Press Club.

"By the word Vision 2021, I simply understand a developed and educated country by the year 2021, and this is the right time to start working in right direction to achieve the target," said the education minister.

He said in order to achieve Vision 2021, a widespread stimulation for development and education across the country is very essential.

Nahid said the country has a glorious history of language movement but unfortunately most of the people do not have literacy even after four decades of independence.

All citizens especially the youths have to come forward as volunteers to eliminate illiteracy from the country, he added.

Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique laid emphasis on higher education of young people.

Pointing to fragile education system, he called for bringing basic changes in it.

Presided over by Barrister Zakir Ahmed, the seminar was also addressed by Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shyamol Dutta, Sheikh Afil Uddin MP, and Abu Taleb, a businessman.

9th Nat'l Rover Moot inaugural ceremony today

METRO DESK

The formal inauguration of the 9th National Rover Moot will be held at the Rover Scout Training Centre at Bahadurpur in Gazipur today, says a press release.

Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice chancellor of Dhaka University, will inaugurate the event as the chief guest.

Md Momtazul Islam, president of Bangladesh Scouts and secretary of the government, will chair the function.

Md Abdus Salam Khan, president of the moot organising committee, will deliver welcome address. Md Abul Kalam Azad, chief national commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts and moot chief, will also address the gathering.

It may be mentioned that the National Rover Moot began on February 6 at Bahadurpur Rover Palli. About 5000 rover scouts and leaders from all over the country are attending the moot. The theme of the moot is 'Rovering for leadership'.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will attend the Grand Camp Fire and closing function as the chief guest on February 13.



Binod Bihari Chowdhury, a veteran leader of anti-British movement, receives a crest at a reception and Mezban organised by Chittagong Samity-Dhaka at Dhanmondi Women's Sports Complex in the city yesterday. On his right is Industries Minister Dilip Barua.

BIBIYANA GAS FIELD

Plan for fresh survey before raising production

UNB, Dhaka

In the wake of a debate among experts about the reserve in the country's second largest gas field at Bibiyana, state-owned Petrobangla is planning to conduct a new survey before going for enhancing the field's production capacity.

Earlier, it was under consideration to raise the gas production at Bibiyana field to tackle the growing demand for gas in the coming summer.

"We'll make a final decision on increasing the gas production at the field after having a new re-evaluation report on the field's reserve position," said Petrobangla Chairman Jalal Ahmed.

He said a new re-evaluation would be made soon at the Bibiyana field on the basis of the available data in 2009.

At present, Petrobangla is receiving around 500 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) gas from the field to meet the growing demand from power, fertiliser and industry sectors.

Recently, when Petrobangla was planning to enhance gas production from the field, there had been a debate among the energy experts whether the country should allow the IOC to extract more than 500 MMCFD gas from the field.

They said extraction of more gas may be harmful to the reservoir and it might destroy the field's structure.

They cited the example of Sangu gas field where Scottish company Cairn

Energy extracted excessive gas than the amount of the originally designed one, which finally led to early exhaustion of the field.

Chevron said extracting gas above 500 MMCFD would not harm the Bibiyana field.

Jalal said they did not find any abnormality in the field during its highest production of about 550 MMCFD in March last year when the country was facing its peak demand.

Despite the fact, he said, it would not be wise to extract excessive gas from the field before getting confirmation about its reserve.

"About the debate, Chevron Bangladesh President Steve Wilson said Bibiyana field had a comprehensive 3D seismic survey conducted prior to development. This reinforced our confidence in the mapping of the field, on which reserve evaluations are based. Contractually, production rates are based on 2P reserves, not Proved (1P) reserves."

He further said, "All geophysical, engineering and production data gathered to date indicate the field is in extremely good health, bigger than originally envisaged one, with more good news to come for gas production for the nation and the people of Bangladesh."

The energy experts considered this study report as a very early estimate as it was based on the results of only two wells.

In 2007, another US-based company which specialises in reserves determination, Ryder Scott, conducted a volumetric study on the basis of more information from the 12 wells drilled in the field so far, including interpreted data from the 3D seismic survey.

About this new report, Wilson says, "It indicates that the field is significantly larger than originally estimated by the pre-development 2000 DeGolyer and MacNaughton study."

In the debate, Dr M Tamim, who is an energy expert and also the special assistant to the immediate-past caretaker government's chief adviser, said any decision to increase gas production must be based on scientific evaluation.

Regarding the Ryder Scott report on the reserve position, he said the study was submitted to Petrobangla in December 2007. But he did not have time to read the report as it reached him during the final days of the caretaker government. "I heard that the reserve might be larger than the initially estimated one."

To put an end to the debate, Petrobangla and Chevron are now in discussions to conduct a new study on Bibiyana's reserve, which playing a major role in tackling the severe gas crisis the country is currently facing.

Many industries across the country, particularly in Chittagong region, are facing the similar problem for short supply of gas.

Create jobs for persons with disabilities

Speakers urge bankers, professionals, businessmen

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday put emphasis on the training, internship and employment of persons with disabilities so that they can live with dignity in the society.

The roundtable titled as 'Employment and Social Distinction for PWDs' was organised by Bangladesh Organisation for Disabled Advancement (BODA) at the National Press Club in the city.

The programme was held as part of 'Mainstreaming Persons with Disabilities through the Applied ICT Training' project.

The speakers called on the bankers, professionals and businessmen in the society to create ample employment opportunities for the persons with disabilities.

The project, funded by AB Bank Foundation, provided a six-month ICT training to 10 visually impaired and 10 physically challenged people so that they can work with the mainstream workforce.

The training includes office application, basic hardware, networking, internet, email, multimedia among other computer programming. The trainees have completed their internships and are now waiting to get employed in the mainstream organisations.

Md Abdus Salam, a visually impaired person with a graduate degree in economics from Islamic University, said he felt a lot more confident about doing a job after completing the course.

"When I first came to Dhaka from Kushtia, I found that it was very difficult to get a job without knowing ICT. Then I took this course and learnt MS Word, MS Excel, PowerPoint, Photoshop and many other things," he said.

Salam is eager to work in the banking, NGO or government sector.

Lutful Alam Maruf, trainer of the programme, said the indomitable courage, determination and enthusiasm of differently able people have surprised him.

"They have the capability to overcome their limitations in their own ways which is very promising," he added.

BODAM Executive Director Khalilur Rahman said, "We

have arranged this event so that they can get employment with dignity in the society."

In 2007, BODA took an initiative for applied ICT training for persons with disabilities to empower them.

Labour and Employment Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain was present as the chief guest at the programme which was also attended by AB Bank Deputy Managing Director Niaz Habib as the special guest.

'Stop pollution to save lives'

METRO DESK

Speakers at a seminar said the country is facing a massive natural disintegration as nature is losing its balance as a result of unrealistic development materialisation, chemical reaction, deforestation, extinction of creatures and population explosion, says a press release.

On the one hand, the nature is sending human beings its ruthless consequences; diversified diseases are spreading very alarmingly on the other, they added.

The speakers said this at the seminar organised by Rainbow Nari O Shishu Kalyan Foundation in the city recently.

Everybody should have to be well aware of the situation both socially and nationally so that unplanned misuse of natural resources can be prevented and corrupt people's mishandling of forests,

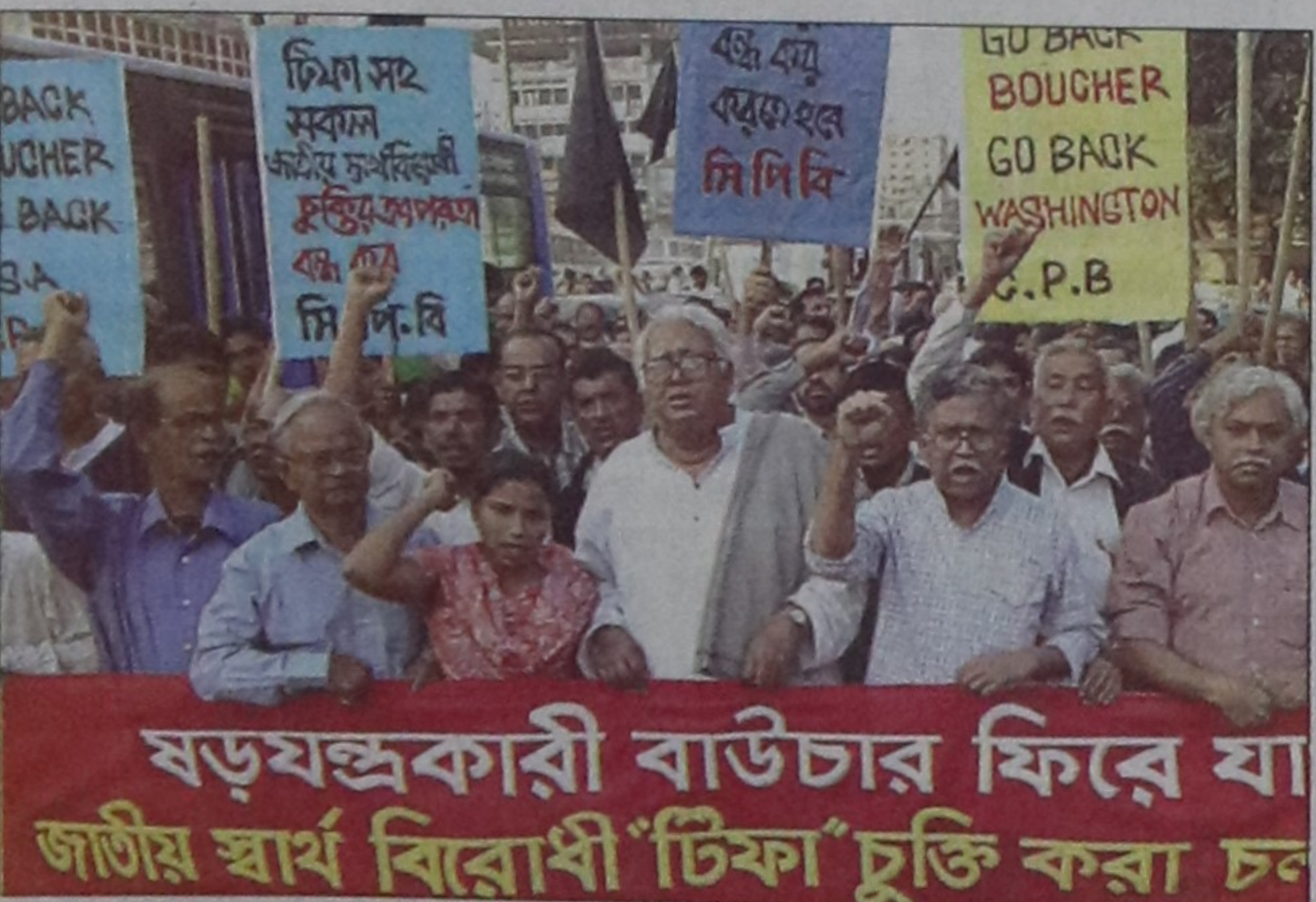
hills and water resources be stopped, they added.

Speaking as the chief guest, National Consultant of UNIDO Md Zahidur Rahman underscored the need for reducing the overuse of chemical fertiliser and pesticides, saying "We must also stop unplanned urbanisation in the name of industrialisation."

He also called for stopping the use of polythene and preventing toxic smoke from factories as well as vehicles and a planned way of removing industrial waste materials and other wastage.

Ward Commissioner Md Humayun Kabir was present as the special guest.

Representatives from RHDS Dr MM Hossain, Md R Zamir from Matador, Rashal Md Iqbal Khan from PKSF, Aniruddha Alam from BEES, Altaf Hossain Mahabub from Rainbow also spoke on the occasion.



Communist Party of Bangladesh stages a demonstration in the city yesterday protesting the visit of Richard A Boucher and the move to sign Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the US.



Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed speaks at the prize giving ceremony of the book-reading programme of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra at Ramna Batamul of Ramna Park in the city yesterday.

6,000 students receive prizes in book-reading programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two-day prize giving ceremony of the book-reading programme of Bishwa Sahitya Kendra concluded yesterday with about 6,000 students receiving the prizes in the two days.

Some 2,031 students from 27 schools in the capital were awarded at the colourful ceremony at Ramna Batamul of Ramna Park in the city yesterday. Theatre personality Mamunur Rashid was present at the ceremony as the special guest.

Eminent artist Mustafa Monwar, former advisers ASM Shahjahan and Mahbub Jamil, architect Moshawher Hossain, economist Dr Anisur Rahman, The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam and Bishwa Sahitya Kendra Chairman Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed were also present.

Of the prize winners, six students were also selected through lottery for a tour of India, Bhutan and Nepal.

Discard old mindset to ensure quicker dispensation of justice Law minister urges judges

UNB, Dhaka

Law Minister Barrister Shafique Ahmed yesterday called upon the trainee judges at the subordinate courts to work with fresh vigour discarding the old mindset to ensure quicker dispensation of justice.

"The judges will have to get used to acquiring contemporary knowledge in case management and speedy justice delivery system to reduce the sufferings of the

litigants," he said while he was inaugurating the 85th basic training course arranged for the newly-appointed assistant judges and judicial magistrates here.

The law minister said speedy and enhanced judgment depends on integrity, competency and firm commitment of judges. "If the judges can keep them away from conventional trend of procrastination in resolving the cases, the backlog of cases could be reduced to a great extent.

As a result, he said, the justice seekers would be benefited and the image of the judiciary be upheld as well.

Organised by the Judicial Administration Training Institute (JATI), the function was also addressed by its Director General Justice Hamidul Huq and Director (Training) M Ashraful Islam.

Fifty newly-appointed assistant judges and judicial magistrates are participating in the basic training course.

Madrasa on temple's land protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad condemned the construction of madrasa on the land of Kantaji Temple in Dinajpur.

President of the parishad Prof Neem Chandra Bhowmik and General Secretary Advocate Sattendra Chandra Bhakta at a press release yesterday condemned the construction work and demanded punishment to the responsible persons.

They also demanded removal of the madrasa from the land of the temple.