

Sea, land ports to be modernised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The government will soon take necessary steps to modernise the country's sea and land ports.

Initiatives would be taken soon to recover grabbed land of Chittagong port for ensuring its best use and increase efficiency of the country's premier port through enhancing facilities and addressing the problems it has been facing.

Nur e Alam Chowdhury MP, chairman of parliamentary standing committee on ship-

ping ministry, told this to reporters here yesterday after holding meetings with the officials of Chittagong port and Chittagong Customs house at the conference room of the port.

The committee comprised of eight members including Shipping Minister Md Shahjahan Khan directed the Chittagong port chairman to formulate a 50-year "master plan" for its development.

The committee in its first visit to Chittagong port yesterday inspected different installations and held a series

of meetings with the port users, berth operators and leaders of different workers organisations.

Nur e Alam Chowdhury said the committee is visiting different sea and land ports of the country before they make trips to several international ports.

Terming the revenue income by Chittagong port good, the committee chairman said the port is doing well while it is handling container at a cheaper rate.

Talking about acute problem of space for imported

vehicles in the port, he underscored the need for construction of a multi-storey building to get rid of the problem.

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan said they would take steps regarding the management of New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT) after their trips to four countries.

Asked about the ongoing probe into the alleged corruption of former shipping adviser MA Matin in appointing berth operator at NCT, Shahjahan Khan said, "It is clear that he [Matin] did it bypassing the rules."

PM's visit to India to help build relationship of trust

Pervez Mosharraf held meeting with Anup Chetia during BNP-led alliance govt, says Syed Ashraf

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraf Islam yesterday said the main objective of the prime minister's upcoming visit to India is to build a relationship of trust between the two neighbouring countries.

It is a political and strategic visit, he said at a roundtable titled 'Prime minister's upcoming visit: Interrelation between Bangladesh and India' organised by Sampradaka O Jangibad Birodhi Manchha (a platform against communalism and militancy) at the National Press Club in the city.

The minister said the relationship between the two countries was not 'normal' in the last seven years. Rather, it was a superficial relationship.

Mentioning some reasons behind such relationship, he said the then Pakistani president Pervez Mosharraf during his visit to Dhaka during the tenure of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government held an hour-long meeting with Ufa leader Anup Chetia at a city hotel. Anup Chetia had been detained at that time.

He also mentioned the issue of 10-truck arms haul.

"How could we imagine that a vast democratic and progressive country like India will maintain a normal relationship

when a party belonging to war criminals became the main ally of a government," he said.

Syed Ashraf said the main objective of the prime minister's visit would be to overcome the situation prevailing over the last seven years.

"We have to build a relationship of trust and soul with India. Both the countries would have to address each other's problems and it has to be reciprocal, not one-sided," he added.

He also said there will be no matter of 'give and take' during the upcoming visit of the prime minister.

"It's a political visit. A political visit does not necessarily entail any specific agenda," he noted.

Expressing the hope that the relationship with India will reach a remarkable level in the next four years, he said the visit will be the opening of a new beginning and this will brighten the relationship.

He also said that the Joint Rivers Commission meeting could not be held in the last seven years and the government held the primary meeting recently. "We will have more high level meetings where decision about the issues of Teesta and other common rivers will be taken."

The minister said the government wants to develop road and rail communications with China as well as India.

"We had a discussion on trade, bilateral and political as well as strategic relationships with China," he said, adding the prime minister will also visit China and the Chinese vice-president will visit Bangladesh.

The country needs to increase trade relationship with its neighbouring countries and to do so, construction of a deep-sea port is needed, he said, adding that deep-sea port in Chittagong will not be possible without the support of China.

Urging the media not to write anything that would create high expectations from the visit, he said the prime minister is capable of strengthening the relations with India and China further.

Other speakers at the roundtable suggested that the prime minister should discuss many unresolved issues such as enclave-related problems, maritime boundary, trade and export.

President of Bangladesh College-University Teachers' Association Dr M Akhtaruzzaman presented a keynote paper while President of the Mancha Prof Ajoy Roy presided.

Dr Mosharraf Hossain, Dr Syed Anwar Hussain of DU, Manjurul Ahsan Khan of CPB, Bimal Biswas of Workers Party, and Shyamol Dutta, editor of the daily Bhorer Kagoj, also spoke.

KHELAGHAR SAHITYA UTSAB 10 artistes honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten renowned artistes were honoured on the second day of Khelaghar Sahitya Utsab yesterday.

The ten artists are folk singer Kuti Mansur, litterateur Rabindranath Sarkar and Akhter Hossain, artiste Fahmida Khatun, dancer Zinab Barkatullah, recite artiste and teacher Bhashyur Bandopadhyay, artiste Dahlia Nawshreen, Milan Bhattacharya and theatre personality Liakat Ali Lucky.

Deputy Speaker Col (retd) Shawkat Ali attended the programme as the chief guest at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium yesterday. Kendriya Khelaghar Asar organised the event.

Shawkat told the children to prepare themselves to take the responsibility to build a country free from discrimination.

Khelaghar central committee convener Abdul Latif Bhuiyan said these great personalities would be role models for the children who would build the country under the ideology of the Liberation War.

Kendriya Khelaghar Asar was established with a view to giving children a platform to flourish their talents imbued with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Sramik League trying to manipulate CBA polls Bidyut Sramik Union alleges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sramik League, the labour wing of the ruling party, is trying to manipulate the upcoming election to the Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) of Power Development Board (PDB), Jatiya Bidyut Sramik Karmachari Union alleged.

"To this end, over one hundred leaders and supporters of the CBA [led by Sramik Dal, the labour wing of BNP] are being transferred from one part of the country to another," said a press release issued by officer secretary of the union Khandakar Belayet Hossain on Wednesday.

In protest of the mass transfer, the union held a meeting at the CBA Central office in the capital on January 3 where CBA Acting President Asaduzzaman Babul and Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal General Secretary Jafrul Hasan were present.

They said such massive transfer of the CBA leaders and supporters is tantamount to gross violation of the right to union activities and the freedom of speech.

They also demanded immediate withdrawal of transfer orders, said the press release issued on January 6.

Such mass transfer after completion of the voter list is unprecedented, the speakers said and demanded steps to create a congenial environment for the CBA election.

Jatiya Bidyut Sramik Karmachari Union cannot be held responsible if any chaos is created in the power sector because of the mass transfer, the press release added.



Prof Kabir Chowdhury inaugurates the seventh council of Sammilita Sangskritik Jote by releasing balloons on the Public Library premises in the city yesterday.

TRIAL OF WAR CRIMINALS Sangskritik Jote to launch awareness campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammilita Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) will hold various programmes in the next three years to press home its demand for the trial of the war criminals and raise awareness among the people to this end, said its leaders yesterday.

They were speaking at the seventh council of the SSJ at the Public Library auditorium yesterday.

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury inaugurated the council by releasing balloons.

Talking to reporters following the inaugural ceremony, SSJ President Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachchu said the ruling party in its election manifesto pledged to try the war criminals, which is also a public demand.

"Through seminars, symposiums, discussions, cultural programmes, musical shows and processions we will create awareness among the people specially the young generation and build up a progressive society in the coming years."

"We will make the government try the war criminals," he said.

Kabir Chowdhury said the SSJ has always been active in the country's progressive movements.

It has always fought against fanaticism and fundamentalism to take the country forward, he added.

Noted cultural personality Ramendu Majumder, singer Fakir Alamgir and SSJ General Secretary Golam Kuddus were also present.

Call to reform edn system to address unemployment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a council meeting yesterday called on the government to bring change in the country's education system to tackle unemployment problem and safeguard the youths from being involved in extortion, terrorism and tender manipulation.

They said discriminatory education system is the key to unemployment problem and those unemployed youths are gradually being involved in different anti-social activities like extortions, terrorism and tender manipulations.

The speakers said this at the 10th council of Bangladesh Jubo Union Dhaka city unit at Muktangan in the city.

There are some two crore and 70 lakh unemployed and semi-unemployed youths, they mentioned.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury said discriminatory and capitalistic social system poses a threat to Bangladesh and it is responsible for severe unemployment problem in the country.

Some dominant and devel-

oped countries are producing huge amount of gases, which are responsible for climate change, he said, adding that Bangladesh is the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. "Such continuous climate change will intensify unemployment problem in the country."

He also called on the government to take necessary steps to create more employment opportunities for youths.

He criticised the government, saying that the Awami League men and members of its different associate organisations are involved in extortions and tender manipulations.

Asad Ullah Titu, president of Jubo Union Dhaka city unit, placed an 11-point demand, including allocation of 25 percent of the total budget for education sector, decentralisation of industries and administration and formulation of national youth policy.

Union President Kafi Ratan, General Secretary Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad, said Ashraf.

About a newspaper's finding that the AL has exceeded the BNP regarding politicisation, the AL spokesperson said they do not believe in politicisation. "We are trying to get rid of the past BNP-Jamaat coalition government's politicisation aftermath," he said.

One killed in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unknown criminals killed a garment worker at Khilkhet in the city early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Faruq Hossain, 26. His body was found lying on a road at Madhyapara in Khilkhet.

Khilkhet police said they found an unidentified body at around 9:00am. Later, his family members identified him at Dhaka Medical College morgue.

Indian national arrested with cocaine

BSS, Jessore

An Indian national was arrested with two and a half kilogram of cocaine worth Tk 2.5 crore on Jessore-Benopole highway near Jhikorgachha thana on Thursday.

Acting on a tip-off, Jhikorgachha police arrested Shahul Hamid with the drug in a bus.

Shahul Hamid, who came from Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is now under the custody of Jhikorgachha police.

He was going to Dhaka by bus, the police said.

Power supply to Dahogram-Angarpota SOON

BSS, Rangpur

India yesterday agreed to allow setting up underground electric cables through the Tinbigha Corridor for supplying electricity to Dahogram and Angarpota under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat district, officials concerned said.

The agreement was reached at a battalion commander level coordination meeting on connecting electric cables to Dahogram and Angarpota between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Border Security Force (BSF) of India in the Indian side of the corridor.

As per directions of the governments of the two neighbouring friendly countries, the BDR and BSF authorities have been coordinating the initiative for ensuring electricity supply to Dahogram and Angarpota, officials told BSS yesterday afternoon.

100TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF BINOD BIHARI Call to build Sonar Bangla

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With a call to love the country and its people, a three-day celebration began here yesterday to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Binod Bihari Chowdhury.

Justice Habibur Rahman, former chief adviser to a former caretaker government, inaugurated the programme by releasing balloons at the Shaheed Minar in the port city of Chittagong in the afternoon.

Addressing a discussion at Khudiram Mancha, he said: "We would be able to build the country if we are inspired by love for the country and its people and courage to move forward the ideology of Binod Bihari that remains as a nasihatnama (testament or guidelines) to us."

Earlier, Binod Bihari, a comrade of Masterda Surya Sen at Chittagong Youth Revolution of 1930 and a valiant soldier of anti-British

movement in the Indian sub-continent, in his speech said, "The Sonar (golden) Bangla can be built in true sense if we have the courage to move forward shaking off cowardice and fear."

"Some people would lead a well-off life while some pass their nights on the footpaths. Such difference cannot be accepted. There would be no discrimination between Hindu and Muslim. Let it be my prayers of today," said Binod, a living legend playing his role of a conscious guardian for humanity and freedom for long.

Poet and journalist Abul Momen also spoke at the discussion presided over by former vice chancellor (VC) of Chittagong University Prof Alamgir Md Sirajuddin, also a historian.

Later, a procession was brought out from the Shaheed Minar premises. Riding on a horse-driven cart, Binod and Habibur participated in the procession. A photo exhibi-

tion was also organised on the life of the revolutionary at Surya Sen Mancha.

Biplobi Binod Bihari Chowdhury Jannashatabarshiki Udayan Parishad (100th birth anniversary celebration council) organised the programme titled 'Utsab and Shapthaher Aoubhan Shatanjali' amid festivity.

The programme, designed to highlight the historical movements and glory of the people of this subcontinent, is expected to be a gathering of noted litterateurs and personalities of Bangladesh and India.

On the second day of the programme today, a daylong seminar titled 'Shatabarsher Alokey Bangla and Bangalee 1910-2010' would be held at Muslim Institute auditorium.

Justice Habibur Rahman, ex-VC of Kolkata University Dr Anisuzzaman and Prof Bhabarozar would be presiding over the three sessions of the seminar.

Govt warns of stern action to stop chaos

FROM PAGE 1 turning university teachers partisan.

The minister criticised university teachers for their involvement in partisan politics and religious fundamentalism.

At the press conference, organised to mark one-year completion of the present AL government, Syed Ashraf unveiled a publication titled "Uttoron", which contains highlights of the government's achievements so far.

The LGRD minister said majority people of the country have expressed satisfaction over the performance of the government, which has been reflected in researches carried out by the media, especially a few influential and independent newspapers.

He said his party has also independently evaluated the performance of the government but this does not mean they are claiming to have been successful in all sectors

equally. The government is trying to overcome its failures, he added.

The government spokesperson accepted the research result that people have opposed extra-judicial killings in the name of crossfire and encounter. "Crossfire and extra-judicial killings can never be accepted in a rule of law and constitution," he said, adding that the government will work sincerely in the future to bring an end to this practice.

Regarding BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain's statement that the government has failed to play any role in implementing its electoral pledges, Ashraf said the main opposition made the comments without facts, figures and information.

He criticised the BNP for boycotting parliamentary sittings on various grounds although its lawmakers are enjoying all facilities including salaries and foreign trips and

are also lobbying for purchasing duty-free cars.

On the issue of withdrawal of cases against BNP leaders as a prerequisite to joining parliament by the opposition, he said the matter is beyond the jurisdiction of parliament and the speaker.

He said all corruption cases against BNP leaders must be settled in court. "Will the rule of law be established in the country if these cases were withdrawn?" he said.

Referring to the finding of a newspaper's research that 88 percent people do not like BNP's boycott of the House, the AL leader urged the main opposition to join parliament and expressed hope that the opposition leaders will come back to parliament in the upcoming session starting January 11.

Asked what steps the government has taken to curb corruption compared to the last caretaker government,

Ashraf said the caretaker government had good intention in this regard but the anti-corruption drive itself turned later into a tool of torturing and harassing political leaders.

He stressed the need for curbing corruption in a systematic way. He claimed that no allegation of corruption has yet been brought against any minister of this government by either the media or the business community.

"But we are not happy yet since there is corruption in every segment of the society, a legacy of military dictators Ziaur Rahman and HM Ershad," said Ashraf.

About a newspaper's finding that the AL has exceeded the BNP regarding politicisation, the AL spokesperson said they do not believe in politicisation. "We are trying to get rid of the past BNP-Jamaat coalition government's politicisation aftermath," he said.

Asked about AL's organisational activities that have apparently come to a halt over the last one year, he claimed the AL's organisational position is "very strong now". Councils of the party's grassroots level units--wards, upazila and district--will be organised after an extended meeting of the party on January 30, he added.

Replying to a query, the AL leader said those who are saying the political culture has returned to the pre-1/11 situation are trying to invite another non-elected and undemocratic government.

On establishing a positive healthy political culture as pledged in the AL's electoral manifesto, he said they want to do this with all other parties. "We are working for bringing a positive political culture and we need cooperation from all. If we fail, the nation will face a very bad consequence," Ashraf said.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop
Department of Fisheries, Bangladesh Shrimp and Fish Foundation and Bangladesh Frozen Food Exporters Association jointly organise a workshop on compliance with international food safety requirements. Venue: Matshaya Bhangan. Time: 10:30am.

View exchange meet
Health and Hope organises a view exchange meeting on lifestyle of aged people. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

Roundtable
BlISS organises a roundtable on Bangladesh-India relation: Exploring new horizon! Venue: BlISS office. Time: 10:30am.

Philatelic exhibition
The inaugural ceremony of a three-day philatelic exhibition will be held. Venue: Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology. Time: 3:00pm.

WEATHER TODAY

Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today. Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country and night temperature may rise slightly, Met Office said.

Prevailing mild cold wave over Mymensingh, Madaripur, Faridpur, Jessore, Kushtia, Barisal, Comilla, Feni and Srimangal may continue, it added.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:28pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 32 degree Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest of 7 degrees at Srimangal.

The 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	27.3	11.5	81	69
Chittagong	27.8	13.2	69	54
Rajshahi	25.6	10.8	89	75
Khulna	26.3	11.5	98	70
Barisaha	27.4	9.4	89	76
Sylhet	29.4	11.6	99	57
Cox's Bazar	30.0	15.5	71	69

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