



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Rising Stars

PHILIPS
DVD Player
RSP: 4,250/-
Customer Service Department: 885346-8, 01712-665463
TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS

COMMITTED TO
People's Right to Know
www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781 • VOL. XX No. 63 • DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 18, 2010 • CHAITRA 4, 1416 BS • RABIUS SANI 1, 1431 HJRI • 24 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

Economy stops on waterways

Importers count heavy losses as unloading remains suspended at seaports for 2 days; people's suffering mounts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The countrywide indefinite strike by water transport workers entered its third day this morning and started taking a heavy toll on importers, as scores of cargo and lighter vessels are stranded at Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Imported goods are not being unloaded and brought into the ports on time due to the strike, forcing importers to count losses in payments of demurrages for the vessels stranded at the outer anchorages and in the nearby rivers.

The Department of Labour however called a meeting with water transport owners today to discuss the strike.

Importers said each vessel has to count no less than \$15,000 a day as demurrage for overstaying at Chittagong Port. The demurrages are ultimately realised from importers.

They also said they might have to compensate lighter vessel owners for the delay in unloading and transporting of goods

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Lightening vessels remain anchored at Chittagong Port on day-2 of the water-transport workers' strike as goods-laden ships wait at the outer anchorage of the port yesterday.

PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

MRP to delay by at least 2 months

Authorities to receive applications for MRP from Apr 1, no handwritten passports to be issued from the day

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Bangladesh will miss the April 1 deadline set by International Civil Aviation Organisation for introducing machine-readable passport (MRP) as it will take about two months to set up offices with required equipment for the purpose, officials concerned said.

No handwritten passport will be issued from April 1 since all 187 ICAO members agreed to use machine-readable passports after March 31. It means no Bangladeshi citizen will get a new passport until the country issues MRPs,

they said.

"You will not get a machine-readable passport from April 1 as we are not yet prepared to produce it," said a local agent of Malaysia-based IRIS Corporation Berhad, who will produce MRPs in Bangladesh.

He said complications over opening a letter of credit delayed the entire process of introducing MRP. The official hopes to receive applications for MRP from April 1.

Quebec-based ICAO developed standards for machine-readable travel documents,

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Complete, new list of top terrors soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry decided to prepare a new and complete list of the top criminals in the wake of criticism in and outside the government over placing a faulty list in the parliament.

The ministry found missing the names of many top ranking criminals from the list yesterday while reviewing it.

"After reviewing the list, we have decided to publish a new list tomorrow [Thursday]. We will include the missing name", Home

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Gang targets workers abroad

Criminals lure Bangladeshis with lucrative job offer in Europe, then hold them hostage for ransom; wife of a victim files case

PORIMOL PALMA

A transnational gang is abducting Bangladeshi workers for ransom in countries in the Middle East, deceiving them with false promises of lucrative jobs in Europe.

It came to light after a case was filed against six of the gang members in Dhaka. They took ransom from the family members of Aminul Islam, 30, of Rajshahi, who with six others has been held hostage in Pakistan.

The gang is now threatening Aminul's family with dire consequences unless the case is withdrawn.

The Detective Branch of police is now

investigating the case.

Mohammad Faisal from Nawabganj, who was taken hostage with 29 more Bangladeshis by the gang in Pakistan, gave an account of his ordeal. He returned home two weeks ago after they were released paying ransom to the gang.

Aminul told his wife Nilufar Nahar over the phone on Tuesday that the gang was threatening him with death.

Nilufar, kept at the Victim Support Centre of the Tejgaon Police Station, yesterday said his husband went to Dubai for work two and a half years ago.



Aminul Islam

In October last year, Aminul told her that he got an offer for a better job in Italy.

He called Nilufar a few days later and said he was held hostage in Iran and the abductors wanted a ransom of Tk 1 lakh for his release.

Aminul gave her the mobile phone number of a Bangladeshi, Kamal, in Dhaka and told her to deposit the money with his bank account.

"We deposited Tk 95,000 with an account number as told by Kamal on November 19," said Nilufar.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Fellow students wave at the arrested students of Dhaka College as they are being taken to court in a prison van. The photo was taken on New Market Police Station premises yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

DHAKA COLLEGE 57 students held after BCL factions clash over 'control'

DU CORRESPONDENT

In overnight raids at seven dormitories of Dhaka College and adjacent areas police yesterday arrested 71 students and recovered 52 bullets from one of them.

The raids were conducted following Tuesday night's clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League Dhaka College unit over gaining control of the dormitories.

Of the arrestees Md Abdul Baset Galib was detained for interrogation, 57 were produced before a Dhaka court while 13 others released from New Market Police Station.

The court sent the 57 students to jail.

Police said Chhatra League activist Galib was arrested with 52 bullets at North Hostel. He was carrying 50 bullets with him while Tk 32,100 and two more bullets were recovered from his dormitory room around 5:30am.

Some central leaders of Chhatra League said Galib was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

JRC meet begins today after 5yrs

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Ahead of the Joint River Commission meeting beginning here today after a gap of five years, Bangladesh has said it expects to get more than 35,000 cubic feet per second (cusec) of Teesta water in a cycle of 10 days during March-May.

"We are already getting 3,500 cusec per day without asking for it and we certainly expect more than that from the coming talks," Bangladesh Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen said yesterday.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Congratulations

to the nation builders
O' & A' level awardees from



proud associate sponsor of

The Daily Star

"11th O' & A' Level Award Presentation Ceremony"

Visit our Pavilion in BAC International Education Fair at Sheraton Hotel Today

A' Level after SSC/O' level in 6/12/18 months
* 60% internal assessment

Diploma Leading to **Bar-at-Law** **HND/BBA**

American University Program (after O'A' Levels / SSC/HSC)

alternative to traditional education

BAC Associates: edexcel, abe

www.baegbd.org

A House of British-American Education Group
House # 28/B, Road # 5, Dhanmondi, Dhaka.
Call: 9677054, 9612453, 9612454, 01747-816004 (Friday Open)

Cash incentives for potato export to rise

PORIMOL PALMA

The government is considering increasing in cash incentives on export of potatoes to 20 per cent from existing 10 per cent to help potato growers get fair price as now the price is lower than the production cost in domestic markets.

The agriculture ministry in an inter-ministerial meeting on Tuesday proposed to increase the cash incentive to the exporters, Anwar Faroque, additional secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The move comes when farmers are selling potato at Tk 6-7 a kg in the field level though its production cost is around

Tk10 a kg.

According to the ministry, potato production is estimated to be over 80 lakh tonnes this year, some 20 lakh tonnes more than the domestic demand in a year.

The capacity of cold storages is only about 22 lakh tonnes of potato that leads to a competition between the growers and traders in storing potatoes.

On March 13, five potato growers were injured in a clash between the farmers and a group of traders over storing potatoes in a cold storage in Lalmonirhat district.

The clash ensued when the cold storage employees were receiving potatoes from the traders ignoring the farmers who

were waiting in front of it for long.

Bangladesh Farmers' Association (BFA) also staged demonstrations in the capital on Tuesday demanding increase of cold storage capacity for vegetables produced in the country.

BFA President Morshed Ali said farmers work hard and invest for some profits, but due to lack of storage capacity they are being affected very badly, which is not good for the country.

Additional Secretary Faroque said it is not possible to build cold storages overnight.

"However, the agriculture ministry is seriously thinking of farmers' interests.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

PM warns of stern action against child repression

UNB, Tungipara

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday warned of stern actions against anyone found involved in child repression.

"A law has been enacted to deal with it," she said while addressing a children's rally and cultural programme on Bangabandhu's grave complex here.

The Ministry of Women And Children Affairs organised the function marking the 90th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The PM said her government wants to ensure education for every child. "We have ensured measures so the children do not engage in hazardous works."

She asked the children to adopt the ideals of the Father of the Nation.

"You have to respect your parents and seniors; show your love to your friends and juniors because future leadership of Bangladesh will come from you."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4