

COMPENSATION FOR BASILA BOATMEN

PM's promise yet to be kept

MORSHED ALI KHAN

In the afternoon of December 29 last year, about 150 traditional boatmen from the Basila-Waspur Ghat formed a spectacular column with their boats in the river Buriganga and waited under the just completed Shaheed Buddhijibi Bridge there.



Boatmen from Basila-Waspur Ghat held a rally in the Buriganga River near the newly constructed Shaheed Buddhijibi Bridge on December 29 last year, inaugural day of the bridge, demanding compensation.

On the day, the boatmen waited in their boats to hear from the prime minister about their fate. Local MP Quamrul Islam, also the state minister for law, has pledged to help the community too.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in her speech mentioned the plight of the boatmen caused by the construction of the bridge and promised to compensate them. As soon as Sheikh Hasina announced her intent, the boatmen in the river greeted it with bursts of applause and slogans.

fulfillment of the pledge coming from the prime minister.

"We have not forgotten the day we rejoiced with our families hearing our prime minister's promise for the compensation," said Kazim Ali, 65, a boatman at the ghat for over 40 years.

"For over 100 years we have done the job of a bridge by ferrying people but suddenly [this newly

constructed] bridge renders us jobless and starving with our families. Is there no thank you?" Kazim said.

Like Kazim, many of these boatmen are old and the only earning hands of their families. Most have not learnt any skills other than rowing boats since for generations they found the Basila-Waspur Ghat

a ready job opportunity at their doorstep.

Following the inaugural speech, Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star that as soon as he received the list of the boatmen, he would organise the rehabilitation procedure.

But the boatmen said nothing happened ever since. "When we went to give our list to Quamrul Islam at his

official residence in Mintoo Road [in the city], he suddenly asked us if we would be interested in a bank loan," said Kalachan, 70, and a boatman since 1965.

"We were very scared of further financial burden on our families and declined the offer," he said.

"Next time when we went to see him he said he could not do anything for us because we declined his offer of bank loan," said Kalachan.

Quamrul Islam told The Daily Star recently that the boatmen declined his offer of help. "I told the boatmen that I would officially stand guarantor for a bank loan, but they declined. But still if there is a scope in the area I shall be able to help recruit some of these boatmen," he added without elaborating.

For the last ten months, many of these boatmen and their families are living in extreme hardship. "Some young boatmen are now selling labour in the brick kilns but we the elderly and sick are just miserable with our families since the bridge took away our livelihoods," said Shona Mia, 60, a boatman of the ghat since 1968.

Hardship for one of the boatmen is worse than others. Having lost his job Abdul Baten, the leader of the boatmen, found it too hard to sustain with his seven children. Within three months after he became jobless, he fell mentally ill. His family and friends admitted him to the National Institute of Mental Health in Agargaon but could not afford the costs.

Baten was soon discharged from the hospital. Now, he wanders the streets and mumbles to himself.

Renata Limited House-450, Road-31, New DOHS Mohakhali Dhaka-1206 Dear Shareholders... Subject: Accounts for the third quarter ended September 30, 2010

Renata Limited Balance Sheet (Unaudited) as at September 30, 2010. Table showing ASSETS and LIABILITIES for 2010 and 2009.

Income Statement (Unaudited) for the period January-September 2010. Table showing Turnover and other income, Cost and Expenses, and Net Profit before tax.

Consolidated Balance Sheet (Unaudited) as at September 30, 2010. Table showing ASSETS and LIABILITIES for 2010 and 2009.

Consolidated Income Statement (Unaudited) for the period January-September, 2010. Table showing Turnover and other income, Cost and Expenses, and Net Profit before tax.

Consolidated Cash flow statement (Unaudited) for the period January-September 2010. Table showing A. Cash flow from operating activities, B. Cash flow from investing activities, and C. Cash flow from financing activities.

Consolidated Cash flow statement (Unaudited) for the period January-September 2010. Table showing A. Cash flow from operating activities, B. Cash flow from investing activities, and C. Cash flow from financing activities.

Consolidated statement of changes in equity for the period January-September 2010. Table showing Particulars, Share capital, Revaluation surplus, Tax holiday reserve, Retained earnings, and Total.

24 judges transferred

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday brought changes to the judiciary as per advice of the Supreme Court.

A law ministry press release said offices of 11 district judges, seven additional district judges and six joint district judges were transferred.

The ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs issued a gazette notification in this regard, added the release.

Obituary

METRO DESK

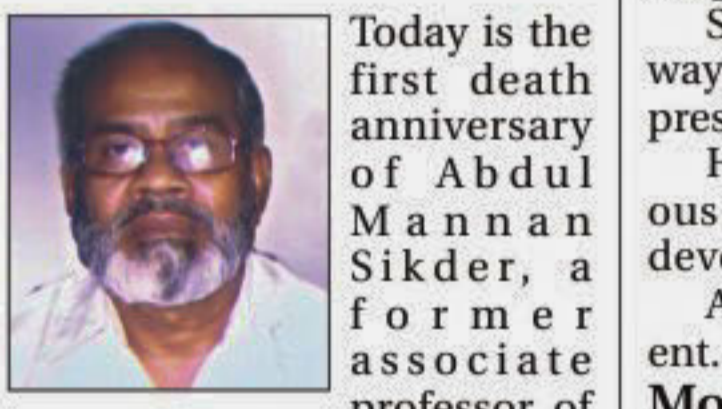


Syeda Khatoun, a social worker and wife of late K A Kader, passed away at Square Hospital on October 24 due to cancer at the age of 83, says a press release.

She left behind her five daughters and two sons. On this occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at New DOHS, Mohakhali Jame-Masjid in the city after Asr prayers tomorrow.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the first death anniversary of Abdul Mannan Sikder, a former associate professor of Patuakhali Government Girls College, says a press release.

Govt's food stock very low Says finance minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on purchase yesterday approved proposal for import of over six lakh tonnes of rice, wheat, fertiliser and petroleum products to increase food stock and ensure fuel supply to quick rental power plants.

The approval was given at a meeting of the cabinet committee at the Cabinet Division with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair. Muhith after the meeting told the journalists that as the government's food stock is very low it is going to import food to build up adequate food stock and contain food inflation.

He said in every meeting of the purchase committee proposals for import of rice and wheat have been okayed.

He said now the food stock is around 5 to 6 lakh tonnes. Due to power crisis, the country's fertiliser production was lower than expected and for that the government has been importing more fertiliser.

The purchase committee meeting yesterday gave nod to the proposal for import of 50,000 tonnes of wheat at Tk 117 crore, 30,000 tonnes of rice at Tk 102 crore and two lakh tonnes of fertiliser at Tk 585 crore.

Besides, proposal for import of 3.60 lakh tonnes of diesel and furnace oil at a cost of Tk 1,202 crore was also okayed. 2.70 lakh tonnes of furnace oil will be imported.

For quick power generation, the government has approved about 1,200MW quick rental power plant to be run by furnace oil.

165 tolas gold, Tk 4 lakh robbed in Jurain

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of armed robbers looted 165 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 4 lakh in cash from a residence at Khandakar road in Jurain in the city yesterday.

Sub-Inspector Abir Mohammad Hossain of Shyampur Police Station told The Daily Star that the family's housewife Lutfunnesa filed a case mentioning that a gang of seven robbers broke into the house by cutting through the balcony's grill.

They took away the valuables, keeping the family at gunpoint at around 3:30am yesterday.

ACC chief made Comilla Zila School convener

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Gulam Rahman has been made convener of the committee formed yesterday to formulate an association of former students of Comilla Zila School.

Chairman of the Department of Development Studies at Dhaka University Prof Mahubullah and Executive Committee Chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council Sayed Rezaur Rahman have been made associate conveners of the committee.

Khandker Habib-E-Rabbani was made member secretary of the committee, says a press release.

British Council keen to assist students in learning English

UNB, Dhaka

A delegation of British Council led by its Chief Executive Officer Martin Davidson paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhavan yesterday.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said Davidson informed Hasina that they want to assist Bangladeshi students in learning the English language.

The PM said her government launched the International Mother Language Institute in Dhaka for conducting research on different languages of the world and preserving those languages.

She requested the British Council to explore ways to assist the institute for protecting and preserving different languages. Hasina mentioned the government's various measures including highest allocation for development of education.

Ambassador at Large M Ziauddin was present.

MoU Signed

Staff correspondent adds: British Council yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding

with the Access to Information (A2I) Programme of the government to enhance skills on English language of the programme stakeholders.

British Council will provide English language materials to 4,500 Union Information Services Centres (UISCs) and establish partnerships between Bangladeshi and UK's schools.

This would enable schools of the two countries to work on international curriculum projects that will equip young people with the skills of communication, information and communication technology, leadership and problem and critical thinking skills.

The signing ceremony was held at the British Council auditorium in the city.

Davidson and Anir Chowdhury, policy advisor and acting project director of A2I Programme, represented their respective organisations, said a press release.

It will train the UISC managers to connect classrooms online and introduce International School Award, the International Teacher Award and the International Leadership Award to maintain standard of international curriculum.

WEATHER No change in temperature UNB, Dhaka Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Admission going on... Build your career as an AME (Aircraft Maintenance Engineer) Also available Air hostess/Steward, Airport & Airlines Operation, Aviation Management, E-Ticketing & Reservation. College Code: 50158

Request for Quotation (Re-advertised) Procurement of Photocopier & Fax Machine The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh hereby invites sealed bids from interested manufacturers/ authorized agents/ dealers & distributors for supply 75 units Photocopier and 75 units Fax machine.