

BIDDING FOR CTG CONTAINER TERMINAL OPERATION

Party lawmaker slams Mohiuddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Awami League lawmaker MA Latif yesterday criticised his party colleague and former Chittagong city mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury for his recent movement against alleged irregularities in the bidding process for appointment of private operators of New Mooring Container Terminal at Chittagong Port.

The lawmaker said that in the name of saving Chittagong Port, the movement would only create anarchy to the destruction of the existing good operational condition of the port and urged the senior AL leader to stop the protest.

Mohiuddin alleges that Chittagong Port Authority has relaxed some rules and conditions of the bidding to favour a local company, Saif Power Tech Ltd of Bangladesh, which, he says, is incompetent to operate the specialised terminal.

Five international and local firms finally submitted their tenders Thursday for operation of the terminal.

MA Latif termed Mohiuddin's allegations baseless. "A vested section comprising some labour leaders is trying to create anarchy through bringing baseless allegations for their own interests, and they are using Mohiuddin for the purpose."

"Why he (Mohiuddin) raised the allegations of irregularities just two days before the tender dropping while the tender documents were sold over three months back?" he asked.

"If there were irregularities, the bidders would oppose them and would refrain from taking part in the bidding. But five international and local firms out of six pre-qualified ones took part in the tender process."

Latif blamed Mohiuddin, also Chittagong city unit president of AL, for starting the movement without holding talks with the port users and for not bringing up the allegations in the Advisory Committee on Chittagong Port.

Referring to the names of Mahfuzur Rahman and Abdul Ahad, general secretary and joint secretary of Dock Bandar Sramik Karmachari Federation, Latif said the two men had created anarchic situation in the port many times.

For their petty self-interests, they are misguiding Mohiuddin, he said, adding that such act would tarnish the image of Mohiuddin and the party. "For God's sake, please don't do anything which may cause people's sufferings and destroy the economy of the country," Latif asked Mohiuddin.

Mohiuddin has been leading the movement as the chairman of recently formed Chattagram Bandar Raksha Parishad. The forum held a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club yesterday and will hold a roundtable on the issue today.

MA Latif was speaking at a views exchange meeting organised by Port Users' Forum at Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) yesterday.

BGMEA first vice president Nasir Uddin Chowdhury said the productivity and capacity of Chittagong Port had enhanced much in the last five years, and at this moment all political parties should show responsibility.

If there is any irregularity in the bidding, there should be an investigation, he said.



Philippine President Benigno Aquino (centre) shakes hands with Ramon Magsaysay award winner Syeda Rizwana Hasan from Bangladesh. Among the other awardees are (from left) Ambrosius Ruwindirjarto from Indonesia; Yang Saing Koma from Cambodia; (from right) Chen Shu-Jiu from Taiwan; Romulo Davide from Philippines; and Kulendei Francis from India. The 2012 Ramon Magsaysay award giving ceremony was held at Philippine International Convention Center in Manila yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

BNP's 34th founding anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition BNP will celebrate its 34th founding anniversary today.

On this very day in 1978, late president Ziaur Rahman founded the party.

To mark the day, the party has chalked out a two-day programme including discussion meetings, hoisting party flags at central office and all the party offices across the country, and placing wreaths on the grave of party's founder.

Party and national flags will be hoisted atop today at all offices of BNP across the country and party chairperson Khaleda Zia along with the party leaders and activists will place wreaths and offer fateha at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman this morning.

Besides, the party's associate organisations also have taken various programmes to observe the day with due respect.

Lift Hilsa export ban to avoid fish smuggling

Barisal traders urge govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Hilsa traders of Barisal division have called for lifting the export ban on Hilsa immediately to avoid smuggling of the fish and causing loss of export market and damages to investors.

The government banned export of sweet water fishes and Hilsa from Bangladesh on August 1 to reduce fish prices in local markets.

The traders said the export ban was applicable only for sweet water and frozen fishes and they could not find any reason of the discriminatory decision, which exempted frozen shrimp from the ban and imposed it on Hilsa which was mostly netted in the Bay and exported as a non-frozen item.

Bangladesh Fish Exporters Importers Association and Barisal District Fish Wholesalers Association made the demand at a joint press conference at Ilish Bhaban in Barisal Port Road area on Thursday.

The export ban has not worked properly, as Hilsa is not adequately available in local markets during this peak season, the association leaders said. Neither the fish's price fell enough to the purchasing capacity of retail consumers, they added.

Prices of commodities like Hilsa depend on demand, supply, investment, costing, profit, and consumers' purchasing capacity, and ignoring these factors, only slapping an export ban cannot bring any sustainable solution to control Hilsa prices in local markets other than losing export earnings, they said.

Consumers of Bangladeshi Hilsa want non-frozen Hilsa having a fresh taste, and there is no fish processing unit in the Hilsa catching zone, the traders said, adding that there are not enough ice factories and cold storages either to preserve the netted Hilsa for long time marketing.

The 300 Hilsa trading houses across Barisal have invested huge money and a ban on export for the interests of local markets and local consumers' failure to

buy the fish would inflict losses on the investors, they added.

According to the businessmen, more than 300 firms export 3,000-4,000 tonnes of Hilsa annually, earning about Tk 250 core. This export earning has been contributing an average of 8 percent revenue to the government for the last two years, they said.

The Hilsa season usually starts and ends in monsoon from June to October, but due to climate change, the rainy season now starts late and ends early, seriously affecting Hilsa catching, they said. Hilsa catching also depends on current in the rivers and sea and rainfall, among others.

The businessmen said the ban came when a delayed Hilsa season only started and fishermen were netting a good quantity of Hilsa in the sea. It will only affect the 2 lakh people connected with Hilsa trading, they said.

This would have no positive impacts on local markets other than increasing the chances of smuggling of Hilsa and loosing the export markets in India, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam and China, they said.

AKM Nur Muhammad, manager of Barisal Matsya Obotoron Kendra of Bangladesh Fisheries Development Corporation, said Hilsa exporting activities had been suspended at the centre since August 1 and was yet to receive any order to resume the activities. Last year about 3,000 tonnes of Hilsa was exported through this centre but this year only 60 tonnes of Hilsa has been exported so far, he added.

HILSA 'SMUGGLERS' HELD
Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested two fish traders along with eight maunds of Hilsa in Lawjani area of Jessore sadar upazila yesterday, reports our Benapole correspondent.

The consignment of the fish was about to be smuggled to India. The arrested were Shahinur Rahman and Taju Biswas of Lebatala area of the sadar upazila.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Abul Hasnath, superintending engineer of Dhaka South City Corporation, died at United Hospital in the capital yesterday early morning. He was 52.

Hasnath had been suffering from brain cancer for the last six months, said a press release.

He left behind his wife, two daughters and three sons.

Mahtab Uddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi



Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury, a senior staff reporter of a local Bangla daily the

Sonali Sangbad, passed away at Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) yesterday afternoon. He was 42.

He had been suffering from asthma for long.

He left behind his parents, wife and son.

Mahtab was also the joint secretary of Rajshahi Press Club.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the third death anniversary of Mohammad Khurshid Alam, former additional secretary and a fiction writer.

Various programmes, including food distribution will be held.

All have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Khurshid was an official of BCS Cadre (Admin) of 1982 batch. He wrote 19 books.



Tired in the sweltering heat, a worker of a large tailoring shop takes a nap on the same machine he works with in the capital's Lalbagh yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

C'NAWABGANJ-RAJSHAHI ROUTE

New shuttle train soon

Says Obaidul Quader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Communications Minister Obaidul Quader said Bangladesh Railway (BR) would introduce on more shuttle train on Chapainawabganj-Rajshahi route to meet commuters' demand.

The train would be introduced between March to August next year, he said adding that a coach would also be added to the existing train on the route by January in that year.

Quader said these while talking to journalists during a visit to Chapainawabganj Railway Station in Chapainawabganj town.

Earlier, hearing a complaint from a passenger, he instantly ordered official concerned over cellphone to transfer a BR staff Ibrahim, a booking clerk at Golabari Railway Station, to elsewhere as punishment for realising extra fare Tk6 to Tk10 from the passengers.

The minister said double line railway-tracks would be constructed in the Northern region.

But it would take about two years, he said.

Quader emphasised on ensuring of highest use of the existing facilities of trains in the country.

Stating government's plan regarding the railway, he said appointment of 11,000 staffs for the BR is under process.

The communications minister said an evil circle in the railway department has been engaged in pocketing money by misappropriating the BR's resources.

In the past years, some 153 stations have so far been closed in the country, he said.

Of total 56 thousand acres of land of the BR, about 5 thousand to 6 thousand acres have been grabbed by land grabbers, he added.

During the communications minister's visit at the Chapainawabganj Railway Station, State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Brig Gen (Retd) Mohammad Enamul Haq, local lawmaker Abdul Odud and government officials were present.

On Thursday, Quader also visited Rohonpur Railway Station, an important railway route for transit to India and Nepal, in Chapainawabganj.

Construction of a railway link between Rohanpur and Singhabad of Indian Malda district to facilitate transit from Bangladesh to Nepal through India was decided during a recent visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India.

Death Anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the ninth death anniversary of Nurjahan Murshid, a renowned leader of women renaissance of Bengal and one of the major organisers of the Liberation War.

On the occasion, Nurjahan's family members, Nurjahan Smrity Parishad and Broti, an organisation formed by her ideology and inspiration, will place wreaths at her grave in martyred intellectual graveyard.

Food will also be distributed among orphans on the day.

Born on May 19, 1924, in Taranagar of Murshidabad district, Nurjahan completed her master's programme from Calcutta University.

Nurjahan was the country's first state minister for health and social welfare.

Nurjahan and her husband Khan Sarwar Murshid made significant contribution to the country's Liberation War.



Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad unveils the video cover of Fakhru Abedin's documentary "The Speech" on the epic March 7 speech of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The launching programme was held in the capital's Liberation War Museum auditorium yesterday.

PHOTO: PI