



## May Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The historic May Day will be observed today to recognise the rights of labourers, as part of an ongoing struggle to end exploitation of labour the world over.

The day will commemorate the toiling people's sacrifice for the first successful movement of the working class and their courage to speak out against injustice.

The day is glorified with supreme sacrifice of the labourers at Hay Market of Chicago, USA, in 1886.

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### Holiday

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed today (Thursday) on the occasion of May Day. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow (Friday).

# Bhaluka villagers lynch 13 dacoits

STAR REPORT

Thirteen alleged dacoits were lynched and two others seriously injured by a mob of villagers in Bhaluka upazila under Mymensingh district yesterday, police and witnesses said.

They said angry Kashor villagers hemmed in the armed gang, caught 16 of its operatives and beat them up savagely when they were passing through the village at about 5:00am.

"The robbers were carrying the booty they looted from several houses in Ghughudah and Palgaon villages," a Kashor resident said.

Of the victims, 11 died on the scene, one on his way to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH) and the rest at the hospital.

Locals said a grocer saw the

band of 25-30 'suspicious people', some of whom were burying a cassette player at Kashor intersection early morning. They were also carrying a raft of loot including luggage.

The gang threatened the grocer with death when he inquired about their identity.

A few moments later, when the gang hit the highway to make a quick getaway, the shopkeeper raised an alarm, shouting 'dacoits'....'dacoits' at the top of his voice.

On hearing the alarm, thousands of people from adjacent villages, armed with lethal weapons, raced to the spot and caught 16 of the gang. The rest, however, managed to flee.

The mob took the 16 to a nearby field and beat them up indiscriminately.

Informed of the incident, Bhaluka police rushed to the scene at about 6:00am. They recovered a light machine gun, some bullets and valuables worth about Tk 5 lakh from the gang.

The dead are Kazim Uddin, 45, of village Dubaillyapara, Tofazzal, 30, of Meduari, Bidyut, 35, of Chapor Bari and Parvez, 30, (village unidentified) under Bhaluka Police Station, Shafique, 30, Ali, 25, of village Neekhapur under Trishal thana, and Saidul, 32, Suruj, 35, Abul, 30, Bidyut, 30, Jabir, 30, Sohe, 35, of Gaforgaon and Hafizul, 35.

Of them, Parvez died on his way to MMCH, and according to UNB Hafizul died after admission there.

Critically injured Ibrahim 30, and Rashedul, 30, were undergoing treatment at the hospital in a coma, doctors said.

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## 'Frame investment-friendly fiscal policies'

Speakers at CPD-The Daily Star-Prothom Alo dialogue ask govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers called for investment-friendly fiscal policies for poverty alleviation and economic growth at a dialogue on budgetary discipline and fiscal programme in the city yesterday.

They said macro-economic stability achieved over the last two years would not be beneficial if it was not mirrored in the investment sector.

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) organised the dialogue at its office in collaboration with The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo. The dialogue was held under the regional consultation meeting on



National Policy Review Forum 2003.

Former finance minister M Syeduzzaman moderated the dialogue which was addressed by former finance minister M A Muhiit, Finance Secretary Zakir Ahmed Khan, CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan, former advisor to

the caretaker government M Hafizuddin Khan, former secretary Motiul Islam, Dr Kaniz Siddiqui, Dr Momtajuddin, Orma Haider Chowdhury, Abdul Qayyum, and CPD Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya.

Speaking as the chief guest, the finance secretary said there was a plan to right-size the government instead of keeping it downsized.

The government is narrowing public deficit on the basis of suggestions and recommendations by various high-powered commissions.

Rehman Sobhan observed that

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# US troops kill 3 more Iraqis

AFP, Fallujah

US troops shot dead three Iraqis and left two more in critical condition on today, a doctor and witnesses in the Iraqi city of Fallujah told the wire service.

Witnesses said the shooting occurred during a protest of thousands of people over a similar shooting Monday night, when US soldiers in this town west of Baghdad killed 13 people.

"This was a peaceful demonstration. Religious leaders told us not to be armed. There was no exchange of fire," said Safa Rusli.

He said US soldiers riding in jeeps and armoured vehicles mounted with guns opened fire after children in the crowd started pelting them with shoes and stones.

"I saw three people shot dead before my own eyes," Rusli said.

Dia Jumalli, a doctor at Fallujah general hospital, said three people were killed and two more were in critical condition. Several other people were also reported wounded.

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A boy watches a US army tank pass by in his neighbourhood in Baghdad. US army patrols roads in the Iraqi capital amid protests by Iraqis after toppling of the Saddam Hussein's government.

## Robbers stab 10 on bus at Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Armed robbers stabbed ten people including passengers and crew of a Chapainawabganj-bound night coach from Dhaka yesterday.

Sources said a group of seven robbers got on the bus of National Travels at Dhaka's Kalyanpur on Tuesday night. As the bus passed the Chandpur graveyard on the outskirts of Natore town, the robbers took control of the vehicle after attacking the crew and some passengers with sharp weapons.

The robbers got off the bus near Biraladaha police box after robbing passengers of cash and valuables worth Tk 5 lakh. Most of the passengers were cattle traders and faculty members at Rajshahi University.

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## How diplomatic can we get?

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

One of the most unfortunate incidents has occurred during the just concluded visit of the French state minister for foreign affairs, Renaud Muselier. At the very last minute he was told that he could not meet our prime minister, which incited him into going public at a press conference, saying the appointment was cancelled for 'personal reasons'.

An otherwise smooth trip turned into a quasi disaster due to inapt handling of an important diplomatic visit. France is a very important world power (even if the

US may not think so) and has been a valued friend of Bangladesh all through. From her support during our Liberation War through her special interest in the international flood action initiative for us to being our third biggest trading partner and an active donor in many fields. There are also rising prospect of French FDI including the large investment by Lafarge. Regardless of everything else, France has been a very steady friend and has always looked upon Bangladesh with understanding, sympathy and genuine friendship.

The bottomline is that in diplo

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## BDR, BSF trade fire at Tentulia

UNB, Panchagarh

Border troops of Bangladesh and India exchanged heavy fire at northern frontier of Tentulia when their chiefs are holding conference in Dhaka for resolving disputes and maintaining peace on the border.

BDR jawan Anisur Rahman, 35, of Majeepara border outpost and farmer Noor Mohammad, 30, were injured in BSF firing. Anis was rushed to Rangpur Medical College Hospital in a critical condition and Noor is undergoing treatment at Tetulia health complex, officials said.

Reports from across the border said a BSF inspector was also injured in the firing.

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