

## Port springs to life

### Foreign feeder vessels withdraw strike following announcement to amend flag rule

RAFIQ HASAN

The crippling strike over container cargo shipment at the Chittagong Port ended yesterday afternoon with the foreign feeder vessel operators thrown into a frenzy of activities to meet the shippers' deadline. The shipping ministry in an announcement yesterday said the government has decided to amend the Bangladesh Flag Vessel (Protection) Ordinance 1982, exempting foreign container services from obtaining waiver certificate before

loading and unloading cargo at Bangladesh ports. A bill in this regard would be placed in the next session of the parliament. The ordinance said all foreign flag vessels would have to obtain waiver certificate for loading and unloading goods at Bangladesh ports. They would be allowed to load and unload goods only when there was no Bangladesh flag vessel at the ports, it said. Local representatives of Main Line Operators and Singapore-

based Chittagong Feeder Trade Committee (CFTC), which stopped operation on May 31, held a meeting yesterday afternoon and decided to resume operation immediately. "All the foreign feeder vessel operators and MLO representatives agreed to resume operation from now on," said Jamaluddin Quader Chowdhury, managing director of QC Container Line Limited, and a member of the CFTC. "We are convinced that the ordinance would be amended very soon," he said.

Three foreign feeder vessels loaded cargo last night. Over 1,000 containers with various exportables like garments and frozen foods were stuck up at the Chittagong Port due to suspension of operation by the foreign feeder vessel operators. Meanwhile, Chairman of Bangladesh Ocean Going Ship Owners' Association (BOGSOA) Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury has expressed disappointment over the

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## 'Donors to up aid if gas is exported to India'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Donors are ready to increase aid if the government exported gas to India, said State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain on Monday. "The donors assured us of increasing aid if we exported gas to India," Mosharrar said at a discussion on National Budget 2003-04 organised by the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) at its auditorium. He said if aid declines, it would be difficult for the government to tailor budget. Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) Senior Research Fellow Dr Atiur R a h m a n

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## Saifur urges opposition to join budget session

### The National Policy Review Forum 2003 begins

STAR REPORT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday urged the opposition lawmakers to attend the upcoming budget session and assured them of adequate time for discussion. "I want your opinions on budget proposals," he said in his address as the chief guest to the inaugural session of the National Policy Review Forum 2003 at a city hotel. The budget session will be meaningless without participation of the opposition lawmakers, said Saifur. He admitted to the tradition of

the ruling parties depriving the opposition lawmakers of the floor in parliament. Many areas of the government lack good governance and only a good political culture can ensure democracy, transparency and the rule of law, he went on. "Politics is the foundation for good governance," he said. The governments since 1991 have no major policy differences. But a few irritants surfaced in times of implementation, he said. Saifur, responding to a concern expressed by a speaker at the

event, argued that the government alone should not be blamed for the slide in standards of education. He pointed to the irregularities in the education sector over the years and accused politicians of not uniting on national issues. The National Policy Review Forum 2003, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), the Prothom Alo and The Daily Star, is the finale of eight regional consultation meetings that discussed draft review briefs. Seventeen taskforces, involving

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## Daylight bank robbery at bustling Rampura



- 1 12 noon: A dozen armed men enter the bank & disarm the guard
- 2 Two goons hold the manager at gunpoint, disconnect phone & lock up people inside a bathroom
- 3 Other goons enter cash counter & take Tk 6.5 lakh from one drawer
- 4 12.10 pm: People seek police help through the window while the goons pack up and leave by 12.15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Armed robbers looted about Tk 6.5 lakh from a Pubali Bank branch near the bustling Rampura Bazaar yesterday noon and also stripped two customers of over Tk 1.6 lakh. A gang of 12 entered the bank at 335 DIT Road, west Rampura, under the guise of customers, overpowering the lone guard Kadam Ali. One of them held him in tight grip during the 15-minute robbery. They robbed the guard of his rifle, which they left behind. The other guard, Minnat Ali, was off yesterday. Inside the bank, two of the gang went straight to the chamber of the bank manager and forced him and two customers into a bathroom. Others climbed the glass wall of the cash counter and took away Tk 6,49,440 from one drawer. Two other drawers were left untouched, said bank officials. The gang also snatched Tk 91,081

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## College teacher's house robbed at Demra

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers looted cash and valuables worth over Tk 1.52 lakh from a college teacher's residence at Dania in Demra early yesterday morning. Seven armed robbers broke through the kitchen window of the first floor apartment of Prof. Moniruzzaman at 3:30am. They used a ladder brought from an adjacent under-construction building. The robbers tied up the family members at gunpoint and herded them into a room. They broke the almirahs and took away Tk 40,000 and 15 tola of gold. Before leaving the apartment, the robbers locked up the rooms and

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## Abducted Jubo League leader found dead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The body of a Jubo League leader, who was abducted on Sunday, was recovered from Fatikhchari upazila in the district yesterday. The victim was identified as Eskander Alam, 30, former joint secretary of the local thana unit of Jubo League. Sources said some armed miscreants had abducted Eskander from a tea-stall near his house at Chhoto Silonia of Shunderpur union at around 7:30pm on Sunday. Local people found Eskander's body buried at the bank of river Halda at Azim Chowdhury Ghat in the same village yesterday. The body was later handed over to police. Police believe Islami Chhatra Shibir cadres loyal to Amir Ali Bahini (group), a branch of Didar Bahini, might be involved in the abduction and killing. A case was filed in this connection. In another incident, an alleged

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## Developer abducted, freed in 90 minutes

Five Star Group's link suspected

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A real estate businessman, also a Jubo Dal leader, was freed in less than 90 minutes after his abduction from Bahaddarhat bus terminal yesterday. Cadres of the 'Five Star Group' allegedly linked to the Islami Chhatra Shibir were believed to be involved in the incident, police said. "The motive was to extort a huge amount of money."

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## Two die as launch hits boat at Sadarghat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people including a girl were killed and a woman went missing in river Buriganga as a passenger engine boat was sandwiched between two launches at Sadarghat Launch Terminal yesterday. The victims have been identified as Khorshed Alam, 28, son of Rajab Ali of Subadda Uttarpara, Keraniganj and Sabina, seven, of Ekuria Purbapara. Joytun Begum, 28, Sabina's mother has been missing. Two divers of the fire service and

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Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday warmly clasps hand of Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdul Hamid at the opening of the National Policy Review Forum 2003 organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, The Daily Star and Prothom Alo.

PHOTO: STAR