# Gas pipeline scam

Planning Division of Titas Gas company, found pipes installed half a metre below the surface where these were supposed to be placed 2.5 metres below.

Again, at many places, the contractors dumped several feet of soil over the pines laid just below the surface of the ground to meet this criterion. The flawed design of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Limited (TGTDCL) itself gave scope for contractors to resort to such evil practice.

Contractors even did not maintain a one-foot distance between two parallel pipes at some points, observed the parliamentarians, who included Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bokul and Illias Ali.

There is no evidence of mechanical construction although Titas 'filtered out' many contractors on the grounds that the whole work should be done mechanically. Mechanical construction also 'justified' Titas' doubling of the project cost to Tk 60

On seeing the construction works Petrobangla Chairman SR Osmani could not help questioning how Titas could approve such risky

Meanwhile, a Petrobangla investigation committee submitted its report two days ago stating that the pipeline construction poses serious safety problems. It found fault with the project design, cost assessment as well as field inspectors and contractors and recommended ensuring that the contractors undertake remedial measures at their own expense.

The report stated the energy ministry refused to give the commit tee another investigation report filed a year before on the ground that it was 'classified'.

Pressed by the parliamentary standing committee and because of The Daily Star reports on the issue, Petrobangla and Titas also issued show cause notices against 14 high officials asking them to explain why departmental action would not be taken against them.

The officials are SM Anwaruzzaman, former MD of Titas and now GM of Petrobangla, MA Baset, former MD of Titas and currently MD of BAPEX, Shafiqur Rahman, deputy general manager (DGM), Petrobangla, Rana Akbar Haidary, deputy manager (planning), Titas, Abdur Rois Syddique, GM of Gas Transmission Company Ltd, Mahbubur Rahman, GM (planning), Titas, Amir Ahmed, former DGM of pipeline construction department of Titas, Kaosar Azizur Rahman, GM, marketing, Titas, Manjur Morshed Talukdar, MD of GTCL, Khurshid Hasan, GM, Service, Titas, Obaydullah, GM, LPR, Titas, Jalaluddin Bhuyan, secretary, Titas, AQM Selim, GM (administra-

tion), Titas, and Mukhlesur Rahman, former GM, ,Titas.

However, the name of one Petrobangla director, who was serving as MD of Titas when the project was conceived in '98-'99 -has been dropped for mysterious reasons. Sources said the director is close to the state minister.

The Daily Star last month reported that corrupt officials dou-

### **Outlaws kill** youth in **Pabna**

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna** 

A gang allegedly belonging to an outlawed organisation shot and chopped to death a youth at Faridour in Pabna on Wednesday.

A 12-member gang opened fire on Monzur Hossain, 25, when he was buying cigarette from a shop in Madrasah Para area at around midnight. They then chopped him with sharp weapons to confirm his death and fled, police said.

Police recovered the body yesterday morning and sent it to Pabna General Hospital for autopsy.

Monzur was an operative of an underground group and an accused in several cases including that of abduction, police added. The victim's brother Hazarat Ali

filed a case with Faridpur Police Station. However, police failed to nab anyone in connection with the killing till the writing of this report at

### Nizami

FROM PAGE 12

Matiur Rahman Nizami, now the industry minister, claimed at parliament yesterday that a section of the press ran the story in a distorted

"The media cooked the story to destroy my image as well as the alliance government. It's yellow journalism and crude lies," said the

The allegation of appointment anomalies came at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee

on agriculture ministry Wednesday.

But ruling BNP lawmaker Masiur Rahman, also a member of the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry, said that there was no such discussion took place at the standing committee meeting.

He requested the Speaker to rebuke the seven newspapers who carried the story

Another BNP lawmaker. Shah Shahid Sarwar, also claimed he did not raise any allegation against bled the project cost to Tk 60 crore and contractors began construction the 109-km pipeline from Joydevpur to Mirpur Bridge and another 101-km pipeline from Kaliakoir to Garai Industrial area

from October. Although the contract was officially given to two companies, in reality nine companies are sharing the tasks and 'spoils', insiders said Profit shares are also allegedly going to a certain bhaban to ensure political backing in favour of the corrupt officials

Late in 2002, when the project's tenders were being awarded to two companies. the then energy secretary smelt a rat in the deal and conducted an investigation. Although the investigation found massive irregularities and recommended scrapping of the deal, state minister Mosharraf Hossain did not allow re-tendering or any action against the officials involved.

When the parliamentary standing committee at a meeting a couple weeks ago proposed all the committee members make spor visits to see the pipeline project, Mosharraf Hossain refused to be a party to it. He is also a member of

## No headway Ctg customs official murder case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Law enforcers in Chittagong, till last evening, failed to make any head-way in the Wednesday killing of Mokhter Hossain Afrad, a customs

The 38 years old victim might have been killed due to personal feud over money transaction and enmity with colleagues over revenue collection, police suspect. One Swapon, charged as an accused in the murder of Mokhtar's

domestic help, might be involved in the killing, police added. Unidentified assailants shot the

customs official near his Halishahar residence in the port city at around 7:30pm. He died on way to hospital. His wife Sultana Islam Sheela filed a case with Halishahar Police

Organising a protest rally yesterday, officials and employees at Chittagong Customs House demanded immediate arrest and punishment to those involved in the

Meanwhile, Mokhtar's body was sent to his village home at Akanagari in Monahardi under Narsingdi after autopsy, family sources said.

### 2 killed, 5 injured in Bogra road accident

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra** 

Two people were killed and five others injured in a road accident at Baghopara in Bogra on Wednesday.

A speeding Rangpur-bound bus smashed into a tempo on Bogra-Rangpur highway at about 9:00pm, killing Hamidul, son of Monsur Ali, on the spot and injuring six others, police said.

Wounded Rafiqul, 32, Jadu, 30, Alamgir, 35, Khalilur Rahman, 36, Belal Uddin, 30, and Zillur Rahman. 32, were admitted to Mohammad Ali Hospital in Bogra, hospital sources

Zillur succumbed to his injuries at about 10:00pm, they added. A case was lodged with Bogra

### Altat

FROM PAGE 1

Kader Siddiqui rejected the home minister's statement as untrue and staged a walkout in protest.

Altaf, however, regretted the 'isolated' incident in which Saber and Ahsanullah Master were injured and called it unfortunate.

Describing the incident in which the two AL leaders were injured, he said a section of unruly Awami League activists carrying sticks attacked some vehicles on the Rajuk Avenue in the morning.

"On-duty policemen tried to refrain them from creating anarchy for the security of innocent passengers. But the unruly pickets attacked nolice who were compelled to charge batons to disperse them." he said.

At one stage, he added, Saber and Ahsanullah fell on the road and sustained injury.

"Immediately afterwards, we inquired about the incident. The injured also received medical treatment," he said.

'The four-party government of Khaleda Zia doesn't believe in the politics of having politicians beaten by police. The present government respects honour and dignity of the politicians," he said.

The home minister said police are always alert to protect life and property of the people. "Police will not remain silent if anyone tries to create anarchy and unrest."

The minister also elaborated on other scattered incidents that took place in different parts of the capital

# **Workers Party** talk agitation

UNB, Dhaka

Gono Forum (GF) and Workers Party (WP) yesterday reached consensus on intensifying the ongoing anti-government movement by uniting all democratic, progressive and non-communal groups and forces.

"The BNP-Jamaat coalition government has pushed the country to such an intolerable situation that people want to get rid of it," the two parties observed at a meeting held at the residence of GF President Dr Kamal Hossain.

Leaders of the two parties also discussed overall situation of the country and latest state of the antigovernment movement.

Dr Kamal invited the Workers Party to the national convention of Oikya Prochesta (effort for unity) scheduled for March 14.

Apart from Dr Kamal, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and Adv Zahirul Islam of Gono Forum and WP President Rashed Khan Menon, General Secretary Bimal Biswas, politburo members Fazley Hossain Badsha and Mahmudul Hasan attended the

### Bird flu

FROM PAGE 12

"We have to conduct random checks on these birds nationwide and will kill those testing positive," Environment Minister Prapat Panyachatraksa told reporters.

Of the five Thai deaths, four were boys between the ages of six and seven. The other was a 58-year-old

The human victims are believed to have caught the disease from contact with sick chickens, but fears persist that the bird flu virus could combine with a human flu virus and mutate into a deadly disease that could be passed between people.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) says it expects more people to be infected by the virus beyond Vietnam and Thailand.

The U.N. agency criticised afflicted countries Tuesday for putting business before human health in the fight against bird flu. It said Thailand, the world's fourth largest chicken exporter, may be rushing to declare its outbreak over.

But Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak rejected the charge, saying the government, which plans to clear the last of 163 "red zones" this week, had not acted recklessly

Somkid said the government would continue its mass cull if new infections were found in former red zones -- the five-km (three-mile) areas around confirmed outbreaks within which the government ordered the slaughter of all poultry. "I think we can contain the out-

break for now," Somkid said. "If we find positive results from the second round of tests on animals due this Sunday, we will do the said referring to mass culling

### 11 banks

FROM PAGE 1 Islami, City, NCCBL, Prime Bank, Dhaka Bank, Dutch-Bangla, First Security and Standard have reduced their deposit rates by as much 0.5 to 0.275 percentage

points. The banks, however, did not lower lending rates for agriculture and small industry despite the government and BB recommendations. In fact, the Standard Bank has even increased their agriculture loan rates by 4 percentage points.

The lending rates for agriculture sector of most banks hover between 10 and 14 percentage points. However, the Pubali, Arab-Bandladesh Bank and One Bank are lending agri loans at 8 percentage points.

Meanwhile, all banks have started to set export loan rates at 7 percent, down a 2 to 3 percentage

### BRTC service

FROM PAGE 12

Gabtoli-Kalabagan route, which proved a loss for the corporation, the chairman added.

Plans are on to make three more major roads rickshaw-free next year. They are Progati Sarani to Mouchak, Bangla Motor to Mouchak and Rokeya Sarani to Farmgate.

Mirpur Road stretching from Gahtali to Russel Square was made off-limits to rickshaws on December

#### Kerosene supply FROM PAGE 12

to adulterate the essential fuel. Our Khulna correspondent adds: The prices of kerosene are soaring in the industrial city where a litre sold

at Tk 24, up from Tk 16 yesterday. Retailers accused wholesalers of creating an artificial crisis and selling kerosene at high prices on the black market.

According to BPC's regional office in Khulna, the depot has a stock of about 48 lakh litres for the region that needs no more than 4 lakh litres a day. The BPC distrib-

# Gono Forum, Over 100 wounded BSF kills 2,

demonstrators.

three passenger buses

Islam Khan Nikhil.

whom had already taken shelter in

Mohona, the local AL office, and in

nearby lanes, started raining brickbats

on the law enforcers. Police fired three

teargas canisters to disperse the

Some of the injured were taken to

hospital while some others were given

first-aid inside the AL local office. The

hartal supporters vandalised at least

After the incident, police besieged

the AL office confining more than 100

AL activists including former MP

Kamal Ahmed Majumder and Jubo

League General Secretary Mainul

threw stones at some buses.

Earlier, police scuffled with women

League (BCL) at Shahbagh and

strators staging a sit-in at Shahbagh

when some of them tried to damage

an autorickshaw. BCL leader Syed

Abul Kalam was admitted to the

attacks on pro-hartal activists near the

AL headquarters till morning when the

opposition activists tried to demon-

strate on the streets breaking police

strated near the Russell Square at

Dhanmondi during the hartal hours.

Frontline AL leaders also demon-

At least six AL activists were

njured, one of them seriously, at

Kolaroa of Satkhira when the ruling

BNP activists attacked on a proces-

sion during the hartal, sources and

Chittagong where the hartal otherwise

On hearing the news that Relief and Social Welfare Secretary Nazma

Rahman was arrested in Dhaka,

agitated AL activists in Narayangan

set fire to a tempo and vandalised

Bogra, Gopalganj, Habiganj,

Noakhali, and industrial city of Khulna

newspersons the police actions

trampled democratic norms and were

a flagrant violation of the right to pro-

"They (the government) should apologise for such attacks," he

observed. Badruddoza, who is now

forging an alternative political platform.

refused to comment on the possibility

to form an anti-government alliance

A renowned physician,

Badruddoza also examined the

medical reports of the injured. He

reached the hospital by an ambulance

Jatiya Party (Manju) Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam,

President Maniurul Ahsan Khan and

its General Secretary Mujahidul Islam

Selim, Jatiya Party (JP-Ershad) leader Abu Hossain Babla and Jatiya

Samajtantrik Dal leaders Moinuddin

Khan Badal and Syed Zafar Sajjad

also visited the injured AL leaders and

of leaders and activists of the AL and its

front organisations rushed to the

DMCH on hearing the news of injuries

Earlier in the afternoon, hundreds

Hospital sources said six opposi-

The other hospitalised are

tion leaders, including Saber and

Ahsanullah, are now undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

Bangladesh Chhatra League

President Liakot Ali Sikder, its leaders

Syed Abul Kalam, Shahinur and

female activist Azmiri Lucky. Ten

other injured were kept under obser-

Mostafa Kamal. 35. a travel agent.

was killed in the afternoon at his office

on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue in

Tejgaon in a hail of bullets, apparently

over refusal to pay tolls. In reaction,

members of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue

Traders Association asked the associ-

ation's president Abul Khaer Bhuiyan

Tuesday to take measures to prevent

recurrence of such incidents in the

The second victim was Anwar

Hossain Babul, 40, treasurer of Mirpur

Benarasi Tanti Samity and a contractor,

who was shot dead in the evening on

Zoo Road in Rainkhola. Traders of

three Mirpur wards kept shops closed

Tuesday and Wednesday demanding

observed daylong strike in the capital

last Saturday protesting the deterioration of law and order. They gave the

government a 72-hour ultimatum to

recover gold jewellery worth around Tk

5.5 crore looted from Karnaphuli

A number of kidnappings of mag-

nates occurred in Chittagong during

the last few months. On July 24 last

year, Jamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury

was kidnapped; no-one knows his fate

On August 8, the body of abducted

shipping magnate Rezaur Rahman

Zakir was retrieved from roadside.

During the Eid-ul-Azha vacation,

businessman Nasiruddin bought his

Four jewellers' associations

arrest and trial of the killers.

Garden City on February 4.

condemned the attacks.

of their leaders.

vation at the hospital.

city last Monday

FBCCI blames politics

4:05pm and stayed there until

mmunist Party of Bangladesh

test as the constitution guarantees

Hartal passed peacefully in Barisal

Seven people were injured in

witnesses said.

passed off peacefully.

several other vehicles.

without untoward incidents

**Political** 

leaders

FROM PAGE 12

There were also sporadic police

DMCH in a critical condition.

Police also beat up BCL demon-

dragged at least nine to police van.

Raiuk Avenue. Saber, also the AL organising secretary, and Ahsanullah, the general secretary of the Jatiya Sramik League, fell to the ground unconscious in police beating attempting to rescue demonstrators under police attack.

An autorickshaw of a newspaper on hartal duty ferried seriously injured Saber and Ahsanullah Master to Dhaka Medical College Hospital Master was given several stitches in Motijheel commercial hub became

a battlefield during the 20-minute clash with the demonstrators throwing stones at police. The clash left at least 25 people injured. The AL leaders alleged that some ruling alliance activists from roadside

buildings hurled at least three bombs

and stones at the procession when the

demonstrators came under police Police swooped also on a procession taken out from the AL headquarters at Bangabandhu Avenue and spearheaded by former minister Motia Chowdhury, former Dhaka mayor Mohammad Hanif and ex-state minister Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury

Maya at about 1:30pm. Motia and several others were beaten up when they tried to proceed through the barbed-wire fences police

had put up.
Police went into action to quell antigovt demonstrations in the city's Mirpur area, Shahbagh crossing, near the AL headquarters at Bangabandhu Avenue, Jatrabari roundabout and otherplaces.

At Mirpur, at least 30 people and some policemen were injured when police charged baton on hartal supporters, prompting them to rain brickbats on police at about 10:20am.

Police cordoned a wayside rally of a few hundred Awami League, Jubo League and Mohila League activists. They swung into action when some activists from the rally threw stones at a public bus that was passing by. Some of the stones also hit policemen, according to witnesses.

The retreating pickets, some of

### 10 hurt

FROM PAGE 12

and politics, and five unidentified others were injured. They were treated at the JU Medical Centre. Police rushed there and fired five times in the air to disperse the students. They picked up two villag-

The angry students left the area at around 7:00pm after policemen, who were deployed there 10 minutes to the beginning of the rampage, assured them of arresting hose who attacked the students. The students blocked the road that

goes through the campus to connect Gerua to Dhaka-Aricha highway. Some villagers alleged General Secretary of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal

Harunur Rashid assaulted a villager yesterday morning and the villagers made the attack to avenge the assault.

#### Police inspector FROM PAGE 12

refused. Then he rose from his seat to sit by me and fell down on the ground," he added.

Saveed was rushed to nearby Al-Razi Hospital and later shifted to National Heart Foundation Hospital (NHFH) where doctors declared him dead at 11:15am.

Dr Shamim at the NHFH said the police personnel might have died of cardiac failure.

Police said the deceased earlier suffered a mild heart attack. Sayeed, hailing from Kalihati upazila of Tangail, joined police service in 1979.

### **ROK** scientists

FROM PAGE 12

FROM PAGE 1

the genetic material inside them. The lead scientist, veterinary cloning specialist Woo Suk Hwang will unveil the research Thursday at a meeting of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science. Details will be published in the journal Science.

because of conflict between the two

main political parties [ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)

and opposition Awami League (AL)],

Mintoo said his organisation would

demand decentralisation of executive

power as at present it was too much

concentrated in the prime minister.

We want the government to exert

power in a transparent way. We want

the judiciary to be independent and

parliamentarians to have freedom of

expression and play their due roles.

We want transparency in governance.'

unemployed and 50 percent below the

poverty line, we can no longer afford

the luxury of the conflict between the

two parties that is responsible for all this

and order in recent days, different

associations threatened to go for tough

programmes if the government failed

to safeguard their life and property from

criminals. They also warned of stop-

ping tax payments if the slide in law and

On Wednesday, a team of 30 leaders of Bangladesh Dokan Malik

Samity, the country's apex body of

shop-owners, met Home Minister Altaf

Hossain Choudhury at his office and

expressed grave concern over the

recent rise in killing, loot, extortion and

abduction of businessmen and their

In the face of continuing slide in law

mess." he added.

family members.

"With 30 percent of the population

he told The Daily Star yesterday.

# abducts 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed two Bangladeshi nationals in Chuadanga and kidnapped another in Sylhet on Wednesday.

In Chuadanga, the BSF men opened fire on Abdur Rahim, 35, and Ahsan Habib, 35, on Thakurpur border under Damurhuda upazila as they allegedly tried to cross the border at midnight, according to

Rahim was shot in the head while Habib in the abdomen. They died on the spot and the BSF personnel took away their bodies.

When contacted, Bangladesh AL activists at the same place and Rifles (BDR) officials confirmed the clubbed some of them when a Jubo incident and said they were commu-League procession just behind them nicating with the BSF to bring back the bodies

Police also used batons to disperse In Sylhet, the Indian border a BCL gathering at Shahbagh interguards kidnapped a Bangladeshi section, leaving some 25 injured. The law enforcers, both male and female, rom Dalia Khola border under Jointapur upazila assaulted female workers of AL's Locals said the BSF men picked student wing, Bangladesh Chhatra

> at gunpoint while he was working in his land at noon. BDR sent a letter to its Indian counterpart protesting the incident.

up Abdul Kadir, 25, of Bairkhal village

## Spring comes

FROM PAGE 1 amid joys of regeneration in life and the nature.

As usual, daylong pageantry of celebrations has been arranged at Bakultala on the Institute of Fine Arts premises of Dhaka University to hail the season of life.

Jatiya Basanto Utsav Udjapan Parishad (National Spring Festival Observance Committee) has arranged the 'Basanto Utsay-1410' to welcome the Bengali month of

The celebrations will begin at 7am and continue into the night. Channel-I will telecast live the morning mirth of the festival.

Renowned singers like Kiron Chandra Roy, Rezwana Chowdhury Banna, Sahin Samad, Mahmud Selim, Laisa Ahmed Lisa, Timir Nandi, Mita Haque, Shamya Rahman, Salma Akbar, Nargis Chowdhury and Bulbul Islam will render solo songs at the carnival. Vaskar Bandapadhaya, Rupa

Chakraborty, Shimul Mustafa Ashraful Alam, Laila Afroz and Laila Tarannum Chowdhury will take part in the poetry-recitation programme. Kabi Shamsur Rahman, Wahidul

#### Haque, Shafiuddin Ahmed and Kazi Arif will attend the festival Another hartal

FROM PAGE 1

governance," Jalil added. He blamed the government for attacking AL leaders and activists during yesterday's hartal.

Jalil further alleged that the government had the houses of the opposition politicians raided a week before vesterday's hartal. Leaders and workers were also arrested, he Before the meeting, Hasina

visited Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) to see the injured party leaders including her Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury. Addressing an impromptu gathering at the DMCH, she dubbed the attacks on her party leaders and

workers as barbaric and termed the

## BNP-led coalition as a 'jungle gov-Man kills self

FROM PAGE 1
Mohan Tripura, 8, died from the wounds, police added. "All the family members were

found lying in a pool of blood in the morning," local Union Parishad Chairman MK Azad said quoting Padmabati, a niece of the killer, as saying. Seven-year old son Samiran Tripura, the only surviving family member in the gruesome incident, was admitted to Chittagong Medical

College Hospital (CMCH) in critical condition. He underwent an operation in the afternoon, hospital sources said. Police suspect the grim incident took place after Kasam returned home drunk late in the night only to

develop an altercation with his wife. However, locals believed some criminal gang was involved in the gory incident. Recovering the bodies in the

morning, police sent those to the CMCH for autopsy. Two separate cases were

#### Queen Sofia FROM PAGE 1

headquarters at Mirpur tomorrow. She will stay at Hotel Sonargaon.

On Sunday, Queen Sofia will go to Comilla to see Grameen Bank's activities. She will also visit Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development there. The other dignitaries who are

coming to attend the summit include Zanele Mbeki, first lady of South Africa, Telefoni, deputy prime minister of Samoa, Ishrat Hussian, governor of State Bank of Pakistan, Firivana Khanthaphane, state minister of Laos. Moulana Ibrahim deputy governor of Bank of Indonésia, Ram Babu Pant, deputy governor of Rastra Bank of Nepal Sharad Pawar, parliament member and an influential political leader of India, QAMA Rahim, secretary general of Saarc (South Asia Association for Regional Cofor Agricultural Development.

## **Doctors face**

cancellation of their licences under the new law.

"The existing rules are not strong enough to prove offence of any private clinic or diagnostic centre. The best we can do is to bring charges against those clinics for malpractice and serve them with showcause notices," said Dr Md Rashid, director of Hospital and Clinic at the Directorate of Health Services (DGHS)

Private medical practitioners reject the Private Clinic Ordinance 1982 because it was formulated during the autocratic rule of former president HM Ershad.

The law proposes that all medical services post a chart of fees. It also stipulates that doctors have to follow the existing fees for private consultation -- Tk 40 a visit and Tk 20 for each follow-ups -- until a new schedule is set. The Bangladesh Private Medical

Practitioners Association (BPMPA), however, disputes some of the clauses of the proposed law and refuses to endorse it unless the clauses are changed.

"We strongly oppose the idea of law suits against medical practitio-

### Tk 40 lakh foreign bills seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs officials at Zia International Airport (ZIA) seized about Tk 40 lakh in foreign currency from a Singapore airlines passenger and arrested him Wednesday

The arrestee is Mustafa Kamal, a resident of Green Road in the capi-

Tipped off, a customs intelligence and investigation team stopped Kamal while he was boardng the Singapore-bound flight. They recovered from his hand

bag 46,600 euro, 5,000 Australian

dollar, 2,950 Swiss franc, 2,500

Brunei dollar and 1000 Singapore

dollar equivalent to a total of about He was handed over to Airport Police Station and a case was filed.

## US Mideast Gen

carrying Abizaid and his party pulled inside the cinderblock walls at the headquarters of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps in this city west of Baghdad, an explosion rang out. Seconds later, two more explosions were heard near the rear of the compound, and US soldiers responded with a barrage of rifle and machine gun fire. Several attackers fired three

rocket-propelled grenades, and another pelted the party with small arms fire from a nearby mosque. The gun battle lasted about six minutes. No US soldiers and no one in Abizaid's party were injured.

Residents said one Iragi was grazed in

the leg by a bullet and slightly injured. Abizaid was accompanied by Maj. Gen. Charles Swannack, commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. After the gun battle, Abizaid and Swannack canceled plans to walk into the city and instead returned to a U.S. military base

## Journalists' meet

FROM PAGE 12 selection of journalists for political appointments despite the bids of most BFUJ leaders and Information Minister Tarigul Islam to cow them

down. A high official at the Prime Minister's Office said the 'free flow of abuses and slanders' damped the 'happy mood' of the premier who was listening to the problems of the iournalists with natience The BFUJ leaders pressed for

the demand of the announcement of the sixth wage board before the chaos broke out. A senior leader of the BFUJ told The Daily Star that Khaleda was sympathetic to the journalists'

demands. Meanwhile, several senior ournalists launched hectic lobbying with the government for the post of BSS chief, vacant since last December when Amanullah's contractual appointment expired.

Sources said the information ministry has sent a proposal to the establishment ministry recently to draw proceedings for the appointment of Gaziul Hasan Khan to the

### Khaleda blames

FROM PAGE 1 Upazila BNP President Rafiqul Islam Sabu presided over the rally, also addressed by Home Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury, Water Resources Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed, State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharef Hossain Shahiahan. State Minister for

Cultural Affairs Selima Rahman and

Barisal Mayor Mojibur Rahman

The prime minister inaugurated a power supply facility in Mehendiganj, provided by the Rural Electrification Board (REB) through a submarine cable link to the national grid. A Tk 31.56 core project was

earlier launched with assistance from the World Bank for power supply to 32,965 users -- 3,462 of them were given connections. State Minister for Power Iqbal A BNP lawmaker has alleged there of taka. Maniur Kader said at the Jativa Sangsad and demanded

toll collection, I must take action.' He mentioned a foreign company collects toll and maintains the bridge and that they were doing it in

The minister quipped, "He (Shahin) is busy managing his own house. If he joins my house then everything The lawmaker protested the

#### no justification of having fixed He also said the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA) and the BPMPA welcome initiatives that bring discipline to the sector, but the doctors must be consulted 3 more held on charge of

Ctg robbery STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

ners. We already have a body to

monitor allegations of malpractice,

negligence and other violations.

Why ignore the BMDC and allow

lawsuits against doctors?" asked Dr

Muniruzzaman Bhuiyan, president

BMDC's committee dealing with

complaints, Dr Munir said, "The

BMDC has a group of experts who

are able to pass judgement on

malpractice or negligence. So as

long as we have that mechanism,

why not force the government to

private consultation, Dr Munir said,

'In the open-market system there is

About fixed rates of fees of

On the suspension of the

of the BPMPA.

make it functional?"

Police yesterday arrested three more people in connection with the robbery in the Chittagong Chamber building in the early hours of Wednesday. Detectives and Double Mooring

police jointly conducted raids in

Agrabad, and Kadamtoli areas and

nabbed the three.

The arrestees are Md. Russel, 28, of Saraipara, Md. Ekhlas, 35, and Md. Kashem. Russel, reportedly a member of a Agrabad-based criminal gang, was arrested at a sweetmeat shop. Police are quiz-

(Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry) security guards and another security guard of a private security firm as suspects. Police said they collected some evidences, including the numbers of

some prize bonds, looted during the

robbery and a bunch of keys. The

Earlier, police arrested two CCCI

evidences would help investigate the incident, they said. Robbers looted cash and valubles worth over Tk 27 lakh and ransacked six high-profile offices including those of the CCCI, the Export Promotion Bureau and four firms during the heist in the Chamber building at Agrabad.

## **UP** member injured in outlaw attack

Gangster succumbs to bullet wounds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A UP member was critically

wounded in an armed and bomb attack by outlaws Wednesday night while a member of 'Ahad Bahini succumbed to bullet injuries in the Insan Ijarader, 38, a member of Srifaltala union parishad (UP) under

Rupsha upazila, came under armed and bomb attack near JBM High School at about 10pm Wednesday allegedly by cadres of Purba Banglar Communist Party (M-L), an

outlawed political group. Insan is in critical condition and undergoing treatment at Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH). According to police, the UP

member helps joint forces nab criminals, particularly outlaws. The same night at 11:30pm Abdul Ahad alias Mizan, 30, succumbed to bullet wounds at the KMCH, three hours after a shootout with police near Dakbungalow baby

## Irregularities in toll collection Bangabandhu bridge alleged

taxi stand.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

are gross irregularities in toll collection at Bangbandhu bridge and demanded stern action to end this. Officials engaged in toll collection show heavy vehicles as light ones and thus misappropriate lakhs

steps to stop such corruption. In response, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said, "It is a serious allegation. I will look into the matter and if I find anything wrong in

a scientific way. Independent lawmaker MM Shahin asked the minister to ensure repair of a road in his constituency.

minister's remarks. The speaker advised the minis-

ter not to cut such jokes.

They told the minister that they freedom in Chittagong, reportedly would watch law and order for another during the dawn-to-dusk general utes it through 250 dealers and operation), and Phrang Roy, assis-Hasan Mahmud was present at the paying a ransom of Tk 10 lakh. Another week before launching a tough movestrike enforced by the main opposiagents. tant president of International Fund event, organised by Barisal Polly Bidyut Samity-1 of the REB. "We can scrape through 12 days businessman, Bablu, was kidnapped tion Awami League Two businessmen were killed in the in Bandarban during the Eid holiday. with our stock," a BPC official said.