

# Ctg port discards stevedoring system

Introduces integrated operation for cargo handling

RAFIQ HASAN

To accelerate the container handling at Chittagong Container Terminal (CCT), the port authorities have brought the loading and unloading activities of cargo from ships under an integrated operation, dissolving the age-old stevedoring system.

Private company Saif Powertec Limited takes over the charge of the entire container handling activities at CCT from today and it will conduct the task in the first phase on test basis, said a circular issued by Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) yesterday.

Earlier a high-level meeting of a task force formed by local joint forces took the decision to improve the port operation by bringing in a series of reforms that would reduce the cargo handling cost and improve the image of the port abroad, sources said.

In case of ships coming from March 5, the plans for container lashing, unlash, discharging and loading, report writing and all ship related works would be done by the Saif Powertec Limited, said the CPA circular.

Preserving of containers at the back yard, container tracking and all other activities will also be done by

the same company, the circular said, adding that the company will be responsible for completing all the above jobs until further order.

"Trade, the business community as well as the whole nation will benefit from the decision as it will remove the obstacles in cargo handling at the port," said Amirul Haque, chairman of port and ship standing committees of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and industry.

Terming the decision a 'milestone step' after 35 years of

## Govt to start regular test of formalin in fish

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will start regularly testing fishes at markets, even in rural markets, to see if they have formalin in them. It will also start a massive awareness drive to educate people about the use of formalin on fish.

The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Dr CS Karim at his office where ways to stop the use of formalin in food items, especially fishes, were discussed. All concerned government authorities, law enforcing agencies, fish importers and exporters, representatives of Fish Wholesalers Association and Fish Retailers Association were present in the meeting.

The adviser told The Daily Star that nobody has the right to put

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## RAB MEN KILLING AT SAVAR Probe focused on 3 criminal groups

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers yesterday claimed significant progress in tracking down the killers of two Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) personnel in Aminbazar but declined to disclose any detail for the sake of investigation.

The investigators are focusing on criminal groups operating in the area, especially three major gangs - Hazi Group, Gangchil Group and Babu Group, who might have been angered by the Rab operations in the area.

Detectives yesterday recovered an abandoned trowler, which they suspect had been used by the killers, in Bangshi River about 30 yards off the crime scene.

Meantime, brick fields in

Kaundia, where Rab deputy assistant director Humayun Kabir and constable Phool Mia had been shot dead Saturday afternoon, and the adjacent area became deserted yesterday as all the workers had fled the area fearing harassment.

Sub-inspector Nasimuddin of Savar police station yesterday filed a case against unknown killers and the Detective Branch (DB) was tasked with the investigation of the case.

Police yesterday said 24 people rounded up on Saturday were being kept in Rab custody while one was in police custody.

However, neither police nor Rab brought any charge against any of the detainees or shown them arrested in connection with the murders.

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## Probe fails to find cause of BSEC fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The industries ministry probe into the BSEC Bhaban blaze has failed to find out the cause of the devastating fire that left four people dead and at least 36 others injured at the city's Karwan Bazar on February 26.

The probe team said they could not prove beyond doubt whether electric shot-circuit or an act of sabotage was the cause of the fire. They, however, did not dismiss the possibilities of sabotage.

The five-member committee headed by Joint Secretary Mushtaque Hasan Mohammad Iftikhar submitted a 16-page report to the industries ministry yesterday.

In the report, it said the BSEC Bhaban was not built maintaining the building code and fire-extinguishing arrangement there was not adequate.

The fire originated at the first floor office of the Bengal Group Ltd at around 10:00am, said a press release the industries ministry.

The probe team suspects that there were highly explosive substances somewhere on the first floor and fanned by those, flames swept through the building despite attempts to douse the fire, it added.

It all could be known once the chemical tests of the evidence are done, it added.

Meanwhile, a well-placed source said the committee thinks that chemical substances at a medical centre on the first floor and a gas burner at the BSEC office might have caused the fire to spread fast.

The probe also could not find

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## Ex-BNP MP sent to jail in murder case

UNB, Comilla

BNP leader and former lawmaker Abdul Gafur Bhuiyan was sent to jail yesterday when he appeared before a court for seeking bail in a Shibir leader killing case.

Gafur, the prime accused in Nangolkot upazila Chhatra Shibir president M Shajahan murder case, was earlier granted anticipatory bail by the High Court.

District and Sessions Judge M Shawkat Hossain ordered to send Gafur to Comilla Central Jail when he appeared before his court.

Shibir leader Shajahan was shot dead on October 2 last year.

## UNO held for bribery

UNB, Lalmonirhat

Upazila nirbahi officer (UNO) of Hatibandha and his office assistant were arrested yesterday from their office on charge of bribery and irregularities.

Allegations were widespread against the UNO, Joyanta Kumar Sikdar, for bribery in recruitment of teachers and favouritism in eviction of illegal occupants.

He was also accused of holding back payment of salary of the headmaster of Gaddimari High

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## Hawa Bhaban notice, our reply

Hawa Bhaban has sent a legal notice to The Daily Star following a news item headlined "Hawa Bhaban man Tinku arrested" published on January 25, 2007.

The notice said Hawa Bhaban believes the statements published by the daily "implicating Hawa Bhaban in respect of business deals with one Mr Tinku and 'Hawa Bhaban' being the Office of the Chairperson of Bangladesh Nationalist Party" were made intentionally, purposely and knowing

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## HC issues suo moto rule against confinement of children to jail

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday issued a suo moto rule upon the government to explain why action would not be taken for confining children, both convicts and under-trial ones, in jails defying its earlier orders.

In April 2003, the High Court in a ruling had asked the authorities to immediately transfer juvenile accused detained in various jails to correction centres and other recognised homes.

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Prayer Timing		
March 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-07	6-11
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka inaugurates DCC's anti-mosquito campaign at Gulshan Lake in the capital yesterday.

## Hasina renews early polls call

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina again urged the caretaker government to initiate electoral process without further delay after updating the voter list as per the High Court directives.

"As the present caretaker government took oath as per article 58 (C) of constitution, it is their obligation to hold elections within stipulated 90 days. Fifty days have already passed but the electoral process is yet to start," Hasina said at the meeting of AL Central Working Committee (ALWC) yesterday.

The meeting started on Saturday at the party's Dhanmondi office in the capital.

The AL chief urged the interim government to start groundwork for the elections that should be free, fair and credible as well as free from the influence of black money.

She demanded the use of transparent ballot boxes for the elections. Showing a sample transparent ballot box, she said an AL delegation will soon take the box to the Election Commission (EC).

It is not necessary to import ballot boxes as it can be made in Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory, said Hasina.

The EC should prepare a policy on registration of political parties through discussion, she said, adding that the percentage of votes

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## BB asks banks not to hamper business while freezing accounts

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Bank has asked the commercial banks not to hamper normal business operations of enterprises while implementing the National Board of Revenue (NBR) directive to attach accounts of the suspected tax-dodgers.

"We've asked the banks to take measures so that business operations of the enterprises do not suffer," Governor Dr Salehuddin Ahmed told reporters yesterday.

Replying to a question, he explained that the NBR directive might have called for attaching the accounts of a director of an enterprise, but that does not mean the company account will be attached.

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## Cases being filed against held politicians

Huda shown held in fake car registration case, Hafiz in arms case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Detained former communications minister Barrister Nazmul Huda was shown arrested yesterday in the criminal case filed for using a fake registration number for his sport utility vehicle (SUV).

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shafiqul Islam passed the order following a petition submit-

ted by the investigation officer (IO) on March 2 for showing Huda arrested in the case.

On February 25, police had seized Huda's luxurious Cadillac Escalade bearing registration number Dhaka Metro Gha 11-9999 and filed a case against him with Dhanmondi Police Station (PS) on March 1.

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## US troops kill 16 Afghan civilians after blast

AGENCIES, Kabul

US troops killed up to 16 civilians and wounded more than 30 when they opened fire after a suicide car bomb struck a military vehicle in eastern Afghanistan yesterday, officials said.

An AFP reporter saw around seven bullet-riddled vehicles, some smeared with blood, at the site of the attack on the main road between Kabul and Pakistan in the eastern province of Nangarhar.

A few thousand demonstrators gathered afterwards to protest the killings and blocked the road, about 50km from the city of Jalalabad in the Marko area, for several hours, witnesses said.

Reports said demonstrators chanted "Death to America" and "Death to (President Hamid) Karzai".

There were conflicting reports about the death toll. Provincial police spokesman Ghafoor Khan said 16 people were killed and between 25 and 30 wounded, while a district official said six were dead.

The US-led coalition force, which has US troops in the area, confirmed a patrol had been struck by a suicide car bomb. It could not give further details.

The coalition did not give information about casualties.

An AFP reporter at the scene saw the decapitated body of a person who appeared to have been killed

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## Big guns warm up today

AFP, Bridgetown

Hosts West Indies, England, South Africa and Sri Lanka will fire the opening shots in their World Cup campaigns today at the start of series of warm-up matches.

West Indies, bidding to become the first host nation to win the title, face Kenya in Jamaica, England will look to pile up the runs against debutants Bermuda at St Vincent while the world's leading team South Africa clash with Ireland in Trinidad.

Sri Lanka, the 1996 champions, will play Scotland in Barbados.

West Indies captain Brian Lara believes his team have the ability to reach at least the semi-finals as they bid to win the title for a third time but first since 1979.

"We are looking to get to the

semi-finals and then take it from there," said Lara.

"We have a very good record at home, and the players are really looking forward to this major event. We have a fit team that is ready to go. We have the ingredients to do well."

At Kingstown, England skipper Michael Vaughan will test his fitness after a combination of knee and hamstring injuries meant he has played in just three of his team's 35 one-dayers.

He sat out the tri-nations win over Australia when Andrew Flintoff took over the captaincy duties but plans to feature in some of the warm-ups before assessing his chances of playing in England's opening game of the tournament against New Zealand on March 16.

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PHOTO: STAR

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina demonstrates the use of a transparent ballot box at a party meeting at Sudha Sadan in Dhanmondi in the capital yesterday.

## GAS FIELD Bibiyana goes into trial run today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The US oil company Chevron starts trial gas production at the much talked about Bibiyana Gas Field of block 12 in the country today.

The formal inauguration of the gas field is scheduled for March 8.

When operational, the gas field will pump 200 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) to the national gas grid. Chevron will raise this supply to 400-500 mmcf by the end of 2008, an official claimed. A 90-kilometre

pipeline from the gas field to Muchhai has also been completed for this purpose.

The Bibiyana Gas Field is considered the country's second gas-rich field with a recoverable reserve of 2.4 trillion cubic feet. However, the probable reserve is 5.5 trillion cubic feet, a Chevron official claimed.

In late 2004, Chevron signed a Gas Purchase and Sales Agreement (GPSA) with Petrobangla

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