

PM: Sundarbans

FROM PAGE 12 Department, the sources said. Trees are already being felled indiscriminately in the name of 'jote permit' for sale of logs from private gardens and forests in the CHT, they said. This correspondent along with well known nature scientist Dr Ali Reza Khan during a recent visit saw indiscriminate felling of trees by poachers in Raikhong and Pablikhali and Fasiakhali range. Every night boatloads of logs and immature saplings are being brought to the Reserve Bazar ghat in Rangamati. None is asking wherefrom the logs are coming. Some saw mills are operating there with total immunity. Against this backdrop, the Forest Department has put up a file before the MOEF Secretary for putting on auction the reserve forests, the sources said. The move for sale of teak and timber of the reserve forests was initiated last year at the behest of a powerful group. The teak and timber in the forests would be worth Tk 500 to 600 crore, they said. The then MOEF Secretary Marghub Murshed refused to clear

the file in this regard, for which he was transferred from the MOEF; the sources claimed. The move has been initiated again. The proposal is now awaiting clearance by the MOEF, they said. But MOEF Secretary Mamunur Rashid, when contacted, denied that any such move was underway. He said he will look into it. Gunfight over donation box at mazar: 30 hurt UNB, Sylhet Rival groups fought a gun battle in a dispute over donation box at the mazar leaving 30 people injured at Mollapara in Osmani Nagar upazila yesterday. Nine of the bullet hit were admitted to the Osmani Medical College Hospital. Witnesses said the dispute was continuing for the last few days. The rival groups came to a frontal fight at 9 am when both sides used firearms.

CMH refuses to talk

FROM PAGE 12 CMH Adjutant Major Sajjad, when contacted, advised this correspondent to go to Military Intelligence (MI) for clearance. "Unfortunately, I cannot give you any details. You must seek permission from MI for any information regarding affairs of the army," Major Sajjad had said on Sunday. This correspondent then requested the MI at the Army Headquarters for clearance. An official there advised this correspondent to apply in writing for permission. Meanwhile, other sources said, two persons critically injured in the bomb blast, were at the ICU (Inten-

sive Care Unit) of the hospital. The source said seven more injured persons have been shifted to wards at the hospital, but the authorities refused to give any details about their condition. Even their names were not disclosed. Brigadier General M A Salam, Commandant of Dhaka CMH, could not be contacted till last night. Meanwhile, bodies of two unidentified persons, victims of the blast, still remained unclaimed at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue. Intestine of both the bodies have been blown off and limbs severed. Police suspect that the persons had carried the bombs.

Police hunt for two

FROM PAGE 1 Police said Mizanur claimed himself to be a student of Geography Department of Dhaka College. Abdul Mannan, Imam of the mosque, also said Mizanur and his companions told him that he (Mizanur) was a student of Dhaka College. But the investigators could not confirm till yesterday. Talking to The Daily Star, Mannan said Rafiqul had been staying in the mess for about six months. Jashim and Mizanur joined him in the first week of April. Jashim, who hailed from a village under Bamna thana in Baruguna district, was a student of Islamic History Department at Jagannath University College. "As far as I know, Rafiqul got a Fazel degree from a madrassah in

Barisal. He could not continue his studies due to poverty", the Imam said. The mess was set up on the first floor of the mosque about two years back. The other members of the mess were Arif and a teenage boy, Sohag Arif, who hails from greater Barisal, went home on Friday. Sohag works as an employee at a shop in Old Dhaka. "The boys apparently looked good and I agreed to keep Mizanur, Jasim, Arif and Sohag in the mess from this month", Mannan said. Each mess member pays a monthly rent of Tk 200. The elderly imam however expressed his ignorance about any kind of political involvement of Mizanur, Jashim and Rafiqul.

Shilpi fighting for life

FROM PAGE 1 Now in bed-6 at the ICU, Shilpi has been given at least five stitches on the right part of her head just above the ear to stop bleeding. Her X-ray report shows some signs of blood clots, which are yet to be confirmed by CT scan, a more advanced method to scan injuries in the brain and around its periphery. The CT scan was done yesterday morning and findings were not available till writing of this report. Her actual diagnosis is yet to start, the on-duty doctor said yesterday morning. She may have to be operated upon for further treatment or the removal of blood clot, if any, added the doctor. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sent Tk 10,000 through her protocol officer Monjila Farook. "I'm here to enquire about Shilpi on behalf of the prime minister. All treatment costs would be borne by the prime minister," she said while visiting the victim yesterday. According to family sources, Shilpi went to the cultural function

at Batamul in the Ramna Park with her first cousins Reaz Uddin and Al-Mamun, both of whom died on the spot when the bomb went off. "We came to know Shilpi's fate through the TV news last 1 pm, on Saturday," said Zahedul Islam, brother of Shilpi's sister-in-law. "My sister Sonia Parvin (Shilpi's elder brother's wife) and I rushed to the DMCH and we identified Reaz and Mamun at the morgue. Then we rushed to the Bangabandhu Medical Hospital to see Shilpi at ICU," said Zahedul. Shilpi had been staying at her brother's residence at Indira Road in the capital since the last Eid-ul-Azha. Reaz came to pick her and Mamun up early in the morning on that day. Mamun was also staying at the Indira Road residence. Reaz was living in a rented room at College Gate in Mohammadpur. Shilpi, the youngest among four brothers and three sisters, is a first year student at a high school in Kachipara village under Baufal in Patuakhali district.

Plot to kill Sheikh Hasina?

FROM PAGE 1 had been finalised. Riaz was keen to find out whether a mercenary based in Central Europe, apparently assigned to "hit" Sheikh Hasina, was happy with the advance payment offered, to which Nasir said "aur paisa chahta hai (more money would be required)". The interception indicated that Colonel Khondakar Abdur Rashid, the prime accused of the 1975 coup (since been convicted and sentenced to death) and now at large, chaired the meeting at Breda. At least six other accused of Mujib assassination case attended the meeting along with two Jamaat-e-Islami leaders from Dhaka, the newspaper quoted the sources as saying. The arrest of the Pakistani diplomat Arshad Cheema at Kathmandu

with sixteen kilos of explosives and the explosion at Ramna in Dhaka on Saturday in which at least one person were killed have been linked to Bangladesh's desperation to foil the ISI plot, it said. "The explosion at Ramna may be a dry run," intelligence analysts here said. "It would be aimed at creating panic before the elections which would give credence to the opposition's charge about poor law and order conditions under the Awami League government, but it could also be a way to test the level of alert of Bangladesh's security ring around its key politicians in power," an intelligence official was quoted as saying. The paper also said Bangladesh has requested the INTERPOL to identify the Europe-based mercenary, who, according to one Western intelligence source, is Abu Hamid

who "hits if he gets the right price." The Western intelligence sources have been on Hamid's trail ever since he killed one of their officer in Vienna four years ago. When they recently picked up reports about his reported liaison with the Mujib-killers and the ISI, they promptly reported it to the Indian agency, which informed the Bangladesh authorities. Since Sheikh Hasina became Prime Minister, Bangladesh's relations with Pakistan has steadily worsened. Pakistan's chief executive General Pervez Musharraf is upset with her repeated snubs and particularly with the expulsion of the Pakistani deputy high commissioner Irfan Raja after the diplomat had made "humiliating references" to the Bangladesh Liberation War. The Sunday Times said.

EC: polls in Oct

FROM PAGE 1 work for the election including printing of voter list, making of ballot boxes, finalising reports on new polling centers and delimitation of the constituencies has not progressed much. Although voter list printing was scheduled to be completed by December last year, the list for only 25 districts out of the 64 was completed so far, according to official statistics. The progress was 80 to 99 per cent as regards that for 30 districts, 70 to 79 for seven districts and 70 per cent for two districts. With the increase of some 1.5 crore voters this time, the Commission has to make additional arrangements for them. It asked the district election officers and the deputy commissioners to report to the EC on new polling centers to accommodate the additional voters in the coming election. But the EC Secretary received no such report as yet, an official said. The Commission recently gave work order to the authorities concerned to make some 26,000 ballot boxes in addition to the existing 1.5 lakh. The boxes would be available late next month. Reports on delimitation of con-

situencies, without changing their actual size, were also not sent to the EC by the end of last month, as was asked for. Besides, as the dialogue with the political parties for electoral law reforms was not fruitful, the Commission has to think of alternative ways, said an official. Part of its reform proposals may be placed before the caretaker government. "Political parties have apparently sidelined the EC's reform proposals," he added. Tension mounts at Sylhet border as BDR, BSF reinforce troops UNB, Sylhet Tensions gripped frontier Sonarhat area with the reinforcement of BDR and BSF troops following dispute over construction of a road along the no man's land on the Indian side. The residents of four villages - Laxmanchhara, Islamabad, Nawapara and Malai-kandi - have been evacuated to safer places, sources from the area said. Bangladesh Rifles sources said they protested the Indian BSF bid to construct a road in the no man's land and called for a flag meeting. "Although both sides sat in a flag meeting on Saturday, it ended inconclusively," the sources said, adding that the two sides started amassing their troops after the failed meeting, heightening border tensions.

Nasim on Batamul carnage

FROM PAGE 1 identified culprits either belong to a fundamentalist group or they are madrassah students. Such forces would not have dared to continue with bomb attacks had they not been provided political support openly," he said. Such attacks, he said, is clearly intended to destabilise the government and create a situation ahead of the general election. "Such forces can be eliminated only if they are not given political supports." The home minister blamed the higher judiciary for delaying the process of trial as regards such heinous crimes by granting bail to the culprits or restricting arrests of those apparently encouraging such criminal acts. Calling the role of the higher judiciary unfortunate, he said such incidents would continue to happen unless the criminals were punished by way of speeding up the process of trial. The minister hoped that the courts would play their part to help check criminal acts. Referring to the findings of the primary probe into the Ramna explosion, he told journalists that more than one of the persons killed in the explosion were carrying the bombs that went off as the carriers were trying to proceed towards the dais zigzagging through packed audience. Of the carriers, one Jasim was killed and several of his accomplices were injured, he said adding that police arrested one person on the basis of statements given by the wounded ones. The dead, the injured and some others are suspected to have been involved in the incident and some more are believed to have been absconding, the minister said. But, he would not give further details at the moment for the sake of investi-

gation. All the dead hail from a particular area and were sheltered in Dhaka by a fundamentalist party; he said quoting primary investigation reports. "Besides, some papers recovered from the spot of occurrence indicate that they (bombers) were engaged in criminal acts to destabilise the government. Primary investigation shows that the Ramna bomb blasts have a link with other explosions at the Udichi function in Jessore and CPB rally in the capital, bomb planting in Kotlailpara, killing of a policeman at Noor Mosque in the city and the murder of eight BCL activists in Chittagong." The home minister claimed that all these incidents had the common purpose of stifling a particular political belief that draws its strength from Bangalee nationalism and War of Independence. "Associated with them are those who were involved in the killing of the Bangabandhu and are patronising the killers," he said. "A particular political party that is trying to dislodge the government at all cost is collaborating with them." Nasim said the culture of bomb attacks has its roots in the politics of hatred where bombs are used to create a situation. He ridiculed the Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia for condemning the Ramna incident despite the fact that she protected those who hurled bombs killing innocent people during the recent hartals. The home minister told the newsmen that the police conducted a security check on the eve of the Bangla New Year celebrations at Ramna Batamul, but it is not possible to frisk everyone given the fact that people in their thousands attended the programme.

Tension mounts at Sylhet border as BDR, BSF reinforce troops

UNB, Sylhet Tensions gripped frontier Sonarhat area with the reinforcement of BDR and BSF troops following dispute over construction of a road along the no man's land on the Indian side. The residents of four villages - Laxmanchhara, Islamabad, Nawapara and Malai-kandi - have been evacuated to safer places, sources from the area said. Bangladesh Rifles sources said they protested the Indian BSF bid to construct a road in the no man's land and called for a flag meeting. "Although both sides sat in a flag meeting on Saturday, it ended inconclusively," the sources said, adding that the two sides started amassing their troops after the failed meeting, heightening border tensions.

Warrant for arrest

FROM PAGE 1 At one stage of the sit-in the accused chanted slogans and hurled abusive words against judge's of the Appellate Division. The Judges of the Supreme Court, including the Chief Justice, could not come out of their chambers for about three and a half hours following the sit-in. They also kicked on the doors of rooms of the judges. The pro-opposition lawyers staged unprecedented demonstration and went on the rampage after appointment of two new judges in the Appellate Division. In the charge sheet, 32 people were shown as prosecution witness. Two investigation officers submitted the charge sheet before the court after three months' of investigation.

Shops demolished

FROM PAGE 12 in inhuman conditions and the shops are our main source of income," he said, adding that the Biharis would be in a very desperate situation if the shops were demolished. He however said that some Biharis themselves demolished their shops in the afternoon. When contacted, Estate Officer of DCC Fazle Elahi said they are authorised to demolish any illegal structure without notice. "We went to demolish the shops as they have taken up part of the road creating public nuisance." He alleged that they were attacked by the Biharis while demolishing the illegal structures. "We could not complete our drive due to shortage of police."

Hardboard mills

FROM PAGE 12 leader. Overtime bills were paid even when production was slashed due to pinnacle crisis, he added. Besides, the mill is burdened with bank loan and huge debts, sources said. The stockpiled hardboards are gradually getting damaged because of poor maintenance in the warehouse. The administration collapsed due to lack of command and discipline. Some top officials have been thriving in luxury while workers and employees are reeling under abject poverty following loss of job and non-payment of salaries and wages, they pointed out.

AL govt: Dreadful end

FROM PAGE 12 means involved in the incident. Similarly, he said, elderly politician and Islami Oikya Jote Chairman Azizul Haq was arrested under a false case. Fazlul Haq Amiri and ARM Abdul Matin have also been kept in jail under false charges. The BNP secretary general said the government in a bid to split the opposition alliance is harassing Jatiya Party Secretary General Nazim Rahman Manzur, Jamaat-e-Islami Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mujahid and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal General Secretary Shahabuddin Latu were also arrested without any warrant, said Bhuiyan. Bhuiyan asked the government to immediately release all arrested opposition leaders or face ouster in a mass movement. He called upon all to join the movement against the "litigious and repressive" government and make the April 19 mass procession a success. Jamaat leader Abdul Qader Mollah said both Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Home Minister Mohammad Nasim should be tried under Public Safety Act for explosion of bombs and killing of people in different parts of the country, including at Ramna Batamul, as they failed to provide security to the people. Jatiya Party leader Saifur Rahman

said thousands of leaders and activists who have been arrested and are being repressed by the AL government for last five years, should have to be released by toppling the government. Acting secretary general of IOJ Ahmed Abdul Qader said like in the past the government is again trying to blame the Islamic parties for the bomb explosions at Ramna Batamul to gain political capital. He said the AL blame Islamic and fundamentalist parties for the killings in bomb blasts, but has failed to prove anything. He said the government did not form a single judicial inquiry committee following all the explosions and major untoward incidents. The rally was addressed, among others, by BNP leaders Mirza Abbas, Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, Amanullah Aman, Alamgir Kabir, Abdus Salam, Kazi Abul Bashar, JP leaders Humayun Kabir Hiru, Talibur Rahman and Gazi Kamrul Islam Sajal; Jamaat leaders ATM Azharul Islam, Mujibur Rahman and Aminur Rahman Azad; Jaggia President Shafiul Alam Prodhan and Democratic League leader Saifuddin Moni. Later, opposition leaders and activists took out a procession and paraded different city streets.

PM urges newsmen

FROM PAGE 12 at Pallan Maidan, planting of bombs at Kotailpara, killing of Juba League and Chhatra League leaders in Chittagong and Saturday's bomb explosion at Chhayanaut's New Year celebrations. She said the forces opposed to Bangladesh's independence, Bengali entity, culture and literature are responsible for these heinous acts and those elements were being encouraged by certain political quarters who are providing them political platform. Describing newspapers as mirrors of society, Hasina said since newspapers are enjoying maximum freedom at the moment, her government is facing lot of criticism. She however, welcomed the

objective and fair criticism and said newspaper report help her take important steps and give necessary instructions for the administration. The BFUJ President Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury put forward certain demands to the Prime Minister that include announcement of 6th Wage Board, implementation of the 5th Wage Board Award, housing for journalists and BFUJ welfare fund. Prime Minister Hasina assured that her government had already taken steps to provide apartments on hire-purchase basis for poets, litterateurs and journalists alongside the government officers in Dhaka and other districts. Press Secretary to PM Jawadul Karim was present in the meeting.

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Mujibnagar Day today

FROM PAGE 1 the new nation and his government led the nation's liberation war for the next several months till victory came on December 16, 1971. Islam also administered oaths of offices of the members of the Mujibnagar government in the presence of local and foreign journalists. Later, commander-in-chief Bangabir MAG Osmani conducted a march past and saluted the first government of Bangladesh. Earlier, the acting president hoisted the national flag as artists rendered the national anthem Amar Sonar Bangla, Aami Tomai Bhalobashi. In observance of the day, the national flag will be hoisted atop all government, semi-government, autonomous and private buildings and country's missions abroad. President Shahabuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave separate messages on the eve of the day highlighting the day's significance. In his message, Shahabuddin greeted the nation saying it will

remain as a bright part of the national history as it marked the emergence of independent Bangladesh in 1971. He said the nation recalls with gratitude the Father of the Nation and the four national leaders on this day. In her message, the prime minister said the Mujibnagar Day is a red-letter day for the nation and will shine ever in the country's history. "On this day, the first government of sovereign Bangladesh took oath in the mango garden of Baidyanathpala in Meherpur district declaring unanimously Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as its president," she said. Today Sheikh Hasina will address a discussion at the historic Mujibnagar, 15 km south off Meherpur district headquarters. Earlier in the morning, she will place wreaths at the Mujibnagar Mausoleum at 11 a.m., where she would be accorded a guard of honour by the armed forces. At eight this morning, the prime

minister would also place wreath at the portrait of the Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhavan in the city's Dhanmondi area. Bangladesh Television assisted by Ekushey Television will telecast live the function at Mujibnagar, and the airing of BTV's special programme will start at 10:15 a.m. today. Ruling Awami League would observe the day with a series of programmes, which include hoisting both the national and party flags, placing wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhavan. The city unit of AL will hold a discussion at the party headquarters at Bangabandhu Avenue in Dhaka at 5 pm, today. Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote will bring out a rally from the Star Gate of Ramna Park in the city at 11 am, which parading down main city streets, will come to a close at the Jatiya Press Club. The Bangla Academy will arrange a discussion at its seminar room at 11 a.m. today to mark the day.