# **Experts stress joint** census every 2 years

449 paw prints found so far

PINAKI ROY, back from the Sundarbans

Wildlife experts from India. Bangladesh and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were exhilarated after finding 449 pugmarks or tiger paw prints four days into the Sundarbans tiger census that began on February 26, and stressed the importance of such joint surveys on a regular basis.

"It would be great if we could do it regularly. We agree (to do so) in principle but our fund is very limited," said Minister for Environment and Forest

The UNDP gave \$50,000 for the ongoing census, which focuses on the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans.

Till yesterday, 22 out of 32 teams participating in the weeklong census have reported their findings. The number of pugmarks is expected to go up once all teams, each comprising eight members, submit their data and the figures are tallied up.

A given number of pugmarks does not necessarily indicate the presence of an equal number of tigers since multiple marks can come from an individual animal. Minister Shajahan Siraj told The Daily Star that a conservative estimate puts the number of tigers in the Bangladesh part of the Sundarbans at no more than 350, although he said the number could be

"We would come to know the exact figure after the cluster computer analysis of the pugmarks. We have to

take the computer software from India. It will take more than four months to know the exact result," said Ali Kabir Haidar, coordinator of the

But the number of paw prints found so far is encouraging enough for the two governments and the UNDP to want to jointly monitor the world's largest mangrove more frequently to ensure its sustainability. Presence of tigers means the forest. the natural habitat of the big cats, is still able to sustain the animals.

"As the Sundarbans is a single ecosystem, we are very keen to hold the census every two years jointly with Bangladesh. If we want to save the Sundarbans, we have to save the tigers," said Atanu Kumar Raha, chief conservator of forest (South) of India's West Bengal. Six experts from India have come to assist the census.

M Aminul Islam, Sustainable Development Advisor of the UNDP, said the Sundarbans is a single ecosystem and therefore a joint effort instead of separate approaches by the two countries is necessary to conserve the world heritage site. "We have to remember the ecosystem transcends political boundaries.

Meanwhile, forest officials were very glad they were frequently getting pugmarks. The 32 teams are spending busy days collecting the telltale marks of the elusive big cats.

The census will continue till March

# Pakistan in semis

The eagerly anticipated contest turned into a low-scoring affair after the high-flying Indians were shot out for 169 in 47.3 overs. Pakistan survived a littery start before costing to 171-5 with more than five overs to spare, thanks to an unbroken 88run partnership for the sixth wicket between Tariq Mahmood (45) and Fawad Alam (43).

Pakistan, looking for their first title triumph in the juvenile competition, will take on either England or West Indies in the March 5 final at the same venue.

India won the toss of the day-

## Aristide flees

FROM PAGE 12

Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, said Aristide had flown there. It was not yet known where he was going

The Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, was convulsed by looting and violence this wee as the armed rebels, led by a former police chief and a former death squad leader, advanced on the city.

Aristide's departure prompted celebrations among his political foes, who have accused the president of human rights violations

and corruption. The armed revolt this month capped months of political ten-

"It's great for the country. That's what we've been waiting for," said Charles Baker, a leader of a coalition of opposition civic and political groups. "Now we're partying. Then we'll get back to work."

Aristide, a former parish priest, first took office in 1991 but was ousted in a coup months later. He was restored to power by a U.S. invasion in 1994, and then reelected in 2000 for a second term that he had, until now, said he would serve out until 2006.

night match, but the fireworks never came after their run-machine Shikhar Dhawan departed for just eight. The charges of Robin Singh eventually crawled to a modest score with Sunny Singh contributing highest 25, followed by Solanki and Sharma, who both made 21, against a varied Pakistan attack.

Riaz Afridi, the leading wickettaker in the tournament, took two more scalps to improve his tally to 18 from seven matches. Ali Imran, who got the prized wicket of Dhawan, also finished with 2-38. Dhawan, who started the day on 497 runs, crossed the 500-mark before he miscued an attempted pull to Pakistan captain Khalid Latif.

Meanwhile, Australia booked their place in the Plate final with a 49-run win against Ireland at the MA Aziz Stadium in Chittagong. The Australians posted an imposing 340-5 and the brave Irish boys responded gallantly with 291.

Australia will now play the March 4 final against the winners of the second semifinal between

#### CAB

deluge of fake and sub-standard

products.

Prof. Syed Rashidul Hasan, treasurer of Dhaka University, said adulteration has spread out in all spheres of the country. Now it is about time Cab held a national convention to inform the people about how much adulterated and sub-standard food they are taking in order to launch an agitation, he said.

S K Saha, deputy director of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI), said many companies or factories are selling their products using the fake BSTI label. 'It is not true that the BSTI label always ensures quality of products."

# Hasina accuses Jamaat

Jamaat coalition and patronised by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia tried to kill Dr Azad in a planned way,' Hasina alleged at a press conference at the Dhanmondi office of the main opposition Awami League (AL). The reaction of Hasina, also

president of the AL, came a day after prime minister Khaleda Zia yesterday blamed the party for the attack on Azad, a professor of Bangla at Dhaka University, near Bangla

Khaleda in her speech to a rally in Basabo alleged that the AL carried people ahead of its hartal.

"The prime minister in her usual manner tried to shift the blame onto the Awami League once again, Hasina said, adding the comment was bent on saving the real assail-

Azad who were angered by him and masterminded the attack to silence

on his latest work, Pak Sar Zamin Saad Baad, by Jamaat legislator Delwar Hossain Savedee, Hasina said since then the writer, who never sided any political party, was receiving death threats.

She alleged that a bomb attack

to avenge their defeat in Bangladesh's liberation war against Pakistan in 1971.

"In recent days, Dr Azad himself expressed fears of attack on him by the communal forces," Hasina said.

with butcher's knife, Hasina demanded formation of a neutral people's inquiry commission to uncover the motive for the attack and unmask the real criminals. She asked the government not to harass innocent people framing them in false

The AL chief was also critical of the prime minister for barring her from risiting Azad at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka.

"Even people going to the hospital to donate blood to Dr Azad was stopped," she said.

"Why does the government want to conceal the latest condition of the

injured educationist who is fighting for life at the hospital?" she asked. She urged the CMH authorities to broadcast regular bulletins on the

Asked whether the AL would announce a programme protesting the attack on Azad, Hasina said her party had already expressed solidarty with the movement of Dhaka

On the premier's comment that she would not step down a day before the expiry of the coalition's

February 15, 1996 'sham polls'. at the press conference.

## Norwegian JV **buys SoE**

Three enterprises of Bangladesh Forest Industries Development Corporation (BFIDC) were yesterday sold to a Bangladesh-Norwegian joint venture (JV), anticipating those would be profitable under private owner-

The JV Nordic Woods Ltd purchased the Cabinet Manufacturing Plant, Wood Treating Plant and Mangrove Tannin Plant located in Khulna for Tk 8 crore, which is 54 percent of the total permanent assets of the three units.

Two other state-owned enterorises -- Kaliachapra Sugar Mills in Kishoreganj and Bangladesh Oil Mills Ltd in Khulna -- are under consideration for handover to private hands next month, according to a source in the Privatisation Commission.

Privatisation Commission Secretary M Abdul Majid and Managing Director of the JV Azam J Chowdhury signed an agreement on the transfer at the Privatisation Commission vesterday. Privatisation Commission

Chairman Enam Ahmed Chowdhury chaired the makeover ceremony, also attended by Environment and Forest Minister Shajahan Siraj and State Minister Jafrul Islam Chowdhury as chief and special guests. Permanent member of the com-

mission Nazmul Ahsan and BFIDC Chairman Subhash Chandra Roy Chowdhury, among others, addressed on the occasion.

The commission took the decision of the handover of the three losing concerns in 2002 and floated the first tender thereafter, the source said.

ingforthelast one year to hand over 14 factories including the three, the source added. "But the process slowed down due

to some problems including legal

disputes and the government also could not invite tender after April 12, 2003,"hesaid. Only three factories -- Zinat Textiles, Deshbandhu Sugar Mills and Nishat Jute Mills -- were handed over

## Shun violent

democratic and constitutional process of removing a government.

Terming AL's hartal a terrorist activity, she wondered how the main opposition party could claim itself to be the proponent of democracy and human rights when it hinders people from going to work, assaults women in rickshaws, sets passenger buses on fire and damage other national proper ties in the name of hartal.

The government cannot allow anyone to commit such crimes, she said, and accused the AL of resort-ing to frequent hartals to hinder the widespread development programmes of her government.

She blamed the AL for the attack on eminent writer Dr Humayun Azad ahead of its hartal rogramme, saying it was a ploy to disrupt peace by creating an issue. She expressed her shock at the incident and said Azad would be provided modern treatment facilities and his attackers arrested for punishment under the speedy trial

Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda, State Minister for Labour and Manpower Amanullah Aman, State Minister for LGRD (Local Government, Rural Development) and Cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia, lawmakers Dr Dewan M Salahuddin Ahmed and Barrister Ziaur Rahman, and local BNP leaders also addressed the rally.

#### India goes to polls FROM PAGE 12

news conference vesterday. Counting of the vote will start on May

For the very first time the polls in India will be fully electronically devised across the 543 Lok Sabha (Lower House of bicameral parliament) constituencies, engaging a total of 1.75 million Electronic

The first phase of the polls, covering 141 Lok Sabha seats will be on April 20, while the second covering 137 seats, the third covering 83 seats and the concluding phase covering 182 seats are slated for April 26, May 5 and May 10

Earlier on February 6, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee dissolved the parliament, eight months ahead of its

Along with the parliamentary polls, elections for new legislatures in four states of Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka and Sikkim will also be held. Of these fours states the Congress

#### runs only Karnataka, while BJP and its allies run the rest three. Alliance candidate

FROM PAGE 12

polled 81,587 votes in 71 centres of 101 while his nearest rival independent candidate Korban Ali trailed with 21,322 votes

turnout of voters was poor in the absence of the main opposition, Awami League, which boycotted the polls apprehending large-scale rigging.

Two candidates, Rezaul Haq of JSD and Korban Ali of BJP, withdrew from the race midway through the polling alleging widespread irregularities and rigging by the BNP candidate. They informed the assistant returning officer of boycotting the polls at 1:30pm.

forced out of most polling centres. He termed the polling farce.

DIESEL CRISIS

# Irked agri ministry to talk with the energy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The agriculture ministry will immediately take up with the energy ministry the issue of an acute diesel supply shortage facing the farmers.

Lawmakers present at vesterday's meeting of the parliamentary standministry expressed the fear that by the time the government imports diesel and fertiliser, farmers may miss out on the peak boro season.

They were also wary that insufficient irrigation and fertiliser will

affect the growing rice plants. The ministry also informed the parliamentary committee that an official probe into the alleged question paper leak in written exams for recruitment of block supervisors (BS) on January 30 found the former director general of the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) and an additional director of DAE involved with the scam.

two-hour meeting held at the Cabinet Room of the Sangsad Bhaban, parliamentary committee Chairman and BNP MP Abdul Mannan said apart from departmental actions corruption charges would be pressed against the officials

Talking to The Daily Star after the

have been suspended after the leak was proved in Mymensingh, Abdul Mannan said adding that the parliamentary committee had asked the ministry to ensure 'watertight' security for the question papers next

meeting of normal urea supply in the country and import of 50,000 triple super phosphate (TSP) soon.

The committee chairman acknowledged that there has been a diesel crisis and that the farmers have been forced to buy diesel at a price higher than normal to irrigate boro lands. He said diesel consignments from abroad are expected

Half of Bangladesh's annual food output comprises boro rice.

Jativa Party lawmaker and committee member GM Kader told The Daily Star the government should have taken the import measures much earlier. "Now, by the time fertiliser and diesel consignments reach here, farmers would miss the peak boro irrigation season."

Kader said Anwar assured the meeting that he would look into the problem and take up the issue with energy ministry so that diesel import is expedited and farmers get it at fair It was alleged in the meeting that district-level fertiliser monitoring

unscrupulous traders were hiking farm input prices. The agriculture minister warned against hoarding and artificial price hike on the pretext of price fluctuation in the international market. He also told the meeting that steps

State Minister for Agriculture Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, other committee members and the minis-try officials were also present.

would be taken to make the monitor-

ing more stringent.

## When elected leaders

by the side of a person in time of their need.

ple of the supreme arrogance of power that seems to have gripped the minds of Khaleda Zia and her team. When the highest administrator of the country -- that is the true function of a prime minister-feels that law is nothing more than a plaything and the government machinery is a toy that can be used in any way one pleases without any sense of right or wrong or any thought of being accountable to anybody, then we have a serious case of delusion of power leading to its serious abuse that threatens civic rights of ordinary citizens.

Let us recall that of all the enormous executive power of the US president. Nixon fell on the rather small issue of wire-tapping of a few delegates to the Democratic Party convention at the Watergate complex in Washington DC in the late

press release issued by the Ministry of Defence, which is the only offito the CMH, makes a mockery of the hospital? Did the doctors order the patient, express our sympathy, could have been allowed to do the of power which now involves the case of a severely injured intellectual-- a man far away from the world of politics and partisan

We have no tears to shed for Ershad, but recently he was, without any rhyme or reason, prevented from travelling abroad in another case of arbitrary and whimsical use of power. Several weeks

the government against the opposition and ordinary citizens against staring us in the face. But these and can be taken as a barometer of its mindset about democracy and values such a political system represents.

Phones are tapped, income tax files recalled, people investigated and surveillance is ordered simply because one has fallen foul of the powers that be. We can predict the response of the government -- 'we are doing nothing compared to

all about revenge while the country, its people, its human-rights record, its economy, its student community -- in one word our future -- can all go to hell.

There is another violation of the law we feel compelled to underscore today. Till the writing of this piece, police, the intelligence agencies and the home ministry are clueless about who were the assailants of Humayun Azad. All say investigation is on and they are still to find a lead. But in the evening following the attack the prime minister herself declared that the Awami League carried out the attack to fuel their hartal call. Is this the respect for the law? Is Humayun Azad's near-death (God forbid) condition a game that the government will play just to denigrate the opposition? How could the highest administrator make such a public statement when her own government machinery is vet to find out who did it?

When asked, BNP leaders say that such things are said in public meetings and so should not be taken seriously. They point at what Hasina regularly says about Khaleda. One is amazed by the comfort our leaders find in justifying wrong actions just by saying that the other side does the same. No distinction is made between the government that is oath-bound to uphold the constitution and treat every citizen (including the opposition) with fairness and equality before the law and the opposition which is not in charge of running the country. (That, of course, does not give it the licence to be destruc-

What is really sad about the PM's comments is the influence it is likely to have on the investigation itself. When the police get a clear signal as to what the PM wants the investigation to lead to, then it becomes impossible for the police to follow clues that may lead to different culprits. After all, how can they prove the head of the government wrong, especially in our climate of partisan politics?

We recall how the PM's pointing finger at the Awami League for the Mymensingh blast led to arrests of Shahriar Kabir, Prof. Muntasir Mamun, and others of the opposition. Cases against them still await even a shred of proof while the real culprits are not being appre-hended because that will not suit the political purpose of the government. This may be why none of the major bomb blast cases have gone anvwhere for all these vears. Taking a cue from all this, the home minister the other day brazenly misrepresented facts in parliament about the attack on Dr Kamal's motorcade, saving that it was the latter's own people who attacked the other side and not vice versa, while the entire media reported and his own ministry's subsequent action proved.

Step by step we are moving towards a more repressive society. We are convinced that Khaleda's repressive measures are not going to solve the political crisis and only take us towards greater strife Nobody can match this paper's record of opposing hartals and violent attempts to overthrow an elected government. We will continue to do so. However, we must raise our unflinching voice at the treatment being meted out to peaceful demonstrations of the Awami League. Every attempt by them to protest, to demonstrate, to hold meetings and to organise rallies are being met with violence by the police and hooligans of the ruling alliance. The recent attack on and obstructions to Hasina's tour of Bhola and adjoining areas can in no way be accepted as a part of democratic norms. The result of all this is the erosion of democracy that, we desperately hope, is something that Khaleda does not want.

# Rajuk projects to come under lens

IS body recommends structural change to make it dynamic

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee is to probe widespread allegations against Rajuk (Rajdhani Unnayan Katripakkha) in its different housing projects including Purbachal, Uttara and Rupnagar.

The standing committee on housing and public works ministry yesterday came down heavily on Rajuk for its lack of transparency, recommending the ministry to bring structural changes in the Rajuk to make the organisation more dynamic and accountable.

Ruling BNP lawmaker Alamgir Haider Khan will led the threemember sub-committee formed at a meeting of the standing committee at the Sangsad Bhaban and will submit report within 45 days. "At the backdrop of widespread

allegations of corruption raised against Rajuk, especially in the implementation process of different housing presents, we wanted to probe it.' Shahjahan Chowdhury, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee, told The Daily Star coming out of the meeting.

"The meeting also observed there is no accountability and transparency in the Rajuk activities. The officials must be accountable for their deeds.'

#### B Chy FROM PAGE 12

Memorial Hospital on the Biswa

With the people's cooperation, he hoped to form party units at all level across the country. The party will reflect aspirations of farmers workers and the people against oppression and injustice, he said.

be to eradicate poverty and establish a society that is free of corruption and crime," said Chowdhury, adding that he is yet to finalise a name out of 127 for his party. He also blamed the government

for failing to run the country. "We

did not free this country for the

"The main target of my party will

frustrating situation we are in now, "Terror rules the country now. People are being killed in daylight. Criminals chop university teacher

with butcher knife to take life. People are no longer safe. "No work can be done without kickbacks. There was corruption before. But now it has widened to the maximum extent. The government and persons close to the ruling alliance are involved in the corrup-

"People have not voted anyone to power for accumulating family wealth. Nobody has been elected to rob people's money," he said. Terming the ruling alliance non-

transparent, he alleged that the

government attacks anyone who is critical of it. "They attack the motorcade of the (Opposition) politicians and behave rudely with people, Chowdhury said. People voted for development, improving law and order, and establishing their rights. "But the

pocket," he alleged. After the rally he told the press that he has advised his son Mahi Chowdhury, a ruling party parliamentarian, not to 'keep relationship with a party of hooligans and cor-

government failed in all aspects

because it was busy filling its own

## 6 civil surgeon

surgeons involved in the corruption in line with the recommendations of the parliamentary standing committee on the health ministry of the seventh parliament.

The officials of the ministry could not explain the corruption

and sought time to clarify the issue. Committee Chairman Harun Al Rashid said the body would discuss the issue at its next meeting and asked the officials of the ministry to come up with a report identifying the guilty.

Committee sources said similar allegations were found against at least 16 civil surgeon's offices and the body would discuss the allegation at its next meeting.

Chaired by Harun, the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban was attended by committee members and officials concerned.

## Taiwan

FROM PAGE 12

Bangladeshi authorities," Shih said, adding that "Bangladesh would open an office in Taipei later this

The office will be headed by Frank Chen, former deputy chief of the ministry's department of general affairs. Shih said the opening of the

office was "a breakthrough" for Taiwan as it would be the second Taiwanese mission in the region since 1995 when it opened an economic and cultural office in the Indian capital. Neither Bangladesh nor India

regards as part of its territory waiting to be reunified with China, by force if necessary. The liaison office in Bangladesh would help "enhance our bilateral cooperation in fields such as the

recognise Taiwan which Beijing

economy, trade, culture, education and technology," the Taiwanese ministry said in a statement.

# **Prof Azad**

tasked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) with investigation.

"He is still unconscious," Azad's wife Latifa Kohinoor told The Daily Star last night, adding: "Doctors said they cannot say anything before the 72-hour anaesthesia spell wears off tomorrowmorning (Monday)."

Doctors at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), where Azad is now being treated for severe head and jaw wounds, allowed Latifa to see her husband in the morning.

"I held his hand and called him at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), but he could not answer," she said.

"Doctors told my mother they would take her there again later in the day, but did not do so," Azad's daughter Smita said at 9:00 last night, adding his condition remained the same. An army officer, visiting the author

at 8:00pm, said his health was improving, but he was not out of danger, adding: "His temperature and blood pressure are normal. He now responds to verbal cues." The CMH authorities said they

would allow up to seven relatives to see Azad from today and asked his wife to submit a list.

"The government gave the case priority," State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar told journalists after a meeting of the home ministry monitoring cell that decided to transfer the case from Ramna police to the CID for a quick probe.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia assured Azad's family of best treat-

"The government will send him abroad for better treatment, if necessary," a government source quoted Khaleda as telling Azad's another daughter Mouli Azad and son Anannyo when they called on her at her office.

But Azad's family declined to comment on the 10-minute meeting with A high official of the home ministry

Azad's brother Sajjad Kabir, sister-

in-law Shamsunnahar Gafur and Prime Minister's Political Secretary

Haris Chowdhury were also present.

claimed Azad regained consciousness for a short time when his wife

went to meet him. "Doctors gave us the impression

that his health improved. He can now move his hands and see," he said. The Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate remanded Abu Abbas

Bhuiyan, a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader of Dhaka University unit, in police custody for five days after arrest on Saturday with suspected links to the attack. Sub-Inspector Mahbubur Rahman of Ramna police, who was investigating the case, told the court

Abbas and his accomplices carried

out the attack, branding him as a bomb-maker with a past of campus violence. "I hope we will find the motive for the attack and identify his accompli-

ces once we can interrogate him in

But main opposition Awami eague General Secretary Abdul Jalil alleged the police implicated the BCL

Intelligence agencies were engaged to trace the attackers, pelieved to have ties with fundamen-

"Since Dr Azad talked to the attackers for long, we hope we'll be able to arrest the attackers once we can talk to him after his recovery," the

#### Mahi threatens

strained relations with the ruling BNP since his father Prof B Chowdhury resigned from the presidency, expressed solidarity with the general students and teachers, who were demonstrating on the campus demanding immediate resignation of the home minister and immediate arrest of the culprits

"Members of parliament represent

## Grenade attack

Hossain of Khulna Police Station.

"The powerful grenade was

made in Pakistan," a high official of Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP)

said, adding the assailants forgot to take the pin off the grenade -- the reason it did not explode. Witnesses said the attackers secreted themselves in Shaheed Hadis Park to home in on the mayor's official car that also carried KCC Public Relations Officer Abu

The attack that came at 2:35pm is reminiscent of the killings of New Age newsman Manik Saha in a bomb attack on January 15 and main opposition Awami League city unit president Manzurul Imam on August 25 last year in a city reeling from underground violence.

hundreds of people including political leaders, KCC officials and employees flocking to the Gagan Babu Road home of the mayor to see Outraged at the attempt on the mayor's life, the KCC Karmachari Union brought out a procession and

decided to stay off work for an hour

High police officials visited the

scene after the incident that sent

today in symbolic protest. The KCC unionists threatened to enforce a shutdown of the corporation, going on an indefinite strike if the attackers were not arrested by this evening. Jamaat-e-Islami lawmaker Mia

welfare group's Khulna chapter, and its General Secretary Saidul Huqcondemned the attack. Khulna district and city BNP

Golam Parwar, also president of the

pro-mayor group and supporters of the district BNP brought out protest processions that ended up in chases and counter-chases in an apparent internal conflict spreading panic.

A general diary was filed with Khulna Police Station and security was tightened in the city and around

Case filed

leader of violating the Cantonment Act No. 118 and Army Regulation No. Some other opposition activists Hafiz spoke in the House respond-

Minister Khaleda Zia and other lawmakers thumped desks as the minister made the statement. The minister said supporters accompanying Hasina assaulted

which is a punishable offence. Hafiz termed Hasina's attempt to enter the cantonment and reach the CMH a 'planned incident' designed to 'break the morale' of the armed forces by crating chaos inside the cantonment. He said cantonment is

not a place for carrying out 'subver-

for initiating a process of advocacy for the Saarc Social Charter.

Asia have adopted the document it

should be taken to parliament and

the opposition political parties can

tension by reducing the defence

budget to ensure better life in South

As heads of government in South

# GDP lost in graft

Limited, chairing the inaugural

session. Earlier, Dr Godfrey Gunatilleke, convenor of Saceps taskforce on the Citizen's Social Charter, made a presentation on the Saarc Social

While both charters have dealt with poverty, women, children, youth, and human resource development, the Saarc charter has dealt with a few other areas namely health education and drug-de addiction which the citizen's charter does not cover. The citizen's charter on the other hand has dealt with social integration and good governance, areas not addressed by the Saarc

ASHK Sadeque, former education minister, said political leaders do not have the commitment, which is very important to implement the charter.

Prof Muchkund Dubey, former Indian foreign secretary, said the Saarc Social Charter is going to be the main instrument for advocacy at the national level. There are tremendous  $scopes \, to \, increase \, cooperation \, in \, the \,$ region, he said stressing the need for ensuring security of minority groups in the region.

Kibria, speaking as chief guest at the concluding session, said it is very important to pick up specific issues from the social charter. Referring to the introduction of

old age allowances in Bangladesh, he said there may be specific social programmes that can be extended to other countries of the region.

and crucial to its implementation.

Studies (Saceps) and Centre for Policy

Dialogue (CPD) co-organised the minar at Brac Centre auditorium in

leader to harass opposition adher-

ministry official said.

### EDOM DAGE 12

the people. Being people's representative it's not possible for me to take a position against the people," he said.

Acting Police Commissioner Sajjad Ali said police opened a vigorous investigation into the

the attackers, but adherents of the

have also been implicated in the case. ing to treasury bench lawmakers Monjur Kader and Mashiur Rahman, who spoke on point of order. Prime

some army personnel inside the cantonment on Saturday night,

### leaders and activists in sharp reaction demanded immediate arrest of

Charter and drew a comparison with the Citizen's Social Charter.

charter.

Former finance minister SAMS

Prof Rehman Sobhan, executive director of Saceps and CPD chairman, said the civil society in the region has an important role to play take a position on it in parliament, he noted. Former diplomat MM Rezaul Karim said it is essential to eliminate

Khushi Kabir, coordinator of the Citizen's Social Charter preparation taskforce in Bangladesh, spoke at the inaugural session while Khawar Mumtaz, coordinator in Pakistan. Professor Rounaq Jahan, member of Bangladesh taskforce, and Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, managing director of Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation, also spoke at the concluding session.

#### Political parties FROM PAGE 12

and ask the government to behave positively. The Grameen Bank MD urged the

citizens to play a role in bringing about a change in the present situation. "There can be a tremendous change if the citizens individually feel like 'I can make a change'." He pointed out that the Saarc Social Charter missed out on the role of the

The South Asia Centre for Policy

local government, which can be a very

important part of the social charter

for his progressive writings. "The government's attitude in the last two days made it clear that criminals harboured by the BNP-

Academy on Friday.

"It's clear from the writings of Dr his outspoken criticisms.' Referring to the demand for a ban

ripped through the shrine of Hazrat Shahjalal (R) in Sylhet days after Sayedee criticised a function there. She remarked that the attack was an attempt by the anti-liberation forces

Condemning the grisly attack

latest condition of Azad. University teachers and students and would lend all-out support to

tenure, Hasina said the prime minister made similar remarks after the Frontline AL leaders were present UNB, Dhaka

The commission has been prepar-

Voting Machines (EVM).

respectively.

Independent observers said the

Korban said his agents were

committees were not active enough to redress farmers' miseries as The exams for recruiting the BS

Mannan said Agriculture Minister MK Anwar had assured the

What we have here is an exam-

sixties and early seventies. To add insult to injury, the Inter cial explanation we have as to why Hasina was prevented from going public intelligence. It says she was prevented to see Prof Azad on doctors' advice. Did the doctors order that Hasina be stopped on the road several kilometres from that the main gate be closed on the opposition leader's face? Many of us, on numerous occasions, visited critical patients at the CMH when doctors prevented us from going inside the intensive care unit (ICU). What happens then is that we meet the near and dear ones of good wishes and solidarity with the suffering family and leave. Hasina same. Instead, we have the most horrible example of whimsical use

ago, Hasina was prevented from paying respects to the soldiers who died in a plane crash in Sierra No-one needs to be reminded of the bitterness that marks the personal relations between Khaleda and Hasina. We hear about it almost every day from the speeches they make about the other. However, what we want to underscore here is the regular and almost routine abuse of power by whom the ruling power takes umbrage. Who is prevented from going where and who is stopped from going abroad are but small issues compared to the plethora of serious national concerns that are small incidents form an acid test for a government's respect for law

what they did to us. During their (A long narration follows). So it is