Zillur, Iajuddin

FROM PAGE 1 prime minister to act whatever

the problem the country faces. The office of the president is a ceremonial one and many people believe the president has noting to do without being advised by the prime minister. In a sense it is partially true since in exercise of all functions assigned to him by the constitution or any law, the president is required to act on the advice of the prime minister except that he shall act in his own discretion in matters of appointment of prime minister

and chief justice. But it's not the whole truth. The new president, if he wants, may play a significant role for the betterment of the country and strengthening the democratic process. Constitutional experts believe a man of high stature, integrity and experience holding the office of the president can exert great influence on the executive government by way of advice and counseling.

The president can also play a great role in building a bridge between the government and the opposition to strengthen the parliamentary democracy,

they observed. According to the constitution, the prime minister will inform the president on matters of domestic and foreign policy. The president may request the prime minister to submit any matter for consideration of the cabinet for the welfare of country's people, an authority may not appear to be a power at all, but constitutional expert observe it has considerable importance.

Constitutional expert and former attorney general Mahmudul Islam in his book titled 'Constitutional Law of Bangladesh' explained the significance of the oath of the office of the president.

"The president has taken mandatory oath in terms of article 148 to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, which is not just a matter of formality or rituals. The oath creates an obligation or duty for the president to act to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.... It is difficult to deny him necessary authority in discharging the duty of preserving, protecting and the defending Constitution....Thus he will not be bound to act on an advice of the Prime Minister if such advice is ex facie unconstitutional," observed the former attorney general.

On the president's power to promulgate ordinance, Mahmudul Islam said the president cannot promulgate any ordinance without being advised in this behalf by the prime minister.

But situation may arise where promulgation of an Ordinance becomes a necessity for the preservation of the Constitution or the continuity of the constitutional process. The president may promulgate such Ordinance without being so advised by the Prime Minister and the doctrine of necessity will render such ordinance valid," he asserted. The Constitution also gives

the president power to grant pardons and reprieves and respites and to remit, suspend or commute any sentence passed by any court, tribunal or other authority. Like other powers the president has to exercise this power on the advice of the prime minister. The supreme command of

the defence services is vested in the president and its exercise is to be regulated by law. No money bill or any bill

involving expenditure from public fund can be introduced in parliament without recommendation of the president. Excepting money bill, the president has jurisdiction to send back any bill, which is placed before him for assent in 15 days, with message for consideration of the House.

If the president so returns the bill, the House shall consider it together with the president's message, and if the bill is again passed by the parliament with or without amendments, it shall be presented to the president for his assent, whereupon the president shall assent to the bill within the period of seven days after it has been presented to him, and if he fails to do so he shall be deemed to expiration of that period.

have assented to the bill on the According to the constituion, the president enjoys immunity. The president shall not be answerable in any court for anything done or omitted by him in the exercise or purported exercise of the functions of this office. During his term of office no criminal proceedings whatsoever shall be instituted or continued against the president in, and no process for his arrest or impris-

onment shall be issued from any court. Moreover, during the tenure of the caretaker government, the constitution provides the president with more authority. The caretaker government is collectively responsible to the president. The president does not require counter signature of the prime minister to declare state of emergency when the caretaker government oper-

ates. GOOD BYE 'YESUDDIN'

Given the said constitutional powers, President Iajuddin Ahmed did little mentionable to protect, preserve and defend

the constitution. On advice of the BNP that elected him president in last parliament, he rather suddenly assumed the office of the chief adviser of the caretaker government at the end of 2006, violating the constitution and putting the country's political turmoil into grave crisis.

Being the chief adviser, he also badly failed to discharge his constitutional duties neutrally as he did not dare to ignore the suggestion of the BNP policymakers at that time. His failure put the country in grave political turmoil and finally he was forced to resign from the office of the chief adviser declaring the state of emergency on January 11, 2007 that suspended the January 22 scheduled parliamentary election.

He installed a new caretaker government led by Fakhruddin Ahmed on next day, but he acted as per the wish of the army backed caretaker government despite making the interim government accountable to him.

However, the BNP that elected him president finally accused him of violating the constitution for his failure to hold the parliamentary election despite assuming the office of the chief adviser. The BNP led opposition lawmakers boycotted his address to the inaugural sitting of the ninth parliament while the treasury bench lawmakers started blasting him for his controversial role as president. Participating in the discussion on thanks giving motion on the president's address, the treasury bench lawmakers have also been opposing to give

thanks to the president. Iajuddin, whose tenure was expired on September 5, 2007, but election to the presidency could not be held in absence of the parliament, just acted as president on advice of the then prime minister, Khaleda Zia and he proved his undoubted loyalty to the BNP, rather than

the constitution. It is very hard to remember whether he exercised his other constitutional powers including the matters related to assenting the bill or sending any matter to the then cabinet for consideration for the welfare of the country and people.

He did not dare to refuse to follow any advice of the then prime minister regardless of the advice constitutional or not or ethical or unethical. On advice of the then prime minister, Iajuddin Ahmed in January 2005 granted mercy to Mohiuddin Ahmed Jhintu, president of the then ruling BNP's Sweden chapter.

death 22 years ago in a doublemurder case. He had managed the mercy in only 10 days after his surrender to a court and left the country. Another convict in the same case has already been executed. The presidential mercy triggered widespread criticism at that time. Political analysts observe

Iajuddin has badly failed to uphold the dignity and integrity of the office of president and tarnished the image of Bangabhaban, which is not only the symbol of country's heritage but also plays an important part in the history of Bangladesh.

FROM PAGE 16

who was armed with weapons and suicide vests.

"He was identified by our

security forces and gunned down before achieving his At one point the justice

minister was locked inside his office under armed protec-There was constant gunfire

there as police scaled the building with ladders to enter through windows. Student Assadullah

Jagdalak was inside the justice ministry and said he hid under a table when he heard shooting outside the building. "Security guards started

shooting and then the attackers responded by killing other security guards. One got inside the building and started shooting, one guy got upstairs," he said. The commander of Nato's

International Security Assistance Force, Gen David McKiernan, condemned the attacks.

"Once again the Taliban have displayed that they have no respect for Afghan citizens or any desire to see a peaceful future in Afghanistan," he

The incident comes after US military chief Adm Mike Mullen said more American troops were needed urgently

in Afghanistan. US President Barack Obama is expected to announce soon how many extra US troops could be sent to Afghanistan, and has called

for Nato reinforcements. Holbrooke is expected in Kabul later this week, after his

visit to Pakistan. Before he left for the region, he said Afghanistan would be "much tougher" to solve than Iraq and that he had "never seen anything like the mess we have inherited"

Erratic gas

FROM PAGE 16 sometimes start cooking late

in the afternoon, she added. General Manager (operation) of Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, Md Khalid Hasan said gas crisis in Mirpur and some pocket areas in the city occur every year as the areas are in down stream of the network.

The domestic gas demand also rises at this time of the year, which is another reason of the crisis, he said.

The residents of Mirpur especially, section-11, 12 and section-10 are the most sufferers as there is an one-inchpipe line network in the area which should be at least three to four inches, he said.

"We took an initiative to enhance the network of Mirpur area with 16-inche pipe lines but it has been delayed as no satisfactory offer was made in five rounds of biddings in last two years,' said Khalid.

"Unable to involve a firm in the earlier biddings, we are again going to invite tender soon," he said.

He said Titas is also initiating to connect the existing network with 12 inch pipes in Mirpur DOHS.

"We are also considering to conduct a survey to locate apt sites for replacing the old oneinch-pipe lines in the affected

areas in Mirpur," said Khalid. The crises in all the areas of the city would be solved if the gas production increased according to the demand, 1,400 cubic feet a day where we produce 1,300 to 1,320 million cubic feet, he said.

Hearing

FROM PAGE 16 Earlier, on January 11, the apex court adjourned the hearing on the matter and fixed yester-

day for its hearing. On August 29, 2005, the HC upon a writ petition declared the 5th amendment to the constitution illegal, meaning the rules of Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem and Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman from August 15, 1975 to April 9,

1979 were unlawful. The Appellate Division on September 1, 2005 stayed the HC verdict and asked the government to file a regular leave to appeal with this court. against the HC verdict.

Power outag FROM PAGE 1

420 MW Raozan Power plant

Jhintu was sentenced to (now generation capability of 360 MW) only generates 90 MW. One of the three 70 MW units

of the Mymensingh RPCL power plant remains shut down. The Sikalbaha or the

Baghabari power units remain partly functional.

PDB fears that the load shedding level would continue to worsen due to lack of gas supply this year.

"Although there are some new power projects that would start generating few hundred more Megawatts to the national grid by June-July, we are afraid the scenario would not improve," said the official.

Delwar

FROM PAGE 1

Delwar urged the countrymen to be aware of the issue and take preparation for resisting the move from forming the task force. He said it is a logical apprehension made by some political scientists and economists that Bangladesh might be turned into 'Gaza Valley' due to the proposed task force.

When asked whether they (BNP) know about the taskforce or not, he said, "I don't know any concrete information relating to the taskforce and that is why we have demanded disclosure of all the facts in this regard."

Replying to a query, Delwar criticized Foreign Minister Dipu Moni for keeping her mum when an Indian journalist termed Bangladesh as a 'buffer state' during joint press conference with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

"We had said before that 1/11 was a conspiracy to establish a puppet government in the country and as a minister of a puppet government, how can she [foreign minister] understand the meaning of this question by which the Indian journalist defamed our country," he

raised a counter question. During the briefing, the BNP leader congratulated newly elected President Zillur Rahman and said, "We hope that the new president will conduct his activities as per the constitution, law and justice what he promised to

the nation. Party's Joint Secretary General Nazrul Islam Khan, former lawmaker Shamsuzzaman Dudu, Ilyas Ali, Khairul Kabir Khokon and Shiril Sultana and party office secretary Rizvi Ahmed, among others, were present.

White Papers

FROM PAGE 1 take appropriate steps for

"Of course the White Papers should be published," the leader of the House said amid desk thumping of treasury bench lawmakers.

A BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government upon assuming power in 2001 published White Papers on the corruption committed during the last Awami League (AL) regime between 1996 and 2001. Asked whether the govern-

ment will disclose the list of individuals who were involved in corruption and laundered money abroad during the regimes of BNP-led four-party alliance and the caretaker government, the premier declined to divulge details, for the sake of investigation. "Although much informa-

tion is coming to me from abroad, I can't disclose those for the sake of investigation. Efforts are on to bring back the money laundered by the corrupt," the premier said.

Hasina, who was also the prime minister between 1996 and 2001, said it is true that massive corruption took place and a large amount of money was laundered abroad during the BNP-led alliance government, news about which are also being published in news-

She also criticised former prime minister Khaleda Zia and former finance minister M Saifur Rahman for 'whitening

their black money'. In reply to a query of AL lawmaker also former law minister, Abdul Matin Khasru, the premier said the government will form a committee to investigate the repression and injustices inflicted on Awami League activists during the BNP-led alliance regime. Actions will be taken following investigation, so the victims

may get justice, she asserted. The premier also warned members of law enforcement agencies of stern actions on their failure to protect the lives and properties of the people.

"Those responsible for

committing crimes must be brought to book. But members of law enforcement agencies will also be made accountable and tried for their failure to carry out their duties," the prime minister warned. She also said individuals with criminal records who managed to join the police

during the BNP-led alliance regime will be identified, and appropriate measures will be taken regarding them. In reply to a question of ALled grand alliance lawmaker Rashed Khan Menon, the prime minister said she has always

been against extra judicial "The government will remain alert to stop extra judicial killings and those found to be involved in such crimes will be brought to justice," she said

5 JS standing

FROM PAGE 1 minister as its member.

Planning Minister Air-Vice Marshal (retd) AK Khandker was made member of the Estimate Committee though the rules of procedure strictly imposes restriction on ministers to be included as member of the committee.

According to the rules of procedure, even if a member of the committee is inducted in the council of ministers, his/her membership will automatically fall vacant.

Contacted by The Daily Star immediate after the committee's formation, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid said the minister's name was mistakenly included.

"It will need an amendment to drop the minister's name from the committee," Shahid added.

The four other committees formed yesterday are the Privileges Committee headed by Speaker Abdul Hamid, Public Undertakings Committee headed by Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, Estimate Committee headed by HN Ashiqur Rahman, standing committee on the finance ministry headed by AHM Mostafa Kamal and standing committee on the law, justice and parliament affairs ministry headed by Suranjit Sengupta.

Two membership posts -one for BNP lawmaker and another for lawmakers to be elected to reserved seats for women -- have been kept vacant in each of the four committees, excepting the Privileges Committee.

On behalf of Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid proposed before the House to form the committees. The House unani-

mously formed the committees. Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina, Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia, Jatiya Party chief HM Ershad, AL senior lawmakers Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, and Chief Whip Abdus Shahid were inducted as members of the Privileges Committee, which deals with

the lawmakers' privileges. The five committees have been formed as per the treasury bench's plan to complete formation of the standing committees in the inaugural session of the ninth parliament.

Official website FROM PAGE 1

adding, the culture of extra during the BNP-led alliance government after it had pendence.

launched Operation Clean Heart and formed Rapid Action the website.

Outgoing President The premier however added 'it might take some time to 2007 inaugurated the present change their habit of extra official website of In reply to a written question of BNP lawmaker Joynal Abedin information about state activwho was absent in the House due to the opposition's boycott, sketches of the country's the premier read from a written former presidents. answer that the government

ened and effective. She also said her government is committed to make the parliament the centre of all

will take necessary steps to

make the newly formed Human

Rights Commission strength-

judicial killings raised its head

Battalion (Rab).

judicial killings'.

government activities. In reply to another question, she said her government will take necessary steps to turn Rangpur into a division, and it is working to set up two public universities there, one of which

will be for women. She also spoke about the power sector, describing her government's plan to generate more power to meet the increasing demand.

2 criminals

FROM PAGE 16 Two unidentified criminals were killed and an army man received bullet wounds during the firing, the sources con-

firmed. After the gunfight, army men recovered some arms and ammunition include one AK-47 rifle, one G-3 rifle and some

ammunition. An indigenous man told The Daily Star that they heard sounds of several round of gunshots at about 6:00 pm

yesterday. Body of one criminal was recovered but another yet to be recovered because of darkness at night, said the army source adding army men were

cordoning the area. Plan to explore

Overseas workers' job market in these countries however is shrinking as fallout of the global recession, and a sharp decline in oil price in international market. Moreover, the traditional and largest manpower market for Bangladesh-- Saudi Arabia -- has stopped hiring workers while Kuwait stopped it in 2006, said the letter sent to the PMO.

Restoring the manpower market in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait is an urgent task, it

Besides, Libya is potential market for manpower and it must be tapped, the letter said. "Alongside private initiatives, state-level diplomatic efforts are a must to fully utilise the potentials."

The objectives of the proposed visits are persuading Kuwait to ratify the Technical Cooperation Agreement with Bangladesh signed in 2003, discussing effectively the ways to ensure security of jobs of Bangladeshis, speeding up implementation of MoUs with the UAE and Libya, informing foreign employers about the skills of Bangladeshi manpower and reviewing the activities of Bangladesh missions abroad in this regard, the letter said.

Ctg fertiliser

FROM PAGE 16 are now counting a loss of Tk

57 per kg DAP fertiliser. The government raised subsidy on fertilisers ranging from 15 to 55 percent with effect from January 15, 2009. With the increased subsidy the price of DAP came down to Tk 43 per kg, Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) to Tk 35 from Tk 70 and Murate of Potash to

Tk45 from Tk90 per kg. The officials and employees of the state-run factories allege though the factories were registered in the revenue sector they are not getting bonus or other facilities like the factories under BCIC.

At the same time, the authorities continue halting the payment of 30 percent project allowance since July 2006, allege the DAP CBA leaders.

"We are now being

deprived of festival bonus, production bonus or incentive, overtime and other benefits and of project allowance as well," said a CBA leader, adding some of them have already resigned, while many are considering the same. "While working in other factories under BCIC, I got

three festival bonuses

amounting to over Tk 50,000 every year. But since I joined here on deputation two years ago I have received not a single they grew suspicious. taka in bonus," said an official At night the neighbours of DAP factory. peeped through the tin-shed There are some 20 officials and 200 employees against the approved posts of 48 and 452

respectively, say the sources. Of the workers and employered the body. ees, over 60 are working on Polash has been on the run daily basis of Tk 110 [nonsince then and his cell phone skilled] and Tk 130 [skilled] could not be reached, police each, they add.

in 1971. But it did not recognise Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as the proclaimer of country's inde-

The information is given in Ziaur Rahman's biography on

Iajuddin Ahmed in November Bangabhaban that contains ities, the president's official programmes and also life

The life sketch of Ziaur Rahman posted on Bangabhaban website reads, "....following the crackdown on unarmed civilians on the midnight of 25 March 1971, he led the revolt against the Pakistan army and later announced the historic declaration of independence first on his own behalf and afterwards on behalf of the elected leader of the country Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the Kalurghat radio station." But the website did not mention the date of the announcement made by Ziaur Rahman.

Referring to his family life, it says, "Ziaur Rahman married Begum Khaleda Khanum in 1960. Khaleda Zia is the present Prime Minister of Bangladesh and was also Prime Minister from 1991-96. They have two sons, Tareq Rahman and Arafat Rahman. Tareq Rahman is currently senior joint secretary general of BNP."

Khaleda's tenure as prime minister ended on October 29, 2006, with President Iajuddin Ahmed assuming the office of chief adviser of the caretaker

government. Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina was sworn in as the new prime minister on January 6 this year at Bangabhaban.

Fair opens

FROM PAGE 16

"We want to raise awareness about different social issues. As hundreds of people come here everyday, we have chosen this venue for our campaign, said Khaleda Akter Kalpana, a 24-year from Amra Kaj Kori, a social welfare organisation from Faridpur. "We want to make people

women have equal rights in a family and violence against women in a family is also responsible for breaking up a family," he said. There were also volunteers from Pabna and Dinajpur conducting campaigns at the

fair to draw the people's atten-

understand that men and

tion to the issue. Other organisations like the Red Crescent Society, Sandhani and Quantum -which provide blood banks for patients -- have been collecting blood from volunteers from amongst the visitors to

the fair. Sujana, a member of Sandhani said a good number of people have been donating blood each day.

Some students from Dhaka University set up a stall, along the road leading to the fair, to sell T-shirts bearing slogans demanding the trial of war criminals.

Meanwhile, a total of 101 new books arrived at the fair yesterday on its eleventh day.

The new titles include --"State of the Bangladesh Economy in FY 2007-08" and "Outlook for FY 2008-09" by the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), "Bandini" by Taslima Nasrin, "Bhasha Sangskriti Utshop Niye Bhabna Chinta" by Jatin Sarker, "Kishore Samogro-2" by Anisul Haq, "Daag" by Jillur Rahman, "Bishakto Chumbon" by freedom fighter Golam Mahmud Mamun and "Aloukik Shaktir Shandane" by Syed Nurul Huda Rano.

Newly-wed

from Muladi of Barisal.

FROM PAGE 16 Mohammad Polash and a garment worker. She hails

Police sent the body to the Dhaka Medical College Morgue and the morgue sources said Shima was strangled to death. Police quoting neighbours

said they got married only

three days back on Sunday

after a lover affair for a year or so and they rented the house the same day. Earlier, they used to live in two separate adjacent rooms in the area for over a year,

police said. Shima's next-doorneighbour Shapla said, Tuesday morning Polash locked the house and came out alone. As none of them showed up till the evening

shanty and found the body lying on the bed, she added. On information, police reached the spot and recov-

Cabinet okays

FROM PAGE 16 ratification of the signed Bangladesh-Russia Consular

Convention. "The clause 5 of the 1951 citizenship act only children of a Bangladeshi man married to a foreign woman was eligible to get citizenship of Bangladesh has been amended in the cabinet," said the PM's press secretary Abul Kalam Azad while briefing

reporters after the meeting. Azad said the Citizenship Amendment Act, the proposed Barisal Metropolitan Police and Sylhet Metropolitan Police Acts were tabled on January 25, at the first sitting of the first session of the 9th national assembly and would be passed

in the parliament soon. A proposed amendment to the Acid Control Act was also raised at the meeting. The cabinet has asked agencies

Govt plans

FROM PAGE 1 like Haripur 360 MW, Siddhirganj 300 MW, Barapukuria 125 MW and

Bheramara 450 MW. In the private sector, the government would go for Bibiyana 450 MW and Sirajganj 450 MW power pro-

The parliamentary document also adds that according to the forecast in the power system master plan in 2006, the expected demand for electricity will be 6,066 MW by 2009, 9786 MW by 2015, 13,993

MW in 2020.

BNP grassroots controversial leaders from top party posts terming it 'a

conspiracy to weaken the

"A quarter with vested interests is propagating against popular leaders like me. This is nothing but an attempt to weaken our party," BNP Joint Secretary General Mirza Abbas told the reporters.

Some field-level leaders demanded expulsion of those known as reformists in the party. Two groups of party lead-

ers from Narayanganj scuf-

fled when a former lawmaker

who sided with party's expelled secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan after the 1/11 changeover entered the party office. Araihazar Upazila BNP leaders clashed in the afternoon while Bandar Upazila

and counter chase centring intra-party disputes. Later, some central leaders stepped in to bring the

situation under control.

Most grassroots-level leaders said they want the party free from Jamaat links as the new generation took the issue of trying the war criminals very seriously. "We have lost our moral strength because of Jamaat

must reconsider the matter for party's future," a BNP leader from Bagerhat told reporters after meeting with central leaders. Another party leader from Jessore said corrupt and controversial leaders must

and the party high command

be dropped from the party's top level. BNP constituted six central teams to hold discussions with grassroots-level leaders from six divisions

that started on February 3. The teams have been asked to submit their reports by February 28. Later, the party high command will discuss the reports to decide on reorganisation of the

concerned to review the amendment and present the findings at its next meeting. The PM told the meeting that strong measures and laws are needed to prevent heinous

acid attacks. Hasina has directed the cabinet to bring amendments to the act through incorporation of some provisions so that punitive actions could be taken against acid throwers, meeting sources said. She also asked the cabinet

to form an acid control council with major participation of women to review the amendments and place the act in the next cabinet meeting by bringing changes in its recommendations after discussion with experts working on prevention of such acid violence. Ministers, advisers to the

PM and state ministers, secretaries to the ministries concerned attended the meeting at the cabinet division of the

Bangladesh Secretariat. 15 injured

FROM PAGE 16 panic-stricken garment workers rushed to the main exit down from the 3rd, 4th and 5th

floor of a six-storey building. Witnesses said around 4:45pm a machine on the fifth floor caught fire and was

instantly doused. Of the injured seven were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while others

were rushed to the local clinics.

Guest birds

In a special drive on Saturday, the officials of the environment department in Baralekha recovered two dead and an injured birds on the bank. They could not hold any hunter but seized several

poison traps on the spot.

Officials of the Baralekha office of Center for Natural Resource Study (CNRS), an associate organisation of the Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project of the Environment Department, say CNRS workers and Haor guards often drive away the poachers. But it is hard for them to gourd the entire Haor, they add.

Many bird species including some rare birds come to the Haor every winter. The officials express their concern saying maybe many species would be extinct as the hunters are using poison traps.

Earlier, the Haor guards held a number of poachers in December and January but leaders got involved in chase poaching did not stop. The officials say they are working to raise awareness among the locals about protection of migratory birds for greater interest of environment.

Generally, many bird species including Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveller, Graganey, Blue-winged-Teal, Mallard, Gadwall, Wigeon, Common Teal, Tuffed Duck, Ferruginous Pochard, Common Pochard, Ruddy Shell Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, Fulvous Whistling Duck, Lesser Whistling Duck, Falcated Duck, Gray-leg-Goose, Common-Shell-Duck, Indian-Pond-Heron, Grey Heron, Cattle Egret, Great Egret, Large Egret, Little Egret, Intermediate Egret, Purple Swamp hen, Pheasant-tailed-Jacana, Little Grebe, Great-Crested-Grebe, Little Cormorant, Great Cormorant, Asian Openbill, Common Coot, Pintail Snip, Marsh Sandpiper, Little Ringed Plover, Golden Plover, Wood Sandpiper, Green shank, Red shank, Red-Wattled Lapwing, Wattled, Brown-Headed-Gull and Black-Headed-Gull come to the Haor every year.

a charge denied by both.

Last week, a mob stoned

the ICRC offices in Colombo

while on Tuesday demonstra-

tors denounced US Secretary

of State Hillary Clinton, who

had asked for a "no-fire

period" to allow civilians to

the finger at aid workers,

diplomats and journalists

saying they are being support-

attempt to stop people from

nearly 33,000 non-

combatants have already fled

the war zone this month, with

hundreds more following

day kept up attacks against the

Government forces yester-

The government says

leaving rebel territory.

On Monday, a female Tiger

Colombo has also pointed

move to safety.

FROM PAGE 16

across the frontlines out of territory held by the Tigers, who have battled since 1972 for an independent Tamil

has said final victory may come within days. The military has accused the LTTE of gunning down 19

control. The Tigers in a statement issued to the pro-rebel Tamilnet website denied they were behind the attack, and in

turn blamed the military. A Tiger official said that Sri Lankan army commandos had opened fire on the civilians inside a governmentdesignated "safe zone."

be verified as journalists, rights groups and international observers are unable to report freely from the area. The government has also

the defence ministry said. Foreign Secretary Palitha

Hospital shelling reports of civilian casualties --

homeland. Sri Lanka's army has encircled the rebels in the jungle after a string of battlefield victories, and the government

civilians and wounding ive of the Tamil Tigers. another 75 who on Tuesday tried to escape from the dwinsuicide bomber killed 30 dling territory still under rebel people at a centre for displaced civilians, in what Sri Lankan authorities and the United States said was an

The raft of claims can not

rebels and took more territory, accused the only two independent groups still working

every day.

Kohona said the Colombo government hoped displaced locals would be able to return in the conflict area, the ICRC to their homes within about a and the UN, of causing panic year after the region was swept by putting out exaggerated for mines.