

## Cyclone Bijli

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Abdur Rahim, 8, son of Abdul Monaf of Pekua upazila, died when a tree fell on him, while the two-year-old child of Amir Hossain of Char Para died in a stampede in Kasturaghat cyclone centre in Cox's Bazar at 9:30pm Friday.

Seven women and children were also injured in the stampede.

Mohammad Ibrahim, 55, of Fateh Ali Sikder Para died of cardiac arrest at Barac shelter centre in Ali Akbar Dail union, Kutubdia around 11:00pm.

More than 50 people were injured as trees and thatched houses fell on them.

Sources say over 500 thatched houses and 1,500 betel leaf plantations were destroyed, while boro crops on about 20 acres of land and salt production in about 70,000 acres of land in the district remained suspended due to rainfall.

People in the coastal areas of Chittagong heaved a sigh of relief as Bijli caused no casualty and big damage of property, writes our Staff Correspondent

in Chittagong.  
Three elderly people reportedly died of old-age complications in Satkania upazila.

Mobarak Khatun, 65, of Premashia in Khankanabad union died after she was brought to a nearby cyclone shelter, said District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer Abul Kalam Azad.

Twelve people were injured in Banskhali upazila while going to the nearby cyclone shelters.

Boro crops on around 323 hectares of land were damaged, while 448 houses in seven upazilas were destroyed.

The storm lashed coastal upazila of Chakfashion under the offshore island of Bhola, reports our Barisal correspondent.

At least eight people were injured when trees and walls collapsed on them during the cyclone, which damaged boro crops on about 25 acre of land.

In Noakhali, Dulal Mia, 40, of the island of Hatia died being struck by a lightning, reports UNB.

## PM's security

**FROM PAGE 1**  
intelligence agencies have been asked to rev up efforts to track down the "conspirators".

The issue of Hasina's security came to the fore after the Indian media reported that their Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon in his visit to Dhaka last week alerted the Bangladesh government to the possibility of attacks on the PM and other leaders.

Quoting unidentified home ministry sources, the Indian Express said New Delhi picked up intelligence on this in the form of "electronic chatter by terrorist groups active in the neighbourhood in recent weeks".

"There was specific intelligence on a plot to target the new Sheikh Hasina government in those conversations intercepted by Indian intelligence agencies," said the daily.

Given the sensitivity of the issue, Menon himself went to Dhaka to communicate the leads to the Bangladesh authorities, it added.

Besides calling on the prime minister, he met Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, State Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud, Foreign Secretary Md Touhid Hossain and Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed on Monday.

Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League (AL), has shared the information with some of her cabinet and party members.

A number of her colleagues told The Daily Star last night that she does not fear for her life.

Commerce Minister Col (ret'd) Faruk Khan said some quarters have long been out to kill Hasina. There have been at least 20 attempts including the 21 August grenade attack on her.

"However, we are not afraid. The government has

## Saifur quits

**FROM PAGE 16**  
be held by May or June, the TV channel reported.

On the present state of BNP, he said the party is in a serious debacle, and its former secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan is to be blamed for this.

Comparing present Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain with Bhuiyan, he said, "Delwar and Mannan are two sides of the same coin."

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia should revamp the party with dedicated leaders, said Saifur, one of the founding members of the party.

## Govt mulling

**FROM PAGE 1**  
decision in this regard, the matter is on their consideration list.

"There is a post of director at PMO for each ministry in the presidential form of government but it is not a suitable system for the parliamentary form," Ashraf told reporters.

When the country returned to parliamentary form from the presidential system in 1991, the then president's office was changed into PMO and the huge manpower used during the presidential form of government inducted into the PMO.

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shaifque Ahmed told reporters that it needs some amendment in the rules of business to curtail manpower in the PMO.

Both the ministers said the work in the secretariat gets momentum as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is doing her office in the secretariat regularly and holding regular cabinet meeting.

already taken necessary measures to ensure her security," he said.

The AL leader said conspiracy would bring no result. Tough actions would be taken against the plotters.

"No matter how hard they try, they won't be able to stop us working for the people under Sheikh Hasina's leadership."

Asked who he thinks are the conspirators, he replied, "Those who don't want the country to make progress and those who want to see it become a failed state."

According to Indian media reports, Menon exchanged notes with his counterpart on the activities of the radical groups that operate in Bangladesh and are suspected to have played a role in the February 25 bloodbath at BDR Pikhana headquarters.

In the high-level contact with Bangladesh after the mutiny by border guards, India is believed to have emphasised the need to crack down on elements which aim to destabilise peace and security in the two countries in particular and the region as a whole.

## 150 injured

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Sadar Hospital, Sirajganj Sadar Hospital and different clinics.

Of the injured, condition of four is critical, hospital sources said.

Police and local sources said the clash erupted around 6:00 am with one side led by local AL leader Abdul Mannan Bepari and the other led by local BNP leader Abdus Samad Fakir.

Both the sides were equipped with lethal weapons. They also exploded about 10 bombs and hurled brickbats at each other.

On information, police came to the spot and charged batons to bring the situation under control. Police squads were deployed in the area to avert further untoward incident. High officials of police visited the area after the incident.

Contacted, Abdul Mannan said the clash broke out as BNP men were trying to control the cooperative society.

And Abdus Samad said AL supporters attacked BNP men "without any reason" which led to the clash.

## Khaleda's house

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Court will decide whether your (cabinet) decision is lawful or not," Delwar asked the ruling party hierarchy.

He criticized the government for creating a non-issue and dragging it on since the cabinet took its resolution on April 8, raising question in public mind what actually is going on in the state.

Delwar went on saying when the country is weighed down with lots of problems, the ministers, leaders and activists of the ruling party and its front organizations are raising hue and cry over a residence. "It's a trivial matter."

The BNP secretary general asked the ruling party not to aggravate the situation further by issuing threat and intimidation, and raising "storm at the cup of tea."

He, however, reiterated BNP's stand to extend cooperation to the government in fulfilling the ruling party's election pledges urging them to return to the path of law and democracy, changing their mindset.

The rally was presided over by Tanti Dal President Humayun Islam Khan and addressed by, among others, Jubo Dal General Secretary Moazzem Hossain Alai, JCD Vice President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku.

## Bangladeshi

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Serabang district as their dormitory was not prepared. However, the local agent also took away their passports and other documents from them, said Liakat.

"On March 24 night, the Malaysian police suddenly came to the mosque and arrested all of us as we failed to produce our passports and other valid documents and took us to the Lenggeng Detention Camp."

"In the camp, they force us to be naked and do exercise by holding ears. When someone becomes slow in complying with their (police) instructions or fails to do so, they beat us," Liakat told The Daily Star over telephone.

Police took Ikhtiar for the team leader and tortured him severely, he added.

"After four to five days, Ikhtiar became very sick. We then requested the authorities concerned to hospitalise him (Ikhtiar). After two days, Ikhtiar succumbed to his injury in the hospital," Liakat continued.

After 16 days of the detention, the agent finally arranged their release from the police custody.

However, they are now working in a palm garden without having any work permit. "Police can arrest us again," Liakat feared.

## Criminals

**FROM PAGE 1**  
critical, hospital sources said.

Injured Kawsar Parvez at DMCH told The Daily Star that at around 1:30pm a gang of 3-4 armed criminals, all of a sudden, opened fire on them at the gate No-2 leaving him and guard M Amzad Hossain bullet injured.

Guard supervisor Abdul Aziz sustained bullet to in his chest while chasing the criminals along with some other garment workers, said Aziz.

The gang of criminals were waiting at the gate in the guise of visitors and as workers came out at lunch break they sprayed bullets on them leaving the guards injured.

A witness, Rabiul Hawlader, also an employee of the garment factory, said when he was going downstairs he saw the gang of 3-4 armed criminals fleeing the scene firing bullets.

Borhan Uddin, an employee of the administration section of Epyllion, said they could not foresee such attack, as they had not had any threat from any quarter.

When contacted Pallabi police said two local bands of criminals - one led by Jamil and the other by Sahadat - had been trying to take the garment jhoo (wastage) business in their grips for the last few months.

Either of them might have been behind the incident, they added.

Abdul Malek, officer-in-charge (OC) of Pallabi Police Station, said they arrested eight criminals from a house on Block-B at Mirpur-2 and recovered 10 rounds of bullet and 10 cell-phone sets from them last night after a case was filed with the police station.

During primary interrogation, the arrestees admitted to their involvement in the incident, Malek said.

Police are analysing the video footage of the incident captured on CCTV cameras installed at the garment factory, he added.

## BDR probe

**FROM PAGE 16**  
accused have already confessed to their involvement in the carnage in which 75 people were killed including 57 army officers.

Statements of 300 BDR members, around 50 family members of victims and 250 others who live near the Pikhana area have also been recorded.

Investigation sources said, they have spotted 66 places of occurrence (POS) and collected around 2400 evidence in connection with the carnage.

Shortly after the grisly incident, the CID launched its investigation with 60 personnel in eight groups. But the number rose to 250 in 15 days and at present over 500 CID members are working on the case.

Besides, the Rab is helping the CID in the investigation process directly.

Colonel Reza-nur Rahman, additional director general of Rab, told The Daily Star a huge number of Rab members from across the country including the Rab headquarters are also helping the investigation.

In addition, many army personnel were hunting down fugitives under the 'Operation Rebel Hunt'.

Contacted, BDR Director General Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam, however, declined to disclose the number of the army personnel engaged in the 'Rebel Hunt Operation'.

He said personnel from the army and police are jointly carrying out the operation.

Apart from them, around 2,000 police personnel from the DMP are on guard at the Pikhana, the arsenals of the border forces and they also escort the accused while being taken to the court.

Talking to The Daily Star, DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Haque said, "Soon after the mutiny around 2,000 personnel of the DMP got engaged in the process but now it has come down to around 800."

## City cops face

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Of the total 35 police stations in DMP 10 are located in rented houses and 12 in vested properties while only 13 are in its own lands.

DMP on June 9, 2008 decided to establish eight police stations but it could complete only 2, Kadamtali and Darussalam police stations, raising the total number to only 35.

The rest six police stations -- Ramna, Kalabagan, Gendaria, Chawkbazar, Bangshal and Sher-e-Bangla Nagar -- could not be set up due to lack of suitable houses, they added.

Usually house owners are reluctant to rent out their houses to be used as police stations and again it is very tough to find houses with adequate number of rooms, which will serve well as police stations, they said.

The DMP houses 14 out of 52 police outposts and seven out of 69 police boxes on its own lands while the rest are located at rented houses or in vested properties.

During a visit to Hazaribagh Police Station, which is a rented house, the station was found to have only twelve tiny rooms, most of which are of around 120 square feet in size.

The police station sources said 37 police personnel are to huddle together in two rooms on the first floor where they pass sleepless nights.

Policemen posted at the station said they even struggle

to handle victims due to lack of accommodation.

During the visit this correspondent found four motorbikes lying in the conference rooms taking up space of almost the entire room.

Police members said they kept the bikes in the room due to absence of a compound hampering regular activities that are supposed to be done in the room.

Seeking anonymity a female police sub-inspector told The Daily Star "I receive around Tk 3500 as house rent while I have to spend over Tk 4500 on rent for a small house at Mirpur and over Tk 1500 on conveyance to reach my office."

If I had a government quarters I could save Tk 2500 per month, which I could spend on my children's education, and I could spend at least three more hours with my family," she lamented.

The authorities concerned have undertaken a five-year housing plan (2008-2013) to ease the housing problem, which will raise the total number of quarters to only 1727, a very meagre 10.37 percent, DC Shajahan said.

Under the five-year housing plan 1,110 more quarters will be built by 2013 for those from the rank of assistant sub-inspector onwards.

Accommodation capacity, as per the plan, in barracks of DMP will be increased to 10752 from the existing 9252, Shajahan said.

## 31 Hizb-ut Towhid

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Police also seized from the office some books, leaflets, and two types of powders which are now being examined.

The office is used as a training camp for the militants, police said.

During initial interrogation, the arrestees told police they do not believe in saying prayers in mosque led by an Imam.

They however did not give any information about their activities in the area. So further quizzing is necessary, police said.

Hizb-ut Towhid was active in the district for the last several years, police mentioned.

They had arrested at least 100 activists of the organisation, and all were released on bail.

Different sources said Hizb-ut is becoming active again in several southwestern districts including Kushtia, Meherpur, Jhenidha, Magura and Chuadanga. Its activists even engaged in clashes with

people.

The outfit has around 1,200 'trained' activists. It also has a women's wing.

Activists of women's wing are also trained. One such activist was killed in a clash at Jugia village in Kushtia back in September, 2003, the sources mentioned.

In the past, Hizb-ut militants used hammer and 'gul' (a kind of powder of burnt tobacco) during clashes. In 2006, they killed Dadaipur upazila Jatiya Chhatra Dal president Maruf Ahmed by using those, police recalled.

Contacted, some police officials in the region said the militant outfit is not well equipped at the moment for a 'so-called Jihad'. But it is gradually getting prepared for this since its goals are based on this (Jihad).

The organisation is led by one Bayezid Khan Panni of Tangail. Its activists consider Panni as their 'Imam' and he guides them through his writings including books and leaflets.

## Upazila Parishad

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"...The members of parliament have got no direct role or function, in respect of either development or maintenance of law and order, in the district or in other local administrative units," said the High Court (HC) Division of the SC in the verdict on a writ petition titled "Anwar Hossain Manju versus the government of Bangladesh".

Also the HC Division in the verdict declared illegal the notification on the appointment of district ministers. The government did not file any regular appeal against the verdict, which means the verdict is now law of the land, and the current government also refrained from introducing the system of district ministers.

On April 6, the parliament passed the upazila parishad bill to reintroduce the Upazila Parishad Act of 1998 with some amendments, including the ones that empower local lawmakers to meddle with the functioning of the local government body.

President Zillur Rahman consented to the bill on April 6 and the Parliament Secretariat published it in official gazette on April 8.

Legal experts said the Upazila Parishad Act also discriminates against the 45 lawmakers elected to women's reserved seats in parliament as only 300 MPs, who were elected in direct voting, were made advisers to the parishads.

They said all MPs are entitled to equal facilities and privileges but the Upazila Parishad Act provides more authority to the 300 lawmakers.

"Such discrimination runs counter to the constitution that bars discrimination on grounds only of religion, race,

caste, sex or place of birth. The constitution also asserts that women shall have rights equal to men in all spheres of the state and of public life," eminent jurist Shahdeen Malik told The Daily Star.

He said the constitution rather allows the state to make special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.

Legal experts also said empowering the lawmakers to meddle with the functioning of the upazila parishads also contradicts with Articles 59 and 60 of the constitution, which deal with the formation, functions of the local government bodies.

Question has also been raised whether parliament can legislate law on local government to empower lawmakers over the upazila parishads, ignoring Articles 59 and 60 of the constitution.

In a verdict on the case of Kudrat-E-Elahi versus Bangladesh, the Appellate Division of the SC asserted that the parliament is not free to legislate on local government ignoring Articles 59 and 60 of the constitution.

"If the parliament has to pass a local government legislation, it has to conform with Articles 59 and 60, read with Article 152 (1)," former chief justice Mustafa Kamal observed in the Appellate Division verdict.

The former chief justice said local government shall be entrusted to bodies, composed of persons elected in accordance with the law.

Special representation may be given to peasants, workers and women as per Article-9 but not by robbing the local government institutions of their elected, hence representative character.

## Water crisis

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Jhumpa Roy, a student of class five at Kamarkhola Government Primary School, said she gets to drink a glass of water during the six hours (8:00 am to 2:00 pm) at school. Jhumpa, Shavan, Rupa, Mohon and many other children of the school say that that's the best glass of water they get to drink in a day.

Shavan said, "Often students get into a fight when the water in the containers dip to the bottom levels as children think they will not get their share that day."

Asim Roy, headmaster of the school, said, "Most of the students suffer from dehydration due to the small amount of water they get to drink."

"I have applied several times for funds to build a concrete water reservoir to the Thana Education Officer (TEO) but didn't get any response," he said.

Dakop Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohsin Ali however said that his office is about to launch a project soon to set up water reservoirs in each school to partly overcome the drinking water crisis. He added that since the government has limitations to respond to such schemes quickly enough, private organisations should come forward to help.

Shamareesh Roy, Chairman of Kamarkhola Union said, "We hope to dig a fresh pond but the present crisis would continue until the monsoons if the government doesn't come forward with alternatives."

World Vision, a non-government organisation working in the area, has dug two ponds while and excavated 20 others to help solve the crisis, but that doesn't entirely solve the crisis faced by the majority of the people in the area.

## 2 killed

**FROM PAGE 16**  
several indigenous people working on their land at Kachua village of Nawabganj upazila in the morning and drove them away.

Later, about 50 to 60 indigenous people armed with sharp weapons swooped on the locals leaving Azizul dead on the spot and three others wounded.

Critically injured Emdad was taken to the Phulbari Upazila Health Complex where he succumbed to his wounds.

On information, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

They arrested Dudu Soren, 45, Laxmi Roy, 50, Robin Soren, 20, Shukh Soren, 19, and Chanu Soren, 33.

Kushdah Union Chairman Md Delwar Hossain told the Daily Star that indigenous people and a group of locals had been involved for long in a dispute over the 100-acre land, which Yakini Ali claimed to have received from Dudu Soren's mother about 25 years ago.

Sources said the verdict on the disputed land remains pending with a Dinajpur court.

## Bangalore win

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Indian batting star Rahul Dravid made a fine 66 as Bangalore recovered from losing two wickets for no runs in the first three balls of their innings.

Bangalore made 133 for eight, which hardly seemed likely to be a total easily defended, but the Royals made a horror start and never recovered.

They were bowled out for 58, with no batsman making more than 11.

England all-rounder Dimitri Mascarenhas had New Zealand's Jesse Ryder caught behind for a duck off the second ball of the match and then bowled fellow Kiwi Ross Taylor with his next delivery.

Mascarenhas struck again when Robin Uthappa was caught behind to reduce the Challengers to 17 for three.

But Pietersen made 32 as he and Dravid started a fightback. Dravid carried it on, batting until the last over of the innings as he made 66 off 48 balls with eight fours and six.

Mascarenhas took three for 20 and he was backed up by Munaf Patel (two for 25) and Warne, who claimed two for 18 in his four overs.

The Royals suffered early blows when opening bowler Praveen Kumar dismissed Swapnil Asnodkar and South African captain Graeme Smith in his first two overs.

Medium-pacer Ryder took two quick wickets, Mascarenhas was run out first ball and Kumble ripped through the rest of the batting.

**SCORES IN BRIEF**  
BANGALORE: 133-8 in 20 overs (Pietersen 32, Dravid 66; Mascarenhas 3-20, Patel 2-25, Warne 2-18).

**RAJASTHAN:** 58 (Kumar 2-7, Ryder 2-14, Kumble 6-5)  
**Result:** Bangalore won by 75 runs.

**Man-of-the-match:** Rahul Dravid.

## Obama offers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
overshadowed those issues.

"I am prepared to have my administration engage with the Cuban government on a wide range of issues -- from drugs to migration and economic issues to human rights, free speech and democratic reform," the US president said.

The proposal came after a surprise overture from Cuban President Raul Castro, who on Thursday said he now stood ready to discuss "everything" with Washington -- including specifically the hot-button issues of human rights, press freedom and political prisoners.

The only condition was that US officials respect Cuba's self-determination and treat its representatives as equals.

Obama, who early this week lifted curbs on Cuban-Americans' contacts with Cuba, said Havana still had to give some concrete signs it was willing to engage.

He stressed, though, that the United States had changed from its Cold War days, and was "willing to acknowledge past errors, where those errors have been made."

He stopped short of discussing the possibility of lifting the 47-year-old embargo.

But several Latin American nations and delegates at the summit voiced a general agreement that the embargo should go and Cuba be readmitted into regional bodies such as the Organization of American States, from which it was expelled under US pressure in 1962.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Cuba's closest and most vocal ally, offered an opportunity for another gesture of conciliation at the summit, briefly shaking hands with Obamalete Friday.

A photograph of the moment was quickly distributed by Venezuelan officials, one of whom said Chavez told Obama in Spanish: "I shook hands with former US president George W Bush with this hand eight years ago. I want to be your friend."

## Power crisis

**FROM PAGE 1**  
saving system would at least cut 250MW of demand.