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Hills remain tense

2 bodies sent to hospital for autopsy; indigenous people displaced as 9 villages burnt by 'Bangalee settlers'

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, back from Baghahat, Rangamati

Anger continued to brew in the remote Baghahat area over Saturday's killing of indigenous people and arson attacks on their houses, with the indigenous people holding the army responsible for the incidents.

The dislodged indigenous people also blamed Baghaichhari Upazila Nirbahi Officer SM Humayun Kabir for the incidents and attacked him yesterday when he was returning from the spot along with the state minister for CHT affairs.

They damaged Humayun's car in the presence of law enforcers, minister, Rangamati deputy commissioner and

police super at Gangaram Mukh and Hazachhara.

They alleged that the army from Baghahat zone raided their villages in commando style and opened fire at them in the presence of the UNO.

At least 1,500 indigenous people of 300 families in nine villages were displaced after Bangalee settlers allegedly burnt down the houses of indigenous people on Friday night and Saturday.

The authorities have so far confirmed the deaths of two members of the ethnic community. The bodies were sent to Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital for post mortem.

The indigenous people claimed that six persons, including Noapara Buddha

Bihar monk Loko Priya Bhikkhu, are still missing. They alleged that the Bangalee settlers concealed a few dead bodies.

During a visit to different villages at Baghahat it was found that at least 200-300 houses of indigenous people were completely burnt. Fire and black smoke were seen everywhere.

The villages that came under attacks are Gangaram Mukh, Guchchhagram, Hazachhara, Jaralchhari, Dane Baipachhara, Bame Baipachhara, Simanachhara, Chhurung Nala and Gulakmachhara.

The panic stricken indigenous people from the nine villages have taken shelter in Bongaltoli and Battala villages, some

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Concern over violent clash at CHT
BNP points at army pullout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political organisations have expressed concern over the violent clash involving indigenous people, Bangalee settlers and the army, torching houses and killings of at least two persons in Rangamati.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, senior joint secretary general of BNP, said, "Army presence is essential for peaceful coexistence and security of all in Chittagong Hill Tracts."

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BDR won't get magistracy power

Govt asks it to propose another draft for new laws

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government last month rejected Bangladesh Rifles' proposal for new laws delegating magistracy to the border guards to conduct mobile courts and hold trial of cross-border offenders and hand out punishment.

Home ministry sources say giving such power to BDR will create legal complications, which the government wants to avoid.

The BDR is now preparing another draft of proposals.

The draft also proposed recruiting retired army soldiers in the force.

The BDR headquarters framed the first draft law late last year and sent it to the home ministry early in January for approval. An inter-

ministerial committee formed last year was supposed to scrutinise the draft and give primary green signal.

In late January, the inter-ministerial meeting headed by Additional Secretary of home ministry Md Ghulam Hussain (who has been recently transferred to the commerce ministry as the acting secretary) rejected the two proposals.

"We've not considered the proposal seeking magistracy power and asked the BDR authorities to exclude it," Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder told The Daily Star yesterday.

He however said the proposal for incorporating retired army soldiers was not rejected yet. "We will take final decision in this regard

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Businessman dies in AL-BNP clash

A CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

A man died and nine others were injured early yesterday in separate clashes between Awami League and BNP activists over placing wreaths at Amishapara Shaheed Minar in Sonaimuri, Chatkhil and Hatia upazila of Noakhali.

The deceased was identified as Shah Alam, 42, a local trader at Amishapara Bazar.

Both local Awami League and BNP leaders claimed Shah Alam belonged to their party and was killed by rivals' attack.

The clash erupted over who would be the first to place wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

On return from Shaheed Minar, agitated activists of both parties went on rampage,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



The colour of the roses and the miniature Shaheed Minar speak out: it's time to sing the mournful notes of the elegy: *Ami Ki Bhulite Pari* -- how could I forget February 21?
PHOTO: SHAFIQUUL ALAM

1952 revisited

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Observance of this year's Ekushey in the capital included a rather extraordinary recreation of the 30 minutes of the day 58 years ago that ended in bloodshed for protecting the right of the Bangalee people to have their mother tongue as a state language, and made the day to become International Mother Language Day.

Organised by the daily Prothom Alo and Grameen Phone, the event titled Dunia Kapano Tirish Minute or 30 Minutes that Shook the World took place at the historic Amtala of Dhaka Medical College which used to be Dhaka University back in 1952, and where the language movement activists gathered on February 21 that year to break the curfew imposed by the then Pakistan government.

The Pakistani law enforcers took 30 minutes to open fire on

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Khaleda not given due order

BNP unhappy about delay at Shaheed Minar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP have alleged that party leader and chairperson Khaleda Zia did not pay homage to the Language Movement in the appointed order because Dhaka University authorities mismanaged the usual protocols.

A BNP party spokesperson

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BANGABANDHU BRIDGE-JOYDEVPUR RAIL LINE 75 out of 97 level crossings left open

OUR CORRESPONDENT, TANGAIL

At least 75 of the 97 level crossings on the Bangabandhu Bridge-Joydevpur rail line have been left without gates and gatemen rendering them risky for pedestrians and vehicles.

Even the level crossings with gates and

gatemen are unsafe too, as the ill-paid gatemen do not perform their duties properly.

A large number of vehicles, including heavy ones, and pedestrians pass through the level crossings everyday and quite a few accidents reportedly took place on the route since its

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

PM opens centre of all mother languages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday inaugurated the International Mother Language Institute and said the institute will contribute to preservation of all languages of the world.

After unveiling the institute's plaque at Segun Bagicha, she said, "The main objective of constructing the institute is to practise different languages, conduct research on them and save languages which are on the brink of extinction."

The premier said her government wants to make it an autonomous institution with modern facilities for research, and sought cooperation of litterateurs, language researchers and people in this regard.

"The institute will not stand as a mere building," she said adding that it will have a world-standard library enriched with books on all languages.

There will be a database system which will contain audiovisuals of languages even those which are now extinct or about to extinct, she added.

Without mentioning any names, she thanked the party who had come to power in 2001, as she would not get the chance to inaugurate the institute if the then government had completed


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