criticise and review the execu-

tive's performances. Had they

Meanwhile, Transparency

International Bangladesh

pointed out that Tk 35,000 is

spent a minute for House

participated in the discussion

either misused or abused the

opportunity. They locked

horns on flimsy grounds and

traded blames aggressively and

unnecessarily. In such situa-

tion, the opposition staged

over a dozen walkouts from the

demonstrated their failure to

rise above partisan interests

and act as members of the

House -- the highest forum of

the nation. In some cases, their

behaviour put the House in

disorder and undermined its

dignity, sparking widespread

sury bench deputies spoke at

times created the impression

that they are also members of

the cabinet. It is the responsi-

bility of each cabinet member

to support and defend cabinet

decisions in parliament. But

treasury bench lawmakers

joined them in doing so. They

blindly supported and lauded

the executive's policies and

actions, and blasted the oppo-

was also not anything different.

The opposition deputies found

nothing to appreciate in gov-

ernment activities, and

labelled all those anti-people

In doing so, they cared little

and damaging to democracy.

about people's interests and

rules of procedure of parlia-

ment. They kept themselves

confined to their partisan

interests and unnecessarily

raised old issues in their dis-

cussions to criticise the gov-

The opposition lawmakers

blasted Awami League for its

rule immediately after the

country's independence. They

portrayed a gloomy picture of

the AL rule using unparliamen-

tary and indecent words about

Bangabandhu and his govern-

ing BNP-Jamaat alliance rule as

a dark episode marked by

repression and unbridled

corruption, and blamed them

for the state of emergency later.

both the sides to unnecessarily

bring father of the nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman and late president

Ziaur Rahman in their deliber-

ations. They engaged in an

unhealthy competition --

treasury bench upholding the

image of Bangabandhu and

tarnishing that of Zia and the

opposition doing just the

time to prove whether

Bangabandhu or Zia declared

ers made derogatory remarks

on Bangabandhu while trea-

sury bench deputies termed

Zia a 'killer' and also ques-

tioned existence of his dead

glorify the leadership of Sheikh

Hasina and the Opposition did

the same for Khaleda Zia. The

former labelled Khaleda's son

Tarique Rahman as corrupt

and the latter accused the

premier's son Sajeeb Wajed Joy

of involving in illegal VoIP

climaxed on March 4. While the

BNP- led opposition lawmak-

ers' return to the House on

February 11 ending a long

boycott was a good sign, its

positive side was buried under

lawmakers on that day leaped

out of their chairs and rushed

towards each other gesturing

aggressively throwing the

parliament sitting into chaos

lawmakers, particularly the

Without microphones, the

for around 10 minutes.

A number of AL and BNP

the shocking events.

This unhealthy situation

The treasury bench tried to

body in his grave.

A number of BNP lawmak-

the country's independence.

They also wasted much

It was totally unbecoming of

ernment side.

The other side of the coin

sition for criticising these.

The way most of the trea-

public criticism.

This appeared to have

Most of the lawmakers who

took part in it.

sitting.

House.

NEWS

Green light

Following protests by the Khasia community and Bapa, forest ministry on October 19, 2008 suspended

FROM PAGE 1

the permit.

Before the suspension, the contractor, however, had cut 1,200 trees and removed them with elephants. The court in its February 22 directive did not mention the number of trees already felled.

Interestingly, Sylhet Divisional Forest Officer Md Delwar Hossain issued a fresh permit on February 2 this year allowing the garden owner to cut down 2,350 trees and asked to spare 450, as those are located in the Khasia Punjis (1200+2350+450=4000).

Following a writ petition filed by the timber trader Salim Uddin Mohalder and Nahar Tea Garden Manager Pijush Kanti Bhattacharya, the court on February 22 directed the forest department authorities and local administration to allow the felling of trees as per the earlier work order.

In the Sylhet Divisional Forest Office permit, the garden owner was asked to pay the government an enhanced royalty of Tk 1.19 crore for the trees as per revised rate of forest goods. The HC in its February 22

rule also asked authorities including environment and forest secretary to show on what legal grounds they had imposed the enhanced royalty and reduced the number of trees by 450 and stayed the permit for three weeks. "The timber trader started

cutting the trees around noon with the backing of several hundred musclemen," said father Joseph, a religious leader of the local Khasia community. **Environment and Forest**

Secretary Mihir Kanti Majumdar said he would take initiatives to file an appeal today against the HC directive that allowed the felling of trees. As to why the ministry

gave permission in the first place to wipe out as many as 4,000 trees, he said, "We shelved it for some time." The then Sylhet Divisional

Forest Officer Abdul Mabud in a letter to the Nahar Garden manager in August, 2008 said 3,754 of the total 4,000 trees grew naturally and the rest were planted. The trees had 87,174 cubic foot timber and 75,508 cubic foot of firewood. The trees included Cham,

Gamar, Gorjon, Jaam, Koroi, Bonak, Rongi, Shimul, Awal, Khami, Bolos, Lud, Belpoi, Dumur and others. Khushi Kabir, chairman of

Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), said tree felling on this scale would adversely affect environment, life and livelihood of the local indigenous peo-

Bangladesh is already very low compared to requirement," she said.

Md Abdul Matin referring to locals' estimate said even though the tea garden has a lease for 864 acres of land, it is on over 1,200 acres of land

including 200 acres of Khasia community land.

been realising money by subleasing 100 acres of the leased-land in violation of the terms in Bangladesh Tea Management Directory, alleged Bapa Member Secretary Sharif Jamil.

The owner has realised a total of Tk 2 crore illegally in the form of land tax since 1984 from the Khasia communities, said Md Abdul Matin. Deputy Commissioner of

Moulvibazar Mofizul Islam said Khasia community is dependent on the trees for their livelihood by the betel leaf cultivation. He received no complaints about realising tax from the community, he said. There are around 60

Khasia families in two Khaisa Punjis--Akilam Punji and Kailin Punji--in and around the garden. The tea garden's manager

Pijush Kanti said they needed to cut the trees to expand the garden by 60 acres every year. On realising tax from the Khasia, he said they do not do that anymore but the previous owner used to do it.

Dhaka banks

fertiliser factory, Chinese investment in Bangladesh's oil and gas field, waiver of a \$800 million loan from China. Foreign ministry sources

said Chinese assistance for various projects in Bangladesh, including construction of the seventh Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge, Chittagong. Myanmar-Kunming Highway and a Bangladesh-China exhibition centre, a deep-sea port at Sonadia Island in Cox's Bazar and some power plants, will be sought during the talks. Officials said Dhaka's

concern on the issue of balance of trade tilted in favour of Beijing is also expected to figure in the talks. The bilateral trade volume between the two countries amounted to about \$4.67 billion in 2008 with the balance of trade tilted heavily in favour of Beijing. According to the

Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh imported 18 percent of its goods from China in 2007-2008 pushing Dhaka's trade deficit with Beijing to \$3.8 billion.

They said regional connec-

tivity will get top priority at the talks. Dhaka would attach top priority to construction of the Chittagong-Teknaf railroad to be connected with China's Yunnan province via Myanmar in future, they added. During her stay in China,

Hasina will call on the Chinese president on March 19 and visit Kunming the next day. She is expected to return here on March 21. Her delegation members

Forest area in include Finance Minister Abul Maal Abul Muhith, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Industries Minister Dilip Bapa General Secretary Barua, Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain, Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, AL leader Kazi Zafrullah and State Minister for CHT Affairs Dipankar Talukder.

Kuripara of Sirajganj. He

began working as a journalist

with the daily Azad in

Kolkata before partition of

daily Insaf, Ittefaq

Bangladesh Observer, and

He also worked with the

the sub-continent.

Sangbad.

KG Mustafa

messages expressed shock at his death.

bronchial asthma.

for his treatment.

release.

Hasina said in the death of Mustafa, the country has lost

a progressive journalist. The language hero breathed his last at around 1:30am at Intensive Care

February 16 as his condition

worsened. A seven-member

medical board was formed

Hospital and family

sources said his body will be

kept at the hospital mortuary

until his son Sabir Mustafa,

head of BBC Bangla Service,

renowned journalist will be

at 3:00pm today, says a press

Namaz-e-janaza of the

returns from London today.

Unit of a local hospital, said He was editor of the nowdoctors. defunct daily Muktakantha. He had been suffering Mustafa also served as an rom various ailments ambassador to Lebanon and including kidney trouble and

Iraq in the 1970s. He took part in the Mustafa was admitted to Language Movement in hospital on February 8 and 1952. In his long career, he was shifted to ICU on received many awards

including the prestigious Ekushey Padak. He was revered for his contribution to the cause of

journalists. He was a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh

Mujibur Rahman. Both studied in Islamia College in Kolkata. Different socio-political

organisations expressed held at the Jatiya Press Club shock at his death. Leaders of Jatiya Press Club, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Gitikobi Parishad and Bangladesh National Awami Party (Nap-Mozaffar) in separate messages condoled his death and recalled his contribution in different fields.



A team from District Livestock Office are seen culling a chicken at Kazi Breeders in Thakurgaon yesterday, following bird flu outbreak at the poultry farm.

Bird flu

FROM PAGE 16

Zahedul Hasan said his farm incurred a total loss of Tk 34.09 crore due to spread of bird flu virus.

Zahedul suspected that the bird flu virus might be transmitted from recently imported eggs from India. After the bird flu attack at

Murshidabad in West Bengal, the government gave permission to import 20 crore eggs from India defying its rules that any poultry goods can not be imported from poultry industries of any country where bird flu has broken out he alleged. He said that they are very

anxious for their other 19 farms in the district and Panchagarh after the spread of the virus. The DLO said they have

already taken necessary measures to stop spread of the flu to other farms and chickens. They also supplied medicine to the poultry farms through their workers, he added.

Clash again

authorities for "quota" in the ongoing admission. As the authorities refused

them, the activists jointly brought out a procession, then enterted the administration building and vandalised a classroom and a seminar At this, the law enforcers on

the campus asked the activists to leave the college around 11:00am. The incensed activists

fought a pitched battle with the police that left around 10 people injured. Police said the BCL and

Moitree men also damaged two vehicles outside the col-At one stage of the clash, police baton-charged the

activists to disperse them. Later, police held Kanak, Rubel and Nayan from the campus. Anisur Rahman, officer-in-

charge of Rajpara Police Station, claimed that police constable Raihan received injuries during the clash. The college authorities,

however, resumed the admission process at 12:00noon after a break amid tight security as additional police forces were deployed on the campus. Talking to The Daily Star in

the afternoon, Principal Farida Sultana said they successfully completed the admission process.

Convener of BCL college unit Mamunur Rashid told The Daily Star that the allegation of admission trade brought against them is not

"We are protesting irregularities in the admission," he said.

Matiur Rahman, city president of Moitree, denied their involvement in the admission trade and said "We went to the college as guardians of some students but not to force the authorities for their enrolment."

BSF digs

FROM PAGE 1 "We raised strong protests in

the meeting and asked them to retreat to their previous position in line with the decision taken in September 2009", said Zahirul Alam adding that the BSF agreed to leave. Colonel Alam also said that

according to a joint decision taken in September 2009, the BSF and BDR had kept themselves at a distance of 200 yards from Padua-Protappur border. Meanwhile, BDR on

border the same day.

Suicide blasts kill at least 30 in Afghan city AP, Kandahar

A suicide squad detonated bombs at a newly fortified prison, police headquarters and two other locations late yesterday, killing at least 30 people in the largest city of the southern Taliban heartland. The prison was the main

target, but no prisoners escaped, Afghan President Hamid Karzai's half-brother said. Ahmed Wali Karzai, a member of the Kandahar provincial council, said two of the explosions occurred near his home, which was not damaged. Wali Karzai told The

Associated Press in a telephone interview that Canadian troops had reinforced the prison with cement block after a suicide attack in 2008 blew apart the prison gates and freed hundreds of criminals and suspected insurgents. "They wanted to keep

people busy in the city and break the prison, but the Canadians last time did a good job," Wali Karzai said. "They did a lot of reconstruction so they couldn't break the prison this time.' One suicide attack struck at

the front gate of the Kandahar police headquarters, causing a lot of casualties, he said. "There are a lot of civilian

causalities," Wali Karzai said. "There are houses that have collapsed and businesses and people are still under the rubble. There was a wedding hall near the police headquarters and there was a wedding. A lot of casualties there from the explosions."

He said at least 30 people were killed and another 47 people were injured Kandahar has a population of 800,000 and is the provincial capital of Kandahar province, the spiritual birthplace of the Taliban movement.

Five nurt FROM PAGE 1

Soleman, 42, and Khalil, 35, of Haribhanga village under Sadar Witnesses said the clash

ensued at noon when the cold storage employees were receiving potatoes from the group of traders ignoring the farmers who were waiting in front of the cold storage for long. The farmers protested the

incident that led the clash, they In another incident, a farmer

died of cardiac arrest in front of a

cold storage in Tapadhan village under sadar upazila of Rangpui district yesterday. The deceased was identified as Abdur Rahim, 45, hailed from

Mayanagar village under Kounia upazila of the district. Sources said Rahim stood in the line for seven hours for storing his 150 bags of potato

when he felt pain in his chest

and died on the way to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. Director of Zelema Cold Storage Anwarul Islam Maya said as he become sick he was sent to Hospital with an ambulance and died on the way to the

The management stored his 150 bag of potato in the morning, he added.

Potato cultivators of the northern districts are facing a great problem for shortage of space in the cold storages.

Drug barons

FROM PAGE 16 Camp slum, Karwan Bazar

Railway Line slum, Mohammadpur embankment, Janata Housing and Bashbari -are the most vulnerable compared to other places.

Of the 200 people, there are 10 wholesale drug peddlers while eight are heroin vendors and 30 sell ganja [marijuana], " said the DC

He added, "Karwan Bazar is a wholesale drug trading cen-Sources said other hot drug

zones include Bijoy Sarani, Tejkunipara, Fakinnipara, Nakhalpara, Arzatpara, Mohammadpur Town Hall and Adabor.

tial people and even a number of law enforcers are the stakeholders in the trade. According to sources, some

Some powerful and influen-

traders keep contacts with users through mobile phone. The DC said they had

launched a "special drive", as the peddlers and junkies are responsible for at least 80 percent of the criminal inci-

Around 400 policemen led by the Tejgaon division DC every day conduct the special drive in a selected area. Sources said the special

drive is carried out in broad daylight using loudspeakers, and therefore, no significant success is ever reported. Witnesses said it appears

that the police stage a "showdown" on the city streets. They parade roads and make announcements against the drug peddlers through loudspeakers. Additional DC Md

Manirujjaman said, "The

police leave, criminals return and resume their activities.

The officer-in-charge of Tejgaon Police Station said they had arrested two people during the drives conducted Thursday at Bijoy Sarani Tejkunipara, Fakinnipara Nakhalpara and Arzatpara.

Ashraf asks

Awami League and grand alli ance will give a befitting reply, he said.

The minister was speaking at said Samad Sheikh. a rally yesterday that demanded the trial of war criminals.

The rally was organised by the 14-party Dhaka city unit and it was held at the Golartek playground, which is adjacent to the Samad, who retires in July, Mirpur Martyred Intellectual Graveyard.

Ashraful said, "Joy is a welleducated and polite person. "I want to throw the chal-

lenge to Khaleda Zia to disclose authentic documents relating to the allegation within seven Ashraf also called on his

countrymen to form a committee in every neighbourhood supporting the trial of war criminals. Industries Minister Dilip Barua, AL leader Mofajjal

Hossain Chowdhury Maya also spoke at the rally. During a press conference yesterday at the Awami

League's Dhanmondi office, AL Whip Mirza Azam asked the opposition chief whip Zainul Abedin Faruk to come forward with evidence supporting the allegations. AL office. Azam also said that the

opposition chief whip was trying to sully Joy's clean image the upazila chairman brought so that he would have a reputaout a procession claiming and

around the council venue.

Opportunities Settlers to FROM PAGE 1 "For God's sake, please act blocade in enormous opportunity to in such a way that parliament

hills Mar 18 OUR CORRESPONDENT,

enforce

Rangamati

Samo Odhikar Andolon and its student wing Parbatya Bangali Chhatra Parishad yesterday announced a road and waterway blockade programme in three hill districts for March 18 to protest "harassment" of their leaders.

The announcement came at a press conference at the office of Rangamati Reporters Unity. The Andolon leaders

claimed that Yakub Ali Chowdhury, founder president of Chhatra Parishad, has been falsely implicated in the cases filed for recent arsons in CHT. They alleged that Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, founder of the

Andolon and also a former BNP

lawmaker, was also being

harassed. The organisations demanded that the government release Yakub and conduct a judicial probe into the hills violence.

The blockade programmes will be called off if their demands are met immediately, the leaders said.

The other programmes include submission of a memorandum to the prime minister on March 16 and a roundtable in Dhaka on March 19, sources

Jahangir Kamal and Muhammed Shahjahan, presidents of Rangamati units of Andolon and Chhatra Parishad, and Jalal Uddin Chowdhury, central president of Parbatya Bangali Gono Parishad, among others, spoke.

Al-Aratah's MD He alleged that the minister

used offensive words during the conversation over the phone

letter by March 14.

him in militant activities. The bank authority served a notice on senior officer Alauddin Al Azad, posted in Rajshahi, on December 15 2009 asking him to collect release

and threatened to implicate

charge him for failing to perform his duties, involvement in corruption and misbehaviour with clients. Mahbubur told The Daily Star that the MD talked to him in

an "unusual" manner without

The bank decided to dis-

showing minimum respect to the minister. "Why should I send people to pick him up? I just sent my staff with a visiting card to let him know my identity. I can take

The minister said the MD later apologised to him.

actions against him," he said.

On recommendation to retain the bank official in his position, the minister said, "The bank officer, who is from my constituency Patuakhali-4, comes to my house every day and disturbs me." Azad was allegedly involved

in corruption during his stint at the bank's Barisal branch causing the bank to incur a huge loss, the bank officials said. Allegation of misbehaviour

against Azad prompted the branch managers to request the head office to withdraw him, they said. The managing director said the manager of the bank's

to withdraw Azad as soon as possible. "As the chief executive, have to protect the bank's interest. I never gave in to any unjust demand in my career,

Rajshahi branch requested him

He however decided not to seek legal help or file a general diary over the incident saying filing of a GD would not save his

was made MD of the bank in 2002.

Govt urged **FROM PAGE 1** will have an adverse effect on

the livelihood of the Khasia and other indigenous communities, he said. Bangladesh Adivasi Forum

General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong and representatives from indigenous communities were present at the press conference.

20 hurt **FROM PAGE 1** Besides the BCL activists,

Sharif Abdur Rakib, 50, former general secretary of district Awami League, was injured. Earlier, the voting began at around 7:30pm at Daratana

The gun battle broke out soon after the group backed by

ones elected to reserved seats, were seen shouting loudly and exchanging extremely indecent and vulgar words on the unprintable.

depends on our behaviour."

utilised this, they could have expects a lot from you. Lakhs of come up with suggestions people elected you and they which would help formulation cannot accept the behaviour of policies to run the country in you displayed and the lana better way for people's welguage you used in parliament [on March 4]," Hamid said. According to parliament AL senior lawmaker Fazle secretariat, the House had as Rabbi on March 5 said, "I feel many as 42 hours and 56 minashamed of giving my identity utes of discussion on the presias a lawmaker." dent's address and 236 MPs --But the lawmakers did not 204 from the treasury bench care the speaker's call. A numand 32 from the opposition--

can be effective, and people's

desires are fulfilled. The nation

ber of treasury and opposition bench lawmakers on March 10 engaged in a squabble again on how much time BNP lawmaker Moudud Ahmed would be given on the floor, sending the House in disorder for over five minutes. Without microphones, some AL and BNP lawmakers pointed fingers and showed sneering gestures at each other and shouted, "shut

Finally ending the discussion, the House passed the motion giving thanks to President Zillur Rahman for his January 4 address in parliament, highlighting the government success and plans. In fact it was not the president's own address as the cabinet approved it. And it is the AL that in 1996 amended the rules of business and introduced the provision for approving the president's address.

The way the discussion was held proved that lawmakers, even those from the treasury, paid little heed to the president's call to change confrontational political culture to realise the people's dream for a change in line with the ruling party's pledge in its electoral manifesto styled "A Charter for Change." The treasury bench law-

makers' behaviour also proved that they cared little about their own manifesto that promised exercise of tolerance to end confrontational politics.

Anti-graft FROM PAGE 1 public service, will be discriminatory and counterproductive to the objective of making corruption a punish-

able offence".

TIB said the ACC should be allowed to fight public service graft without requiring prior permission from any authority. Offences committed in good faith, if any, should be determined in the Court of Law, not through any blanket

waiver. It also demanded the commission retain the authority of appointing the secretary.

Iftekharuzzaman said setting up a strong internal The treasury bench deputies countered this by portrayaudit unit in addition to statutory audit would strengthen financial accountability of the

> The unit could comprise qualified professionals reporting directly to the ACC chairman, he added.

The watchdog in the statement said it had submitted a set of 18 proposals to the government.

Section 25 of the ACC Act 2004 must be reviewed to provide full authority to the commission to use its budget independently without interference from the government, TIB suggested in its proposals.

It also said the ACC jurisdiction should be expanded to include crimes under Money Laundering Act 2002, and other crimes in the banking and financial sector, foreign companies, and those involving foreign exchange.

The TIB statement said the proposal to make the commission accountable to the president would not meet the objective of transparency. The ACC should rather be made accountable to a Supreme Court judicial committee.

Alternately, the ACC could be reportable to a parliamentary committee comprising one member from every party represented in parliament. It also proposed that a

citizens' advisory committee

on specific work in the fields

like education, awareness and

composed of non-partisan citizens of high integrity, honesty and credibility could be assigned to advise and evaluate the ACC activities. Citizens' subcommittees can be formed to advise ACC

civic engagement. It said the ACC should develop its own anticorruption strategy setting out

prioritisation of jobs at hand as provided by the law, particularly to develop a strategic balance between functions of investigation, prosecution and prevention. It also said the ACC needs

to develop a policy to be able to deploy its resources and capacity for effectively handling the huge number of pending cases against new ones.

tion much like Khaleda Zia's His body will be taken to special drive was launched on floor, most of which are Thursday handed over an victory over the one backed by son, Tarique Rahman. January 16 to create mass the Central Shaheed Minar Indian to BSF, who intruded the local lawmaker, said the Post awareness about the drug Speaker Abdul Hamid so that people can pay their into Bangladesh through Telecommunication Minister witnesses. peddlers and it will continue." decried this and said, "The use last respects. Razi Uddin Ahmed Razu also Padua border on the previous The situation came under Sources said the peddlers of words by lawmakers also He will be laid to rest at day. The BSF also returned a strongly protested the comcontrol with additional police and other criminals in the Mirpur Martyred ments of Zainul Abedin Faruk bespeaks of their modesty and Bangladeshi, held by them and Rapid Action Battalion areas remain absent during during a view-exchange meetpersonnel being posted in and manhood. Our dignity Intellectuals' Graveyard. from zero line along the same the drives. As soon as the ing held in Narshingdi. KG Mustafa was born in