

## SC extends stay on tree-felling

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
 The Supreme Court yesterday stayed for two more weeks tree felling in Khasia settlements of Nahar Tea Garden in Sreemangal of Moulvibazar while a timber trader has so far chopped over 4,000 trees with government permit.  
 Earlier on February 22, the High Court ordered the authorities concerned to allow felling of 3,550 trees as per a government permit. The order followed a petition filed by manager of the tea garden Pijush Kanti Bhattacharya and timber trader Salim Uddin Mohalder.  
 The SC on April 4 stayed for one week the HC order, and directed the attorney general to file a civil petition for leave to appeal within the week. In default, the stay would stand vacated.  
 "As we did not get certified copy of the (SC) judgement until April 8, we sought special permission from the court for extension of the stay," Additional Attorney General Murad Reza told this correspondent.  
 "The court considered our plea and granted stay for another two weeks," he said.  
 Now, the government has to file a civil petition within  
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## Sinking carbon-sinks

**When the world fights to reverse climate change with more green canopies, illegal logging goes unabated in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, probably the last resort for Bangladesh to green itself. The prime minister has all along been talking tough against tree plunderers. But in reality, little has changed, as the authorities remain indifferent to denuding of hills and forests. The photo, below, speaks the truth.**

**Felling trees in dense forest of hill areas, loggers every day carry piles of wood across the river Sangu. The photo was taken recently at Ruma, Bandarban.**



## BANGLA NEW YEAR Hasina greets Khaleda

**UNB, Dhaka**  
 Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has greeted Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia on the occasion of Bangla New Year 1417.  
 Prime Minister's greeting card carried by her protocol officer Proloy Zoarder was formally handed over to Khaleda's private secretary ASM Saleh Ahmed at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.  
 Khaleda will also send her greeting to Sheikh Hasina today, says the opposition leader's office.

## PROTESTS Jamaat fails to hold Ctg conference

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**  
 Central Jamaat leaders had to leave the port city yesterday without holding a scheduled conference in the face of strong protests.  
 Activists of different organisations had been surrounding the conference venue since noon with slogans calling Jamaat an anti-liberation force.  
 Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid, senior assistant secretary general Muhammad Kamaruzzaman, Dhaka city unit secretary Hamidur Rahman Azad, also a lawmaker, had arrived here in the afternoon to join the conference.  
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## WAR CRIMES TRIAL Saudi Arabia bins reports on tension

**BSS, Dhaka**  
 Saudi Arabia yesterday ruled out media speculations about "deterioration" of Dhaka-Riyadh ties over Bangladesh's initiatives to expose some Jamaat-e-Islami leaders to justice as part of a process to try perpetrators of crimes against humanity in 1971.  
 "The relations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the government of her Excellency Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina are such strong in which no doubt can be penetrated at all," said a statement of the Saudi Embassy in Dhaka referring to some Bangladeshi newspaper reports fearing the bilateral ties could be affected if the Jamaat leaders were exposed to trial.  
 The embassy requested all the press media and "some responsible persons" not to involve Saudi Arabia in this  
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## Court's sanctity left all trampled

**Judges plead for safety, help save SC image as angry pro-BNP lawyers claim Khaleda won't get justice in the HC bench, call judges 'agents', 'AL Presidium members'**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
 A group of pro-BNP lawyers yesterday created such an unprecedented chaos during the proceedings of a petition of Khaleda Zia in the High Court that two HC bench judges had to urge senior lawyers to "save" them and the image of the Supreme Court.  
 Judges Md Imman Ali and Obaidul Hasan earlier even had to warn the agitated lawyers of calling police to arrest them when the lawyers started shouting and thumping desks in the courtroom and called the judges "agents" and "members of the Awami League Presidium".  
 The group of junior lawyers caused the chaotic situation in the presence of their seniors, who were ministers and lawmakers during BNP's rule, when the HC bench rejected Khaleda's prayer for adjourning the hearing on her writ petition that challenged the govern-  
**ment's asking her to leave her cantonment house.**  
 The agitated lawyers told the judges that Khaleda, BNP chairperson and the opposition leader in parliament, will not get justice from their bench and that is why they did not want to move the petition in the bench.  
 The court asked senior lawyers including BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed, Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed and Supreme Court Bar Association President Khandaker Mahbub Hossain to control their juniors.  
 But the lawyers said they would rather get arrested but not leave the courtroom.  
 The junior lawyers, however, left the courtroom later at the request of senior lawyers and brought out a procession, chanting political slogans on the Supreme Court premises.  
 Attorney General Mahbub Alam termed  
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## DCC COUNCILLOR KILLING DB quizzes Bashundhara chairman

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
 The Detective Branch yesterday quizzed Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam in connection with the Dhaka City Corporation councillor Ahmed Hossain murder case.  
 DB's Additional Deputy Commissioner Mahbub Alam  
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## Top officials gobble up Milk Vita

**Says JS body, suggests stern action against culprits**  
**RASHIDUL HASAN**  
 A parliamentary sub-committee unearthed massive corruption and irregularities in state-owned Bangladesh Milk Producers Co-operatives Union Ltd (Milk Vita) and suggested taking stern actions against its corrupt officials.  
 The three-member sub-committee headed by Awami League lawmaker Ashraf Ali Khan Khoshru at a meeting yesterday placed its probe report before the parliamentary standing committee on LGRD ministry.  
 Accepting the report, the parliamentary committee asked the ministry to send it to the Anti-Corruption Commission for taking necessary actions against the corrupt officials.  
 The parliamentary body gave three months' time to LGRD secretary to implement the sub-committee's recommendations to save Milk Vita.  
 Milk Vita has become a den of corruption over the years as its top officials have misappropriated crores of taka, Rahmat Ali, chairman of the committee, told The Daily Star after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.  
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## PEACEKEEPING Bangladesh to send 2 warships to Lebanon

**UNB, Dhaka**  
 Bangladesh becomes the first country in South Asia to send two warships -- BNS Osman and BNS Madhumati -- to the UN Peacekeeping Mission, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).  
 The warships will leave Chittagong seaport for Lebanon today, said an ISPR release yesterday.  
 Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan will see off BNS Osman and BNS Madhumati at the New Mooring Jetty in Chittagong.  
 "This is a pride for the Bangladesh Navy and for the nation that two warships are  
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## BANGABANDHU INT'L AIRPORT First phase work to complete in 5yrs

**3 sites in Mymensingh, Tangail under consideration**  
**JASIM UDDIN KHAN**  
 The government has drawn up a plan to construct the first phase of the proposed Tk 50,000 crore Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib International Airport in next five years under build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) basis.  
 As part of the plan Civil Aviation Authority, Bangladesh (CAAB) conducted a feasibility study over the last three months where they identified three possible sites for the airport.  
 Of the three, two are in Mymensingh and one is in Tangail.  
 An inter-ministerial meeting last week at the  
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