Tree felling

FROM PAGE 20

decision at its weekly meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Earlier in 1990, felling of forest trees was banned for 10 years. The previous Awami League government in 2000 extended the ban until 2005, and the BNP-Jamaat coalition government further extended it up to 2010.

Briefing journalists after the cabinet meeting, PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the decision to extend the ban again came against the backdrop of rampant illegal felling of

The cabinet also approved in principle the draft Forest (Amendment) Act 2010, seeking three-year jail term and fine up to Tk 50,000 for illegal logging and related offences.

The existing law provides for six months' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 2,000 for such offences.

The draft act seeks10 years' imprisonment and a fine of Tk 100,000 for major plunder of forests such as denuding vast tracts of forest

MONEYLAUNDERING

At the meeting, the PM asked the authorities concerned to prevent money laundering. She directed them to strictly enforce the money laundering prevention act to stop recurrence of this misdeed.

The cabinet sent back the draft of Financial Reporting Act-2010 for further examination, and formed a committee headed by PM's economic affairs adviser Mashiur Rahman to revise

behalf of Salauddin. He said

they did not appear with a

legal vokalatnama (power of

attorney) that his client

Salauddin stood up again

and said, "Now it's proved

that he [Fakhrul] is not my

Judges asked him to wait

They issued directives

upon jail authorities to allow

Salauddin to sign the

vokalatnama and consult his

Interrupting them

Salauddin shouted out, "Jail

In response, Justice

Nizamul Huq, the chief of

the three-member panel,

said, "Your lawyers are com-

petent enough to take steps

But Salauddin went on

saying, "I need to talk to my

lawyers; I need medical

Ignoring him, Judges

continued and directed

authorities concerned to

produce Salauddin before it

The BNP leader was

finally allowed to speak after

the tribunal finished deliver-

He seized the chance and

As soon as the court

on January 17, 2011.

ing its directives.

tortured in custody."

standing in the dock.

them, he flew into a rage.

of Forces Intelligence]? Call

DGFI... I will not move from

here. Call Rab,

been a lawmaker for 32

years. I am a representative

of half a million people. And

now, my fundamental rights

and detained without any

arrest warrant.... I have been

starving for the past 15 days.

They [law-enforcers]

allowed me to take only

three sets of clothes with me

and even I was not served

On his way out of the

courtroom, Salauddin

shouted again. He said,

"This government is a Karzai

regime...not a constitu-

tional one. This government

"I was tortured in custody

He continued, "I have

Intelligence...."

have been denied."

any book," he said.

if the jail code is violated."

code is not being followed."

lawyers.

treatment."

lawyer. I can speak now."

and started passing orders.

could not sign from jail.

the draft.

The act proposes formation of a council to ensure smooth and objective reporting on various financial institutions in the interest of more transparency.

Sheikh Hasina asked all the ministries to put on each ministry's website data on the government's development activities in the last two years so that people could see those.

Sources said directives have been given for more publicity of the development activities.

Azad said it would help journalists to know and write about those.

Vatican sets up watchdog to combat money laundering

BBC ONLINE

The Vatican has announced the creation of a new authority to make its financial operations more transpar-

The move comes ahead of a 31 December EU deadline to create a compliance body to oversee all financial oper-

It brings the Vatican banking regulations in line with international efforts to combat money laundering and the financing of terror-

It follows Bank of Italy accusations it had been contravening international rules on money laundering.

SQ Chy antics has no validity."

"I will appoint 500 lawyers...5,000 lawyers if necessary. Let the trial be held outside," he said. The tribunal issued an

arrest warrant against Salauddin after hearing a petition filed on December 15 by war crimes investigation agency seeking his arrest.

On December 16, law enforcers arrested the BNP leader from Banani in connection with torching of a car at Moghbazar on June 26. The arson left one person Salauddin was allegedly

involved in the killings of Nutan Singh, founder of herbal medicine factory Kundeshwari Oushadhalaya, and 35 people at Jagatmallo Para and 69 others at Unasattar Para in Chittagong during the War of Independence.

Earlier, he was brought to the Old High Court building, where the court sits, at 7:00am yesterday. He was taken to jail at around 11:10am. Fakhrul Islam told jour-

nalists that they will appear before the tribunal with due preparation on January 17. On that day, he said, they will complained about "being come up with two applications for the cancellation of production of warrant and adjourned and judges left, warrant of arrest. Salauddin started shouting

Chief Prosecutor of the tribunal Ghulam Arieff When law enforcers Tipoo told journalists the requested him to leave with role Salauddin and his lawyers played during the pro-"I won't go.... where is ceedings was quite unusual. DGFI [Directorate General

The judges' panel also comprised Fazle Kabir and

AKM Zahir Ahmed. **SCUFFLEAT ENTRANCE**

The tribunal expressed concern over the scuffle between lawyers of Salauddin and several officials of the tribunal at the main entrance of the build-

"We are really shocked at the scene at the main entrance today [yesterday]," said Justice Nizamul Huq minutes after appearing in the courtroom.

The tribunal officials and law enforcers obstructed Salauddin's lawyers who tried to enter the court en mass. The key counsels of Salauddin, however, were inside the courtroom in the meantime.

POLLUTION

DoE fines brick kiln

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The department of environment (DoE) yesterday fined an illegal brick kiln Tk 4 lakh at Bhaluka of Mymensingh for destroying agricultural lands and environment.

A special team of DoE led by Md Munir Chowdhury, director of monitoring and enforcement wing, also dismantled the 32 feet chimney of the kiln during the drive.

The team also dismantled a chimney of another brick kiln in Baliarpur, Savar as it was being set up without obtaining the DoE permis-

Meanwhile, the owner of Experience Textiles Ltd paid a fine of Tk 75 lakh in the first instalment to DoE yesterday. Earlier on Wednesday, a

team of DoE sealed the textile factory at Bhaluka in Mymensingh, and fined it Tk 2.24 crore for polluting over 232 acres of agricultural This is the highest

amount of fine ever imposed by the DoE.

The owner of the factory also committed that he would employ trained people and install modern technology to run the effluent treatment plant.

3 killed

FROM PAGE 20

son of Imrul Hossain of Bhutiargati village and Sohan, 32, son of Golam Maula of Porahati village under Sadar upazila.

Alam died on the spot while Bazlur and Sohan succumbed to their injuries at Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

Officer-in-Charge Iqbal Bahar of Sadar Police Station and locals said two rival groups, one led by Juba league leader Jahangir Hossain and the other by Masudur Rahman, engaged in the fierce clash at about 7:30pm to establish supremacy in the area. Both groups used sharp and lethal weapons during the clash.

Alam of Jahangir group and Bazlur Rahman and Sohan of Masud group were chopped to death, witnesses said.

The clash started when the two groups confronted each other at Pobahati during their campaign for rival councillor candidates in the coming Pourasava election.

Jahangir group supported councillor candidate Akhter Hossain and Masud group supported his opponent Zahidul Islam, locals said.

Additional police forces have been deployed in the town to avert further clash.

Govt plans

FROM PAGE 20

An eight-member subcommittee led by former UN ESCAP director M Rahmatullah will conduct a study on transit routes, infrastructure, required investment and cost recov-

Two other sub committees headed by National Board of Revenue member Hussein Ahmed will study traffic, transit fees and charges, and legal issues including security, monitoring, anti-smuggling mea sures, international practice and obligations, and domestic obligation.

Another sub-committee led by Executive Director of Centre for Policy Dialogue Mustafizur Rahman will work on the key issues of transit between Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

A sub-committee led by Sadik Ahmed, vice chairman of Policy Research Institution and former World Bank official, will make economic analysis of

Each committee will have experts as members, apart from representatives of ministries and departments.

Mujibur Rahman said they would prepare a complete report and make recommendations to the government on transit after receiving reports from the sub-committees.

The government asked the commerce ministry to make recommendations on transit to neighbouring nations following a debate over the issue.

PM opens textbook

FROM PAGE 1

education boards at a simple ceremony at Gano Bhaban in the morning.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, who was present at the function, informed the premier that the textbooks will be reached to all students on the first day of the next year.

The PM was informed that 98 percent of the textbooks have already been taken to the upazila level. The government will distribute some 23

crore textbooks this year free of cost among the school students. Addressing the function, the premier directed the authorities concerned to intro-

duce e-book system at the earliest possible

time to ensure more availability of textbooks. She said e-book will facilitate all, particularly the expatriate Bangladeshis who are keen to educate their children with the national textbook curriculum.

Hasina also underscored proper utilisation of the government's Workers Welfare Fund to set up schools in other countries where Bangladeshi expatriates live in large number.

She said the expatriate Bangladeshis also can contribute to the government's initiative to set up schools abroad.

The PM further asked the Education Ministry to reduce school syllabus to ease pressure on the kids. "But the syllabus should include the history of 1971 liberation war as well as all glorious history and national culture and tradition," she said.

She also urged the students not to rely on notebooks and instead concentrate more on the textbooks.

Hasina questioned why a student will have to go to school with a heavy load of books. "Students will go to school with a few books. There should be more books in the library. The students will read books in the library," she said. The education minister informed the

premier that this year the government had to print five crore additional books for free distribution among the students. The premier said her government is working to introduce free education up to graduate

level for both male and female students in all government educational institutions. She said a national committee headed by a minister is working at present to see how to introduce the free education system. "We want to do this in such a way so that no new government can stop free education."

Hasina said a trust fund could be formed to introduce the free education up to graduate level.

Expressing satisfaction over the results of

all recent examinations, she said children in

Bangladesh are highly talented. "Our children are very much talented. They only need support from teachers, guardians and of course, from the government." To attain better results in the future examinations at Primary and Secondary level, the

PM emphasised on infrastructure development and creating competitive zeal among the students. She directed the authorities concerned to take immediate steps for repairing the schools, which need infrastructural develop-

ment. On JSC examinations result, the prime minister said the result could be much better if all the schools in the country had infrastructures and teaching staff of same quality.

She observed that in the rural areas, there are many schools, which remain neglected in terms of infrastructure and teaching staff.

"Even in Dhaka City, there are many gov-

ernment schools which conditions are not good," she said. Hasina remarked that if the textbooks are not well designed and with quality contents,

students would not find interest to read. She expressed her happiness as the Education Ministry has completed all necessary tasks to reach the textbooks to the students on the first day of the coming New Year.

The PM said the government has allocated

the highest budget to the education sector as it believes that investment in education is the best investment. "There is no alternative to education to

build a prosperous and developed nation,' she said. Primary and Mass Education Minister

Afsarul Amin, State Minister M Motahar Hossain, Press Secretary to the PM Abul Kalam Azad and Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury were, among others, present.

No relief

FROM PAGE 20

Hassan MS Azim challenging legality of the seventh amendment.

He also wanted an order from the HC cancelling the trail and conviction in the martial law court and retrial of the murder case against

The HC granted him bail and after furnishing the bail bond in a Dhaka court he has been released from jail.

The historic verdict delivered by Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain declared illegal the trial of Siddique in a martial law court but did not give any clear judgment

cancelling his conviction. Barrister Azim, who is now abroad, told The Daily Star over phone yesterday that he read the full text of the judgment on net. As his client did not get full remedy he would appeal to the

Supreme Court, he added. "I am partially happy as my client [Siddique] has got partial remedy. But now I will go to the Supreme Court for the rest of the remedy we wanted after getting the certified copy of the judgment," Azim said.

He added, "We wanted cancellation of trial in the martial law court which we have obtained. But we also wanted an order from the High Court to set aside the conviction by the martial law court and send the case to a trial court."

On the martial law courts, the judgment said, "...particularly in the light of the finding that martial law courts were bereft of authority as the martial law itself was. This would, a fortiori, entail that convictions passed by such purported courts are of no effect in the eye of law.'

But discussing some other complicated issues the judgment added, "His [Siddique] sentence still being executory, he can be compartmentalised within the Transparency the 'past and closed' criteria. But the petitioner's sentence is still executory." On Siddique's conviction,

the judgment said, "...it is our well meditated view that the petitioner must, if he is so advised, seek relief from a different forum, not from us."

The judges discussed another issue in the judgment under a section styled "Is a Criminal Matter Judicially Reviewable?" and drew their conclusion not to pass any order regarding cancellation of conviction and sentence. The judges said their

refusal to intervene also

means cessation of the peti-

tioner's bail privilege and directed Siddique to surrender his bail. Legal experts say the petitioner now will have to surrender his bail before a

will send him to jail. Besides, Siddique's counsel will have to look for a "different forum" for his client's remedy.

trial court meaning the court

Barrister Azim said though the judgment did not mention specifically about the "different forum" he thinks it is likely to be another HC bench with power to cancel such conviction and sentence under section 561 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

He added, "I didn't seek to get the murder case against my client quashed and wanted direction of cancellation of conviction by the martial law court and retrial in a court set up under proper law."

NO MOVE FROM

GOVERNMENT

Though the judgment also directed the law ministry "to reflect this judgment by reprinting the Constitution", Law Minister Shafique Ahmed said the government has nothing to do with it right now as the Supreme Court will scrutinise the judgment.

As the HC issued a certificate the appeal will be filed with the Appellate Division automatically and the SC will give the final judgment over the petitioner's case.

Shafique said now everything related to the seventh amendment case is with the Appellate Division and the government would do its task after the matter is finalised by the apex court.

FROM PAGE 20

senior High Court judges to examine a survey report of International Bangladesh (TIB) involving the judiciary.

The judges are: Justice MA Wahhab Miah, Justice Nazmun Ara Sultana, Justice Md Imman Ali, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain and Justice Sheikh Rezowan Ali.

43,150 tonnes of nickel was Requesting anonymity, a high official at the apex court told The Daily Star that the committee will decide the next course of actions after examining the report and other documents submitted by the TIB on Wednesday. on board.

Tight security for New Year's eve

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tight security will be in force on the New Year's Eve in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country. Dhaka Metropolitan

Police has arranged over 7,000 additional forces for the city. Outsiders will have to stay away from diplomatic zones of Gulshan, Baridhara and

Banani and Dhaka University campus, said DMP Commissioner Benazir Ahmed yesterday. People will be allowed to

visit hospitals and clinics in those areas after verifica-All the city bars today will

close at 7:00pm.

The DMP Commissioner urged city dwellers to refrain from any rowdy activity and exploding crackers on the 31st night.

FROM PAGE 20

pirates on December 26 last

He could talk to Farid Ahmed, captain of the ship, on December 24 and the captain told him that the stock of drinking water and fuel was about to finish, Meherul added.

from different parts of the country came to the meeting and urged the officials to take the measures needed to bring back their relatives in the shortest possible time. The officials, in response,

The family members

requested them to have patience and assured them of taking every necessary step in this regard including payment of the ransom. Meherul, however,

refused to give details of the ransom demand. He only said the pirates

are yet to settle on the ransom amount while they need to find the right person who they can trust to buy freedom from. Mohammed Shahjahan,

managing director of SR Shipping Limited, the firm owning the ship, assured the family members that they are taking measures for safe return of the hostages. The vessel carrying

on its way to Greece from Indonesia on December 5 when Somali pirates hijacked it. There are 25 crewmembers and the wife of the ship's chief engineer

73pc crosses

FROM PAGE 1

city

before secondary and higher secondary certificate exams," he said.

Other education officials also noted that the success rate could have been better had the students got more time for preparation, and the announcement of the examinations had been made earlier.

They observed that many students failed mostly in English, mathematics, and science subjects due to a lack of efficient teachers for those subjects.

The education minister said committees have already been formed to find out why class VIII students tend to do bad in English, maths, and science. The committees will also recommend remedies, he added.

"We could not explain the question patterns and syllabus to the students adequately, for a lack of preparation time, and for that the rate of unsuccessful students is a bit higher I think," Barisal Education Board Chairman Prof Bimal Krishna Mazumder told The Daily Star.

A total of 8,556 students under 8 general education boards and 1 madrasa board scored the highest GPA-5 (grade point average) this year; 8052 of them are of general schools and 504 are of madrasas.

As many as 10,20,047 students -- 8,22,275 of the general schools and 1,97,772 of the madrasas -- passed the examinations, while 3,76,552 failed. A total of 15,09,847 stu-

dents from 27,289 general schools and madrasas had registered for the exams, of whom 13,96,599 took the exams. Of them, 11,52,536 were of the 8 general education boards, and 2,44,063 of the madrasa board.

The number of schools with cent percent pass rate is 863, while only 2 madrasas got that credit.

No student from 272

schools and 95 madrasas passed this year. The results were formally handed over to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in

the morning, prior to their publication. Boys are ahead of girls in terms of pass rate and high GPA, even though the number of girl examinees was higher than the boys'. The pass rate among boys is 75.65 while the rate is 70.68

among girls. Of the total GPA-5 scorers, 4,820 are boys and 3,736 are girls.

Among the students of general education boards, examinees of Barisal Board did the best with a pass rate of 81.75 percent while Sylhet Board is at the bottom with 61.97 percent pass rate. Dhaka is the second with

80.58 percent passed. The government made a list of top 20 institutions for each general education board and the madrasa board on the basis of three factors -- total number of examinees, passed examinees, and the number of GPA-5 achievers.

On that basis, under Dhaka Education Board, Ideal School and College in Motijheel of the capital became the top school while Viqarunnisa Noon School and College, and Monipur High School became the second and the third respectively. In all other general education boards the top

Grandchildren

FROM PAGE 20

taken at the weekly cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair yesterday. The grand daughters and

grand sons of the freedom fighters will enjoy the quota benefits in the jobs of government, semi-government, autonomous and semiautonomous organisations, institutions and corporations when no eligible freedom fighter and their offspring will be available, said PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad while briefing newsmen after the meeting.

Sources said some of the cabinet members proposed bringing brothers and sisters of the freedom fighters under the quota but the PM dismissed their proposal.

institutions are cadet colleges.

> Under the madrasa board, Tamirul Millat Kamil Madrasa in Tongi of Gazipur became the first while Darunnazat Siddikia Kamil Madrasa, and Tamirul Millat Kamil Madrasa -- both in Demra of Dhaka secured the

respectively. The pass rate for 7 general schools under foreign cen-

second and third positions

tres is 98.16 percent. Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman of Dhaka Education Board, told The Daily Star that she expected the results of all general education boards to be on a par with the results of Barisal and Dhaka boards.

do as good, since English and math teachers in many areas are not efficient enough," she added. Dr SMA Abdul Khaleque, chairman of Sylhet Board which did the worst among

general education boards,

"But some boards did not

said, arrangements should be made for more training of teachers. Briefing the reporters, the education minister said the government is trying to bring equality in the standard of education with such competitive public exams based on unified question

He said, the maiden JSC and JDC exams helped the government to understand what are the problems at this level of the education sys-He greeted all students of

junior schools and junior

dakhil madrasas saying

many students took the exams with courage amid economic hardship. Asked whether any grace mark was awarded to the examinees to increase the

pass rate, he said no grace mark was given. Regarding scholarships to students who passed on the top of merit lists, he said the government will increase the number of scholarships, and an announcement regarding

the matter will come soon. Currently, 22,000 scholarships -- 7,000 on the basis of extraordinary merit and 15,000 on the basis of general merit -- are being awarded at the completion of junior level general school education, he said adding that madrasa students will also get scholarships in the

The chief justice feels that other judges would be encouraged to submit theirs to him after he has submitted his own wealth statement to

The Supreme Court Registrar Mohammad Ashraful Islam delivered the chief justice's wealth statement to Bangabhaban yester-

he has Tk 2.19 lakh in his bank

neer and a lawyer, and a daughter, who is a doctor.

judges in the judiciary". He called upon the judges of the Supreme Court to sub-

the chief justice. He said for the sake of transparency the judges should release their wealth statement to the public when they are appointed and when they go into retirement. It is mandatory for Bangladesh's lower court

confidential reports to the Supreme Court. Since the 2008 general

manifesto. Last January, Supreme

CJ shows

the president, sources said.

day afternoon. Sources say that the chief justice in the statement said

account and he owns a 10katha piece of land in Dhaka. He also said his wife inherited a flat in Dhaka. His has two sons, an engi-

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam thanked the chief justice for "setting the historic example for other

mit their wealth statements to

judges to attach their wealth statements to their annual

elections, no minister or ruling party lawmaker, apart from Finance Minister AMA Muhith, released their annual wealth statement to the public even though the Awami League had pledged that they would do so in its election

Court sources told The Daily Star that the chief justice would submit his wealth statement in January 2011.