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**Fidel Castro quits party leadership**

AFP, Havana

Fidel Castro confirmed he had resigned from the top leadership of the Cuba Communist Party yesterday, after the party approved a raft of economic reforms.

"Raul knew that I would not accept a formal role in the party today," Castro said in an article on the Cubadebate.cu portal, referring to his brother Raul and his

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**AUG 21 PROBE  
CID seeks 45 days more**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The CID yesterday sought 45 days more from a Dhaka court to complete further investigation into one of the two cases filed for the grenade attacks on the August 21, 2004 Awami League rally.

Abdul Kahar Akand, special superintendent of the CID (Criminal Investigation Department), also the

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**RCC postpones eviction drive amid clash**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) yesterday postponed its eviction drive till Sunday following a clash between police and slum dwellers over demolition of illegal structures in Court Station area.

At least 20 persons including six policemen were injured in the clash. The injured

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**Total transit facility not before 4 yrs**

**Capacity building needs \$7b; Tariff Commission report skips earning aspect**

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh will need to invest Tk 49,835 crore in road, rail and river ways and ports in the next two to three years to facilitate transit to India, Nepal and Bhutan.

A government committee on transit gave the estimate in a report placed at a high-level meeting chaired by Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

The report said Bangladesh can provide only limited transit facility for two to three years initially. Full-fledged handling of transit cargos may be available from the fourth year.

The report, however, gives no estimate of Bangladesh's benefit from giving transit to the three countries, meeting sources said, adding that the committee was asked to include the benefit analysis in the report and resubmit it.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan, Foreign Minister

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Fishermen collect eggs of fish from the Halda river well ahead of the season. Inset, a palm full of eggs collected from the river.

PHOTO: STAR

**Halda fishes act unusually**

Release eggs before rain; experts sight salty water intrusion as reason

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

In conditions adverse to laying eggs, a number of indigenous fish species yesterday released spawns in the Halda river in Hathazari and Raozan upazilas of the district, a major natural sweet water fish breeding spot.

Mother fishes usually depend on factors like temperature of water, current, rain and thunder to lay eggs during the full moon, said experts and local fishermen.

Despite the absence of any such condition this time, different fish species including ruhi, katol and mrigel released eggs in the river.

Asked about this, Md

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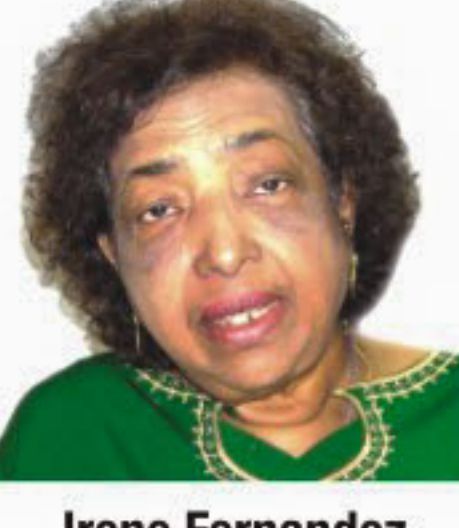
**Migrants unprotected**

**Leading rights voice Irene Fernandez tells The Daily Star about failure of Asian nations in protecting basic rights of workers**

PORIMOL PALMA

Despite having an association for nine years, the manpower exporting countries of Asia have done little to protect the fundamental rights of their migrants, said Irene Fernandez, a veteran rights activist.

"I do not see any common framework evolving out of the Colombo Process on minimum decent wage, rights to form associations in destination countries or standardised job contracts for migrant workers," she said.



Irene Fernandez

LIBYA REPATRIATION IOM urged to arrange flights

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

With a continued exodus of Bangladeshis from trouble-torn Libya, the government yesterday again requested the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to charter flights and fly them back from Egypt.

The request was made after IOM representatives in Egypt informed a consular team of Bangladesh foreign ministry that they

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RELATED STORY ON B1

**SQ Chy antics at courtroom again**

Court notes 'he pretended to be a sick man', allows to be quizzed over war crimes at 'safe home'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury once again showed arrogance by erupting into shouting in the courtroom of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday.

The BNP lawmaker, who claimed himself very sick, made statements before the tribunal in a very loud and excited voice and tried to take off his clothes to show spots of torture

allegedly inflicted on him by law enforcers.

Earlier on December 30 last year, the BNP lawmaker made a similar exhibition of arrogance before the tribunal.

Salauddin, who was hauled before the court yesterday in connection with war crimes charges, did not pay any heed to the tribunal that asked him to make his statement in a lower voice.

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Dhaka City Corporation demolishes structures built illegally next to roads in Taltala of Agargaon in the capital. It, however, left the office of a ruling party associate organisation untouched.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

**Forests shrink to only 9pc**

Muhith worried, stresses social afforestation

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the country's forest coverage has come down to nine percent, and emphasised on social afforestation and massive tree plantation in each village to face the climate change impacts.

"The forest coverage is nine percent (in Bangladesh), it is not 17 percent (official claim)," he said while addressing as chief guest at the inaugural session of the first Bangladesh Forestry Congress 2011 held at Dhaka Sheraton hotel.

Muhith said since the country's population is huge with limited land and nearly 1,000 people live in per square kilometre area, proper land use plan is very

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**KILLING, ARSON  
Khagrachhari reels from panic**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

People of Ramgarh and Manikchhari upazilas of Khagrachhari are still in panic following Sunday's violence that left three people dead.

Many had to stay home yesterday with Section-144 still in place. Section-144 of the CrPC prohibits gathering of five or more people.

Three separate cases were filed Monday night in connection with the violence. Police arrested Md Fazlu, a

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**Helicopter crash kills 17 in India**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Seventeen people were killed when a helicopter with 23 people on board caught fire and crashed into a gorge while landing in Tawang town of north eastern Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh yesterday.

Tawang district Commissioner G Padu said 17 of those on board were 'presumed dead' while six were rescued.

The helicopter, which had taken off from Guwahati, capital of Assam state, at 1:15pm, crashed near the helipad on a hilltop in Tawang town falling from a height of 15 metre into the gorge, sources in the company running the copter service said.

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**HILL CUTTING Chinese firm fined**

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a Chinese company Tk 10.5 lakh for cutting hills at Mirsharai upazila in Chittagong.

A DoE team in a drive spotted the incident of hill cutting by S R Enterprise, an earth supplying contractor appointed by the Chinese company Cino

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**9 bullet-hit in Satkhira clash**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least nine people were hit by bullets in a clash over taking control of a piece of land in Shyamnagar upazila in the district yesterday.

Police said Abdus Sattar, 62, a retired Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) member, of Gouripur village of the upazila had a longstanding dispute with Abdul Gaffar over six decimals of land.

The clash ensued between the two groups around 9:00am and continued for 30 minutes, Kazi Jalal Uddin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Shyamnagar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

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**ONLINE POLL**

How do you look at the parliamentary body's summoning of ex-chief adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed and ex-army chief Moeen U Ahmed for the violent situation on the Dhaka University campus in August 2007?

Justified (39.7%)  
Intended to harass them (60.3%)

TOTAL VOTES : 489

**TODAY'S POLL**

Do you agree with former chief election commissioner Abu Hena that political parties create main obstacles to strengthen the Election Commission?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT  
www.thedailystar.net

**PRAYER TIMING April 20**

Azan	4:25	5:00
Fajr	4:25	5:00
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:27	6:31
Esha	8:00	8:30

Sources: Islamic Foundation