EC wants firm grip

2 held with 4 firearms

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two people as they were out to sell firearms at Napitkhula Battala Bazar in Lama upazila of Bandarban yesterday.

Arrested Ilias, 35, of Dakkhingona in Cox's Bazar, and Kayes Mia, 22, of Ramu upazila of the same district, are involved in gunrunning for long, said Abdur Rahman, deputy assistant director of Rab-7.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-7 led by Captain Sheikhar Roy conducted a raid at the bazar and nabbed the two as they were going to sell three light guns (LG) and a single-barrel gun, Rab sources said.

The suspected buyers fled the spot sensing Rab presence while the arrestees and the recovered firearms were handed over to police.

Two arms cases -- one with Ramu and another with Sadar police stations in Cox's Bazar -- were filed in this connection.

BSF kills 1

UNB, Satkhira

The body of a Bangladeshi cattle trader, allegedly stabbed to death by Indian Border Security Force, was seen floating in the bordering Ichhamoti river of Satkhira Sadar upazila yesterday. The victim was identified

as Ruhul Amin, 35, son of Abdul Wahab Ali o Komorpur village of Debhata upazila of the district.

Sources at 41 Battalion of BGB said BSF jawans of Soladana camp chased a group of Bangladeshi cattle traders when they were returning home from India along with their cattle at about 6:00am. BSF forces caught Ruhul

during the chase and stabbed him with rifle bayonet, leaving him dead. The BSF jawans later

dumped the body into Ichhamoti, sources said. Local people found the

body floating at Haraddah border at about 9:00am and informed the police.

The body could not be retrieved as it drifted towards the Indian water territory before the arrival of police, sources added.

Contacted, Shajahan Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station, confirmed the incident.

The body could not be recovered till filing of this report at 5:00pm yesterday.

Iran's lake

ROM PAGE 20 by solidifying salt and

lamenting that he could not understand why the lake was fading away. The long lake, home to

migrating birds, has shrunken by 60 percent and could disappear entirely in just a few years, experts say.

The first alarm over the lake's shrinking came in late

which feed the lake.

Tabriz, cities on the west

environmental feasibility

study was done in the plan-

ning for the road, and envi-

ronmentalists believe the

project worsened the lake's

health by acting as a barrier

effort to save the lake: a

cloud-seeding program to

increase rainfall in the area,

a lowering of water con-

sumption by irrigation sys-

tems, and supplying the lake

with remote sources of

bolic action" by govern-

would be to release more

Some experts termed the

water.

back by dams.

In April, the government

to water circulation.

Beyond tourism, the saltsaturated lake threatens agriculture nearby in northwest Iran, as storms sometimes carry the salt far afield. Official reports blame the

drying mainly on a decadelong drought, and peripherally on consumption of water of the feeding rivers for farming. Nonetheless, the government continued construc-

tion of 35 dams on the rivers for peace talks. Also completed was a lake-crossing roadway between Oroumieh and

and east of the lake. No

other parts of the body. announced a three-prong | Several tumours were

Ima Khan, daughter of

weather control portion of the program as only a "symder pain." ment, saying the best answer water currently being held

No indigenous

FROM PAGE 20

Accord of 1997."

then Awami League govern-

ment to restore calm in the

Lars Anders Baer, special

rapporteur of UN, presented

the study report titled "Sta-

tus of implementation of the

Chittagong Hill Tracts

have any indigenous popu-

lation," said Iqbal Ahmed

following the presentation,

according to a press release

of Parbatya Chattagram Jana

do with indigenous issues and

therefore, the government of

Bangladesh reiterates its

position that the forum,

which is mandated to deal

with indigenous issues, need

not discuss issues related to

mended, among others,

developing "a mechanism to

strictly monitor and screen

the human rights records of

[Bangladesh] army person-

nel prior to allowing them to

participate in peacekeeping

operations under the aus-

pices of the United Nations."

report, Lars Anders met with

the CHT civil administration

and cabinet members includ-

ing the foreign minister and

CHT affairs minister, law

While working on the

The UN report recom-

the CHT peace accord."

"The accord has nothing to

Sanghati Samity (PCJSS).

"Bangladesh does not

minister and land minister. He also submitted the report to the government but did not get any response,

motives," said Iqbal.

After his comment, government delegations from Denmark and Guatemala, representatives of international indigenous population and international human rights groups emphasised that Bangladesh has not done enough to implement the peace deal.

peace accord could cause renewed instability in the region. Denmark would like to encourage the government of Bangladesh to set up a roadmap with a timeframe to implement the remaining parts of the accord," said Steen Hansen, representative of Danish government.

A high-level delegation led by state minister for CHT affairs Dipankar Talukdar cancelled the trip to New York at the last minute.

G8 leaders

talks with French G8 host President Nicolas Sarkozy that "We have made progress on our Libya campaign.'

vided the bulk of the firepower blitz which launched the Nato campaign in Libya, but has since taken on a support role with European nations, especially France and Britain, to the fore. The US leader warned the

protection cannot be accomplished when Gaddafi remains in Libya directing his forces in acts of aggression against the Libyan people."

"We are joined in resolve to finish the job.'

tinues its bloody oppression further measures".

"We call on the Syrian leadership to immediately stop using force and intimidation against the Syrian people and to respond to their legitimate demands for freedom of expression and universal

The draft voiced "strong support" for US President Barack Obama's vision for

Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia and the United States urged the two sides "to return to substantive talks with a view to concluding a framework agreement on all final status issues."

"To that effect, we express

Peace Process is now," the

Azam Khan

FROM PAGE 20

returned home from Singapore without taking full course of radio therapy, his oral cancer spread to detected in his different organs including his lungs.

Sixty-two-year-old pop legend Azam Khan went to Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore in mid-July last

the press release added.

"We urge upon the UN forum to dedicate its valuable time to discuss issues related to millions of indigenous people all over the world and not waste time on issues politically concocted by some enthusiastic quarters with questionable

"Failure to implement the

FROM PAGE 1

The United States pro-

'UN mandate of civilian

An earlier draft that threatened Syria with United Nations Security Council sanctions if Damascus conof protests was softened under pressure from ally Russia to warn simply of

rights and aspirations. "Should the Syrian authorities not heed this call, we will consider further measures. We are convinced that only by implementing meaningful reforms will a democratic Syria be able to play a positive role in the region.'

Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The leaders of Britain,

our strong support for the vision of Israeli-Palestinian peace outlined by President Obama on May 19, 2011," it said, referring to his call for the 1967 lines to be the basis

"The time to resume the draft statement said, calling also for an easing of the

He said that since Azam

Azam, said, "We were making preparation to get him to Singapore again but over the last few days his condition deteriorated. He was admitted to the hospital on May 22 with severe hand and shoul-

year for better treatment.

With popular revolts sweeping the region, the G8 is expected to pledge billions in aid to help Tunisia and Egypt along the path towards democracy after their successful anti-regime

situation in the Gaza Strip.

uprisings earlier this year. Both economies were hit hard by the tumultuous events of January and February, and Egypt wants between 10 and 12 billion dollars in aid by the middle of next year, Tunisia 25 billion dollars over the next five years.

Tunisian Prime Minister Beji Caid Essebsi and his Egyptian counterpart Essam Sharaf were in Deauville for an enlarged G8 session yesterday, along with the UN, the Arab League and the IMF.

British Prime Minister David Cameron on Thursday pledged £110 million (\$175 million) to foster democracy in the region -- and Sarkozy is expected to push his partners for more.

Africa is also in the G8 spotlight with leaders hosting the newly elected presidents of the Ivory Coast, Niger and Guinea for a session to encourage democracy.

G8 leaders were expected to agree a statement backing a limited government role in policing the Internet, and to agree on boosting global nuclear safety standards in the wake of Japan's devastating tsunami-triggered nuclear tragedy.

Power

FROM PAGE 1

industries in January 2009 for nagging power crisis. However, the BPDB and other suppliers provided a limited number of power connections last year.

The government is now providing new connections as the country's power situation has improved significantly with a number of new power plants going into commercial production.

The BPDB hopes to add 200MW electricity on average a month in the second half of this year to take the total addition to 2,000MW to the national grid in 2011

Thirty-nine deals for generating 4,500MW of electricity have been signed since the present government assumed power in 2009. Ten power plants have already added 835MW to the national grid under the agreements.

Two quick rental power plants -- one with 78MW | capacity in Ghorasal and another with 53MW capacity in Ashuganj -- are on a test run to supply power to the national grid.

A number of power plants

are ready for commercial production from June-July, the official said. Bangladesh produces up

to 4,600MW of electricity against a demand of 6,000MW a day with 51 percent of its population remaining out of the power network.

Gas explosion FROM PAGE 1

four-storey building at Mirpur-2 when they switched on the lights of a room that has been closed for a while.

On that small section of the floor was a beauty parlour which was closed three months ago. Two months ago Atiqullah rented the section to use it as an office of the Samannay Officers' Bahumukhi Samabai Samiti but the office did not open that time. Yesterday, when they switched on the lights, the

explosion occurred and soon fire engulfed the area. The three managed to come out with burn injuries. The next flat that housed a small garment factory was heavily damaged by the explosion. Parts of bricks and window panes of the building

injured four construction

workers who were at an

adjacent building. "The explosion caused an earthquake-like situation around the building," said neighbour Mamtaj Begum. The shaking lasted for around 10 seconds damaging windows and furniture of two floors of the building.

The doors and windows of two adjacent buildings were also damaged, she said.

A bomb disposal team led by Assistant Commissioner of Detective Branch of police Sanwar Hossain visited the spot. Hossain said the explo-

sion could have been caused

by gas that leaked from air coolers in the flat and got stuck as it was closed. Somehow this gas exploded...' The team did not find any evidence of bomb blast there, but would conduct

chemical tests to find out the

cause. Lightning

FROM PAGE 20

upazila and Mazedur Rahman, 22, Babu, 20, of Paharpur village. The identity of the other

deceased could not be known immediately. Rafigul Islam Khan,

chairman of Laohati Union Parishad, said they heard peals of thunderbolt at about 2:00pm. The lightning struck a group of people, who were harvesting Boro paddy in a

field. Six of them including Toaz, Afaz, Hossain, Kalu and Mazedur died on the spot," Rafiqul said adding that ten others were also injured in the incident. The injured were admit-

ted to different hospitals in

the district. Babu died in another incident of lightning while he was harvesting Boro in a field at Paharpur village in the upazila.

7 killed

FROM PAGE 1

taken to Gaibandha General Hospital and Rangpur

Medical College Hospital. Bashudev Banik, superintendent of police of Gaibandha, said the driver's assistant was driving the truck instead of the driver and he could not control the vehicle.

Asma Kibria

FROM PAGE 1

"nothing is going to be changed as the charge sheet was prepared after four years of investigation."

"I made a phone call to Mazid and told him that his comment about the charge sheet was improper," she told The Daily Star over the phone.

"To my knowledge, the charge sheet only identified the hired killers, not the mastermind. It is in the interest of the party and the country that the mastermind is unearthed. The case needs to be investigated further for that," she said. The supplementary

charge sheet was supposed to be submitted on Wednesday but was delayed for further scrutiny. Kibria, also a former AL lawmaker from Habiganj,

was killed in a grenade

attack on a rally in Baidyer

Bazar in Habiganj on

January 27, 2005. Mazid filed two cases -one for murder and the other under the Explosive Substances Act -- with the Habiganj Police Station the next day.

Toxic tannery

FROM PAGE 20

Failing to do so, the government had filed a petition with the HC seeking two more years for the job.

The HC then extended the time till August 28 the same year asking the industries ministry to submit a report within six months on the actions taken to move those out of the city's residential areas.

But the government again failed to do the job and kept on seeking more time from the court every six months. "We're trying our level

best. But I'm not sure when they will be relocated," said Mahbubur Rahman, project director of Savar Leather Estate of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC), who is also responsible for implementing the relocation. Asked why they are taking

took nearly one year to complete the technical evaluation of the central effluent treatment plant (ETP) and submit it to the government. progressing. We've recommended four ETPs with five

million cubic metres of toxic

waste treatment facilities for

so much time, he said, "It

155 industrial units." The relocation process started nearly 10 years ago following a HC verdict in 2001. The government undertook a project to develop the leather estate at Harinbari in Savar at the cost of Tk 500 more than five years ago. The estate, however, remains unused and empty.

Sources say the relocation is being delayed as the government and the tannery owners could not reach any consensus about compensation and bank loan. Even the project director

pensation and loan issues -two major demands of the tannery owners. The polluters who earn around Tk 1,600 crore by exporting leather goods remain adamant demand-

ing compensation of Tk

1,090 crore from the govern-

is unaware about the com-

ment along with soft loan

from the government yet, said Shahin Ahmed, president of Bangladesh Tanners Association. Now the government

ETPs, which will require more than Tk 300 crore. "But we signed a memo-

and the government agreed to set up ETPs at its cost," said Shahin. He also said they demand

aged during relocation. Although the environmental protection laws require the tanners to set up ETPs in their factories, they never did so causing serious environmental peril.

The residents of the city's "But surely, things are western part continue to suffer from adverse effects of pollution caused by tanneries in Hazaribagh, Dhanmondi, Basila, Kamrangirchar and surrounding areas.

tanneries can be smelt from

export-oriented cluster of industries, produce some 20,000 cubic metres of toxic waste laden with chromium and at least 30 other toxins every day. The toxic waters flow into the Buriganga through the Rayerbazar sluice gate.

for skin diseases, fever, cough, gastroenteritis, asthma and diabetes.

obstacle to the relocation is that most of the land and property is mortgaged against bank loans. Until the banks release the mortgaged property, it is impossible to move their factories.

War crimes

other atrocities, was fit to face international justice at a war crimes court.

Court spokeswoman

Maja Kovacevic said the

transfer conditions had been met. says he is in poor health and that they will appeal on Monday. They have

requested that he be admit-

ted to hospital over concerns about his health. Gen Mladic, arrested on Thursday after 16 years on the run, faces genocide charges over the 1992-95

Bosnian war. He was indicted in 1995 over the killings about 7,500 Bosnian Muslim men and boys that July at Srebrenica - the worst single atrocity in Europe since World War II --

and other crimes. Judge Kovacevic told reporters outside the court that Gen Mladic's health was good enough for him to

stand trial. "It has been certified that Ratko Mladic is healthy enough to take part in that [extradition], because all medical examinations have been carried out and we got an assessment that he's capable, despite the fact that he suffers from a number of

chronic conditions." She added that he had refused to accept the indictment".

Defence lawyer Milos Saljic said an appeal would be submitted on Monday.

1 killed

FROM PAGE 20 Kamruzzaman, a sub-

village at about 1:30pm.

sides injured.

Complex.

inspector at Boalmari Police Station, said a brawl took seven-storey building in a place between the supporters of AL-backed chairman witnesses said. candidate Abul Kalam Azad and BNP-supported candi-The Daily Star that he was on the third floor visiting a date Polash at Char Shekhor

armed with sharp weapons got into a clash, leaving Momrez, a supporter of Polash, dead on the spot and ing room was burnt, Farid the five others from both the said. The injured were taken to

Two units from Agrabad Boalmari Upazila Health fire station doused the fire within an hour.

and readymade central ETPs at taxpayers' money.

"We're asking Tk 1,090 crore in compensation. But we haven't heard anything

proposes for sharing the cost of setting up the central

randum of understanding in

2003 with the government,

the compensation, as they will have to build new infrastructures and repair machinery that will be dam-

The dreadful stink of the

miles away in residential areas like Rayerbazar and Zigatola. Hazaribagh tanneries, an

Locals allege they fre-

quently require treatment A tanner said the major

makes it unlikely he would leave Serbia before Tuesday. Gen Mladic's wife Bosilika and their son Darko turned up at the court to visit him.

The BBC's Mark Lowen,

outside the court, says this

Our correspondent says Gen Mladic's legal team Mrs Mladic only recently said she thought her husband was dead. Speaking to reporters earlier -- a day after his father was arrested at the

> insisted he was not guilty and not healthy enough to be transferred, reports AFP. "His position is that he is not guilty of what he is accused of," Darko Mladic told reporters after meeting

with his father inside the

end of a 16-year manhunt --

his son Darko Mladic

Serbian court building. "I am not a doctor but my opinion is that he is not fit at the moment," he said when asked if he thought his father could be transferred to The Hague.

Having lived freely in the Serbian capital, Belgrade, Gen Mladic is believed to have gone into hiding after the arrest of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in 2001.

Following the detention of former Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic in 2008, Gen Mladic became the most prominent Bosnian war crimes suspect at large.

10 hurt **FROM PAGE 20**

engulfed in flames. Panicked, patients, atten-

dants and staff of the hospital started coming out of the rush and sustained injuries, Jamal, an attendant, told

relative when the fire broke Later, both the groups out. Hearing people scream, he immediately hurried out. Much of the operating theatre room, patient recovery room and surgeon dress-

FROM PAGE 1 administration officials on

poll duty for misconduct or negligence. The current legal provision only empowers the EC

to withdraw such officials

from electoral duties and

refer the matter to the

alleged EC officials.

authorities concerned for taking disciplinary and other actions. The officials' appointing authorities or departments very often take no punitive telephone. action against the officials due to alleged political affiliation or other pressure,

Under such a situation, the EC now wants to have the authority to withdraw and suspend any officer performing any duty in the elections. In case of suspension, it

also seeks the power to take action against the official under "Election Official (special provision) 1991" law. The Daily Star obtained a

copy of the EC proposals for electoral reforms. "If any election officer is found to have wilfully trates, who are also civil

refused or failed to comply with the orders or directions of the commission or returning officer, as the case may be, or wilfully violated any provision of any electoral aw or committed any offence under any such law, would be deemed to have committed misconduct which would be treated as punishable offence and appropriate action would be taken against him in accordance with the provision of the 'Election Official (special provision) 1991'," says the EC proposal.

Official (special provision) 1991, an official might be dismissed or removed or be sent on forced retirement for misconduct or negligence in election duties. His promotion or salary hike might be withheld for two years. He also may be punished up to one-year imprisonment and finedTk5,000. The EC said, "The

According to the Electoral

changes have been proposed to keep the election officials more alert about performing their duties." Election Commissioner

fair parliamentary elections. "If the changes are made into laws, the Election Commission will have more

are required to have a stron-

ger EC for holding free and

authority to control the election officials. And the election officials will have no alternative but to obey the commission's order to perform neutrally for holding a fair election," Sohul told The Daily Star yesterday over

In the past, biased role of many civil administration officials and their failure to perform neutrally contributed a lot to making an election controversial. In many cases, the EC was seen helpless in controlling the civil servants, particularly when elected political governments were in power.

Electoral experts have long been demanding such law as the EC can exercise full control over the election officials. **EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATES** Besides, the EC seeks to

empower executive magis-

servants, to try electoral

offences during the parliamentary polls. The EC drafted some proposals to reduce the punishment for many electoral offences so that executive magistrates can be deployed for trials of those offences.

After separation of the judiciary at the end of the year 2007, the executive magistrates lost the authority to hold trials. In the face of their demand, the mobile court law was enacted empowering them to hold trials of some offences alongside judicial magistrates. The executive magistrates running mobile courts now can sentence an individual up to two years imprisonment.

In the RPO, there are many electoral offences for which an individual could be punished for up to seven years' imprisonment.

In the last parliamentary elections held on December 29, 2008, the EC faced difficulties deploying executive magistrates for trials of offences. Instead, judicial Muhamed Sohul Husein has magistrates were deployed

said the proposed changes Blake meets Khaleda

FROM PAGE 1 become partisan. When a respectable person like Prof Yunus is deprived from fair justice how the commoners

would get justice, she said. Meanwhile, Khaleda met Tony Blinken, adviser for National Security Policy for the US vice president, at White House and discussed entire range of Dhaka-Washington bilateral relations.

lasted more than an hour, Blinken wanted to know from Khaleda what will be the special steps and planning regarding institutionalisation of democracy and socioeconomic development if her party BNP returns to

racy her party will

completely independent,

ensure independence of the

judiciary and mass media.

power in future.

role in flourishing democracy and women empowerment in Bangladesh while she was in power. During the meeting that

> misdeeds' committed in the past two years. On counter-terrorism, the BNP chairperson said BNP's clear stand to fight against terrorism nationally and internationally would

> allowed in Bangladesh. The BNP chairperson is scheduled to return home

be treated as antiorganisational activity which the party won't tolerate.

The letter also pointed out that none can express annoyance publicly against any of his/her party colleagues. If there is any complaint against any party man, the secretary general must be informed to resolve

without the permission of the chair, stated the letter. Recent internal clashes in and outside the capital irked party Chairperson Khaleda Zia and she directed senior

allowed to stay on the stage

of any political programme

secretary of Kushtia district BNP, said he has already received the letter and will implement the guidelines. Officials at central office said they are sending the

concerned will receive it

letters in phases and leaders

BNP Vice-president Shamser Mobin Chowdhury told UNB over phone that Blinken recalled former prime minister's significant

Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition in parliament, said if BNP returns to power, it will restore people's confidence in democracy as people have lost trust in democratic dispensation following the present government's 'misrule and

Khaleda told Blinken that to institutionalise democremain unchanged and militancy would not be strengthen the Election Commission and make it

> tomorrow concluding her weeklong visit to USA.

government rally on May 9 at

way to Barisal from Bhola

after attending a party

As a big political party,

BNP moves

FROM PAGE 1

leaders to send the letters.

Activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and Swechchasebok Dal locked horns in presence of central leaders after an anti- soon.

In another incident on the same day, rival activists hacked BNP's Assistant Organising Secretary Nazrul Islam Rajon while he was on

Nayapaltan.

programme.

BNP always instructs its leaders through letters to ensure discipline at all tiers, Nobody would be said Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, acting secretary general. He termed it a normal organisational activity. Sohrab Uddin, general