

## Posts do not exist, still 332 more promoted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday promoted 332 senior assistant secretaries to the post of deputy secretary even though there are no vacant positions for them in the administration.

The BNP-led alliance government, during the last few years, placed over 300 deputy secretaries as officer on special duty (OSD) on political grounds.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia approved the new promotion list on Saturday night before her departure to Saudi Arabia. She, however, made slight changes in the list and the establishment

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## PRIVATE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

# Govt rushes to okay dubious deals as tenure ticks away

### Environmental disaster inevitable if flood flow zones, wetlands filled up

MORSHED ALI KHAN and TAWFIQUE ALI

The public works and housing ministry in last minute deals has embarked on authorising leading real estate developers to fill up thousands of acres of flood flow zones, wetlands, retention ponds and natural canals in and around the capital, setting up stage for an environmental disaster.

Minister for Public Works and

Housing Mirza Abbas however ruled out 'any dubious deals' in approving at least nine 'unauthorised' private housing development projects, which had been officially accused of flouting laws of the land.

Rajuk earlier filed cases against the developers of all these projects, accusing them of violating the wetland protection act 2000, private housing land development rules 2004, town improvement act 953 and Dhaka Master Plan.

According to available documents, the Rajuk secretary wrote to the home secretary on September 17 seeking police action against the nine accused.

But barely eight days later, at a secret meeting at the works and housing ministry on September 25, the national committee headed by the housing minister approved the 1,247.30-acre Bashundhara-Baridhara housing project, a concern of the East West Properties

Ltd, one of the nine developers in question.

Rajuk earlier filed at least two cases against the developer of this project. Sub-inspector of Badda Police Station Mohammad Abdul

Gafur in his written submission to court in November 2002 stated that the developer was indeed filling up low-lying land violating clauses 5 and 8 of the wetland protection act.

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## WB to fund \$460m in health project

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government and the World Bank (WB) yesterday signed Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) Grant Agreement, a way of channelling US\$460 million for Bangladesh Health, Nutrition and Population Sector Program (HNPSIP).

Department of International Development Fund (DFID) of UK, European Commission (EC), Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) pooled their grant finances administered by WB. The WB will give credit of

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## DIALOGUE RESUMES TODAY

# AL to seek BNP's final view on Hasan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Main opposition Awami League (AL) will seek ruling BNP's final view on Justice KM Hasan, the probable chief of the caretaker government, as the ongoing talks between the two parties resume today after five days.

"The government has remained stuck to keeping KM Hasan as the chief adviser to the caretaker government. The nation will get relief if they [government] move back from their KM Hasan stance," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters at the Zia International

Airport on his arrival from Singapore last night.

Jalil, also coordinator of the AL-led 14-party opposition alliance, said their agenda for discussion in today's talks is appointing an "impartial and non-partisan" person as the caretaker government chief.

"If the Hasan issue is settled, the other reform proposals will be resolved," he said, hoping that a solution to the existing political deadlock will be reached within the tenure of the present government.

The 14-party opposition

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## World leaders continue to greet Yunus

STAR REPORT

More messages greeting Prof Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Bank for winning the Nobel Peace Prize reached yesterday.

Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Store and International Development Minister Erik Solheim have congratulated Prof

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Nobel laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus embraces Binod Bihari Chowdhury, veteran leader of the anti-colonial movement, at the former's reception organised by the civil society at the Engineers Institution auditorium in Chittagong yesterday.

## Yunus returns to microcredit roots

### Tells of his dream of making poverty a history

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, back from Jobra, Ctg

Nobel Peace Prize winner Prof Muhammad Yunus was all ecstatic and full of emotion as he visited his birthplace Chittagong and Jobra village, now a familiar name across the globe, yesterday.

The whole Port City--from Engineers Institute to the economics department at Chittagong University to Jobra village where Prof Yunus' revolutionary concept of microcredit kicked off--was vibrant with people from all strata heartily greeting the Nobel laureate.

The scene was extraordinary in Jobra village in the afternoon as a

few of the first borrowers of Grameen Bank loans thronged the Nabajug Tebhaga Khamar premises and accorded a hearty reception to the lone Nobel laureate of the country.

Prof Yunus said he has come first to Jobra after being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize to convey gratitude and honour on behalf of all Bangladeshis to the people of this great village.

"It is you who actually deserve the honour," he told the residents of Jobra village. "You did a wonderful act of honour for the whole country."

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## KL starts issuing visas to workers

### 'Moves' to lift ban on hiring manpower from Bangladesh

PORIMOL PALMA

In an apparent move to lift an earlier ban, Malaysia has started issuing calling visas for Bangladeshi workers, clearing the way for some 22,000 Bangladeshi workers who had received approval for jobs in that country.

"Our agencies received about 800 calling visas in three days. We hope to get the visas for the rest of the workers with approval for jobs in Malaysia," Ali Haider Chowdhury, secretary general of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (Baia) said yesterday.

Agencies will soon start sending workers to Malaysia, he said.

Calling visa is the final document for entry into that country.

On October 4, Malaysian authorities declared a temporary ban on hiring manpower from Bangladesh alleging that none of the 21,988 Bangladeshi workers who received jobs approvals in Malaysia entered the country although migration was scheduled to begin in August.

Tension gripped the agencies as well as the aspirant migrant workers who submitted passports and a certain amount of money following the ban.

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## THE SCIENCE OF WEATHERPROOFING



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## 3 power proposals of Hosaf approved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet's purchase committee yesterday approved three costly skid and barge-mount power projects -- all proposed by alliance government's close business ally Hosaf group and CMC, its Chinese partner of Barapukuria coalmine and power projects.

The Hosaf-CMC consortium proposed power rental to the government from 20-megawatt (MW) skid-mount power plant in Barabkundu, Chittagong, 20MW skid-mount plant in Feni, Noakhali and 50MW barge-mount plant in Baghabari, Sirajganj.

This clearance will now follow signing of a power rental agreement between Hosaf-CMC and the power authorities concerned.

Sources said the plants will use

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## 2 killed in 'shootout' with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kustia

Two gangsters belonging to an organised group of violent criminals -- the Hamidul-Rashidul group -- were killed in a 'shootout' between police and the gang at Milpara area early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Majid, 35, son of Shamsuddin of Berkatala in Kumarkhali upazila and Piplu, 32, son of Abu Bakar of Milpara area in Kustia.

According to police, the Detective Branch (DB) of police arrested Majid and Piplu from

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## Skop strike sees no violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 24-hour countrywide strike called by Sramik Katmachari Oikyo Parishad (Skop) ended peacefully yesterday except for some stray incidents on the outskirts of the capital.

Workers from several industries refrained from work in different districts, whereas most garment factories in the capital remained open.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)

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Micro-credit paves the way to a Mega Dream--the dream for peace...



**Congratulations to**  
Dr. Muhammad Yunus  
The first recipient of  
Nobel Peace Prize  
in Bangladesh

You have made us proud to be Bangladeshi



**Heartiest Congratulations**

We on behalf of Oponin Family hereby extend our heartiest congratulations to Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank on being awarded Noble Peace Prize for the year 2006

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