

JS body lists 9 firms as big land-grabbers

Plans inter-ministerial meeting to add spark to land recovery drive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary body yesterday accused nine firms of grabbing huge chunks of government land in Narayanganj and Gazipur and decided to hold an inter-ministerial meeting to gear up a drive to recover

the encroached acres. The parliamentary standing committee on the land ministry put Amin Mohammad Foundation, Jamuna Builders, Eastern, Modhumati and Northern housing, Magura Group, Meghna Group, Holecem Cement and Shahjalal

Paper Mills on the list of large-scale land-grabbers. "We've asked Narayanganj district administration to conduct a survey to find out the land grabbed by four firms -- Magura Group, Meghna Group, Shahjalal Paper Mills and Holecem Cement -- on

Sitalakya and Meghna banks in Narayanganj district," Mahbubur Rahman, chairman of the committee, told reporters at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. Deputy Commissioner of Narayanganj, Harun-or-Rahsid, told

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CHILD MOLESTATION

Jackson indicted

AP, Los Angeles

Pop star Michael Jackson was indicted Wednesday by a Santa Barbara County grand jury investigating child molestation allegations, according to news reports.

The Santa Barbara News-Press

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10 SENSATIONAL CASES Babar asks cops to nab accused

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar yesterday directed the investigation officers (IOs) of 10 sensational cases to immediately arrest the fugitives at any cost.

The home ministry's monitoring cell at its 37th meeting also ordered the IOs and their supervising officers to arrest the close relatives of the accused, if need be, for interrogation. It also suggested attachment of moveable properties of the fugitives.

The monitoring cell observed that police have to press charges belatedly, as they do not get autopsy report from the forensic department in time. The state minister, chairman of the cell, urged early submission of autopsy report for quick

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Bush's policy shift to upset ME peace

Warns OIC at emergency KL meeting

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

US President George W. Bush's backing of Israel's latest strategy on the Palestinian territories could "wreck the entire peace process in the Middle East," the chairman of the world's biggest grouping of Muslim states warned yesterday.

Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who heads the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), was speaking at the opening of an emergency meeting here on US

policies in Israel and Iraq.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to pull out of the Gaza strip while maintaining some Jewish settlements in the West bank "ignores and endangers fundamental issues that are central to the conflict..."

"Indeed, if forced upon the Palestinians, the Israeli plan can literally wreck the entire peace process in the Middle East.

"It is most unfortunate that the United States administration has deemed it proper to support Israel's

unilateral disengagement plan."

Malaysia called the OIC meeting at the request of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat after Bush last week backed Sharon's controversial plan, apparently reversing decades-old US policy.

Abdullah urged Washington to play the role of "honest broker", saying Sharon's plan contradicted the provisions of the US-endorsed roadmap for peace.

He called on delegates to come up with new ways of approaching

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PHOTO: STAR

Police quiz passengers to know if they are NGO employees at Kamalapur Railway Station on arrival from Sylhet yesterday, as blanket arrests continue in the run-up to the opposition April 30 deadline for fall of the government.



PHOTO: STAR

A boy runs through a trench a utility agency dug beside the Biswa Road in Mugdapara for the second time to lay underground electric cables. The road was ruptured only months ago to do the same work.

No criminalisation of politics if voted back to power

Hasina tells rally

UNB, Narsingdi

Blaming the government for patronising hooligans, criminals and killers, opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday said she would stop criminalisation of politics if voted back to power.

Hasina called upon the people to stand united and 'topple' the BNP-

Jamaat coalition government, the way they did so in 1996, if they want to eliminate corruption and terrorism, restore peace and stability, curb price spirals, establish the rule of law in the country.

"But the days are not far off when the people will throw this oppressive government out of power and establish a people's government," said

Hasina.

The Awami League president was addressing a huge public meeting at Narsingdi Stadium in the afternoon, organised by Narsingdi district AL to demand resignation of the government.

The whole of the stadium was packed with people while the streets

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RU remains standstill over controversial appointments

RU CORRESPONDENT

Indefinite strike at Rajshahi University (RU) by Rajshahi University Teachers Association (Ruta) demanding the cancellation of controversial April-17 recruitment continued for the second consecutive day with no class and examination held in any department yesterday, campus sources said.

A teacher of statistics department however alleged that some teachers favouring the ruling BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday took classes to show off.

Progressive Teachers Association (PTA) in a meeting held at Shahidullah Arts Building yesterday afternoon expressed its solidarity with Ruta in observing the strike that demands immediate cancellation of the controversial recruitment and removal of the RUV and Pro-VC. It (PTA) also decided to keep the admission tests out of its purview.

University sources meanwhile

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SAUDI BLAST

President, PM condole loss of lives

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday expressed their deep sorrow at the loss of lives in the Wednesday's car bomb blast in Riyadh.

"I would like to convey to you and through you my deepest sympathy to the bereaved families," the president said in a condolence message to Saudi King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

Iajuddin prayed for salvation of the departed souls and courage for the victims' families to bear irreparable losses.

In her message to the Saudi king, the PM said, "On behalf of my government, I would like to express our profound shock at the loss of many innocent lives due to the cowardly bomb attack."

She also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and early recovery of the wounded.

In another message to his Saudi counterpart Prince Saud Al-Faisal,

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Prayer Timings

April 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-27	6-31
Esha	8-00	8-30
Source: Islamic Foundation		

CRIMES IN N-DISTS

Leftists take a swipe at Jamaat

UNB, Dhaka

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon yesterday said it is not BNP but 'fundamentalist' Jamaat-e-Islami is in proxy rule and at the helm of power.

"Jamaat is controlling the home ministry and this fundamentalist force is implementing its hidden agenda," he told a press conference at his party office expressing grave concern over the rise of an armed fundamentalist group in northern districts.

Menon, speaking for the left-leaning 11-party alliance, demanded actions against all those, including a deputy minister and police administration, involved in creating a reign of terror in Natore, Naogaon and Rajshahi.

Coordinator of the 11-party alliance and CPB leader Morshed Ali in a written statement said a group of armed miscreants, dubbed as Mujahideen, are attacking houses of their opponents every day and created a frightening situation.

Ali said those terrorists under the banner of Islami Jalsha are assaulting those who they consider as sinners.

The armed terrorists led by Azizur Rahman (Bangla Bhai), returned from Afghanistan and known as a Jamaat cadre, already killed four people and fatally injured

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Kick poverty to bring education

Schoolchildren ask legislators in Q-A session

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Schoolchildren yesterday identified poverty as the main roadblock to education and called on legislators to take measures to bring all children to school.

The demand came up at a question-and-answer session with the legislators at the LD hall of the Jatiya Sangsad, co-organised by the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) and the Peoples Empowerment Trust (PET) to mark the Global Action Week 2004.

Secretariat security to go up

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has planned to step up security at the Secretariat and equip police deployed there with modern technologies and sophisticated devices and impose further restrictions on entry to it.

Sources at the home ministry said the authorities have already restricted entry of visitors to the Secretariat reducing issuance of gate pass and not allowing officials, employees and others to use date-expired identity cards.

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The number of children who have never attended school in Bangladesh is over half a million and 100 million children are unable to attend school globally -- 60 million of them girls.

The children also demanded playgrounds and libraries in schools, timely distribution of stipend to enable them to buy books and learning material.

They called for security of schoolchildren, an end to political manipulation of students, stipend for poor students and rehabilitation of

evicted slum children.

Deputy Speaker Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui, attending the session, said the government was working for education for all and added: "We will take steps for betterment of students."

Faruk Khan, opposition lawmaker, said: "We may differ on political agenda, but we all united for education."

The children demanded security to girl students especially from teasing on their way to school and

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Outlaws again threaten Duta president with death

DU CORRESPONDENT

Outlawed Sarbahara Dal has once again issued death threat to Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta) President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique in a letter received yesterday.

The letter sent to the Mass Communication and Journalism Department of Dhaka University also asked him to pay Tk 50,000 in toll to Mohammad Kuddus Mian,

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