Tall talks, but no action

bodies and agencies suggest the area of public land now in grabbers' hand is no less than 20 lakh acres. while according to some studies, it is much more, over 30 lakh acres.

Incidence of land grabbing is higher in the metropolises than elsewhere, obviously due to higher level of price and value.

In Dhaka and its environs, grabbers actually far outweigh the government in terms of possession of public land. Against the 4 lakh acres of public land they occupy, the government controls only 1 lakh acres, the parliamentary standing committee on land ministry said on December 28, 2003 quoting reports of the district administrations.

The committee also received a list of business houses and elite including cabinet members and lawmakers in possession of public land. And they have continued to be in possession of their ill-gotten property for the last 15 months, although the PM and her cabinet colleagues repeatedly sounded tough against this crime

The latest whistle blowing came from the prime minister on April 9 last when at a conference of deputy commissioners (DCs) she once again termed the issue a national problem and asked the DCs to initiate stern actions against the perpetrators.

A number of DCs attending the conference blamed ruling coalition leaders for grabbing public lands in their areas. They also emphasised the need to beef up local-level land offices with more logistic facilities and manpower

CHRONOLOGY OF INACTION

"Tougher actions have to be taken against law-breakers, those who interfere in governance, tax and loan defaulters, grabbers of land and property, hoodlums and criminals without any fear," the prime minister told government secretaries at a meeting on October 4, 2003.

A high-powered secretarial committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Sa'adat Hussain was formed in that meeting on land recovery.

The committee in its report in January 2004 identified dishonest real estate companies, shrimp farmers, industry owners and politicians as well as gangs of frauds, Mafioso, forest bandits, pirates and local touts among the major land grabbers. A number of trusts, foundations and social organisations are also engaged in the malpractice, the report said.

The committee recommended some major changes to the laws concerned, including the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) and the Government and Local Authority Lands and Buildings (Recovery of Possession) Ordinance, 1970 to check land grabbing.

The committee viewed articles 417, 447 and 448 of the CrPC that deal with punishment to land grabbers as outdated and called for making the punitive provisions tougher.

ordinance has provisions to punish mentary standing committee in July

encroachers, it lacks proper guidelines and bite to prevent land grabbing and recover encroached lands. It proposed to increase the duration of imprisonment for land and property grabbing by individuals from two years to five and fine from Tk 1,000 to Tk 50,000.

In case of land or building grabbed in an orchestrated way by organised gangs, the committee recommended jail terms of 5 to 14 years along with a fine of Tk 10 lakh.

It also recommended introducing non-bailable and non-settleable clauses in Section 7(1) of the land and building recovery ordinance and amendments to Section 9(1), giving trial courts the power to fix and realise damages from the offenders and give them to the affected party.

But in more than 15 months since January last year, authorities have done nothing about the recommendations except for dishing out earsoothing words

KHAS LAND

It has become a subject of controversy as to how much Khas land the country has and how much has been gobbled up.

The land ministry, the parliamentary standing committee on land istry and study reports cite different figures.

There is only over 6 lakh acres of Khas land in the country, former land minister M Shamsul Islam told the budget session of Jatiya Sangsad (JS) in 2003.

Contradicting him, the parliamentary standing committee on land ministry quoting reports available from 53 districts last year said the government has 10 lakh acres of

The same JS body at a later meeting said the total Khas land amounts to about 14 lakh acres, of which over 5 lakh acres have been encroached on.

But a study conducted by Abul Barakat, professor of economics at Dhaka University, put the area of grabbed Khas land at more than 10 akh acres. According to the study report, the government holds 33 akh acre Khas land, of which more than 8 lakh acres are farmland, 17 lakh acres non-farmland and over 8 lakh acres water bodies.

The report said all the Khas nonfarmland and water bodies are illegally occupied and the government has lost control of 88 percent of the farmland it distributed among the poor in the last 20 years.

VESTED PROPERTY

According to a land ministry report submitted to a JS body on October 13, 2004, grabbers have gobbled up 445,726 acres or more than twothirds of 643,140 acres of vested property in the country.

But Barakat's study claims the government is the custodian of 21 lakh acres of vested property, over 90 percent of which is now in the possession of grabbers.

WAQF PROPERTY

At least 7 lakh acres of a total of 9 lakh acres of Waqf estates is in illegal possession, the religious affairs ministry reported to its parlia2003. The JS body asked the ministry to take action against the grab-

FORESTLAND

The forest department in a recent report said it has lost some 12,000 acres of forestland in Gazipur and Savar to encroachers

There is a total of 64.750 acres of forestland in Gazipur and Dhaka districts. Grabbers occupy some 11,400 acres of the 63,815-acre forestland in Gazipur and 600 acres of the 934 acres in Savar upazila of Dhaka, says the report sent to the JS standing committee on land ministry

Besides, according to various government reports, over 50,000 acres of land under government departments and agencies including the roads and highways, railway and shipping ministry have been grabbed or encroached on.

ELITE GRABBERS

The JS body on land ministry quoting reports of district administrations, land reforms board and forest department disclosed on various occasions names of a number of real estate companies and individuals in possession of grabbed public land in different places.

The forest department in a report last month said State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mizanur Rahman Sinha, ruling BNP lawmaker MA Hashem, FBCCI President Abdul Awal Mintoo and a number of companies have illegally occupied a large chunk of forestland along Dhaka-Mymensingh highway.

According to the report, the state minister's company Acme Group of Industries 1 td has grabbed 30 acres. Hashem's firm Partext Group Ltd 48 acres and Mintoo 131.94 acres of forestland in Habirbari Mouja

The other companies on the forest department's list are Square Spinning and Knitting Mills, Social Marketing Company, Brac Nursery and Poultry Farm, Jamuna Sugar Mills. Asia Textile Ltd. Madina Spinning Mill and Bongos Co Ltd.

On November 6, 2003, the JS committee said Eastern Housing, Basundhara, Madhumati, Jamuna Builders. Amin Mohammad Foundation and Magura Housing Company are occupying a large chunk of public land. On April 22, 2004, the committee

put Northern Housing, Meghna Group and Shahjalal Paper Mills on the list of large-scale land grabbers in Narayangani and Gazipur.

On June 9. 2004, it disclosed names of more realtors as land grabbers in Savar and Gazipur. hey are Metro Makers and Developers Ltd, Sharif Housing Ltd, Northern Holding Ltd, East West Property Development Ltd. Mohammadia Housing Society. Southern Development Property Ltd, and Bangladesh Development Company Ltd and New Town Housing Project of Magura Group.

But all the parties accused of and grabbing by the JS body denied the allegation.

11-year-old girl

Maniu. Editor of The Bangladesh Observer Igbal Sobhan Chowdhury Dean of Social Science at University of Liberal Arts Dr Shakhawat Ali Academy, was rescued uncon-

Balu, inaugurated the seminar. clothes were ragged and scratch

> father went to the office and mother went out to bring her brother home from a coaching centre.

neck when her mother along with some neighbours rescued her," said Sabbir Ahmed, assistant commissioner of Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP)

Police mentioned in its inquest report that she might have been raped and sent her body for autopsy.

The victim's father filed a case with the Boalia Police Station last evening suspecting his landlord's son or other boys of the building of the gruesome incident.

The police arrested five persons--the landlord's son Fazle Rabbi Lion, 36, relative Saiduzzaman Minar, 20, and neighbour Fazlur Rahman, his wife Dolna Begum and their son Delwar Hossain Sabuj.

Morshed

FROM PAGE 1 through diplomatic channel.

The foreign minister also expressed his profound shock at the death of Indian General and Bangladesh's Liberation War hero Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora and recalled his contributions in 1971.

Later, Khan had a telephone conversation with Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and discussed with him the Saarc

Foreign Secretary Hemayetuddin sent the proposed summit dates to his counterpart in Islamabad.

Savar tragedy revisits

FROM PAGE 16 BGMEA officials said compensation

will be given to the remaining five heirs, who did not show up yesterday, as soon as they come forward.

The relatives of the 24 victims are entitled to receive a total of Tk one lakh each. BGMEA is providing cheques of Tk 79.000 while the remaining Tk 21,000 will be given through the Commissioner of the Labour Court, as per existing labour laws. The Tk 21,000 disbursements have already been sent to the commissioner.

Federation of the Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) attended the ceremony as chief guest, while BGMEA President Annisul Huq presided. President Huq announced a number of new initiatives to aid the

Abdul Awal Mintoo, president of the

ailing victims and their families, and to ensure that the lives of workers are better safeguarded in the future. He said BGMEA has decided that all BGMEA members, both old and new, will be required to make life insurance compulsory for their workers. An insurance system for owners is

also under process, he said, adding

that his organization will manage

employment opportunities for the

voung relatives of the workers who

BGMEA has also decided that entrepreneurs seeking membership in BGMEA will be subjected to inquiries to determine if their buildings have

died in the tragic building collapse.

been constructed according to proper legal codes.

The compensation brought little relief for the bereaved families of the deceased yesterday. Ayesha Begum, who lost her only son Milon, the only breadwinner for her four-member family, said with an emotion-choked voice, "What I will do with this money Will it call me Ma?"

According to BGMEA, the 19 dead victims compensated yesterday were M Shah Alam, Abu Bakor Siddique, M Abdul Alim, M Nurul Amin, Manirul Islam, M Sanaullah, Soleman Sikdar (Jamal), Mamotaj Parvin, Masud Rana Sohel, Rodoy Ahmed, Abdus Salam, Abul Hashem, Asadul Islam, Abdul Gafur, Jahangir Alam, Milon, Raton Miah, Abdur Razzak and M Rafigul Islam. The names of the remaining five

dead workers, whose relatives did not show up yesterday to take their cheques, are Akidul Islam, Abul Kalam Azad, Abu Jafar, Abdul Barik and Humayun Kabir. BGMEA officials said compensa-

tion to the relatives of the other dead victims would be given in phases once applications are submitted by their Deputy General Manager M Z

Bokhari of Spectrum Sweater Industries Ltd. attended the ceremony, saying he was representing the owner.

2 BNP, Jubo Dal leaders

Suraj, were nabbed by the DB police

at the market vesterday morning.

A lieutenant of Rahman, Mollah was in charge of the extortion racket in the market's Janata Tower area. traders said.

Tejgaon police produced Rahman and Solaiman before the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka with separate forwarding reports in connection with the extortion cases. In the forwarding reports, the

police said the arrestees are extortionists and identified terrorists, and no-one dares to file any case against them fearing reprisal.

They have created a reign of terror and extortion in the area, the police noted and proposed their detention under the Special Powers Act to restrain them from continuing

NBR asks

FROM PAGE 16 company directors and five

Chinese restaurant owners match their tax returns, NBR sources Although bankers earlier pro-

tested against the move to the Bangladesh Bank governor, the NBR says its action is very much in accord with the tax laws. "In our primary investigations,

we have seen many people have filed tax returns which don't match their real income," said an NBR official. "For instance." he said. "a leading doctor earns at least 30 lakh taka a year by consulting patients and much more as commissions on diagnostic tests he advises. But, in his tax return, that doctor claims to have made only around Tk 4 lakh a

"Similarly, the maximum amount any of the film celebrities has stated in tax return as his annual earning is Tk 2 lakh. But we know they make millions every year," the revenue official said, adding, "The film stars don't cooperate with the income tax officials. They don't even allow an inspector to enter their offices."

Bankers said many of the names mentioned in the NBR notices do not match with their clients' names. "We've sought legal help in this regard," a banker said, "and our lawyers say, since the names don't match, we can't disclose their banking informa-

But sources said the NBR has the power to claim all information about all bank clients, if necessary.

The BNP and Jubo Dal leaders

were later sent to Dhaka Central Jail. However, it could not be known how many days they were detained

Seeking anonymity a Karwan Bazar source hinted that disagreement with BNP bigwigs over share of the extorted money might have led to the arrests. "They could also be arrested because of a dispute over dealings with high ups at the administration." he added. Stretching from Tejgaon Railway

Station to Bangladesh Film Development Corporation gate, Karwan Bazar houses over 22 markets and 10.000 businesses. Of them, only a half or 11 markets eight owned by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), two by private houses and one by Bangladesh Railways are legal. The rest include four fish markets on Railway land adjacent to Hotel Sonargaon, one on the DCC children's park, three on public footpaths and four squatting on commercial plots.

Mafiosi collect a few lakh taka a day in tolls from these markets. A big amount of hush money also goes to dishonest government officials to make them willing to avoid creating trouble for the illegal markets.

Real state MD

FROM PAGE 1 authorities to attach moveable and immovable property of the MD,

in Joarsahara area in the capital from the company on January 18, purchasers.

file a civil suit on November 26, 2002 against the managing director and six others for allotment of the land. They also sought a temporary injunction on the real estate company in a bid to prevent it from

The court further said the company passed an order directing the com-Property Development Company Ltd. Later, the plaintiffs filed a suit against Syed Nasiruddin on July 9, 2003 for

Aurora passes away

commanded a brigade in the same

He assumed the charge of deputy chief of army staff in June 1966 with the rank of Lieutenant General, a post which he held till April 1967. Then he served as the general officer commanding (GOC) of Eastern Sector corps headquarters from 1969 to 1973.

Known for his ice-cool temperament in the face of the most adverse situations on the war front, it was under his leadership that the Indian forces carried out the lightning strike in the then East Pakistan, which ultimately led to the liberation of Bangladesh with the fall of Pakistani troops

Gen Aurora presided over the historic surrender by Pakistani troops under Gen AAK Niazi in Dhaka on December 16, 1971. The photograph showing Niazi signing the surrender deed has become an abiding symbol of an epoch-making event in world history that saw the birth of Bangladesh as an independent nation.

of Shiromani Akali Dal. When Niazi died last year, Aurora remembered him as a man of few

words. "I am sad. I came to know place tomorrow with full military honour at the Brar Square in Delhi has been a quiet chap," Aurora said.

CJ ducks

FROM PAGE 16 lawyers also said, if necessary, they will demand resignation of the chief justice. They accused the chief justice of violating his oath and obliging the government.

About 150 lawyers gathered at the Supreme Court building gate at 8.15am and joined a protest rally chaired by SCBA President Mahbubey Alam.

Speaking at the rally, Alam said they have requested the chief justice not to assign Faizee to any bench but he [chief justice] did not respond to their demand. "The chief justice has two options -- as the chief of the judiciary

for Faizee or sacrifice himself by putting Faizee in the seat of god," Alam added. He urged the chief justice not to make himself controversial for a

person like Faizee

and protector of constitution, he can

refrain from designating any bench

Faruk said, "We are protesting the activities of chief justice...If you [chief justice] think our demonstration is meaningless, ask Faizee to show his original LLB certificate.'

Former SCBA president Ozaer

Bar Council member Sahara Khatun told the rally, "We are preparing to file a criminal case against Faizee for lying about his age.'

SCBA former vice president Sirajul Haq noted, "The chief justice is still trying to protect Faizee. It seems that he is acting as per the directives of [prime minister] Khaleda Zia, [law minister] Moudud or the government."

The demonstration was participated, among others, by SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, barrister Shawkat Ali Khan, Abdul Halim, Mohammad Israfil and Abdus Salam Mondol.

After the sit-in, the lawyers brought out a procession that marched on the Supreme Court premises chanting slogans like: "Our demand is one: thief Faizee's resignation!" "Khaleda Zia's blessing: Faizee's fake certificate!" Meanwhile, pro-government

Secretary Jainul Abedin told the press, "The SCBA movement is a political one. They [protesting lawyers] are using the forum politically. As per the constitution, the chief justice can not deny a judge any bench.' certificate at the Bar Council was the

result of personal conflict," Abedin

claimed. "If anyone has anything to

say against a sitting judge, there is a

forum called the Supreme Judicial

AL lawmakers

voting day," Opposition Whip Faruk Khan told The Daily Star yesterday.

Seven or eight AL lawmakers will reach Chittagong today while quite a few others will go there before the A number of senior AL leaders

are now campaigning for Mohiuddin

Islamist orientation" in its society and government, the report

released on Monday notes.

of the security situation. The defence ministry report says India's extended neighbourhood is uneasy because of internal instability, authoritarian or military rule, extremist political or religious move-

As a result, "at its widest level, with some variations for better or worse, India's strategic environment remained largely unchanged", it

Despite operations against al-Qaeda and the Taliban on Pakistan-Afghanistan border, the principal threats to peace and stability in the region remained the combination of fundamentalism and terrorism nurtured in 'madrasas' and training camps in the area and the danger of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and access to them by fundamentalists and militants

according to the report. The report says India's overall security concerns, despite the positive developments in relations with China and Pakistan, have remained "basically the same." China and India maintained

peace and tranquility along the border and stepped up efforts to address differences on the boundary issue through talks. However, China's close defence relationship with and military assistance to

Commotion

FROM PAGE 16

BDR commanding officer Lt Col Mominur Rahman confirmed the

be crossing the border illegally.

On April 27 morning the BSF gunned down Bangladeshi national Mustafizur Rahman near Bhomra

Campaign fever grips

Organising Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury, also the political secretary to the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, and Bandarban AL leader Bir Bahadur MP were special guests.

Sylhet City Corporation Mayor Badruddin Quamran, AL central leaders Asaduzzaman Noor, Deepankar Talukder of Rangamati and Major General (retd) Subid Ali Bhuiyan joined yesterday's electoral campaign for Mohiuddin in different areas under Purba Bakolia and Uttar Halishahar wards The Nagorik Committee, as part

of campaign for its candidate Mohiuddin, will organise a public meeting at Laldighi Maidan tomorrow afternoon. Gano Forum President Dr Kamal

address the meeting. On the other hand, the campaign

Moyeenuddin Khan Badal

Hossain, AL Presidium Member

Rahman Sarwar joined the electoral campaign for Mir Nasir vesterday. Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman and former commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury are conduct-

race of CCC polls Mir Mohammad

Nasir Uddin is also getting more

intensified with ministers and MPs

of ruling BNP attending it every day.

To drum up support for Mir Nasir

BNP Senior Joint Secretary General

Tarique Rahman will arrive in

Chittagong on a 3-day visit on

for Mir Nasir at Laldighi Maidan on

May 7, the closing day for the elec-

ing campaign for Mir Nasir almost

He will attend a public meeting

Barisal City Mayor Majibur

every day while BNP stalwart Suranjit Sengupta and JSD leader Colonel (retd) Oli Ahmed Bir Bikram also joined them yesterday after-

toral campaign.

FROM PAGE 1

headquarters at Fort Williams, I met him several times and was present with General Osmany (MAG Osmany, then chief of staff of Bangladesh Armed Forces) in discussions with him. I saw him always trying to help us n all possible ways," said Khondoker, former air force chief

Gen Aurora visited Mukti Bahinee headquarters several times to discuss the mode of assistance, he said. "We earnt a lot from him." The retired air vice marshal went

the great soldier for long." He expressed his sympathy for Aurora's family members and prayed

to help us."

Recalling the motivation

Bangladesh forces received from Aurora during the turbulent days of the

Teliapara (in Habiganj district) in July-August (in '71) and assured us of all

December. "Although we did not have direct contact with him (Aurora), we made

contact through our division. The role

Before the formation of joint forces,

on, "All those who knew him will miss

genocide and brutality of Pakistani

"He was sympathetic to us and committed to helping us for our cause, said Rafig, also former home minister

Liberation War, KM Shafiullah, then commander of 'S-Force,' said, "In fact, General Aurora was a father figure for

Shafiullah was commander of Sector-3 from April to September and of S-Force from September to

he played during the war make us heavily indebted to him." he said. Shafiullah last met Aurora in Delhi

at an Independence Day function organised by Bangladesh High Commission in 1998. "During his short stint in Delhi, he managed time to attend the programme," said the former army chief. "During the time we stayed

together, he (Aurora) recalled the war days very passionately," said Shafiullah. CONDOLENCES

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan and

Hasina condoled the death of Gen Aurora through separate messages and recalled his remarkable contribution to Bangladesh's independence. In a message to Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and

Foreign Minister Natwar Singh Hasina conveyed her deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family of Aurora and said the people of Bangladesh will always remember his contribution in their Liberation War. She recalled the supreme sacrifice of 18,000 Indian soldiers in the war to

Morshed Khan, in a message to his Indian counterpart K Natwar Singh said, "I am deeply shocked and grieved to learn the passing away of Lt

liberate Bangladesh.

He expressed sympathies for the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul. Mujibnagar and Freedom Fighter Officers and Employees' Central

It recalled his contribution to thised with his bereaved family and

ACC to probe

FROM PAGE 1 can file cases under the ACC Act against government officials already received departmental

"As there is a provision that one cannot be punished twice for the same crime, we will seek legal

buried in the collapsed structure so the death toll is now 27." Lahore mayor. Mian Amir Mahmood told AFP. "We have an unknown number of people

who are still under the debris.

Residents in the block had previously complained about the sale and

could do nothing," he said. At least nine ice cream street

vendors and salesmen at an outlet adjoining the small factory died after they slept the night at the plant. Rana Mohammad Ashraf, an officer in charge of the local police station, told AFP. Their bodies were badly muti-

the debris. fluorescent jackets clambered over the wreckage and scurried to hunt for

bulldozers uncovered another piece of debris. Gas cylinders were also recov-Television footage showed dazed survivors in ragged clothes being pulled from underneath the concrete. Hysterical relatives of the dead and

survivors whenever the cranes and

and two children. Seven of the fatalities were from the same family, Lahore police superintendent Mobin Ahmed toldAFP. The initial explosion on the truck

basement, resulting in a huge explo-Chatha said.

broke window panes of nearby houses," he said.

Bureau of Anti-Corruption to the government for presidential "We want to keep the guidelines a secret. But there is an apprehension that the secrecy would no more

appoint a secretary to the Commission on deputation in a Prime Minister's Office.

Media doesn't taint

journalists, which bars them from performing their duties freely. "The ruling class of the country always tries to strangulate the voices of the media for their political interest," said Prof Chowdhury.

are many instances of control over

devouring the newspaper industry depriving the readers of their right to sufficient information Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam said freedom of the press is vital for ensuring good

He said some ministers of the

incumbent government are casting

governance in the country.

He also criticised the govern-

ment policy towards distribution of

government advertisements as well

as the increase in adverts in the

newspaper. Advertisements are

aspersions against the media and journalists to vitiate the journalism profession. Referring to the remark "freedom of the press means freedom to lie" made by the Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Anam said, "I condemn the statement of the law minister. The law minister should come up with

ment.' "Press freedom means people's right to know. It is to uphold that right that journalists work for, sometimes risking their lives," Anam said.

proof before making such com-

Renowned lawyer Barrister Amir UI Islam said journalists should be given exemption from the criminal libel law to protect them from harassment. He also observed that the Official Secrets Acts should be repealed as it curbs free flow of information. President of a faction of the

Bangladesh Federal Union of

Journalists (BFUJ) Gias Kamal

Chowdhury urged the government

to make the Bangladesh Press

Council functional. Presided over by Safma and National Press Club President Reazuddin Ahmed, the inaugural session was also addressed by Safma General Secretary and Editor of The Daily Aurthoneeti Jahiduzzaman Faruk, Executive Director of MMC Kamrul Hasan

Khan, journalist Baby Moudud. Asif Kabir, son of slain Khulnabased journalist Humayun Kabir

Hazarı

FROM PAGE 1

absconding since late 2001, did not mention his present address "I consider myself a dead body after the attack of the caretaker government." Hazari said in the statement. He said the conspirators have misguided party chief and

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh

Hasina to expel him from the party.

his last days in iail in his homeland and he would be obliged if he gets the state honour as a freedom fighter after his death. But before going to jail he wants

to talk to journalists, the statement

any other party after serving the AL

Hazari also said he will not ioir

Hazari said he wanted to spend

The expelled AL leader said he is now writing a book that would reveal a lot of unknown facts to people. "If I cannot publish the book, I will put it on website," he said. Hazari had hogged the headlines

frequently for his criminal activities

during the AL rule in 1996-2001, but in the statement he claimed the press reports about him were false.

Locals found the body yesterday

for 35 years.

morning and informed police who sent the body to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy. In another incident, police infor-

Outlaws kill cop

mant Safauyat Laskar was killed on the same night. Six armed men stormed the

house of Safauyat, took him to a nearby field and slaughtered him there, police said.

Mafroza Begum Mili, 11-year old student of class V at PN Government Girls High School and daughter of Mansur Rahman Mollah, an instructor of the Postal

scious from the balcony of their rented house. Doctors at the Raishahi Medical College and Hospital declared her dead and told newsmen that she might have been raped as her

marks were found on her body. She was at home alone as her "There was a scarf around her

him first when we were together at a college in Quetta and after that I met him during the Bangladesh war. He

others purchased 30 kathas of land 1998. But the company attempted to sell the same land to others instead of handing over its possession to the

selling the land to others. contested the suit and the court pany to maintain a status quo. But the company sold 1.03 acres of land to the managing director of East-West

in India's first war with Pakistan over disputed Kashmir in 1947. During his retirement, Aurora championed India's Sikh minority cause. He opposed the security forces' "Operation Blue Star" in the Golden Temple, the holiest shrine of Sikhs, in the northern city of Amritsar in 1984 to flush out Sikh militants and took up the cause of

Minister Pranab Mukheriee said he would be remembered as a great war-strategist and a great son of Decorated with Padma Bhushan, a civilian award of the Indian government, and Param Vishist Seva Medal of the Indian

Aurora is survived by a son and a Gen Aurora's funeral will take

This prompted the landowners to

Besides 1971, he also took part

victims in the anti-Sikh riots following the assassination of Indira Describing Lt Gen Aurora as the "principal architect" of India's victory in the Bangladesh war, Defence

army, Aurora was elected to Rajya Sabha, the upper House of Indian Parliament, in 1986, as a candidate

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum's General 'The cancellation of Faizee's

Council. They can go there.

FROM PAGE 16 different polling centres on the

in the port city. Indian defence

It, however, said Bhutan and Myanmar showed "exemplary good neighbourliness" by refusing sanctuary to anti-India insurgent groups. On Nepal, the report said the imposition of the emergency, arrest of political leaders and press cen-

sorship led to a further deterioration

ments, weak state structures and insurgencies.

Panic has gripped the villagers along the border in Satkhira district as the BSF has threatened to gun down if any Bangladeshi is found to

Bangladesh loses a friend

him in May 1971 at Mukti Bahinee

for peace of his departed soul. Rafiqul Islam, commander of Sector-1 (June-December) during the Liberation War, said Gen Aurora was deeply moved by the sufferings of Bangladeshis. "As a professional soldier, he could not imagine the soldiers to our people. So, he decided

The former army chief said, "We got all sorts of help from him during the war. Before the formation of joint forces, he visited our headquarters at

> Welfare Association of Bangladesh also expressed profound condolence at the death of Gen Aurora. Bangladesh's independence, sympa-

General Jagiit Singh Aurora.

punishments," he said.

27 killed FROM PAGE 16 "We have seen three more bodies

storage of gas cylinders in the neighbourhood, Mahmood added. "However this is a federal subject and as provincial government we

lated. A further nine people were wounded, Ashraf added. Witnesses said they could hear cries for help from people buried under Around 50 emergency workers in

missing wailed and tore at their hair The dead included four women

spread to other cylinders stored in the

sion that "100 percent destroyed" the building, police officer Zubair Nawaz "The blast was so powerful that it

The administration of Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital, announced compensation of 100,000 rupees (18,000 dollars) for the dead and 50.000 rupees for the

explanation on whether we can file cases under ACC Act against those given insufficient punishment by their departments for big corrup-Sources said many trade union

leaders and officials and employees

with political backing in different

government departments escape

punishments using their political identity despite doing huge corruption. "Steps taken against them in the name of punishment often amount to mere eyewash," said an ACC source. Once the ACC investigates the departmental actions, it will be able to pinpoint the cases where insuffi-

awarded for big corruption and identify the people involved in the whole process "Apart from seeking records of departmental punitive actions already taken, we will seek information about whether departmental cases will be filed against any

official or employee in the future,

Asked which point of time will

they summon the files from, Justice

Sultan said: "It is obvious that we will

said the chairman.

cient punishments have been

not be able to look into all cases. We'll decide later from which time we will seek the records. "Our efforts also aim to make the government aware of corruption taking place in its different tiers and steps taken for those.'

The Commission at a meeting

yesterday decided to seek legal interpretation from the attorney general on sending its guidelines on screening of former staff of the

ACC MEETING

be there once we send them to the government. So we have decided to seek legal interpretation about whether we need to send it to the government," Justice Sultan said. He said the government may

couple of days. A source said the ACC sent a proposal to the government on April 23 for appointing an additional secretary as the ACC Secretary. The additional secretary is currently working as the project director of a housing project with the