

3,422 acres of govt land recovered from grabbers

66,000 acres illegally occupied; grabbers could not be evicted in 33 districts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has recovered about 3,422 acres of encroached land worth about Tk 1,600 crore in the last 11 months, said a report submitted to a secretary-level national committee yesterday.

As many as 66,000 acres of land has been encroached by land grabbers across the country.

The government, however, does not have statistics how many cases have been filed against the encroachers and the status of the cases, meeting sources said.

The National Committee for Recovery of Illegally Occupied

Land, Investigation and Monitoring yesterday at its ninth meeting at the Secretariat decided to make an estimate of the encroached land.

The committee asked the administration of the districts to submit to it reports on the legal status of the encroached land. It also ordered the district administration to recover the encroached pieces of land.

As many as 153 acres of encroached land was recovered in December alone, the meeting was told.

A meeting source said the illegal occupants could not be evicted in 33 districts including Barisal, Faridpur, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Bhola and

Chittagong in November.

Cabinet Secretary ASM Abdul Halim chaired the meeting, while Land Secretary Abdul Alim Khan, Housing and Public Works Secretary Iqbaluddin Chowdhury, Information Secretary Haidar Ali, the additional inspector general of police, the additional attorney general, and the law ministry solicitor were present.

"The rate of recovery is not satisfactory," Halim told the press after the meeting. "We have

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Cops taking 'tolls' from vessels on Turag

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Police are systematically extorting money from all vessels plying the river Turag, threatening the navigators with the prospect of 'robbery' if they refuse to pay.

On Friday at around 2:00pm, two armed police constables with a local hoodlum in a motorboat were seen extorting Tk 100 from each passing vessel on the river near the Adabar area. The collection of "toll" continued throughout the day with the policemen's boat chasing and mooring with every passing vessel for the transaction and then moving on to the next incoming vessel.

Up to 500 vessels, mostly carrying sand for the Ameen Bazaar market a kilometre away from the spot, pass through the river every day bringing in sand from the river Meghna in the downstream.

The two constables identified themselves as Mostafa and Ainuddin and said they were working for the Adabar Police Station. Mostafa was wearing a decorative badge that he had earned for his 'good services' to the society. When asked why they were mooring with every vessel, Mostafa replied that the area is full of robbers and they were ensuring security for the vessels.

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14-party to lay siege to DC offices today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine will lay siege to all the deputy commissioner's offices in the country today demanding reduction in prices of electricity, fertiliser, seeds, diesel and kerosene as well as assurance of smooth supplies and fair prices of agro-products.

The siege is part of the opposition's two-month agitation programmes declared at its Paltan grand rally on November 22.

The opposition combine will also stage demonstrations in the capital today.

Processions and rallies will be held on January 5, 2006 in all the districts demanding impartial enquiries and punishment to the persons responsible for the August 21 grenade attacks, August 17 serial blasts, attack on the British high commissioner and the killing of former minister Shah AMS Kibria,

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25 police stations to be modernised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will develop 25 police stations across the country as models equipping them with sophisticated firearms, computers and adequate number of vehicles to enhance their crime-busting capacity.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnec) yesterday approved a project in this regard that also includes setting up of a digital forensic laboratory in the capital to check cyber crime.

All police stations in the country will be computerised in phases and in the first phase a total of Tk 2,911 crore will be spent on this, Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told reporters emerging from the meeting.

The model police stations will be developed under the Japan-funded project "Enhancing the Capacity of Bangladesh Police" involving Tk 81 crore.

An assistant superintendent of police (ASP) will be in-charge of each of these police stations to provide better services to people. Presently, sub-inspectors work as officer-in-charge (OC) of police stations.

The Ecnec meeting with Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the chair approved another 13 projects involving an expenditure of Tk 2,911 crore. The projects include a special diabetic hospital for women and children in Dhaka and developing the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway (Daudkandi to Chittagong) as a four-lane road.

"All police stations in the country will be computerised in phases and in the first phase a total of Tk 2,911 crore will be spent on this," Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman told reporters emerging from the meeting.

The police need modern technologies and sophisticated firearms as well as vehicles to tackle increasing criminal activities, he said.

The model police stations include Gulshan, Ramna, Motijheel, Keraniganj and Savar in Dhaka, Fatullah in Narayanganj, Tongi in Gazipur, Doublemogram and Boalia in Chittagong, Sonadanga in

Khulna, Netrakona Sadar, Cox's Bazar Sadar, Barisal Kotwali, Moulvibazar Sadar and Sylhet Kotwali.

A meeting source said the government will set up a digital forensic laboratory under the same project in the wake of increasing cyber crime in the country in the forms of cyber terrorism, credit card forgery, hacking and e-mail threats.

Under another project approved by the Ecnec, the government will procure two rescue vessels at a cost of Tk 263 crore. The finance minister said the existing rescue vessels are inadequate to conduct salvage operation after launch accidents.

Under a project aid of Tk 1,699 crore, Daudkandi-Chittagong portion of the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway will be developed to four

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Boy kidnapped from Dhaka rescued at Saidpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Police rescued a seven-year-old boy at Saidpur and arrested three kidnappers early yesterday. The boy was abducted from Dhaka on Saturday.

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Saidpur told The Daily Star a police team acting on a tip off raided a bus counter and rescued Imtiaz Faisal Siyam, 7, from the grips of Raju, 18, Masum, 19 and Rubel, 19. The

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Prayer Timing

December 27

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

ASIAN CUP FOOTBALL

Bangladesh move to qualifying stage

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh defeated Pakistan twice inside 13 days on Pakistan soil to reach the qualifying round of the Asian Cup 2007 yesterday.

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FOOD DRIVE RESTARTS

Bengal Biscuit, Priceclub fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

the rules of Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI).

The court handed down the punishment on the biscuit company for not marking expiry dates on its products.

During the raid on Priceclub, the court found at least nine imported food items, which were not approved by the BSTI. The items were mostly tomato ketchup,

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Chinese scientists have produced the world's first live vaccine against bird flu and Newcastle disease -- two killer infections for poultry, the agriculture ministry announced.

The recombinant bivalent vaccine, developed by the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute, will be a great boost to prevention and control of the two epidemics in

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and the process of preparing the defence policy is taking too much time. The committee decided to expedite the task and for that it will sit down with the high-profile council formed nearly two years ago to draft the policy.

After the meeting, which was held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Awami League lawmaker and committee member Shawkat Ali told The Daily Star, "We wanted to know the reasons behind the delay in preparing the draft. We are now confused whether the policy will be framed at all."

In response to the lawmakers' queries on drafting the defence

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