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## Insatiable greed wipes out a reserved forest

Not a single tree seen in 21-year-old woodland; rampant logging allowed for bribe

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

Jugalchhari Reserved Forest in the hill district of Khagrachhari does not exist anymore because of mismanagement and misdeeds of forest department officials, sources said.

As a result the government lost a large sum of investment and at least 10 types of wild lives and 25 kinds of birds lost their safe habitat, environmentalists said adding that the large reserved forest could have been a wonderful natural habitat for wild lives.

A total of 2,415 acres of the reserved forest, which was supposed to grow into a lush habitat



A part of Jugalchhari Reserved Forest in Khagrachhari hill district left without trees due to plunder by a section of forest officials for long.

for many kinds of wild lives in the last 21 years since 1984, is now totally destroyed due to rampant illegal felling of trees by loggers under the safe shelter of the officials of Divisional Forest Office (DFO) and Panchhari Range Office.

Local forest officials of all levels directly helped the loggers to plunder the forest in exchange for hefty sums of bribes, making sure that they would not go out into the forest for routine inspections and monitoring, but they did not hesitate to misappropriate allocated government fund for the purpose, sources said.

A total of 2,565.50 acres of land

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## Short scope for 'legal' money whitening

NBR to accept taxes with 5pc fine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will allow whitening of the legally earned but undisclosed money until July 31.

The National Board Revenue (NBR) issued a circular to that effect yesterday. The provision taking effect today will not impose any punishment but a fine. It states that a taxpayer would have to pay in penalty five percent of the total amount to be whitened in addition to the tax at regular rates.

"We are offering the opportunity for a certain period on suggestions of different organisations and trade bodies," NBR Chairman Badiur Rahman told reporters at his office yesterday

evening.

He defended the decision saying that it would yield some positive results for the economy.

The circular says the facility will not be applicable to ill-gained money. Besides, the people who stand accused or convicted of tax evasion and those who might be charged with similar offence in a future probe by concerned authorities will not be allowed to legalise their money under this provision.

The NBR, the central authority for tax administration, outlined two types of taxpayers who will benefit from the two-month provision.

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## Litu remanded, Mintoo in jail

Charges pressed against Huda, wife; ailing Jalil undergoes 17 tests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-corruption Commission yesterday pressed charges against former communications minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda, and against Sonali Bank CBA leader Feroz Miah and his wife Roushan Ara Begum, in connection with two separate graft cases.

Nazmul and Feroz are currently in detentions.

Meanwhile, police yesterday submitted a charge sheet to a Gazipur court against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's adviser Brig (ret'd) ASM Hannan Shah and his son Shah Rezaul Hannan in connection with an extortion case,

both of whom are also currently detained.

Former FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo was sent to Dhaka Central Jail yesterday, while recently sacked chief conservator of forests Osman Gani, and the owner of Bengal Group, Abul Khair Litu, were sent to five and three days of remand respectively. All three were detained in recent anti-corruption drives.

And detained Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil was still admitted to the coronary care unit of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University yesterday.

The investigation officer (IO) of

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## No place for defaulters, tax dodgers, criminals in FBCCI polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Loan defaulters, tax evaders and persons convicted of crimes, corruption and moral turpitude will not be eligible to contest election of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) within five years of their conviction, a government handout said yesterday.

The commerce ministry in a letter to the apex trade body asked it

to change rules relating to participation in its election within 15 days from yesterday as per the Trade Organisation Ordinance, 1961.

If the FBCCI fails to amend its rules as required within the time limit, the government can change the rules through a gazette notification.

Meanwhile, the FBCCI Election Commission has primarily fixed August 16 for the biennial polls.

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## Seoul reopens door to Bangladeshi workers

ASHEFAQ WARES KHAN

Bangladesh and South Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Gwacheon City yesterday to restart manpower export and allow Dhaka to tap deeper into the Korean demand for 50,000 workers in textile sector.

Korea also expressed interest in investing in Bangladesh's energy and infrastructure sectors on the

back of last week's government decision to award operating licence to the \$1 billion Korean Export Processing Zone (KEPZ).

Dhaka also backed South Korea to host the 2014 Asian Games in March, sources say.

Foreign and Expatriates' Welfare Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury, currently in South Korea, is set to meet a legion of South Korean investors, including massive conglomerates Youngone,

and Daewon, to explore investment in these sectors.

The manpower MoU institutes the new Employment Permit System (EPS), a long held demand of Dhaka not met due to Seoul's reservations over a large number of undocumented Bangladeshi workers and the last BNP-led coalition government's reluctance to give the go ahead to KEPZ, sources say.

The reluctance to award the

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Water of the Turag near the capital turns pitch-black due to dumping of factory wastes. The photo was taken yesterday ahead of World Environment Day today.

## Polls to be held within caretaker govt's timeframe

Says president

UNB, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh is a democratic country and the next parliamentary polls will be held as soon as possible within the timeframe set by the government.

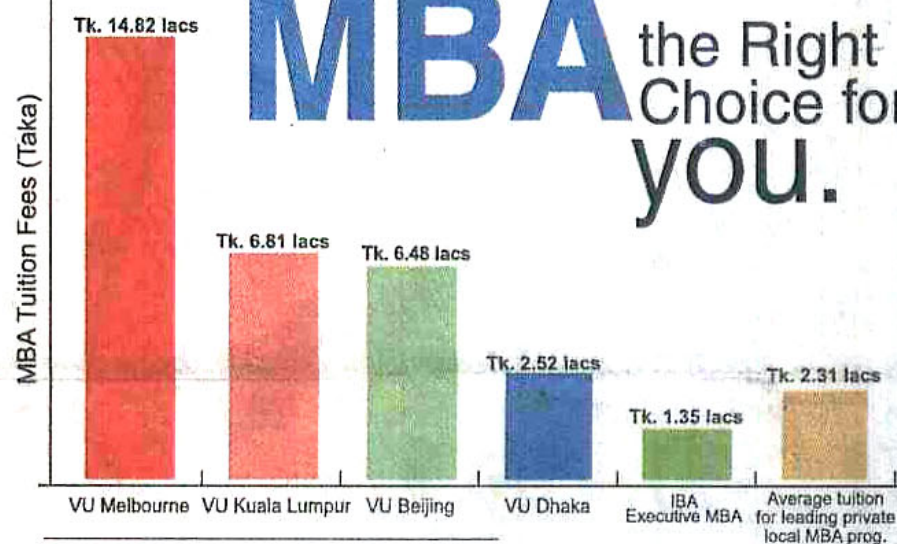
He said the present government is creating a level playing field for holding the upcoming general election in a free, fair and impartial manner and has given priority to fighting corruption.

The president made the observations when the newly appointed Ambassador of Albania to Bangladesh, Maxhun Peka, presented his credentials to him (president) at the Bangabhaban.

Welcoming the new envoy, the president expressed the hope that the relations between the two countries would be strengthened

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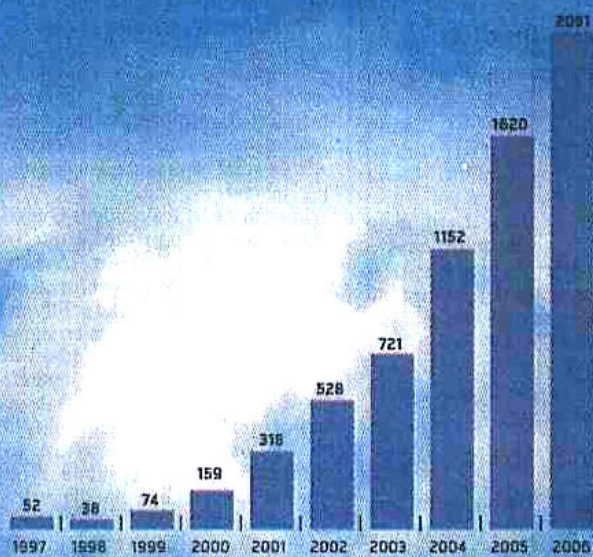
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