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## Hasina greets Manmohan

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday congratulated Dr Manmohan Singh on his assumption of office as Indian prime minister for a second term.

In a message of felicitation, Hasina hoped that the existing bilateral relations between the two neighboring countries would be strengthened further in the days to come.

The prime minister wished good health, happiness and long life of Manmohan Singh and success of his government.

Manmohan Singh was sworn in as prime minister yesterday along with the induction of his 20-member new coalition government.

He is the first Indian prime minister since the country's post-independence leader Jawaharlal Nehru, to return to the office for a successive term.



A vested quarter fills up a portion of the Turag near Sinnirtek to sell plots to people. The photo was taken from Mirpur flood embankment across the river.

PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Rally round rivers

We've started to expose some of the many outrageous encroachments on four Dhaka rivers-- Turag, Buriganga, Balu and Shitalakhya--with a plea to the government to go and check grabbers' claims.

We invite all including our readers to join our campaign for free rivers, lifeline of the capital. Lend your hands and together we can win a war against these powerful, rich and ruthless river-gobblers.

## Clarification, our reply

The Gas Transmission Company Ltd (GTCL) in a clarification to The Daily Star news headlined "\$150m Gas Compressor Project: GTCL goes for 'forced' re-tender for 3rd time" published May 12 differed on some points of the story.

The GTCL denied forcing the re-tender and said after a long drawn process of first and second stage bid evaluation of the two bidders, none of them was found fully responsive to the bid requirements and hence their bids were disqualified by the GTCL board. The GTCL was asked to initiate a fresh bidding process.

The clarification said there were no "heated arguments" SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

# Plots in Turag up for sale

### Tk 3 lakh asked for a decimal; 2-km stretch grabbed by sand traders; BIWTA turns a blind eye to encroachment

**PINAKI ROY**

Everybody is very much aware of the sand traders encroaching on the Turag and erecting illegal structures by the riverbank in Amin Bazar and Diabari near the capital.

A big plinth has recently been raised grabbing a large portion of the river just opposite the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's (BIWTA) Sinnirtek jetty on Mirpur

flood embankment.

The grabber has raised the plinth about 10 feet above the water level which easily draws attention.

"A developer is filling up the river to sell the land as plots. Some BIWTA officials came to investigate, but there was a compromise," said a sand trader indicating exchange of bribe.

The trader did not tell the name of the developer and there was no signboard on the plinth

to identify them. But it was evident that development work of the plinth was going on at a slow pace.

Posing as a potential buyer, this correspondent collected phone number (01720964557) of one of the grabbers Mizan Rahman. The grabber said they are going to fill up 167 decimals, of which 140 decimals has already been filled up.

He has already sold plots to seven to eight people at the rate of Tk 3 lakh per decimal. You

don't need to worry about papers. Many people will love to stay by the side of the river, so we filled it up," he assured.

"We take this land on lease from BIWTA giving them Tk 6 lakh annually," said the manager of sand trader Md Zahurul's outlet when asked if they had grabbed the riverbank.

Zahurul is one of the sand traders, who occupy a stretch of around two kilometres of

## How they slip through net

**PINAKI ROY**

The river-grabbers get off scot-free for a section of crooked land officials and lack of sufficient records to detect documents forged to back up claims on land.

Land office sources said they only have a mouza map of the cadastral survey (CS), the first land survey that ended in 1940, at their disposal.

Though later some other surveys including revision survey (RS) and Dhaka survey were conducted, most of the

## COMPENSATION FOR BARAPUKURIA SUBSIDENCE

# Miners, villagers strike deal

**SHARIER KHAN**

Representatives of villagers affected by land subsidence caused by coal mining in Barapukuria have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Barapukuria Coal Mine Company Ltd (BCMCL) for compensation and cooperation.

The BCMCL will pay compensation for loss of land at a premium price to around 2,400 affected people of seven villages

around the mine, according to the MoU signed earlier last week.

The price of land may be fixed on the basis of that offered to affected people in Maowa for the Padma bridge project in the past years, and also taking into account inflation rate up to 2009. The price may be fixed also on the basis of the highest price of land in the affected Barapukuria area, or the higher price between these two options.

And the villagers will help the authori-

ties ensure law and order in the mining area. The villagers however said if payment of compensation is delayed, it might not be possible for them to help maintain law and order.

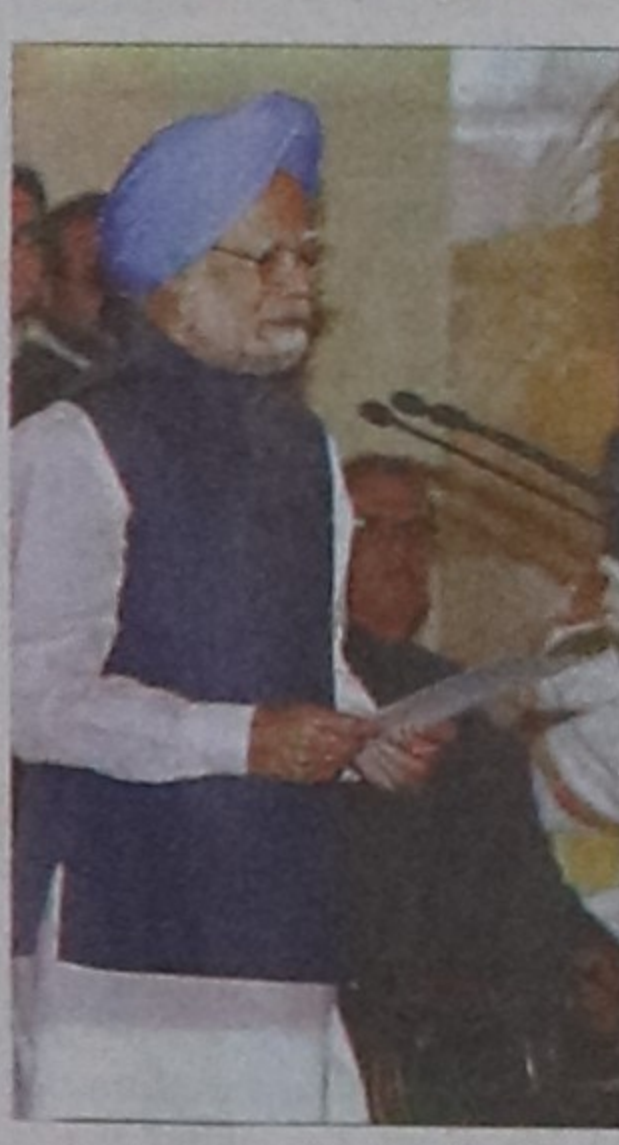
Meanwhile, law and order has become an issue of concern for the mine authorities as some outsiders are fuelling conflicts among mine workers, the mine's Chinese operators and BCMCL officials and staffs.

"We have found that certain people of

A  
**The Daily Star**  
and  
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joint initiative  
For the  
**Prime Minister's Attention**

Please look out for ...

## Manmohan sworn in for second term



**PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi**

Manmohan Singh was sworn in as the prime minister of India for a second term yesterday along with the induction of his 20-member new coalition government.

However, his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) had its first coalition hiccup following differences between Congress and its ally Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) over sharing of ministerial posts and portfolios.

President Pratibha Patil

## Two gunfights, 5 muggers shot

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

At least five alleged muggers sustained bullet wounds yesterday in two gunfights between police and criminals at Mohammadpur and Kadamtoli in the city.

Statistics say at least 20 gunfights have so far taken place since the law enforcement agencies launched the "Combat Operation" to fight criminals in different parts of the city. Some 50 persons were bullet-hit in these incidents.

Masud Miah, 25, Mohammad Sohel, 26, Joj Miah, 30, and Liton, 31, received bullets in a gun battle at Nobinagar Housing in Mohammadpur early yesterday.

Police said the gun battle ensued when they retaliated firing on them from the criminals.

In another incident at Muradpur under Kadamtoli Police Station, Eskender alias Rana, 26, was wounded when his accomplices attempted to snatch him from police.

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