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River drive in week

Govt to go all-out against grabbers; asks 5 DCs to get surveys, demarcation done within HC deadline of Nov 30

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will launch an all-out eviction drive against river grabbers around the capital within the next seven or ten days, decided the first meeting of a high-powered taskforce committee on river recovery held at the shipping ministry yesterday.

It also ordered the deputy commissioners (DC) of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Munshiganj, and Manikganj to complete surveys and demarcation of the rivers Buriganga, Shitalakha, Balu, and Turag around Dhaka by November 30 in compliance with the High Court directives.

The government formed the 27-

member taskforce committee on August 24 merging a previously formed taskforce, and the Taskforce Implementation Committee to evict river grabbers, ensure navigability and natural flow of the rivers, conserve the environment, and to restore the rivers system.

The taskforce, headed by Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan, is primarily intended for reclaiming the four rivers around Dhaka and other important rivers of the country from the clutches of grabbers and polluters. It comprises four ministers and two state ministers among others.

Shahjahan Khan said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will soon arrange a tour by the

taskforce members to see firsthand the condition of Dhaka rivers.

"We will immediately write to polluting industries, Dhaka City Corporation, Dhaka Wasa, and Mitford Hospital forbidding them to dump wastes into the rivers," he said.

Commercial launch operators will be asked not to dump wastes in the rivers, but to collect them in waste bins.

A total of 19 mosques have been built encroaching upon the four rivers around Dhaka, he added.

The shipping ministry already decided to build walkways and driveways to protect the riverbanks as well.

Dr Hasan Mahmud, state minister for

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Hasina, Khaleda to rally together against poverty

Take oath tomorrow from same dais

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Khaleda Zia will address an anti-poverty rally tomorrow from the same dais and take oath to fight together to eradicate poverty, Speaker Abdul Hamid said yesterday.

The speaker will chair the rally and conduct the oath at Bangabandhu International Convention Centre in the capital as part of observance of the International Day for Eradication of Poverty.

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Order to arrest Jalil for tax dodge

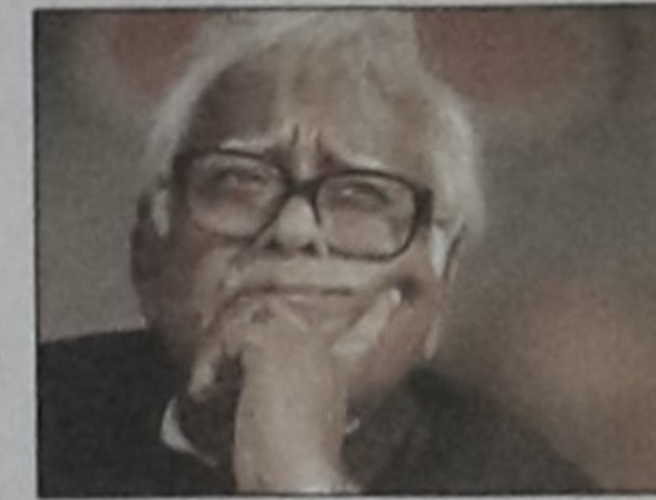
COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued an arrest warrant against former Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil in a case filed by National Board of Revenue (NBR) in connection with dodging income tax to the tune of Tk 4 lakh.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of Senior Special Judge's Court issued the warrant against the ruling AL lawmaker in line with a case filed by Deputy Tax Commissioner Bazlur Rahman Khan.

The case was filed under section 165/166 of the Income Tax Ordinance 1984.

After a short hearing, the judge recorded statement of the complainant, took cognisance



of charges and fixed October 26 for the next hearing.

The court also directed officer-in-charge (OC) of Motijheel Police Station to submit report on the arrest warrant by October 26.

In his complaint, Bazlur Rahman mentioned that Jalil, chairman of Mercantile Bank Ltd, had evaded income tax worth Tk 4,07,485 out of an income from the bank amounting to Tk 54,60,234 for the fiscal years 2003-2008. He concealed his income of Tk 54 lakh in his tax returns submitted to the NBR.

Jalil repeatedly provided false information about his real income and expenditure to Income Tax Department and did not show his

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Bashundhara case binned

Court says defamation charges against Prothom Alo not convincing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday dismissed a defamation case filed by Bashundhara Group against the Prothom Alo Editor Matiuur Rahman, Transcom Group Chairman Latifur Rahman and Prothom Alo journalist Mizanur Rahman Khan.

Executive Director of Bashundhara Steel and Engineering Ltd Major (ret'd) Zahidur Rahman filed the case with the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate in Dhaka yesterday morning.

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Nat'l probe mocks Bashundhara's mall fire claim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bashundhara Group's filing of a general diary levelling a ludicrous accusation of arson against the editors of the dailies, Prothom Alo and Samakal, seems like a delirious ranting in light of the government probe committee's report on the matter.

But without realising the utter absurdity of it, the group yesterday went on to file a defamation suit against the Prothom Alo editor, a reporter, and an industrialist, the court however showed its sagacity by throwing out the case following a hearing.

The government probe committee formed to investigate the incident of fire at Bashundhara shopping mall could not confirm whether it was an incident of arson. The committee

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Militant attacks on Pakistan police

Gunmen, bombers kill 39; airstrikes leave 27 extremists dead

AFP, ANI, LAHORE/ PESHAWAR

Militants unleashed coordinated attacks on Pakistani police in which 39 people died yesterday, storming offices in Lahore and bombing a northwest station to escalate 11 days of carnage.

In response Pakistani warplanes bombed suspected Taliban outposts in the South Waziristan tribal region bordering Afghanistan in which security officials said 27 people died on Thursday.

The simultaneous assaults underscored the power of armed radicals to strike in the heart of Pakistan and the weakness of poorly equipped security forces, despite promises of a new offensive against the Taliban near the Afghan border.

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the terrorist attacks on Lahore on Thursday morning.

Nuclear-armed Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan and is a key ally in the US-

led fight against terror, is reeling from Taliban-linked attacks in which more than 160 people have died since October 5.

Minutes apart, between 9:00 am and 10:00 am, gunmen armed with suicide vests and grenades stormed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) branch in Lahore, plus a police training school and a commando academy on the city's outskirts.

The training centre in suburb Manawan was previously attacked on

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Explain legality of proceedings against Khaleda

HC asks govt, ACC in Zia Orphanage case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a rule upon the government and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) to explain why the proceedings against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia in Zia Orphanage Trust embezzlement case should not be scrapped.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin issued the rule upon petition filed by Khaleda for quashing the proceedings against her.

Another petition of Khaleda's son Tarique Rahman seeking to scrap proceedings against him in the same case has been lying with the court.

Barrister Mahub Uddin Khokon on behalf of Khaleda and Tarique filed both the petitions with the HC on September 15.

The defence lawyer had prayed to the court to issue a rule upon the ACC and the government to explain why the proceedings would not be quashed and to stay the proceedings of the case.

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Four visually impaired girls giggle when one of them cracks a joke yesterday at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the capital. They were preparing for a procession organised on the occasion of White Cane Safety Day.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Rental power bid deadline extended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bowing down to the pressure of interested entrepreneurs, the Power Development Board yesterday extended the bid submission time for eight rental power projects to October 29 from October 21.

Earlier, the PDB had expressed determination to stick to the October 21 deadline on grounds that it wanted the rental power projects of 530 megawatt to launch their operations by the next irrigation season.

Moving this deadline would seriously hamper the government's goals in the power sector, the PDB told interested entrepreneurs at various meetings.

But entrepreneurs have been arguing that they needed more time to prepare their bid documents and visit the power project sites offered by the PDB. Yesterday's decision came as a result of this pressure.

The entrepreneurs have also been putting pressure on the PDB to allow captive power developers to bid for the rental power projects by easing the bidders' qualification criterion.

The PDB has agreed to allow bidders with captive

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Shrinking days seek timeout for day plan

School-goers worst victims of daylight saving plan, tailbacks; new school timing unlikely to help

SHARIER KHAN and WASIM BIN HABIB

The continuation of Daylight Saving Time (DST) beyond October 1 on top of shrinking day times and traffic jams is taking a toll especially on students, teachers and parents who are forced to commute very early in the morning.

At the same time, the core purpose of saving energy by efficient use of daylight is also falling flat.

The measure that was able to cut

power demand by up to 200 megawatt back in June-July, is no longer serving the purpose as more power is being used in the evening "peak hours", Power Development Board sources say. Traditionally power demands reach the peak around 7:00pm to 8:30pm. One of the objectives of the DST was shifting the peak hours by better utilising the daylight.

Other countries, which follow DST measures, have all reverted to their old

timing from October 1 to accommodate shrinking daylight time.

The new school times effective from November 1 would not help the non-government education institutions that deal with the majority segment of students, because their times remain unchanged. The new times dictate that government primary schools will start at 9:30am and close at 4:15pm while other educational institutions

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New timing for offices from Sunday

Schools to follow from November 1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new office timing approved by the cabinet on Monday will take effect from Sunday while educational institutions from November 1.

The government, semi-government and autonomous organisations will maintain their regular schedule--9:00am to 5:00pm--while the banks, insurance, financial companies and private organisations from 10:00am to 6:00pm.

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Assassination part of nat'l, int'l plot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated as part of conspiracy at national and international levels, barrister Abdullah-al Mamun, counsel for two of the five convicts in Bangabandhu murder case, told the Supreme Court yesterday.

It's irrational that only a few people would dare to assassinate father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, he said while placing arguments during ninth day's hearing on appeals of the five convicts challenging their convictions and death sentences.

He said it's unimaginable that anyone



would enter Bangabandhu's residence to kill him without wearing a mask to conceal identity. Even, the law enforcers wore masks while arresting top politicians after the 1/11 changeover in 2007.

If the killers had put on masks, they could not be recognised or identified, said the lawyer, pointing out some contradictions in the statements of the witnesses in the case.

Mamun, counsel for convicts Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin, placed arguments on behalf of only the former before the apex court.

He also claimed that his clients were innocent and had not been involved in the August 15

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