

# Grabbers of land

**FROM PAGE 1**  
land grabbed by a section of developers.

Citing the untoward incident, Jatiya Party lawmaker Mujib-ul-Haque Chunnun said some so-called land developers threatened the state minister at a meeting. "Will you take actions against them?" he asked the prime minister during the question-answer hour.

At a meeting on June 13, land developer leaders, including Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam, blasted the state minister over the draft Detailed Area Plan (DAP).

Finally, the minister yesterday came up with a written statement specifying the government's action being taken against the land grabbers.

He said legal action is being taken against them under the Natural Water Body Protection Act, 2000 and Private Housing Projects' Land Development Rules, 2004.

An individual may be punished with up to five years' jail term and a fine of Tk 50,000 or both for grabbing natural water bodies, open space, playground in metropolitan, divisional and district head-

quarters and municipality areas, according to the natural water body protection laws.

The previous Awami League-led government introduced the law in 2000.

In response to another query on taking action against buildings constructed without approval, the state minister said Rajuk has already identified 4,000 such buildings and is continuing with the task of identifying further illegal structures.

"Once the list is finalised, it will be possible to give information on owners of those buildings and their addresses," he said in a scripted reply.

He however said Rajuk continues removing unapproved buildings. But if any such unapproved building is built after the Dhaka city building (construction, preservation and removal) law was introduced in 2008, owner of that building can take approval of the structure by giving necessary fine, the state minister said.

In absence of the state minister, Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan yesterday replied lawmakers' different supplementary queries in the House.

# Kushtia cops

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Anju Begum alleged that Golam Mostafa, assistant sub-inspector of Ahmedpur police camp under Mirpur upazila, phoned Alim in the evening of May 3 and asked him to come to a spot at Kalabaria village.

Alim went out of home informing the matter to his wife. Local people later informed Anju that a team of plain-clothes police picked up Alim from the spot.

The next morning, Alim's family came to know that he was killed in a 'crossfire', the case statement said.

According to police, a team of Detective Branch of Mirpur police cordoned off a banana orchard at Kalabaria village around 3:15 am on May 4, following information that Abdul Alim, a regional leader of outlawed Gono Bahini, and his men were holding a clandestine meeting there.

Sensing presence of the law enforcers, the outlaws fired shots, prompting police to retaliate that triggered a gunfight.

Alim, son of late Nuruddin Biswas of Kalabaria village in the upazila, was caught in the line of fire and died on the spot while his accomplices managed to flee.

Police recovered a rifle, five bullets, five cocktails and a sword from the spot. Alim was accused in seven cases including three for murder, police said.

Contacted, Assistant Police Super (ASP) Chokdar Abdul Halim said, "We will take action as per the direction of the court."

Ain-O-Salish Kendra assisted the victim's family to file the case.

# BSF kills

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Local BDR commander Lt Col Sultan Ahmed said BSF firing resulting in death of two Bangladeshi cattle traders was strongly protested at a flag meeting with BSF at company commander level at 4:30pm.

However, BSF denied the killing of Obaidul and Akbar.

Another report from Sathira said BSF troopers of Kanaikati outpost caught and tortured to death cattle trader Asghar Ali and thrown into the river. His body floating on the Kalindi border river was rescued at 8:00am yesterday.

Family sources said his two associates Nurul Islam and Subid Ali remained missing.

Koikhali union parishad Member Ashim Mondal told UNB that cattle trader Asghar Ali of Nidaya village along with Subed Ali, Hafizur Rahman and Nurul Islam on Sunday went to Charakkhal across the border river. BSF of Kanaikati arrested them. In custody, they were tortured resulting in death of Asghar Ali.

Hafizur Rahman, however, managed to escape from BSF custody. On return home, he narrated the inhuman torture of BSF, said the UP member.

The fate of two others Subed Ali and Nurul Islam was not known till yesterday, he added.

# Yunus meets

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Justice Owada and Prof Yunus both serve on the board of United Nations Foundation founded and chaired by Ted Turner.

Earlier on the day, Prof Yunus met with Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan at his residence.

During the meeting, Prof Yunus and the Japanese PM discussed on various issues related to social business.

The prime minister informed the Nobel Laureate that he recently proposed a concept of Public Service for Japanese society, which emphasises that all social responsibility should not be on the shoulder of governments alone, and advocates that partnerships have to be created with other actors in order to solve society's problem.

The premier and Prof Yunus also discussed the existing partnerships between Grameen and Japan, and possibility of future collaborations.

Party's Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, noted jurist Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmad, former law minister Moudud Ahmed, former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, MK Anwar and Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury attended the meeting with the chairperson.

Before the parliamentary election in 2008, the AL-led grand alliance pledged to

# Dhaka, Delhi

**FROM PAGE 1**  
The second project is related to construction of an internal container port at Ashuganj at a cost of \$36.2 million. Bangladesh and India have recently signed an agreement under which Ashuganj in Bangladesh and Silhat in India have been declared ports of call.

A joint team has already assessed improvement of infrastructure and the cost for one-time or longer-term transportation of ODCs (Over Dimensional Cargo) from Ashuganj.

Official sources say the Indian government has agreed to make necessary investment and both the governments are working to expedite the project's implementation.

The third project would see procurement of 10 locomotive engines for Bangladesh Railway at a cost of \$35.5 million. On the other hand, the fourth one is for purchasing 125 broad gauge passenger coaches for Bangladesh Railway at a cost of \$53.6 million.

The fifth and sixth projects are about buying 60 tank wagons at \$8.85 million and 50 flat wagons at \$4.55 million for Bangladesh Railway.

Under the next project, a railway bridge will be constructed on the river Titus, which will cost \$120 million.

The eighth project is to buy 300 double-decker buses for Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation at an estimated amount of \$30 million. Under the ninth project, 50 luxury buses will be bought for BRTC at a cost of \$6 million.

Another project is related to development of road communications for a land port. Under the project, Sarail-Brahmanbaria-Sultanpur-Akhaura-Sonardi road will be constructed at a

cost of \$33 million. The 11th project is for construction of an overpass at Jurain rail crossing and a flyover at Malibagh rail crossing in Dhaka. These will cost \$31 million.

The project number 12 is purely for connectivity between Bangladesh and India. Under this project, a road would be constructed between Ramgarh and Sabroom (Tripura's southern border town) at a cost of \$14.5 million.

The sources say India wants to construct the road on an urgent basis for connectivity as distance from Sabroom to the Chittagong port is around 75 kilometres.

An amount of \$158 million will be spent for the 13th project, which is for setting up power gridline between India and Bangladesh. Under the project, a 400 KV interconnector will be set up from Bahrampur in India to Bheramara in Bangladesh.

The 14th project has four sub projects related to capacity building of Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute (BSTI). The Indian premier agreed to support upgradation of BSTI with a view to building capacity on certification when Sheikh Hasina went to India on a state visit in January.

Under the project, several laboratories will be set up to test food, cement, brick and gold at a cost of \$8.92 million. Besides, BSTI will be given financial and technological support for improvement of its research standard and accreditation.

The sources add the ministries concerned are ready to start implementation of the projects and waiting for final approval of the planning ministry and formal loan agreement between Bangladesh and Indian finance ministries.

# Malaysia

**FROM PAGE 16**  
launch of Lim Kok Wing University of Creative Technology's Academy of Creativity and Innovation in Cyberjaya, about 50km south of Kuala Lumpur.

Expatriates' welfare secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan said Bangladesh has been making diplomatic efforts for opening the Malaysian labour market for Bangladeshi workers.

It is surely a good sign from Malaysia's part, he told The Daily Star yesterday, adding that the labour hiring countries often face such realities, but it is good that Malaysia is thinking to address the problems of undocumented workers.

Malaysia is home to around six lakh Bangladeshi workers but the country imposed a freeze on hiring workers from Bangladesh in March last year citing global economic recession.

However, businesses and officials concerned believe it was the irregularities in the labour recruitment process that prompted Malaysia to stop hiring.

# US pledges

**FROM PAGE 16**  
development of environmental laws, reorganisation of the concerned departments, strengthen adaptation capacity in the vulnerable areas.

The USAID official said the US government appreciates Bangladesh's commitment to global efforts to address climate change impacts.

Bangladesh translated its commitment to combat climate change by preparing the Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and establishment of its own US\$ 100 million adaptation fund, he noted.

Responding to the US support, Dr Hasan focused on the vulnerable areas of Bangladesh, which are mostly affected due to climate change.

Bangladesh, an innocent victim of climate change, has been making its own stride to cope with climate adversities, he said.

He also laid importance on accelerating efforts to deliver the fund committed by the developed countries to support developing countries in the Copenhagen Accord for adaptation.

The USAID officials said the initial focus of the SLED programme will be providing technical support for country preparation and initial implementation of LEDS that are designed and led by the host country.

Environment Secretary Mihir Kanti Majumder, Deputy Office Director of USAID Mark Viscoky and senior officials of the ministry were present.

# Govt to import

**FROM PAGE 16**  
India wanted to export one lakh metric tonnes of rice to Bangladesh but the quantum was increased to three lakh metric tonnes on request from Bangladesh.

To keep the rice price stable during the Ramadan, the Food Minister said the Fair Price Card will be distributed among the people in Dhaka City to procure rice at Tk 22-24 per kg.

A final decision about it will be taken within 2-4 days.

Officials in the Food Ministry told UNB that in every Ward 10,000 Fair Price Cards will be distributed before the Ramadan and the card holders will buy rice from OMS dealers.

# BNP goes for

**FROM PAGE 1**  
BNP leaders and activists from the capital's neighboring districts will join the event, which will ultimately turn into a huge public meeting, said the leaders.

Delwar said the programme aims to press several demands of the party that includes halting 'repression' on the opposition, withdrawal of false cases, release of detained BNP leaders, reducing public sufferings due to price hike of essentials and information about the whereabouts of BNP ward commissioner Chowdhury Alam.

He also said there is no democratic government in the country. Those who are in power are running the state in an autocratic way.

"The government has let loose the police on us to stop our peaceful programmes and thus taken stance against the people," he said.

About sending name of a BNP lawmaker for all-party parliamentary committee proposed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Delwar criticised the government for being hasty on this issue.

He, however, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will hold a meeting with some policymakers to decide the matter.

The opposition party earlier on June 27 observed a country-wide general strike to meet almost the same demands.

# Notorious gang

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Lt Col Sazzad said the elite force started investigation in the area about one and a half months back following information that Yakub Bahini has been carrying out criminal activities in the remote Jangle Salimpur area grabbing government khas land.

"We got information that Yakub and his cohorts guard the grabbed hilly lands in different shifts with firearms and don't allow any people inside the area."

"We raided the area around 3:00am and arrested the criminals along with firearms," he said adding that many of them managed to flee with huge firearms sensing presence of the Rab.

Yakub is accused in six criminal cases with Panchlailish, Bayezid Bostami, Khulshi and Sitakunda police stations.

Akkas Bahini chief Ali Akkas, who was killed in a 'shootout' with Rab and police on May 23 this year, sold the grabbed land to people in the name of rehabilitating Chhinnamul Bastibasi (rootless slum dwellers) using banners of different organisations like Bastuhara Cooperative Society, Chattagram Mohanagar Chhinnamul Abasan Prokolpa,

Chhinnamul Bastibasi Samannay Sangram Parishad. To keep the grabbed area under control, the bahini members never allowed entry of any outsider inside the area and guarded the entrance 24 hours a day.

They also issued identity cards for residents of the area to avert entrance of outsiders including journalists.

After the death of Akkas, Yakub started reorganising the gang and set up a slum there after his name—Yakub Nagar—under the banner of Chattagram Mohanagar Chhinnamul Abasan Prakaipa.

He also started criminal activities in the area including grabbing lands of private owners, drug-peddling and demanding ransom keeping hostage others' wives and daughters.

In his diary, which Rab seized yesterday, the law enforcers found that Yakub swore to take revenge for the killing of Akkas. He also included the names of 30 persons in his hit list blaming them responsible for the death of Akkas.

Yakub told reporters at Rab headquarters in the city that he was arrested for being an aide of Akkas.

# Thousands of blogs

**FROM PAGE 16**  
officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) told BurstNet on 9 July that al-Qaeda materials had been found on Blogotery's servers.

It also claimed that material allegedly found on the server included "the names of American citizens targeted for assassination by al-Qaeda" as well as messages from Osama bin Laden and other leaders of the terrorist organisation.

BurstNet's chief technology officer, Joe Marr, said that the FBI sent a "Voluntary Emergency Disclosure of Information" request to the firm.

Sources have confirmed to the BBC that this was the case but FBI spokesman Paul Bresson said the bureau does not comment on active investigations.

However he did say that the FBI had not asked for any websites to be shut down.

The FBI does not have the power to remove content from websites or to take them down. That can only be done with the authority of a judge.

Calls to BurstNet were not returned.

**ROMOURMILL**  
For days bloggers have speculated as to the cause of the shut down at Blogotery.com.

Theories ranged from the FBI using the Patriot Act to silence bloggers to a belief that perhaps child pornography had been found on one of the blogs.

On one forum, a number of users were upset about not getting any advance warning to back up information they had stored on the server.

One frustrated user wrote "so BurstNet can 'kill' your server and give you BS reasons about some 'law enforcement officials'".

"Who needs a hosting service that does not fight for their clients?" wrote another.

The Centre for Democracy and Technology has also expressed concern about what happens to the 70,000 plus bloggers who have had their blogs terminated.

"As a free speech advocate, I certainly think it is unfortunate that what I assume are many thousands of perfectly innocent blogs were taken down here," John Morris, the head of the Centre for Democracy & Technology's free expression project told BBC News.

"I hope our society is able to figure out a way to address one bad apple in a pool of content without collateral consequences for the innocent speakers. This (case) highlights the fragility of speech on the internet when thousands of speakers have their speech removed."

**PLOTTHICKENS**  
Adding to the mystery is the news that another online service that helped users create web message boards was taken offline a week after Blogotery.com.

While there has been no official link between the two cases, iPBFree.com said they are "gone for good" and had "absolutely no warning" and that the reasons are "tied up in legalities".

On a temporary forum called the unofficial iPBFree refuge a statement said, "the main site, all the thousands of forums, and the iPBFree Facebook and Twitter pages are gone."

While the site has been unable to reveal why it has gone dark, users have been

# Poor performing

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the ruling party's electoral pledges," observed a secretary.

He said the prime task of the bureaucrats should be implementing the election manifesto of the party in power. "But we don't see it here. Accountability and performance-based evaluation of the officers are also absent."

On Sunday, LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam lashed out at the bureaucrats for their "contemptuous attitudes" towards public representatives.

Speaking in parliament, he said some officials seem still accustomed to being under military rule, and they do not have any regard for democratic norms and values.

Sources in the secretariat said a group of secretaries, who have somehow developed cosy ties with some individuals close to the prime minister's office, think they are above everything.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has time and again urged the bureaucrats to discharge duties sincerely so the government can better serve the people and make good on its electoral pledges.

Late last year, Molla Waheeduzzaman, secretary to the PMO, wrote to the secretaries, asking them to speed up work of the ministries and divisions.

At her meetings with bureaucrats, Hasina requested them not to be negligent in discharging responsibilities. But little has been changed.

Some officials believe the government is struggling to handle the bureaucracy properly.

Contractual appointments of retired bureaucrats, repeated transfers and promotions depriving the eligible ones—all have been affecting the administration's performance, they said.

HT Imam, prime minister's adviser on establishment and administrative affairs, however claims the overall performance of the administration is better than in the past.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, he said, "The prime minister at her meeting with the secretaries on Sunday applauded 91 percent ADP implementation, which surely speaks of a dynamic administration."

Imam noted that officials who show negligence in duties are given warnings and departmental proceedings are initiated against those who fail to perform. And it all is a matter of routine.

Asked about contractual appointments and seniors

# 2 teenagers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
know how to swim, screamed out for help. Shaheen immediately rushed to rescue his drowning friend but after a few minutes' struggle both of them drowned, added the witnesses.

Other people, who were also bathing in the river at that time, also went to rescue the boys but it was just late. When Sajal and Shaheen were taken to the hospital doctors declared them dead.

Keraniganj police visited the spot and filed an unnatural death case in this connection.

being passed over for promotion, the adviser said some officials who do not deserve promotion spread propaganda against government decisions. "These people just don't work."

Many officials including a couple of secretaries however do not subscribe to Imam's views. They said if the government does not streamline the unwieldy bureaucracy, it will soon find it difficult to execute decisions.

They also said excessive interference from outside, particularly from a former bureaucrat who is now an influential figure in this government, is a key reason why the administration is turning in a disappointing performance.

A deputy secretary said some incompetent officers have got promoted, while some good ones have been made officers on special duty.

Then there are some who are busy doing politics, he added.

Secretary of an important ministry said, "The wheels of the bureaucracy are grinding to a standstill. Many of our colleagues do not work sincerely. They are more interested in using their positions for personal gains."

A number of mid-level officials at the secretariat said a select few that the prime minister has assigned to ensure the administration functions smoothly are busy elsewhere.

# Ex-HC judge

**FROM PAGE 16**  
or from unknown sources of income.

Former justice Joynul Abedin was chief of the one-member judicial enquiry committee formed by the BNP-Jamaat alliance government in 2004 to conduct probe into the August 21 grenade-attack on the then opposition leader Sheikh Hasina.

# Free education

**FROM PAGE 16**  
The facilities will be provided under a Tk 340 crore project -- Female Stipend Project for Degree (Pass) and Equivalent Level -- initially for July 2010 to June 2015.

The students whose parents own less than 75 decimals of land and have annual income below Tk 75,000 will be eligible for the benefits under the scheme.

Besides, all female students in beel, haor, hill and monga-prone areas will be covered by the project. And the daughters of poor freedom fighters, orphans and the disabled will be eligible for the benefits.

Now, there are different stipend programmes for students of primary level to class ten. A stipend programme for female students of higher secondary level is also there.

Yesterday's meeting was attended by Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, Prime Minister's Education Adviser Alauddin Ahmed and top officials concerned.

Meeting sources quoted Nahid as saying free education cannot be introduced at one go, and it has to be done in phases. The sub-committee will make recommendations in this regard.