Grabbers of land

FROM PAGE 1 land grabbed by a section of

developers. Citing the untoward incident, Jatiya Party lawmaker Mujib-ul-Haque Chunnu 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

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 grab-

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' ail 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.

Poor performing

being passed over for promo-

tion, the adviser said some

officials who do not deserve

promotion spread propa-

ganda against government

decisions. "These people just

couple of secretaries however

do not subscribe to Imam's

views. They said if the govern-

ment does not streamline the

unwieldy bureaucracy, it will

soon find it difficult to execute

interference from outside,

particularly from a former

bureaucrat who is now an

influential figure in this gov-

ernment, is a key reason why

the administration is turning

in a disappointing perfor-

some incompetent officers

have got promoted, while

some good ones have been

Then there are some who

Secretary of an important

A number of mid-level

Ex-HC judge

or from unknown sources of

Free education

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

The students whose parents

own less than 75 decimals of

land and have annual income

orphans and the disabled will

Now, there are different

stipend programmes for

students of primary level to

class ten. A stipend

programme for female stu-

dents of higher secondary

attended by Education

Minister Nurul Islam Nahid,

Prime Minister's Education

Adviser Alauddin Ahmed and

cannot be introduced at one

go, and it has to be done in

phases. The sub-committee

will make recommendations

in this regard.

Meeting sources quoted

Yesterday's meeting was

level is also there.

be eligible for the benefits.

2015

FROM PAGE 16

Former justice Joynul

made officers on special duty.

are busy doing politics, he

A deputy secretary said

They also said excessive

Many officials including a

don't work.

decisions.

added.

elsewhere.

FROM PAGE 1 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 Ashraful Islam lashed out at the bureaucrats for their "contemptuous attitudes" towards public representa-

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

ministry said, "The wheels of urged the bureaucrats to the bureaucracy are grinding discharge duties sincerely so to a standstill. Many of our the government can better colleagues do not work sinserve the people and make cerely. They are more intergood on its electoral pledges. ested in using their positions Late last year, Molla for personal gains."

Waheeduzzaman, secretary to the PMO, wrote to the secreofficials at the secretariat said taries, asking them to speed a select few that the prime up work of the ministries and minister has assigned to divisions. ensure the administration functions smoothly are busy

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 prop-

Abedin was chief of the onemember judicial enquiry Contractual appointments committee formed by the of retired bureaucrats, BNP-Jamaat alliance governrepeated transfers and proment in 2004 to conduct probe motions depriving the eligible into the August 21 grenadeones--all have been affecting attack on the then opposition the administration's perforleader Sheikh Hasina. mance, 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 adminis-

below Tk 75,000 will be eligible Imam noted that officials for the benefits under the who show negligence in duties scheme. are given warnings and Besides, all female students departmental proceedings are in beel, haor, hill and mongainitiated against those who fail prone areas will be covered by to perform. And it all is a matthe project. And the daughters er of routine. of poor freedom fighters,

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 top officials concerned. time, also went to rescue the boys but it was just late. When Nahid as saying free education 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.

Kushtia cops FROM PAGE 1

Anju Begum alleged that Golam Mostafa, assistant subinspector 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 plainclothes 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 gun-

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 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 Ain-O-Salish Kendra

assisted the victim's family to file the case.

BSF kills

FROM PAGE 1 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 Satkhira 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 miss-

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 Charakhali 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

FROM PAGE 16 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 prob-

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

He was happy to know that Japan International Cooperation Agency is taking active interest in social busi-

The PM said he would like to continue to support initiatives undertaken by Prof Yunus and would also introduce policy changes to enable Japanese development agencies to invest in social business.

Dhaka, Delhi

NEWS

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 Silghat 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 trans portation 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.

jects 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 Titas, 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 The fifth and sixth pro- 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 min-

istries 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.

Special JS body

Samajtantrik Dal and National Awami Party will be made members of the body.

Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury will be at its helm.

There will be no representatives of Jamaat-e-Islami. A component of BNP-led fourparty alliance, Jamaat has been opposing the move to amend the constitution.

Sources said AL lawmakers Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzaq, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Syed Ashraful Islam, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Abdus Shahid, Dipu Moni, Fazle Rabbi Mia, Abdul Matin Khasru, Rahmat Ali, and Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Jatiya Party's Anisul Islam Mahmud, Workers Party's Rashed Khan Menon, JSD's Hasanul Haq Inu and NAP's Amena Ahmed are likely to be in the parliamentary body.

BNPLETTER

The BNP letter to AL was sent through the opposition leader's assistant personal secretary.

Asked about the content, BNP standing committee member Salauddin Quader Chowdhury said, "We have wanted to know what kind of changes will be made to the constitution and what they will mean to people. We also enquired under what rules of procedure the committee will

be formed." He was talking to The Daily Star after the meeting at the

BNP chief's office. He said the AL letter mentioned that the constitution would be amended in greater interests of the people. But it did not explain what those interests are.

"It's like the government is asking us to buy ticket of a train whose destination we still don't know."

Chowdhury, also a lawmaker, said the issue of constitution amendment is highly sensitive and has far-reaching implications. "That is why we have decided to write back, seeking to know more about the issue." Party's Secretary General

Khandaker Delwar Hossain, noted jurist Khandaker Sara Hossain pointed out Mahbubuddin Ahmad, forusing information technology mer law minister Moudud as tool to provide effective Ahmed, former speaker legal aid to the victims. Jamiruddin Sircar, MK Anwar Member of BLAST board of and Salahuddin Quader trustees Dr Shamsul Bari Chowdhury attended the presided over the inaugural

meeting with the chairperson. session while its Executive Before the parliamentary Director Mohasin Ali Khan, election in 2008, the AL-led Shahidul Alam of Drik Gallary, grand alliance pledged to also addressed the function.

increase reserved seats for women in parliament to 100 from the current 45 and allow MPs to express opinions in the House freely.

It also promised to get back to the 1972's constitution.

In 2005, the High Court passed a verdict declaring illegal the fifth amendment to the constitution. Early this month the Supreme Court upheld the landmark judgment, paving the way for the government to revive some important provisions that were in the original charter.

The fifth amendmen ratified all changes made to the constitution between August 15, 1975, and April 9, 1979. All governments during that period were adjudged unlawful by the HC verdict.

Gunmen

FROM PAGE 1

Operatives of different outlawed groups take shelter at Daspara after committing crimes in the adjoining areas, police said.

CIC suggests

the act," said Zamir.

His observations came while speaking as the chief guest at the launching session of the website www.blast.org.bd. It aims to provide information on different legal procedures.

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST), a human rights organisation, hosted the programme at the Jativa Press Club.

Stating the human rights and right to information issues as related to each other, he said, "I look forward for coordinated efforts of different government and nongovernment organisations to protect human rights in the country." He urged the government

to include the human rights and right to information issues in the textbooks to make the learners aware of their rights. He also suggested loose the police on us to stop sending text messages to the mobile phone users. Zamir was critical of the

NGO officials for not giving way to the process of right to information. Speaking as the special guest noted lawyer Barrister

proposed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Delwar criticised the government for being hasty on this issue.

hold a meeting with some policymakers to decide the matter. on June 27 observed a country-

gone."

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 secre-

Malaysia

tary 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 capac-

ity 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 cli-

mate 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 SSLED 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 Visocky 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

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

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

our peaceful programmes and thus taken stance against the people," he said. About sending name of a BNP lawmaker for all-party parliamentary committee

He, however, said BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will

The opposition party earlier 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

"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 "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

nal cases with Panchlaish Bayezid Bostami, Khulshi and Sitakunda police stations. Akkas Bahini chief Ali Akkas,

Yakub is accused in six crimi-

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,

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

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

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

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

headquarters in the city that he was arrested for being an aide of

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 Blogetery'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

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

Sources have confirmed to

FBI had not asked for any websites to be shut down. The FBI does not have the power to remove content from

authority of a judge. Calls to BurstNet were not

websites or to take them down.

returned. RUMOURMILL

For days bloggers have speculated as to the cause of the shut down at Blogetery.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 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 conse-

quences 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 Blogetery.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 iBPFree Facebook and Twitter pages are

Chhinnamul Bastibasi

Chhinnamul Abasan Prakalpa.

daughters. In his diary, which Rab

for the death of Akkas. Yakub told reporters at Rab

equally frustrated as those at Blogetery.com about at the potential loss of material. One wrote, "I'm personally

record of what they do from day to day. May not sound like much, but it was very important to them and me.' Another suggested that while the shut down poses more questions than answers "one thing about the internet is

that nothing is really kept

devastated. My forum was a

blogging forum and many of

my members used it to keep a

hidden away forever". Pakistan's key

Officials say the head of a federal group meant to coor-

Asif Syed, a senior official at National That can only be done with the Counterterrorism Authority,

> minister's office where it would have more power to

evening.

FROM PAGE 16

In such a scenario, a second place at a later date.

The PM election is the result of political parties failing to form a consensus government after prime minister Madhav Kumar Nepal's resig-

nation last month. Nepal's interim constitution allows the president to resort to such a move if there is

Earlier in the day, the CPN-

UML backed party chairman

Khanal's candidature for the

PM post. Khanal has stated members.

previous government, it shouldn't join the race. Likewise, the Maoist polit-

Dinanath Sharma said that his party would support a Khanalled government if 'Prachanda' fails to win the election.

ture last week. In a related development, the four-party front of

date.

counterterrorism official resigns

AP, Islamabad

dinate Pakistan's fight against terrorism has resigned amid a bureaucratic turf battle.

says its chief, Tariq Pervez, resigned yesterday. A second government official says Pervez resigned because he couldn't persuade his superiors to place the organization under the prime

force intelligence and security services to cooperate. The official says the government decided to place the group under the Interior Ministry. The official spoke on condition of anonymity

because of the sensitivity of the issue. Pakistan established the

group in early 2009. Nepal election

round of voting is likely to take Filing of nominations for the election ended yesterday

no consensus among parties.

that he would withdraw his nomination if he fails to secure support of two-third of all CA Several leaders within the party were of the opinion that since the party was leading the

buro named chairman 'Prachanda' for the post. The party has more than one-third representatives in CA. Maoist spokesperson

Nepali Congress had agreed on Poudel's candida-

Madhes-based parties that have 82 members in CA decided not to field any candi-

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