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500 structures along rail track demolished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The railway authorities knocked down around 500 illegal structures in an eviction drive along the two-kilometre rail track between Khilgaon and Malibagh in the city yesterday.

The structures were demolished for safe operation of railway services, said Ahamadul Hoque, magistrate and divisional estate officer of the railway, who led the drive.

The railway authorities launched a fortnight-long drive to free the said stretch of the rail track on January 18 and have carried out several programmes to knock down several thousand illegal structures, he said.

Hoque said the drive will continue from Malibagh to Tongi.

Though, he said, makeshift slum houses were spared for a High Court stay order, a number of such structures fell under

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SANCTITY AT RISK... Graffiti, such as the one on the right, is all over the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital. People wearing shoes are often seen using it as a hang-out spot. The homeless and vagabonds use it at random; and street vendors, inset, are always there for the customers. A High Court order in 2010 asked the authorities to maintain the sanctity of the Shaheed Minar, but things have not changed much since the directive was issued.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

10 hurt in BCL infight over setting up book fair stall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 leaders and activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League were injured in clashes between its two groups at the capital's Suhrawardi Udyan last night over setting up a stall at the Amar Ekushey Book Fair.

Witnesses said both the groups of the pro-Awami League student body used machetes, sticks and iron rods during the attacks, spreading panic among the visitors of the book fair.

Among the injured are Reazuddin Chowdhury

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Join Feb 7 human chain

14-party leaders call upon people

BSS, Dhaka

Leaders of the 14-party alliance have urged all, irrespective of party affiliations, to join the February 7 human chain to foil conspiracies against the ongoing war crimes trial.

They made the call during a meeting of the alliance at the Awami League Dhaka city office on the capital's Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday.

The 14-party alliance

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Land graft under spotlight

Workshop points at assistant commissioners; vested property list by February

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Misdeeds of assistant commissioners (land) across the country have ruined the reputation of the department, commented Land Secretary Md Mokhlesur Rahman at a workshop on vested property in the capital yesterday.

"Their misdeeds have ruined the reputation of the department and superior officials have failed to control it," the secretary told the work-

shop titled 'Implementation of the Vested Property Return Act'.

The workshop was held at the office of the Department of Land Record and Survey where the additional deputy commissioners (ADC, revenue) of all the districts took part.

"If you find that they don't want to follow your directions, report it straight to your commissioners," the secretary said while speaking as the chair. He added the land ministry is going to issue a DO (direct order)

regarding it soon.

Speaking as the chief guest, State Minister for Land Advocate Mostafizur Rahman said the vested property issue remained neglected over the years and has become a "national responsibility" now.

The minister said the government is working to resolve the longstanding issue the country has been bearing since independence. "The people who have proper documents must

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ELECTION WITHOUT CARETAKER GOVT Free polls difficult, not impossible

CEC spells ways to ensure it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said free and fair parliamentary polls under a partisan government were possible if electoral laws were amended and some ministries and divisions were controlled by the EC during the elections.

Holding the parliamentary polls with-

out the caretaker government was difficult but not impossible, he told reporters while leaving the EC Secretariat premises spending his last working day.

"Many electoral laws will have to be amended for parliamentary polls without the caretaker system. Some ministries and divisions will have to be put under the control of the Election Commission

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CHANDPUR DEATHS Magistrate says firing not ordered

A CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur

An executive magistrate on Wednesday denied the allegation made against him of ordering police to open fire on some protesters during Sunday's violence in the town that left two persons dead.

"Police itself had decided to fire shots. I reached the spot after the firing," Magistrate Shamimul Haque Pavel told The Daily Star.

Regarding a case filed against him in this connection, Shamimul said he would protest it in the court.

Two rickshaw pullers --

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia steps into a Dhaka court yesterday to obtain bail in the Zia Charitable Trust scam case.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

ZIA CHARITABLE TRUST CASE Khaleda goes to court

Gets permanent bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia appeared before a Dhaka court yesterday and received permanent bail in a case filed for abusing power in setting up Zia Charitable Trust.

Meanwhile, another Dhaka court adjourned till March 18 the charge-framing hearing against the BNP chief in a separate case on corruption in Zia Orphanage Trust.

In the Zia Charitable Trust case, Khaleda was granted the bail upon a bond of Tk 10,000 with two guarantors -- Sanaullah Miah as her lawyer guarantor and Masud Ahmed Talukder as her local guarantor.

Khaleda's lawyer barrister Moudud Ahmed submitted the petition seeking permanent bail in the case before Judge Mohammad Zahurul Hoque of the Senior Special Judge's Court around 11:00am.

When she arrived at the court at 11:45am, thousands of party supporters and onlookers had already gathered at the court premises and on the streets. The gathering

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Blake due this month

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Robert O Blake, the US assistant secretary of state for South and central Asian affairs, will arrive in Dhaka this month to hold meetings with government high-ups and opposition and civil society leaders.

It will be his third visit to Dhaka since May 2009.

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HISTORY DISTORTION IN TEXT BOOKS HC asks govt to find culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to find out people responsible for the publication of a school textbook with distorted history on the declaration of the country's independence and Liberation War in 1971.

During hearing of a writ petition, the

court ordered the cabinet secretary to form a five-member committee headed by the home secretary within seven days, and submit a report to it within 90 days on necessary recommendations to stop distortion of history in future.

The HC passed the order after it found

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Vote of trust for war trial

EU Parliament member hails Bangladesh's effort

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH, from Brussels

European Parliament Member Jean Lambert has welcomed Bangladesh's efforts to try war criminals and said he expected that the trial would conform to the highest standards possible.

She said she was aware of the open trial with the right to appeal by the

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WAR CRIMES TRIAL OF SAYEDEE 3 witnesses go missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The three prosecution witnesses who were supposed to testify against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee yesterday went missing.

Witnesses Sumati Rani Mandal, her son Ashish Kumar Mandal and

their neighbour Samar Mistri left the prosecution's custody on Wednesday to "visit relatives" in Dhaka, and did not return, prosecutor Rana Dasgupta told the tribunal yesterday.

The investigation agency is searching for the witnesses, he

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The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir that the government showed absolute failure in each sector of the country?

Yes (84.6%)
No (14.5%)
No Comments (0.9%)

TOTAL VOTES: 1001

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina that restoration of caretaker government (CG) system is impossible?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT [facebook.com/dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)

PRAYER TIMING February 3

Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
5:30	6:05	
Juma	12:30	1:15
Asr	4:15	4:30
Maghrib	5:52	5:56
Esha	7:15	7:45

Source: Islamic Foundation