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 Conditions of the lender may positively affect the next budget
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 Polytechnic students agitate across the country
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DEPUTY PM QUILTS
 Crisis hits the Nepalese govt which has to draw up a new charter by Sunday
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Ministry favours law-breaker

Environment dept fined Hall-Mark Group Tk 40 lakh, ministry reduces it to Tk 4 lakh; court orders arrest of its MD in land-grabbing case

TAWFIQUE ALI
 The environment ministry has mysteriously cut a Tk 40 lakh penalty down to Tk 4 lakh slapped against Hall-Mark Group for illegally setting up an industrial park at Savar on the outskirts of the capital.
 The Department of Environment fined the company for illegally initiating the park on a 100-acre area, including Dhaleshwari river wetland to the south of Singair bridge. Destructive to ecology, the project has no environmental clearance.
 On May 3, the company confessed to

the offence and paid the fine.
 But the DoE delayed depositing the penalty money to the government treasury for a week apparently to facilitate a chance to the company to avail the favour of the environment ministry's appellate authority.
 The department earlier in October penalised the company with another Tk 5 lakh fine for illegally setting up Hall-Mark Knitting Industries and a cattle farm, and Hall-Mark Managing Director Md Tanvir
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The photo shot from Singair bridge at Savar on the outskirts of the capital shows the filling up of low land for the Hall-Mark Group's industrial park, in the background, by unloading sand through steel pipes. Inset, the boundary walls and structures set up by the company allegedly through grabbing land.

PHOTO: STAR

All but 2 Destiny accounts frozen

Govt to form commission soon to probe irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 The Bangladesh Bank yesterday froze the bank accounts of all the directors of Destiny Group and its associated organisations for one month.
 However, the accounts of Boishakhi TV and Bangla daily Dainik Destiny -- two

sister concerns of the group -- have not been frozen.
 The financial intelligence unit of the central bank sent letters to all commercial banks, asking to freeze bank accounts of all directors of Destiny Group and its associated organisations as per the rules of
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FURNACE OIL SCAM BSRM shocked

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Bangladesh Steel Re-rolling Mills (BSRM) is seeking legal counsel to file a defamation suit against state-run Padma Oil Company Ltd, according to a statement sent to The Daily Star by BSRM yesterday.
 The effort was prompted by a news report published in The Daily Star on May 22 under the headline "State oil for stealing".
 The report said Rapid Action Battalion seized more than 3 lakh litres of furnace oil from Anu Majhir Ghat in Chittagong on Sunday night when the fuel was being hauled for black market.
 A part of that consignment was released from a Padma
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Asif kept standing in court, again

Dr Kamal counters judge over precedents
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain and the presiding judge of a High Court bench yesterday locked in a heated debate for around an hour over a decision to keep Prof Asif Nazrul of Dhaka University standing in the courtroom in connection with a petition.
 The petition was filed in March against Prof Asif on charges of making "provocative comments" on who would come to power next.
 Although Kamal Hossain strongly opposed the decision of the HC bench, it kept Asif standing in the courtroom in
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Prof Asif Nazrul



Plainclothes policemen in Bogra chase agitating polytechnic students who went on the rampage following a rumour that the government has decided to downgrade the status of diploma engineers. More on page 9.
 PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

HR REPORT ON BANGLADESH US slates killings, torture by lawmen

STAR REPORT
 The US government yesterday denounced the Bangladesh government over the latter's "most significant" human rights problems, including killing and torture by security forces and their abuses that are responsible for disappearances and custodial deaths.
 "An increasingly politicised judiciary exacerbated problems in an already overwhelmed judicial system and
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Tk 2,638CR LOAN SCAM Sonali Bank to punish 3 officers

REJAUL KARIM BYRON
 The Sonali Bank will relieve three of its senior officials of their duties for lending Tk 2,638 crore to a little-known group beyond their authority.
 The board of the state-run commercial bank at a
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KL RECRUITMENT RIGHT Minister, Baira at loggerheads

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
 Expatriates' Welfare Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday turned down the private recruiting agencies' demand for allowing them to recruit workers for jobs in Malaysia.
 "I told Baira leaders that we shall initially send workers to Malaysia at government level. Gradually, when the
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Free all leaders before budget session of JS

BNP MPs ask govt
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP lawmakers yesterday demanded release of the recently arrested opposition leaders, including five MPs, before the budget session begins in parliament.
 "The next session of parliament [budget session] will begin on May 27. We urge the president, the Speaker and the leader of the House to release our detained lawmakers before the date," said Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque at a human chain programme at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan.
 The human chain was organised in protest at the
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VANDALISM AT COURT Pro-BNP lawyers regret, get bail

Lawmaker Khokon denied bail in arson case
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 22 pro-BNP lawyers who were accused in a case over Tuesday's chaos in the court premises have secured bail for 10 days from the High Court.
 Also, the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court yesterday rejected the bail petition of BNP leaders Mahub Uddin Khokon and Kamruzzaman Ratan in an arson case.
 The High Court bench of Justice M Enayetur Rahim and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain yesterday granted anticipatory bail to the pro-opposition lawyers after the accused had regretted their chaotic behaviour and pleaded for bail.
 On Tuesday, the lawyers staged demonstrations in the court premises in Dhaka in protest against an order sending BNP lawmaker Khokon to jail.
 They also boycotted proceedings at four trial courts in the capital, demanding the release of the 18-party alliance leaders detained in the arson case filed on April 29
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