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BANK BORROWING

DCCI urges govt to find alternative sources to plug budget deficit

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FOR HUMANITY'S SAKE

Gallery Chitrak organises art exhibition to raise funds for Rana Plaza victims

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ROSENBERG DIARY FOUND

The long-lost diary of the top Hitler aide sheds new light on the Third Reich

PAGE 8

Farmland fast disappearing

Land use policy called for a new law to protect cropland decade back; minister says present govt giving it 'top priority'

PINAKI ROY

Only 13 decimals of land was all she had.

Yet, Yasmin Begum of Shyamla hasi village in Savar, on the outskirts of the capital, sold it to a developer last year for some ready cash, without thinking much about the future. Her neighbours did the same.

"We used to grow winter vegetables on that land. Cauliflower and cabbages used to grow very good there," said Yasmin, sitting at her house beside Savar-Keraniganj road.

She said the landscape has drastically changed due to sand-filling by developers and hundreds of signboards put up by new owners.

Yasmin, mother of two sons, now

depends fully on a small grocery shop she runs beside their homestead.

Hasan Ali of the same village said people started selling land to get cash money. "Even my father sold his agricultural land to Mohammadnagar Housing," he said. The housing company has its head office at Mohammadpur in the city.

Some other housing companies such as Buriganga Housing and Tosammat Real Estate are also filling up lowlands in the villages on the western fringe of the capital, like in many other areas in the country.

Indiscriminate sand-filling causes damage to farmland and often forces farmers to dig small and big ponds on their remaining

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A realtor has put up this signboard, claiming ownership over the vast stretch of farmland in Kaliganj upazila, Gazipur.

FILE PHOTO

BNP plans non-stop hartal

To defy rally 'ban' tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance last night decided to enforce non-stop hartal or besiege Dhaka from the night of June 15 if the government "adopts any unfair means" in the city corporation polls.

"The people of the four city corporations are waiting to give their verdict against the government. And if the government does anything unfair to alter the

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CONVICTED JAMAAT LAWMAKER Qamrul eats his words

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hours after making it, State Minister for Law Qamrul Islam yesterday retracted his statement that convicted Jamaat leader Hamidur Rahman Azad would lose parliament membership and be unable run in the next general elections if the lawmaker did not surrender.

The International Crimes Tribunal-2 on Sunday sentenced "absconding" Azad and Jamaat-e-Islami acting secretary general Rafiqul Islam Khan to three months' imprisonment for their derogatory and provocative comments about the tribunals.

A few hours after Qamrul made the comments before journalists on Bangabandhu Avenue yesterday, a handout from the Press Information Department said the minister had "inadvertently" made the comments.

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Free polls, not the city polls

AL sets its goals

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The ruling Awami League aims at ensuring free, fair and credible city corporation polls irrespective of outcome when the main opposition BNP looks for victory to consolidate its position ahead of the next parliamentary election.

Insiders say the main opposition would shelve its ongoing anti-government movement for at least one week now to give all-out efforts to the June 15 city polls. The party wants to bank on both victory and defeat in the polls for the coming days, they add.

If BNP does well in these elections, it would focus on strengthening the party at each constituency so that it could gain public mandate in the next general election, say a number of BNP policymakers. If the results are not in favour, BNP would gear up its anti-government movement with tougher programmes, they add.

On the other side, the AL is trying to create an election atmosphere that would make BNP happy and create a ground for holding the next parliamentary elections under the incumbent government, say ruling party leaders.

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Advani quits over Modi's new post

BJP chief 'rejects' resignation

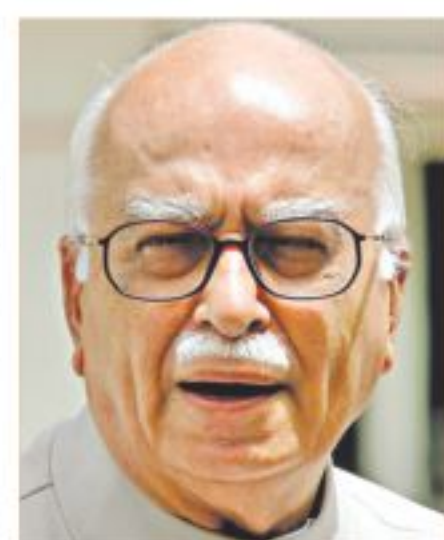
PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Lal Krishna Advani, one of the founders of Bharatiya Janata Party, resigned yesterday apparently in protest against the appointment of controversial Hindu hardliner Narendra Modi as the chief of the party's campaign committee for the next general elections.

Making an oblique reference to 62-year-old Modi without naming him, Advani said in a resignation letter to BJP President Rajnath Singh that he was "finding it difficult to reconcile with either the functioning of the party or the direction in which it is going".

"Most BJP leaders are concerned just with their personal

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