

Vested property to be returned to original owners

Cabinet forms committee to formulate draft law

The Cabinet yesterday decided in principle to return vested property to their original owners after long 35 years of state acquisition, reports UNB.

A regular meeting of the Cabinet with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair took the major decision and formed a Cabinet Committee to formulate a draft law for restoration of ownership of the vested property.

Officials told UNB that the five-member committee is headed by Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru. It comprises State Ministers for Land Rushed Mosharrif, Planning Dr. Mahiuddin Alamgir, Primary Education Satish Chandra Roy and Advocate

Rahmat Ali MP.

In 1965, the Pakistan government had declared the property of those who left the country as 'enemy property'. Four years later, the then government promulgated an ordinance.

A recent study showed that as high as 10 lakh Bangladeshi Hindu families or 50 lakh members of the community were affected by the law.

Later in 1974, the Bangladesh government amended the 1969 Enemy Property Ordinance into 'Vested Property Act'. This time, the landed property of Biharis who opted for Pakistan also got same status.

Despite demand for return of the assets, no government took

will pave the way for the owners or their successors to re-possess more than six lakh acres of land listed as vested property, now occupied by either government or other people through leasing.

Following the Indo-Pak war in 1965, a large number of people of Hindu community left the country for India. Some of them returned later while some were still living there permanently.

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Despite demand for return of the assets, no government took

the onerous responsibility of handing over property worth billions of taka to their original owners.

Former speaker and BNP lawmaker Shaikh Razzak Ali, also a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Vested Property, praised the government decision to form a Cabinet committee to examine and draft a law on the return of the property but warned any decision in haste might spark disputes and complications.

He said mistakes were committed in enlisting properties as enemy or vested property, while in many other cases, properties were listed as enemy property which were earlier sold to Muslims by the original Hindu owners.

Hindu community leader and Awami League Working Committee member Advocate Shudhanshu Shekhar Haldar

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Act issue but several opposition lawmakers personally said the bad law should be scrapped.

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It's been nearly a month since Loharpool, the steel structure connecting Sutrapur and Gandaria in the city, was dismantled. A new bridge was to be built near the old one, but it is still far from reality. Meantime, the hours lost everyday are legion, as school- and office-goers have to go round the broken bridge.

— Star photo

PM to address UN Millennium Summit Sept 6

By Diplomatic Correspondent

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will address the United Nations Millennium Summit on September 6.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister will be the third speaker on the opening day of the three-day Summit, expected to be attended by 115 heads of state or government.

She will also deliver a speech at the Special Security Council Summit on September 7.

The Prime Minister left for New York late last night to attend the Millennium Summit at the head of a 50-strong delegation. The core entourage however includes State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury. For-

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Gen Imam asked to retire

By Special Correspondent

Major General Imamuzzaman, Bir Bikram, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 11 Infantry Division based in Bogra, has been asked to go on retirement from September 6, sources at the Army Headquarters said yesterday.

The sources said General Imam, a valiant freedom fighter and a hero of Beliaria battle, will complete 30 years of service on September 5. He had scope for another seven years of active service.

Earlier, Gen Imam was confined for 16 days at the Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka although he was not ill and asked to seek retirement. He was called to Dhaka following an incident in Bogra on August 15 when he reprimanded a junior officer for flouting his orders, the sources pointed out.

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Stormy debate at JS body meeting Army Chief refuses to hand over trial documents on Zia murder

By Inam Ahmed

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence witnessed another stormy debate yesterday, saying that the sub-committee is a part of the main committee and there is no reason not to give documents to it.

At this point, the Chief of Army Staff said the rule does not permit providing such documents to anyone. "This is a matter relating to security and we are not compelled to show the documents to anyone," the Chief of Army Staff was quoted to have said in the meeting.

This angered the lawmakers and one ruling party member wanted to know whether there is martial law in the country now.

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AL has once again proved its incompetence: Khaleda

By Staff Correspondent

Paltan Maidan in the afternoon.

Khaleda said it was late President Ziaur Rahman who had initiated production-oriented politics in the country and ensured welfare of the poor people of the country.

"Zia not only had ensured development of the country and welfare of the nation, but he also placed Bangladesh in a dignified position in the world community by making the country self-reliant."

On the concluding day of three-day programmes mark-

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ing the 22nd founding anniversary of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the main opposition party took out a colourful procession that paraded different city streets.

Thousands of leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations took part in the big procession carrying colourful banners, festoons, placards, balloon, miniature national and party flags, and portraits of Ziaur Rahman and Khaleda Zia.

People started gathering at

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Ershad files writ challenging cancellation of JS seat

By Staff Correspondent

Former president and Jatiya party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging a notification of the Parliament Secretariat cancelling his parliament membership following conviction in a corruption case.

According to Article 62(1)(c)(d) of the Constitution, the appointment of the Chief of Army Staff and salaries and allowances as well as disciplinary and other matters relating to these services are controlled by the Constitution.

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Soon after the writ was filed at about 10:30 am, Attorney General Mahmudul Islam appeared before the court and prayed for two days' time. The complainant did not oppose.

Barrister Rafiqul Huq and

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Seema's death in Ctg jail: Case against 15

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Sept 3: A case was filed today against 15 people including the then SP, jailor, jail supers, civil surgeon, and IOs in connection with the death of Seema Chowdhury more than 3 years ago in the Chittagong Jail.

Seema's brother Sajal Kanti Chowdhury, also president of the Banskhali Thana Bangladesh Society for Enforcement of Human Rights (BSEHR) filed the case with CMM's court here.

The court of Metropolitan Magistrate Atahar Ali directed the Kotwali thana OC to report the court within 7 days whether any other murder case was filed elsewhere in this connection.

The plaintiff in the case alleged that Seema was murdered

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Govt to stay in power till July 13 next yr: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said last night that her government was trying to wipe out terrorism from the society but the efforts were being hindered as the opposition political parties patronised terrorism, reports BSS.

Presiding over a meeting of the working committee and advisory council of Awami League at Ganobhaban, the Prime Minister said murders had been carried out in a planned way to create law and order situation in society.

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Draft voter list: EC to probe some serious allegations

By Nazmul Ashraf

some 50 applications, mainly challenging rise or fall in the number of voters and alleging phoney voters.

The applicants include the ruling Awami League, opposition Jatiya Party, the lone minister from JSD, a mayor and two opposition MPs.

The EC formed probe bodies to look into the major allegations while its officials examined the minor ones. Reports on some of the investigations have already been submitted to the EC while other alleged flaws are still under investigation.

If needed, the authorities will further amend the voter list based on findings of the investigations, but only after

publication of the final list.

Dhaka District Election Officer Shah Alam is now looking into Awami League's complaint that phoney voters were registered at opposition leader Khaleda Zia's residence in Dhaka Cantonment.

The complaint said that 49 of the 83 voters enrolled in Khaleda's residence were fake.

Members of two probe bodies who had gone to Bhola have submitted their reports on Jatiya Party Secretary-General Nazrul Rahman Manzur's complaint of abnormal rise in the number of voters in Salaria. They also investigated BNP MP Major (retd.)

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HSC exam centre at Ctg Cantt College cancelled for 2 years

Mahmud & Russel are now studying abroad

By Mustak Hossain

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination centre at Chittagong Cantonment Public School and College has been cancelled for two years for its failure to hold HSC examinations in 1998.

The results were cancelled Saturday as per a probe committee report submitted to the Board in March last year. The committee was headed by Prof. Ahmed Hossain, who was a teacher of Haji Mohsin College in Chittagong at that time.

Meanwhile, the two students — Ashikul Kabir Mahmud and Ruhul Haq — are now studying

abroad by showing their 'good' results, the Chairman said.

The probe report said Mahmud and Rahul had secured the first and 18th positions by forging answer scripts and manipulating result sheets in compliance with their teacher Saidul Hassan and some Board officials.

The Chittagong Board Chairman also said that the college authorities have been instructed to take action against the teacher concerned.

The Board would also rec-

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— Star photo

A lifebuoy for potters & weavers

Success story of a micro-credit programme in Sirajganj

By Rezaul Karim, back from Sirajganj

Potters and weavers, who were facing an uncertain future only a year ago, can now profitably market their merchandise due to a micro-credit programme of UNDP in remote villages in Sirajganj district.

The programme encouraged them to produce items as per market demand.

Only recently, hundreds of weavers and potters were about to give up their traditional profession and switch over to new ones as their old fashioned

items failed to attract customers