

Fatwa fails to break their conjugal life

NILPHAMARI, Jan 8: Fatwa (edict) could not break the 25-year conjugal life of Shamsul Haq and Rashida Begum, who are devout Muslims, reports UNB.

The 40-year old Haq lost his temper during a quarrel with Rashida over a trifle household matter and uttered the word 'talak' (divorce) on December 25.

Ignorant Moulvis (clerics) in their village Kionia of Sadar upazila held that under the tenants of Islam Shahida stood divorced. They cannot live together as husband and wife before remarrying after 'hila' (forced marriage).

But Haq said he had not divorced Shahida by merely

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Case against dead woman!

By Court Correspondent

One Sanaullah was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail yesterday for filing a case against a dead woman. The court also directed the thana authority to submit report after a detailed investigation on the matter.

Sanaullah, Deputy Managing Director of Rupali Insurance Company Ltd, Adamjee Court, Dhaka filed a theft case against 12 people including a dead woman with Uttara thana on January 5.

Uttara police arrested two of them on January 7 and they were produced before the CMM's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

Advocates Mohammad Muniruzzaman and Pankaj Chatterjee brought the two accused Abdul Latif and Shawkat Akbar before the court with a prayer for bail petition yesterday.

They told the court that one Sajetunnessa, daughter of Yakub Ali of Gulshan area in the city and accused in the case, died many years ago. But the complainant also filed a case against her. "So the case proved to be false,"

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A symposium on Empowering of Women through Democratic Process was held at the CIRDAP auditorium yesterday to mark the launching of Department of Women's Studies at Dhaka University in collaboration with Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, USA.

-- Star photo

Israel must share land with Palestinians, says Clinton

WASHINGTON, Jan 8: President Bill Clinton is telling Israel to divide the land it holds with the Palestinians "and make the best of it" in the interests of peace in the Middle East, reports AP.

"Israel is a little country, and this will make it smaller," Clinton said of one of the key proposals he has submitted to the two sides in the form of a framework for a negotiated settlement.

But, he said in a New York speech Sunday night, the land Israel holds is also the Palestinians' homeland and "there is no choice but for you to divide this land into two states for two people." Israel needs to "make the best of it," he said.

He also urged Palestinian leaders to compromise and "not hold out for the impossible more." Rejecting a key demand of state should encompass all of Gaza and the vast majority of the West Bank, Clinton said, and most of the 172,100 Jewish settlers Israel says live on the

West Bank should be removed.

As for Israel, he said it would have under his proposals a Jewish Jerusalem "that is larger and more vibrant than any seen in history."

With less than two weeks left in the White House and the odds heavily against a peace deal, Clinton was emotional at times in revealing the "parameters" of a settlement he submitted to the

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two sides before Christmas, only to receive their conditional endorsement in return.

He said "It's been a heart-breaking time for me" to prod Israel and the Palestinians to the Brink of an accord and not reach the goal, even as violence gripped the region. "But we have done our best," he said.

He vowed to use his remaining days in the White House to narrow differences between Israel and the Palestinians, but made

no prediction of success.

Another report says, Palestinians oppose drafting a "declaration of principles" that would be based on Clinton's peace proposals and guide future talks with Israel, their chief negotiator said today.

"We will not accept any kind of pressure," said the negotiator, Saeb Erekat, speaking a day after Clinton urged the Palestinians to compromise and not hold out for the impossible.

In Cairo, a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security officials with CIA chief George Tenet broke up without result, Palestinian officials said. The Palestinians had demanded that in exchange for a resumption of security cooperation, Israel lift its blockade of Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Israel rejected the demand, the Palestinians said.

Larma may meet PM again next month

By Special Correspondent

Chairman of the Regional Council of Chittagong Hill Tracts Jyotirindriya Bodhipriya Larma is likely to have another meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sometime next month.

No date has been set for the meeting, a follow up of his meeting with the Prime Minister on Thursday, sources said.

Though described as a 'courtesy' meeting, a number of issues relating to implementation of the CHT peace accord were discussed at the meeting on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Larma is going to Calcutta today for a medical check up, the sources added.

Fatwa: SC hears petitions for stay of verdict tomorrow

The Full Bench of the Supreme Court will hear tomorrow the provisional stay petitions filed for staying operation of the High Court judgement proscribing fatwa or religious edicts, reports UNB.

A Chamber Judge of the Supreme Court, Mainur Reza Chowdhury, after hearing the petitioners fixed the date for hearing by the Full Bench yesterday.

Mohammad Abu Tayeb and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad have filed two petitions praying for provisional stay of the High Court judgement that declared fatwa given by persons without legal authority as "unauthorised and illegal."

The High Court ruling came in public-interest litigation against 'hilla' marriage of a young housewife of Naogaon under a fatwa given by a local Maulana. Shahida Begum was given a forced interim marriage with another man as precondition for reunion with her husband as he had pronounced 'talak' (divorce) to her during a family feud.

Advocate Mojibur Rahman and Barrister Abdur Razzak moved the petitions on behalf of the two petitioners respectively.

Dr Kamal Hossain and Barrister Amirul Islam, who had pleaded in the High Court case for action against fatwa, appeared before the Chamber Judge and opposed the provisional stay petitions.

The two petitioners submitted that since they want to appeal against the judgement on fatwa by the High Court provisional stay of it is required, leave petition has to be filed for admission of the said appeal which can be done only after obtaining certified copy of the judgement delivered by the High Court Division declaring fatwa illegal, they mentioned.

Fatwa barred them from casting votes for 85 years!

The Election Commission yesterday ordered an inquiry into allegation that the women of 12 villages in Jhenidah have been barred by fatwa from casting their votes in any election in last 85 years, reports UNB.

The directive was issued to the Deputy Election Commissioner, Khulna, and the Deputy Commissioner of Jhenidah after a review meeting on electoral matters following complaints reported in two Bengali dailies.

Presided over by Chief Election Commissioner MA Syed, the EC meeting at its office at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar discussed in detail the complaints published in Bengali daily the Sangbad and the Janakantha on January 5.

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SC Registrar asked to collect Ershad's sign on affidavit

The High Court yesterday directed the Supreme Court Registrar to obtain the signature of former President HM Ershad on the affidavit to be sworn by him from jail custody by forming a commission by January 11, reports UNB.

An HC bench comprising Syed Amirul Islam and AKM Shafiuddin passed the orders after hearing a petition moved by Ershad's counsel Khandoker Mahhub Hossain.

The counsel prayed for a court order for bringing the imprisoned Jatiya Party chairman to the High Court from Dhaka Central Jail for taking his signature on a written reply ordered to be filed by Ershad regarding the cassette issue pending with an HC Division Bench.

The cassette scandal involves the deposed president's conversation with a High Court judge following confirmation of his conviction in the Janata Tower Case.

The judge later resigned.



An overflowing passenger train on way back to the capital at the end of three-day Biswa Ijtema. In their frantic bid to come back home, people simply ignored dangers of overcrowded

c o m m u n i t y

Save Lalon's shrine, save our heritage

Citizen's rally demands end to 'commercial aggression'

By Staff Correspondent

The nation will lose its cultural heritage and national spirit, if "commercial aggression" on the shrine of Lalon in Kushtia is not stopped immediately, observed members of the Committee for Protection of Lalon's Shrine at a citizen's rally yesterday.

Academics, poets, writers, bauls, students, popular artists, NGO workers and people from all walks of life converged at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday to

voice their protest against the controversial project which envisages a complex including a 500-seat auditorium within ten feet of Lalon's shrine.

Reading out a recent investigative report, Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury, one of the two convenors of the protection committee, said that no one has the right to destroy the heritage of a nation, in the name of modernism

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Farida Akhter, a leading folk music exponent in the country, renders a Lalon song at the citizen's rally at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

-- Star

Coup bid in Ivory Coast 'put down'

ABIDJAN (Ivory Coast), Jan 8: Security forces retook control of state broadcast facilities today, hours after mutinous soldiers seized them and called on comrades to join in an apparent attempt to grab power in this once-tranquil West African nation, reports AP.

"The worst is over," Interior Minister Emile Boga Doudou said on state radio. "The time of taking power by coups is past."

While sporadic gunfire could still be heard around Abidjan by midmorning, the level of violence had sharply diminished and the government of President Laurent Gbagbo appeared to be in control.

Defense Minister Lida Kouassi said that 15 people had been

arrested and security forces were searching for more suspects. He said some members of the security forces had been killed, but did not provide specific figures.

Kouassi did not identify the men who attacked the broadcast offices. Prime Minister Affi N'Guessan earlier said the attackers were soldiers who were not wearing their uniforms.

The trouble began late Sunday when the clatter of machine-guns and the thud of heavy weapons began sounding in downtown Abidjan and a number of suburban neighborhoods.

Beginning about 4 am (0400

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Showcause on 2 JU students

In the wake of allegation and counter-allegation of harassment, authorities yesterday issued showcause notices on two students of Jahangirnagar University, reports UNB.

Campus sources said, a Master's student of History department alleged that one of her classmates tried to sexually abuse her when she went to his room at Shaheed Salam Barkat Hall of the university to collect notes.

Brushing aside her allegation, the male student said she came to his room, demanded all his notes and threatened to accuse him of trying to rape her when he refused to give her notes.

He further alleged that the female student with the help of her husband's friends drove him out of the campus despite getting some of his notes.

Under the circumstances, the JU Proctor served showcause notices on both of them and asked them to reply within a week.

A meeting will be held at the History department today to discuss the issue.

60 Thai, Myanmar fishermen sent to jail

BAGERHAT, Jan 8: Sixty Thai and Myanmar fishermen arrested from the Bay on Sunday were sent to jail today, reports UNB.

Officials said Navy patrol teams arrested the fishermen, including 54 Myanmar and 6 Thai nationals, along with two Thai trawlers from the 'Fairway Boya' of Mongla Port while they were fishing into Bangladesh territory.

They were sent to jail after being produced before the court today.

Besides, a total of 266 Thai, Myanmar and Indian fishermen are in the district jail. Of them, 105 Indian fishermen have already completed their seven days of jail term, but they could not return home due to legal hazards.

Meanwhile, the Thai Consular arrived here Friday from Dhaka and identified 20 Thai fishermen.

Rally against Fatwabaz

By Staff Correspondent

A citizens' rally will be held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city at 2:30 pm today demanding arrest and punishment of Fatwabaz for giving threat to High Court judges and contempt of court.

Eminent citizens will participate in the programme. National Professor Kabir Chowdhury will preside.