



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina taking salute at the spectacular President's Parade of 63rd BMA Long Course at Bangladesh Military Academy, Bhatiari in Chittagong yesterday.

PM asks armed forces to work with people

UNB, Bhatiari, Chittagong

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the members of the armed forces to work together with the people for the welfare of the country, apart from their prime duty of safeguarding independence and sovereignty.

Addressing the President's Parade of the 63rd BMA Long Course at the Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) here in the afternoon, she also called upon the newly commissioned officers to devote themselves to the task of serving the country and the nation being imbued with patriotism.

"From today, the sacred duty of safeguarding the country's independence and sovereignty is being reposed on you. You've to remain prepared to perform this onerous duty even by shedding the last drop of your blood," said Hasina.

She said Bangladesh has earned name and fame as a potential and peaceful country in the world. Bangladesh has been contributing immensely to the world peace by deploying the highest number of peacekeepers to the UN Peacekeeping Missions.

"Already we've been able to establish our firm position in various international and regional forums. From now on, you've to go ahead upholding the dignity of this proud position," she told the members of the armed forces.

The prime minister reminded the members of the armed forces members that they are an inseparable part of the people. "You are equal partners of the people's happiness and misery," she said.

She hailed the Army's role in successfully implementing the 1997 peace accord signed during the previous tenure of Awami League to establish peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"Bangladesh Army has always remained beside the people during all natural disasters and national crises," she said.

Hasina also noted that the Bangladesh Army has been assisting the civil administration whenever necessary.

Bangladesh Army's success in preparing national identity cards and flawless voter list with photographs within a short span of time has earned wide acclamation at home and abroad, she said.

The PM said now the Army is performing the task of preparing Machine Readable Passports (MRPs) and Machine Readable Visas (MRVs) with highest level of efficiency.

Recently, the government has engaged the Bangladesh Army to ensure proper management of the Chittagong seaport, she said.

She expressed her happiness that the Constitution, along with the background of the emergence of independent Bangladesh, has been included in the curriculum of the Bangladesh Military Academy with the objective of building an efficient, patriotic army inspired with the spirit of the Liberation War.

Besides, the inspirational speech of the Father of the Nation delivered on January 11 in 1975 has also been included in the Leadership and Management module of

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cadets, she said.

Describing herself as a member of the Armed Forces family, Hasina said her brother Captain Shaheed Sheikh Kamal took part in the War of Liberation as a regular member of the Army.

"My other brother, Shaheed Sheikh Jamal joined the Army after being commissioned from the Royal Academy at Sandhurst. My youngest brother, martyred Sheikh Russel used to dream to join the Army."

She said her government has taken many initiatives to build a digital Bangladesh.

She mentioned that to keep pace with the government initiative, Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) has included information and communication technology (ICT) as a subject in its curriculum. The library and language lab of the BMA have been already been digitised.

The PM thanked the authorities concerned for designing new curriculum for the BMA upholding the dignity of all religions.

Hasina recalled that she laid the founda-

tion of the Bangabandhu Complex of the Bangladesh Military Academy last year as part of the modernisation process of the armed forces.

The 10-storey complex will have all types of modern facilities for the cadets' indoor training, she said.

She informed that the construction of the complex is expected to be completed by June 2013.

The PM told the young cadets that at the end of their training, each of them is going to be a highly skilled army officer.

"You are entrusted with the paramount duty of leading the Bangladesh Army. You have to attain qualities of leadership and techniques of leading to perform such an important duty," she said.

"I firmly believe that the young army officers who have been trained under the new curriculum of Bangladesh Military Academy will be able to give proper leadership to the Bangladesh Army," she added.

A total of 122 cadets - 116 male and six female - passed the 63rd Long Course.

Prime Minister took salute of the parade and distributed prizes among the cadets who demonstrated excellent performance during their course.

Adjutant of the BMA Maj Shahrir Enam Reza commanded the spectacular parade.

Battalion Senior Under Officer Md Alamin was awarded the coveted Sword of Honor as the best all round cadet.

Company Senior Under Officer SM Yasin Noor Siddiqui received the chief of army staff (CAS) gold medal for his outstanding performance in military subjects.

Rouf Company received the BMA Color of the Winter Term on the basis of different inter company competition.

The cadets formally took oath and were adorned with the rank badges by their parents and guardians. The prime minister witnessed the joyful scene and had some chit-chat with the parents and guardians.

Earlier, on her arrival at the BMA Parade Ground, the prime minister was received by Chief of Army Staff Gen M Abdul Mubeen, local area commander of Bangladesh Army and GOC 24th Infantry Division Maj Gen Mohammad Ashab Uddin, Army Training and Doctrine Commander Maj Gen Anwar Hossain and Commandant of the Academy Brig Gen M Anisuzzaman Bhuiyan.

Later, the prime minister took part in the photo-session with the young officers and cut the cake to mark the occasion of passing-out parade.

Three brick kilns fined Tk 15 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three brick kilns have been fined Tk 15 lakh over the last two days for grabbing rivers and polluting croplands in Gazipur and Narsingdi.

A team of the Department of Environment (DoE), led by its Director (enforcement) Munir Chowdhury, gave the penalty to the brick kilns in a drive under an operation to Prevent Environment Crime, says a press release.

Humayra Bricks and Ratul Bricks in Sripur of Gazipur were fined Tk five lakh and Tk seven lakh respectively on Tuesday for filling the River Shutiya and grabbing croplands.

The owners of the two brick kilns were ordered to cease their operations immediately.

Meanwhile, a brick kiln in Narsingdi was fined Tk 3 lakh yesterday and closed down by the DoE.

DRAFT LAW ON TRAFFICKING

Implementation stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday praised the draft comprehensive law on human trafficking and emphasised its proper implementation.

They also highlighted the flaws of the existing law and placed recommendations to incorporate those in the draft.

Pointing out that they are not against safe migration, the speakers said the law will help prevent the crime perpetrated in the name of migration.

Centre for Women and Children Studies (CWCS), Association for Community Development (ACD), Beam of Light of Development for the Deprived, and Bangladesh Migration Development Forum jointly organised the press conference at the National Press Club in the city following workshops in different districts on the draft law.

The foremost challenge of any law is its implementation, said Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association. "So we must discuss the law before its finalisation to avert any misuse of it."

She said the existing law does not give opportunity of bilateral agreement for taking immediate action to bring the trafficking victims back home.

The draft law offers justice for all victims irrespective of their age and sex, said Salma, adding that it also states about bilateral agreement, protection of victims and witnesses, camera trial, and videoconference.

She suggested formulation of specific tribunal to dispose of the case within three months and thus ensure justice.

Salima Sarwar, executive director of ACD, said they had analysed the trafficking situation and the social and legal problems faced by the victims in eight districts.

She stressed the need to arrange speedy trials at district levels as well as ensuring rescue, reintegration, repatriation, and psychosocial council.

CWCS President Prof Ishrat Shamim said men too have been increasingly trafficked in last 4 to 5 years.

She stressed the need for clear definition of trafficking in the draft law where internal and external trafficking should be clearly included.

The speakers also emphasised the need for coordination and strong monitoring to ensure justice.

Sukumar Ghosh, executive director of Beam of Light of Development for the Deprived, and Syed Mahub Elahi, vice president of Bangladesh Migration Development Forum, also spoke among others.

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