

## HINDU MARRIAGE REGISTRATION Law gets cabinet nod

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved a draft law to register marriage of the Hindu people. The draft of the Hindu Marriage Registration Act, 2012 will be the first law of its kind in Bangladesh once it is passed in parliament.

The registration of marriage of Hindu people, however, would be optional in the proposed act, cabinet secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told reporters after the meeting. He said the Hindu customary marriage will remain effective and legal even after the law is enacted.

But those who want to register their marriage will get some benefits, including getting visas for their spouses and children, he added.

The cabinet also endorsed the draft of the Registration (Amendment) Act, 2012 incorporating provisions for donating land verbally by members of Hindu, Christian, Buddha and other religions paying Tk 100 as fee.

Under the existing law, which was passed in 2005, only the Muslims could register the land under Heba Dalil [verbal donation] by paying Tk 100.

The draft of the Vested Property Return (Amendment) Act, 2012 was also endorsed by the cabinet raising the timeframe of publishing the list of vested properties in the country to 300 days from existing 150 days considering the vastness of the workload.

"The list is nearly two crore pages. Of them, one crore pages have so far been printed and more time is required to complete the gigantic task," said the cabinet secretary, adding that the timeline for release and return of vested properties have also been extended to 120 days from existing 90 days.

The government enacted the law last year.

The council of ministers approved the draft of The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act, 2012 to set up the courts of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate and Judicial Magistrate outside district headquarters for quick disposal of disputes and cases in the rural areas, added Musharraf.

Another draft law, The International Crimes (Tribunals) (Amendment) Act, 2012, was also approved at the meeting to give the related ordinance a legal shape for placing in parliament.

The cabinet, after holding detailed discussions, sent back the National Integrity Strategy (NIS) for further review, and formed a three-member committee to place it before the cabinet meeting within seven days.

The committee members are advisers to the Prime Minister Dr Moshirur Rahman, Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury and Dr Gowher Rizvi.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks through video conference from her official residence Gono Bhaban with expatriates living in New York City on Sunday night.

PHOTO: PMO

## Remain alert against BNP, Jamaat propaganda: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Bangladeshi expatriates to supplement the government efforts in strengthening democracy in the country and to remain alert about the propaganda being carried out by BNP and Jamaat against the country.

"You (expatriates) should remain alert about the propaganda of the BNP and Jamaat against the country," she said.

The premier said this while she was speaking through a videoconferencing from her official residence Gono Bhaban with the expatriates living in New York City on Sunday night (US time), marking the celebrations of Bangladesh's win in maritime boundary case.

About the country's image, she said, "The present government has been able to restore Bangladesh's image as a democratic, progressive and secular state erasing the bad name."

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said Awami League's New York City unit arranged the programme at Queens Palace where the mayor of New Jersey was present as the chief guest.

She also called upon the Bangladeshi expatriates living in the US to project the positive image and

the successes that the country achieved during the last three years of the present Awami League government.

"Every sector of the country is making quick progress and our successes have brought qualitative changes in society and economy apart from improving the standard of living of people," she added.

Mentioning the intimidation of political opponents and minorities by the previous BNP government, Hasina said the global community should be aware of their repressive acts and political vengeance.

The premier expressed her gratitude to expatriates for their wholehearted support to her and Awami League at the time of any crisis, particularly after August 15, 1975, and during the crucial time after January 11, 2007.

She also recalled the contributions of the expatriates to the movement for the restoration of democracy in Bangladesh, and extended her thanks to the expatriate citizens and exchanged greetings with them.

Hasina said Bangladesh was a very potential country, and whenever Awami League had come to power it made relentless efforts to take the country forward utilising its potentials.

She urged them to work for bright-

ening the country's image abroad and highlighting its achievements in various sectors over the years.

About the country's present political situation, she said the present government had taken initiatives to try the war criminals and corrupt people to make the country's development and democracy sustainable.

She said BNP, in the name of a democratic movement, was out to foil the trial of war criminals and the corrupt people. But, she reiterated that their trial would surely be held even after their repeated attempts to foil it.

In this context, she referred to the deterioration of law and order and torture by BNP-Jamaat activists during their 2001-2006 rule, saying that they made the country a land of terrorists and militants.

Awami League's New York City unit President Commander Nurunnabi and General Secretary Emdad Chowdhury, among others, spoke on the occasion. PM's Special Assistant Abdus Sobhan Golap and Military Secretary Major General Mia Mohammad Joynul Abedin were present.

Meanwhile, the mayor of New Jersey invited Hasina to visit his state at her convenient time.

## PM to attend US-Islamic World Forum

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the annual US-Islamic World Forum, scheduled to be held at Doha of Qatar from May 29 to 31.

A foreign ministry official told the news agency yesterday that the prime minister will deliver a keynote speech at the forum.

The US-Islamic World Forum is designed to bring together leaders in the realms of politics, business, media, academia and civil society from across the Islamic world and the United States.

The emphasis for this year's forum is the challenge of change, featuring plenary sessions on social, political and strategic transformations in the Muslim world.

Policymakers and officials, thought leaders and activists, entrepreneurs and journalists will meet during the sessions to facilitate productive dialogue concerning problems faced in US relations with the Islamic world.

## Betar to broadcast JS budget session

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh Betar will broadcast live the upcoming budget session, which begins on May 27, of the current 9th parliament from the Jatiya Sangsad every day through T&T Line.

The state-owned radio will broadcast the session through its 1,000 kilowatt medium wave meant 693 kilohertz and FM 103.2 megahertz, an official hand-out said yesterday.

Earlier, President Zillur Rahman summoned the 13th session of the 9th Jatiya Sangsad at 3:00pm on May 27.

The president called the session the 4th budget session of the incumbent government.

## BDR CARNAGE Cops give deposition on slain officers' bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight police officers yesterday gave depositions on the inquest into the deaths of 33 army officers, who were mowed down at Pilkhana in February 2009.

Narrating the conditions of the bodies found on the scene, they said almost all of them were bullet hit, while some were decomposed.

The defence later cross-examined the six sub-inspectors and two inspectors at the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, temporarily set up in the capital's Bakshibazar.

Meanwhile, a prosecution witness gave his deposition against eight accused in the BDR carnage case yesterday.

Abdur Rahman, a driver, testified that he saw gun-toting soldiers all around Pilkhana and found three bodies of army officers. He however did not mention who killed them.

The court will resume tomorrow. So far 170 witnesses have testified against 500 out of over 800 accused in the Pilkhana carnage case, said prosecutor Mosharraf Hossain Kajol. "The way the proceedings are advancing, we hope the trial of the case would be complete by December".

Doctors, who performed autopsy on the slain officers' bodies, and high profile witnesses are supposed to begin giving their depositions from the next month, the prosecutor said.

A total of 74 people, including 57 top and mid-ranking army officers, were killed during the February 25-26 massacre at Pilkhana headquarters of now-defunct BDR in 2009.

## Trader hurt in clash dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fruit trader who was injured in a clash between sand workers and fruit traders early Saturday died at a clinic in the capital's Dhanmondi on Sunday night.

The dead was identified as Mohammad Alam, 28. Three other injured fruit traders are Abdul Qayyum, Mohammad Sujjan and Sukkur Ali.

Watermelon traders on a truck locked in the clash with the workers on a sand-laden truck after the drivers of the two vehicles were trying to overtake each other's vehicle at Gabtoli Beri Bandh in the capital on Friday.

Fruit trader Abdul Qayyum told The Daily Star that the driver of sand-laden truck was trying to overtake their watermelon carrying truck several times early Friday.

He said when their driver tried to overtake the sand-laden truck, the sand workers became agitated and hit the watermelons with spades. When the two trucks reached at Gabtoli Bus Terminal, sand workers locked in the clash with them, leaving the four injured.

## CHILD MARRIAGE IN MEHERPUR HC summons UNO, OC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday summoned an upazila nirbahi officer (UNO), a local police station officer-in-charge (OC) and two ward councillors to appear before it to explain their roles over an incident of child marriage at Sadar upazila in Meherpur.

Shah Momin, UNO of Sadar upazila, Jahangir Alam, OC of Sadar Police Station, and Moniruzzaman and Abdullah Al Mamun, ward councillors of Meherpur pourasava, will have to appear before the court at 10:30am on May 29.

The court also issued a rule upon the government to explain why it should not be directed to punish the persons involved in the incident.

The HC issued the suo moto rule following a report published on the daily Prothom Alo

on Monday under the headline 'Two councillors arrange child marriage'.

The HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Choudhury Manik and Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim passed the order after advocates Abu Obaidur Rahman and Abantee Nurul of Ain O Salish Kendra placed the report before the judges yesterday.

According to the report, guardians of an 11-year-old girl and a 13-year-old boy, residents of Bospara and Notunpara in Meherpur town respectively, were hesitant to arrange their marriage as both of them were under-age.

The wedding was, however, completed on May 20 under the supervision of the two ward councillors after they had taken the responsibilities to tackle the legal barriers, the report said.

Among the councillors, Moniruzzaman is the paternal uncle of the girl, it said.

## Cop source killed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified men stabbed to death a source of Jatrabari police in the capital's Jatrabari yesterday.

The men took Alamgir Hossain, 26, to an under-construction building in Uttar Jatrabari at around 12:30am and stabbed him indiscriminately. When the locals came forward hearing Alamgir's screams, the men fled, said witnesses.

The building's security guard called police, who rushed Alamgir to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

Officer-in-Charge (investigation) Mazharul Islam of Jatrabari Police Station suspected that Alamgir was killed for recently giving a deposition in a case over the murder of his friend Amir, who was also a police source.

Being a witness to the murder last year, Alamgir had been receiving threats over phone by some local criminals so as not to give deposition against them, he said.

However, Alamgir's brother-in-law, Din Islam Robin, said Alamgir was a "lineman", extorting money from the stop of small passenger vehicles and distributing it among police and local political and transport leaders.

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