

## ATTACK ON BUDDHISTS Condemnation continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different socio-political and cultural organisations yesterday continued condemning the torching and vandalism of 12 Buddhist temples and monasteries and over 50 houses in Cox's Bazar and Chittagong early Sunday by a mob.

They reiterated their demand for the arrest of and exemplary punishment to the "identified communal forces" which carried out the attacks and urged people to remain alert and united to ward off such communal violence.

In a statement, Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus said the incident will be recognised as a black incident in Bangladesh's history of communal harmony.

Expressing belief that the accused would be tried after a proper investigation, he called upon all to uphold Bangladesh's communal harmony and stand against communal evil forces.

Addressing Bangladesh Peace Council's human chain before the capital's Jatiya Press Club, Information Minister Hasanul Haque Inu said the attack was a well-planned conspiracy to disrupt the country's peace and stability.

Communist Party of Bangladesh and Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal leaders, at their protest rally near Jatiya Press Club, said the ruling and opposition parties continued the "blame game" culture, helping the real perpetrators escape.

"Extreme fanatics are behind the attacks," said Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University at a human chain seven political parties and several social organisations organised before Jatiya Press Club.

Workers' Party of Bangladesh President Rashed Khan Menon urged the government to remain alert for the peaceful observance of upcoming Durga Puja.

Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, Bangladesh leaders said such acts by criminals and religious fanatics, claiming to be followers of Islam, go against lessons of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Nine other organisations held programmes protesting the violence.



Against the backdrop of the recent attack on Buddhists at Ramu in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh Shanti Parishad forms a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday protesting all conspiracies that threaten communal harmony.

PHOTO: STAR

## John Gomes new envoy to the Philippines

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT



The government has decided to appoint Maj Gen (ret'd) John Gomes as the new

Bangladesh ambassador to the Philippines.

A student of Notre Dame College and Dhaka University, Gomes was commissioned in the Bangladesh Army as an infantry officer in 1977 and retired as a major general in 2008, said a press release yesterday.

Gomes did his masters on defence studies and MBA from the University of Honolulu in USA. He also participated in US Peacekeeping missions in Tajikistan as operation manager and team leader of Bangladesh Group of Observers.

He was also involved in various social activities and is credited to have established Morning Glory School at Savar Cantonment. He is the president of Military Christian Fellowship Bangladesh and general secretary of Notre Dame College Alumni Association.

## Appeal for help

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Housewife Nilab Sultana, 32, is suffering from breast cancer. She is undergoing treatment at a hospital in India and needs around Tk 20 lakh for the treatment.

Her treatment is about to stop as money from her husband's income and support from relatives are not sufficient to continue the expensive treatment.

Her family requests the affluent and generous people of society to come forward with financial assistance.

Contributions can be sent to Nilab Sultana, Mudaraba Savings Account No. 10855, Islami Bank Bangladesh Limited, Mohammadpur Krishi Market Branch, Dhaka.

The contributions can also be sent to Nilab Sultana, Savings Account No. 002281552, Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd, Ring Road Branch, Dhaka.

Interested people can call at 01816433799.

## Adivasi long march concludes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Hundreds of Adivasis participating in a two-day long march demanding a law and a national commission on indigenous affairs reached Rajshahi yesterday.

The marchers headed for Rajshahi from Chapainawabganj on Tuesday morning.

They pressed for a four-point demand, which also includes formation of a land commission for plain land Adivasis, inclusion of all indigenous communities left out from government records, and justice to atrocities on Adivasis across the country.

The long march was organised by Jatiya Adivasi Parishad (JAP). The parishad held a huge rally at Kakonhat after the marchers reached there yesterday evening.

On the occasion, JAP leaders handed over a memorandum to Rajshahi Divisional Commissioner Abdul Mannan, saying that some eight lakh Adivasis of over 22 tribes reside in the eight districts of Rajshahi division and almost all of them are, directly or indirectly, victims of atrocities by local land grabbers.

Due to a lack of laws and separate authorities to protect their rights, they face different forms of repression including rape, eviction, and arson, they said.

The rally was attended, among others, by Rajshahi Deputy Inspector General Siddikur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Hannan, Superintendent of Police M Towfique Mahbub Chowdhury, JAP General Secretary Sabin Chandra Munda, Presidium Member Anil Marandi, Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity Member Nitul Chakma, and Gono Shilpi Sangstha General Secretary Moynuddin Chisti.

JAP President Rabindranath Soren chaired the programme.

## Cabinet approves silk development act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft of The Bangladesh Silk Development Board Act-2012 in a bid to ensure quick development of this sector.

The act aims at bringing about coordination among three organisations -- Bangladesh Silk Board, Silk Research Training Institute and Bangladesh Silk Foundation.

If the law is passed, there will be only one organisation named Bangladesh Silk Development Board. The jute and textiles minister will be head of the board, Cabinet Secretary M Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told reporters after the meeting.

The cabinet also approved the draft of the Waqfs (Amendment) Act-2012 aiming to make Waqf administration more effective. The proposed law has a provision to raise the fine of 'Mutawallis' (caretaker of Waqfs property) to Tk 20,000 from Tk 2,000 for negligence in their duties.

The cabinet secretary said once the law is passed, the Waqf estates would be registered in the names of estates concerned instead of 'Mutawallis' as the estates go to their inheritors after their death.

The proposed law also gives limited executive magistracy powers to the Waqf administration and limited scope in running mobile courts by the administrator and his associates to ensure proper maintenance of the estates and drives to oust encroachers, added Musharraf.

He said no Waqf estate would be transferable or registered without the consent of the administrator under the proposed law.

The meeting approved a proposal for withdrawal of a decision by an earlier cabinet meeting on Land Dispute and Crime (Special Provision) Act, 2004, saying there was no need for the act as a related existing act had been effective.

The meeting also endorsed a proposal for ratifying the Protocol of Amendments to the Convention on the International Hydrographic Organisation, adopted at the 3rd International Hydrographic Conference held in Monaco.

Musharraf said under this protocol, shipping safety and security would be ensured and its capacity enhanced, and Bangladesh would get more cooperation from other countries regarding the use of modern technology.

## SAYEDEE'S CERTIFICATE FORGERY 10 madrasa board officials asked to explain role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary sub-committee probing Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee's certificate forgery yesterday asked ten former and current top officials of the Madrasa board to explain their alleged role in the scam within 10 days.

"The Madrasa board officials, through unfair means, helped Sayedee change his name, and date of birth," Biren Sikder, member of the three-member sub-committee, told The Daily Star after a meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

The officials include Madrasa Education Board's former chairman Mohammad Yusuf, former registrar Hafizur Rahman, incumbent Chairman Abdun Nur, and Professor of Islamic Studies department of Dhaka University Ruhul Amin. They have to come up with their reply at the sub-committee's meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on October 14.

"The committee members enquired them [the officials] of the existing rules and asked them to defend themselves regarding their irregularities. But they sought time for their reply," said Biren, also an Awami League MP.

The parliamentary committee on education ministry found on August 12 that Sayedee, now facing war crimes trial, changed his name and age on Dakhil and Alim certificates illegally in November 2008, more than five decades after he had got them.

He made the changes within just three days with the help of some corrupt officials of the Madrasa board.

The parliamentary body on August 12 formed the three-member sub-committee to investigate the certificate scam with lawmaker Abdul Wohab as its head.



Police cordon off the BNP office at Nayapaltan yesterday following Tuesday's incident of burning and vandalising vehicles by BNP activists in the capital's Bijoy Nagar area.

## Majority for compulsory marriage registration

Says RIB survey

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 91.3 percent respondents, 74.5 percent of whom were women, of a survey conducted by Meghna Guhathakurta, executive director of Research Initiatives of Bangladesh (RIB), demanded a system to make marriage registration compulsory.

The study, "The necessity and importance of Hindu marriage law", was disseminated in a seminar organised by RIB and Manusher Jonno Foundation in the capital's Cirdap Auditorium yesterday.

A total of 756 women and 180 men of nine districts were interviewed for the study. The government recently passed Hindu Marriage Registration Act, 2012, keeping Hindu marriage registration optional.

Presenting the study, Meghna said 93.5 percent of the respondents thought there was no religious barrier to the compulsory marriage registration system.

The study said 61.1 percent of the responding men thought that women were facing discrimination and torture due to the absence of a law making marriage registration compulsory while 88.3 percent of them deemed the law a necessity.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said the law ignored the opinions of thousands of women by keeping Hindu marriage registration optional.

Around 90,000 signatures were collected in favour of making Hindu marriage registration mandatory, but the opinion was not followed, she said.

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