



The Nimtoli Gate near Bangladesh Asiatic Society is in a mess, with sacks of waste and old furniture dumped in the area, and the city corporation authorities turning a blind eye to it. The photo was taken yesterday in the capital's Nimtoli area.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Hoshi laid to rest

FROM PAGE 1  
among others, were present during the burial.

Talukder said Kunio was converted to Islam and given the name Golam Mohammad Kibria. He was buried according to Islamic rituals.

Hoshi's body, which was kept at the mortuary of Rangpur Medical College (RMC), was handed over to the officials of Japanese embassy around 2:30am.

His namaz-e-janaza was held on the RMC premises. Prayers were also offered at the graveyard after the completion of the burial, he added.

Talukder, however, declined to comment on why such secrecy was maintained throughout the burial process.

RCC Mayor Sharfuddin Ahmed confirmed that Hoshi was converted to Islam.

Around 2:30am yesterday, the district administration sought the city corporation's consent for the burial and they gave the confirmation as per the documents they so far received, he added.

RCC Ward-18 Councillor Nizamul Hasan Badal, who was present at the burial, said that as per the direction of the mayor, he attended the burial as a city corporation representative.

He said the body was brought to the graveyard in an ambulance around 3:30am.

Around 50 people were present at the burial of Hoshi. Of them, 10 to 12 members were Japanese nationals, he said, adding that security was beefed up in and around the graveyard during the burial.

Badal said he handed Hoshi's death

certificate over to Mamun-ur-Rashid, investigation officer of the case, around 5:00pm.

Rangpur Police Lines Jame Masjid Imam Muntasir Ahamed conducted Hoshi's namaz-e-janaza, a source who was present at the burial told The Daily Star, seeking anonymity.

Contacted, Muntasir refused to comment anything in this regard.

Meanwhile, a plainclothes police team picked up Sultana Khatun, wife of Humayun Kabir Hira, around 10:30pm Monday, Hira's mother Hasina Begum claimed.

She said the team also seized Hira's laptop, camera and Sultana's mobile phone from the house.

She said she had no idea about her daughter-in-law's whereabouts.

Contacted, Kaunia Police Station Officer-in-charge Reazul Karim said he did not know of any such detention.

Kunio Hoshi, 66, was shot dead by three men riding on a motorbike at Alutilla village in Kaunia upazila on the morning of October 3.

On October 6, a Rangpur court placed Rashed-un-Nabi Khan Biplob, a member of BNP's Rangpur city unit, and Humayun Kabir Hira, a friend of Hoshi, on 10-day remand.

After three days, the same court cancelled the remand of Biplob and sent him to jail.

Police on October 10 also released two private bank officials, who were detained in Rajshahi the previous day, after questioning them over the murder.

## A dream comes true

Inhabitants of 59 former Indian enclaves get electricity

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

It was like a dream come true for the residents of 59 erstwhile enclaves in the district. Their houses and shops were lit by electricity supply yesterday.

Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) started supplying electricity to the former enclaves in Patgram, Hatibandha and Lalmonirhat Sadar upazilas, said Sheikh Mohammad Alauddin, chief engineer of BPDB in Rangpur.

Shamsul Islam, 56, of Banskata village in Patgram upazila said they were happy with the electricity supply. "We've started a new life after the launch of the power supply to our village."

Noor Mohammad, 42, of the same village said the electricity supply has opened up a new opportunity for them to change their lifestyle.

Schoolboy Sifat Islam, 12, said they had to face difficulties to study at night as there was no electricity. But the problem is over.

Azizul Islam, a leader of the former India-Bangladesh Enclave Exchange Implementation Committee and a resident of the erstwhile Gotamari enclave in Hatibandha upazila, said they were lucky to get all the facilities in phases.

Bangladesh and India on July 31 midnight exchanged 162 enclaves between themselves, ending the stateless existence of around 52,000 people.

## Hasina visits Netherlands Nov 3-6

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka and The Hague are expected to sign several deals on economic cooperation, seaport development and natural disaster management during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's 4-day official visit to the Netherlands from November 3.

Her visit is expected to be followed by that of Queen Máxima of the Netherlands to Bangladesh in the third week of the same month, said diplomatic sources.

Highly placed sources at the Prime Minister's Office told The Daily Star yesterday that there has been a pending invitation from The Hague and the PM will be going to the Netherlands on November 3 to boost bilateral relations.

"We are expecting a very positive outcome from this visit as the Netherlands has shown its interest in construction and development of seaports in Chittagong and Paira in Patuakhali," said a PMO official.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, during his bilateral meeting with Sheikh Hasina in New York on Sept 28 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, has expressed deep interest in Bangladesh and assisting the country in its current development endeavours.

A PMO source said during Hasina's upcoming visit, she will call on the King of the Netherlands and hold a bilateral meeting with her counterpart when she will also unveil her government's plan to start the construction of Paira deep seaport soon and seek Dutch government's support in this regard.

Hasina will also seek Dutch cooperation in the areas of river dredging, land reclamation, flood control and natural disaster management in Bangladesh.

She will discuss progress in preparing the "Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100" which is being formulated in cooperation with the Dutch government, added the source.

## Govt's anti-militancy campaign

FROM PAGE 1

regularly and brief students on militancy.

Islamic Foundation also instructed the imams of all three lakh mosques across the country to give anti-militancy sermons. It even arranged a foundation course for imams to motivate them to get involved in the campaign.

The campaign apparently lost steam as only a small number of schools and mosques followed the instructions, a number of teachers, imams and government officials told The Daily Star.

"More than 84,000 imams attended the course but most of them don't give sermons on the evils of extremism," said an official at Islamic Foundation, seeking anonymity.

Taher Hossain, director of Imam Training Academy, however, claimed most of the imams were giving sermons before the juma prayers, but it was not possible for them to monitor all five lakh imams across the country.

He said it would take more time to make the imams understand the issue.

In Pabna, some teachers said they didn't get any circulars or directives from the education ministry to talk to students on the issue.

"If we get any ministry circular, we will have discussions with the students about militancy" Robiul Karim, headmaster of a girls' high school in Pabna town, told The Daily Star.

Saidul Islam, a teacher at Pabna PTI School, said there was no specific directive from the authorities to discuss the militancy issue with students.

When it comes to mosques in Pabna, most imams are not following the instructions from the authorities.

"We discussed the issue several times. This is true that we could not talk about it every week as we had various religious issues to discuss," said Abdul Hannan, imam of Chapa Bibi mosque in Pabna.

Abdus Samad, deputy director of Islamic Foundation in Pabna, told this correspondent that due to shortage of manpower, they could not monitor whether imams were giving anti-militancy sermons or not.

The situation in Natore is even worse as any school or mosque hardly follows the instructions. Most schools do not hold assemblies, let alone briefing students on militancy.

Abul Bashar, imam of Bangabaria Jam-e-Mosque in Natore, admitted

that he never gave any sermons against militancy. "In fact, the issue was never discussed in khutbah."

Mahbubur Rahman, who offers prayers at different mosques in Natore, said he never heard any anti-militancy sermons.

In Patuakhali, a few imams do give sermons against extremism, but not regularly.

Moulana Abu Syed, president of Patuakhali district Imam Association, said "We seldom do it."

Imam of Water Development Board Jam-e-Mosque Moulana Motahar Hossain, who did the Islamic Foundation course, said he didn't get a chance to apply what he learnt in training sessions.

The picture at schools in the district was almost the same.

Abdur Razzak, head teacher at Auliapur Adarsha High School, said he never talked to students about the militancy issue.

In Lalmonirhat, Education Officer Moslem Uddin said they had circulated a notice to the schools and madrasas, asking them to brief students on the scourge of militancy during assemblies.

"They [schools and madrasas] started following the instructions but did not continue," he said.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent visited 10 schools in the district and found that none of them was following the instructions.

Imam of Juma Para Jam-e-Mosque Hafez Shahidul Islam said he talks to devotees about militancy after the juma prayers. "Militancy has no place in Islam and those who use religion for militancy are actually harming Islam."

However, imam of Chouboti Jam-e-Mosque Hafez Md Shah Alam said he had no idea about any campaign against militancy or instructions to give sermons.

Asked, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said there was a clear instruction for schools regarding their role in fighting militancy. Several notices were issued to all schools for making students aware of militancy, drug peddling and stalking.

"I will check whether all of them are following the instructions. If necessary, I will issue fresh directives," he told The Daily Star, stressing the need for build-

ing a social movement against militancy, drug peddling and eve-teasing.

There are more than 70,000 government and non-government primary schools, and 30,300 secondary schools in the country with a total of five lakh teachers.

The education ministry also asked them to organise discussions on the impacts of terrorism and militancy. But that too did not happen.

Identifying militancy as a social problem, the nationwide campaign was launched in 2009, with an aim to tackle it socially, religiously and culturally. But it seems to have lost momentum with the government increasingly relying on law enforcers to combat militancy.

It was not possible to implement steps such as screening of documentaries in rural areas to make people aware of the evils of militancy. Bangladesh Television and a few private TV channels, however, show anti-militancy documentaries occasionally.

## Libya rival forces oppose UN-proposed peace deal

AFP, Tripoli

Libya's rival parliament and government both showed opposition to a UN-proposed peace deal installing a unity government Monday, with one lawmaker saying it would deepen rifts in the country.

"This government is rejected... it will deepen differences between the Libyan people," said Mahmud Abdel Aziz of the General National Congress, which has yet to vote on the plan.

The Tripoli-based GNC is refusing to discuss the proposed government until its demands are met for amendments to the UN-proposed plan for Libya, which plunged into chaos after the 2011 uprising that toppled dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

In the aftermath of his fall and murder, the country has been ruled by powerful armed militias and has had two governments and two parliaments since August 2014.

## Passports issued

FROM PAGE 1

They prepared fake no-objection certificates (NOCs) bearing the names, signatures and seals of some officials of different government offices in Agargaon and other parts of the capital and in Faridpur.

About half the NOCs were issued using the name of Dr Uttam Kumar Barua of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital without his knowledge. In those NOCs, applicants were shown as employees of the hospital, says the probe report.

For other NOCs, the syndicate used the names of officials at Tax Commissioner's Office-5, Department of Housing and Public Works, Ministry of Shipping, Public Service Commission, Directorate of Customs Intelligence and Investigation, Fire Service and Civil Defence and Divisional Forest Office in Faridpur.

Contacted by the probe body, the officials said the persons who got the official passports using the NOCs do not work in those offices.

Mostly, it was cleaners, peons, office assistants, ward boys, computer operators, students, cattle traders, shopkeepers and scrap material traders who got those official passports. For this, they paid huge sums to brokers, the committee learnt after talking to them.

The probe body also took statements of DIP officials and employees involved in the process. They said a government official or employee can get an official passport just by submitting an NOC with the application.

No police verification is required for them but officials and employees can, when in doubt, question the applicants to verify the NOCs.

"Brokers take the advantage of this flexibility," said a DIP director.

Indicating an unusual rise in issuance of official passport in February and March this year, nearly 2,000 additional official passports were issued then, committee members and some DIP officials said.

They observed that the massive forgery was possible due to serious mismanagement and dominance of brokers in the Agargaon passport office.

The committee in its report said issuing of official passports through illegal means has contributed to

human trafficking.

The forgery could have been prevented had the officials concerned quizzed those who submitted the applications, read the report.

"Brokers submitted the applications in the absence of applicants, said record keeper Suman Roy, assistant directors Umme Kulsum and SM Shahjahan in their statements."

Even, the applications have just vanished; possibly they were removed to hide the scam, according to the committee's findings.

The probe identified eight persons who were involved in the process of issuing the passports.

Formed on July 7, the three-member committee headed by DIP Director Shihab Uddin Khan submitted the report to DIP Director General Zeaul Alam in August but no step was taken in this regard so far, according to DIP officials.

The Daily Star found a copy of the report.

Although the forgery has been going for more than a year, it could not be detected by any government agencies or departments, said a probe committee member.

It was the Turkish government who informed the foreign ministry about the matter in April after detaining three Bangladeshi nationals who were carrying the official passports, added the official.

In May, DIP director Munshi Mueed Ikram, assistant director SM Shahjahan, senior assistant Shahjahan Miah and office assistant M Saiful Islam were suspended for their links to the scam.

Some of those who gave statements to the probe body alleged that Mueed Ikram verbally cancelled the system of quizzing applicants about the NOC, added the report.

The DG of DIP could not be reached since he is now abroad.

Senior Home Secretary Md Mozammel Haque Khan said the ministry has taken the issue of official passport forgery seriously.

"We won't make any compromise. Stern action will be taken against those who are involved," he told these correspondents last night.

Asked if the number of such passports would be over 2,000, he said he didn't know exactly, but surely it's big.

## Business factor

FROM PAGE 1

Excessive dependency on businessmen by our major political parties has effectively turned politics into a business in many ways. It is as if an alliance has been created between some politicians and businessmen.

For this situation, businessmen are not responsible alone. The politicians must share the responsibility. They have provided the businessmen the space in politics.

It is known that businessmen donate funds to the major political parties. Many businessmen have opted to join politics formally and become MPs. Some of them have also become ministers. This practice has been going on for long and it has become a worrisome factor in our politics.

Let us look at how the country's politics, as the president said, has gone to the pocket of businessmen.

The facts available in different studies and books show the periods of undemocratic rules, particularly the two martial law regimes in independent Bangladesh, had been the most productive periods of blessings for businessmen to emerge as politicians.

Of the MPs elected in the 1954 election, only four percent were businessmen and industrialists in profession.

In the 1973 election, the first parliamentary election of independent Bangladesh, of the total MPs, 13 percent were businessmen and industrialists. The rise was nine percentage points in around 20 years.

Law, business and farming were the three most common occupations of the lawmakers elected in the country's first parliament.

The segment of businessmen and industrialists in parliamentary politics increased to 34 percent from 13 percent in the second parliamentary election held during the martial law regime-led by Gen Zia in 1979, only six years after the first election.

This trend continued during the second martial law regime-led by Gen Ershad. Businessmen continued to enjoy privileges in the two parliamentary elections held during the Ershad regime.

It was because the military rulers were desperate to form political parties to legitimise their illegal power grabs. They were eager to distribute favours to

businessmen and others to bring them to their folds.

This form of aberration, the businessmen dominated politics, continued even after the restoration of parliamentary politics and it continued because of the major political parties' desperate wills to capture state power in any way possible.

In the seventh parliament formed in June 1996, 48 percent of the MPs were businessmen and industrialists in profession.

The percentage of businessmen and industrialists turned MPs went up to 52.10 in the eighth parliament formed after the 2001 election.

In the ninth parliament constituted in January 2009, a whopping 63 percent of the MPs are businessmen.

[There is no exact data available about the number of MPs who are businessmen in the present parliament which was constituted following the one-sided polls in January 2004 with 153 MPs elected uncontested.]

The rise of businessmen and industrialists in politics and the parliament has become one of the major reasons that parliamentary

democracy could not reach its full potential. Parliamentary works including making laws and overseeing government activities suffered. It is really a peculiar situation. Our political leaders speak of strengthening democracy, but they have kept the parliament, the temple of democracy, hobbled.

The present situation-- political uncertainty, politics of confrontation, lack of rule of law and good governance--is a manifestation of our failure to make the parliament reach its full potential.

There is still hope. Everything is not lost. Yet, the president has forcefully said: "We have to get rid of it."

The crucial question is: how? The answer is simple: we need to get united and our political parties should sincerely take the lead to save our politics for the sake of the people and their own interests.

President Abdul Hamid, who is a respected and seasoned politician, can play a vital role to save the country's politics. He can make a move without delay to lead our battling politicians towards a consensus to save politics.