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প্রিয়জনের প্রয়োজনে...

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Minority attacks were political, not religious

Yunus tells US Senator Peters

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday said the attacks on minorities, particularly Hindus, following August 5 last year were politically, not religiously, motivated.

However, his government has taken swift action against the perpetrators, he said during a meeting with US Senator Gary Peters at the State Guest House Jamuna in Dhaka.

He made the remarks after Senator Peters noted that Bangladeshi-origin people in the US have expressed concerns over recent attacks on minorities.

Peter, however, said there has been a lot of misinformation surrounding these incidents, which has heightened public concerns.

In response, Prof Yunus urged the US senator, alongside other US political leaders, journalists, and activists, to visit Bangladesh and observe the country's religious harmony firsthand.

The chief adviser reaffirmed his government's commitment to protecting the rights of all citizens, regardless of gender, race, and religion.

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PHOTO: AMIRAN HOSSAIN, TITU DAS

With Eid right around the corner, people across the country are busy shopping in preparation for the festival. Some have flocked to the markets to buy new dresses for their loved ones, while tailors are engaged in round-the-clock shifts making clothes for their customers, inset. The photos were taken from the New Market area in the capital and Barishal city, respectively, yesterday.

Consensus commission to begin talks with parties tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Consensus Commission (NCC) is set to begin separate discussions with political parties to form a national consensus on state reforms tomorrow.

The first meeting in this series will be held with the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) at 3:00pm in the LD Hall of the National Parliament.

According to an NCC press release, schedules for discussions with other parties will be announced gradually.

Sources said the commission plans to continue its dialogue with political parties until March 24, before Eid. As per this schedule, the commission may hold discussions with two more parties next week.

As of yesterday, 15 out of 38 political parties have submitted their opinions to the NCC. The Jatiya Gono Front and Jatiya Samantantri Dal (JSD) submitted their opinions yesterday.

The commission also noted that 14 other parties, including BNP, Jamaat, and the National Citizen Party, are expected to submit their opinions in the coming days.

On March 6, the NCC sent spreadsheets with key recommendations from various reform commissions to 37 political parties. These parties were asked to respond by March 13.

Mother, daughter found hanging dead in Dinajpur Five detained in five districts over rape, molestation

STAR REPORT

Police recovered the hanging bodies of a woman and her six-year-old daughter yesterday in Dinajpur.

The deceased were identified as Lucky Akter, 28, and her daughter Morium Akter of Lichupara village.

Police suspect that Lucky may have died by suicide, fearing humiliation over allegations of an extramarital affair.

According to locals and police, some villagers on Monday accused Lucky of having an extramarital affair. A social arbitration was scheduled for yesterday to determine a penalty for her.

However, a group of people suddenly attacked Lucky's husband, Mohorom Ali, near their home yesterday afternoon.

"Seeing the attack, Lucky broke down emotionally, fearing public humiliation during the arbitration," said Saidul Islam, a member of the local union parishad.

Shortly afterwards, Lucky and her daughter were found hanging from the ceiling of their residence.

Police recovered the bodies around 5:30pm, said Abdullah Al Mamun, inspector of Phulbari Police Station.

"The husband has been detained for investigation. Efforts are underway to arrest those responsible for instigating her," the inspector added.

Meanwhile, a man was sent to jail yesterday for allegedly

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This road in the Khilgaon area was cut by Titas Gas to set up gas lines in the area. As a result, pedestrians or speeding vehicles could fall into this gap at any time. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DETAILED AREA PLAN Stop promoting business interests in amendments Urban planners urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must take responsibility if the Detailed Area Plan and building regulations are amended in favour of business groups ignoring citizens' interests, said urban planning experts yesterday.

The amendment to DAP, which is underway, should immediately be stopped as it aims to serve business interests, they said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Any revision to DAP and building regulations must involve citizens, professionals, and community organisations to ensure overall public welfare and liveability of the city, they said.

They demanded that the interim government publishes a white paper after a thorough investigation into past amendments made to the DAP and other urban plans under business influence.

Several civil society, professional organisations and advocacy groups, including Bangladesh Institute of Planners, Center for Atmospheric Pollution Studies, Work for Better Bangladesh Trust, Bangladesh Urban Forum, Center for Housing and Building Research, and the Institute for Planning and Development, jointly organised the event.

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Bangladeshis can still obtain Umrah visas: adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia has not suspended Umrah visas for Bangladeshi citizens, said Religious Affairs Adviser AFM Khalid Hossain yesterday.

He said the Saudi ambassador in Dhaka had confirmed this to the religious affairs secretary.

The Saudi ambassador advised Bangladeshi agencies to contact the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah through authorised Saudi Umrah companies or agents, submitting the necessary documents, including air tickets and hotel

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Resign from govt within 15 days

Gono Odhikar Parishad calls upon advisers Asif, Mahfuj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Gono Odhikar Parishad yesterday called for the resignation of interim government advisers Asif Mahmud Shobij Bhuiyan and Mahfuj Alam within 15 days, accusing them of compromising the government's neutrality.

They made the demand at a press conference held at the party's Bijoynagar office.

At the press conference, Faruk Hasan, vice

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Govt employees to get extended Eid holidays

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government employees are set to enjoy a prolonged holiday during Eid-ul-Fitr, with at least six consecutive days off, according to the public administration.

The official Eid holiday is from March 29 to April 2, with March 31 likely to be the Eid day, subject to moon sighting. The break includes the two days before and two days after Eid, declared as government holidays by executive order.

Additionally, March 28 marks Shab-e-Qadr, a public holiday, and is a Friday -- a weekend day in Bangladesh. Earlier, March 26 is a public holiday for Independence Day, making March 27 the only working day before the extended Eid holiday. Offices will reopen on April 3 (Thursday) but close again for the weekend on April 4 and 5.

This results in government offices remaining open for just two days -- March 27 and April 3 -- between March 26 and April 5, effectively creating an 11-day span with minimal working days.

A source from the cabinet division said a summary regarding the holiday extension might be presented at the next Advisory Council meeting. If approved, the Ministry of Public Administration will issue a notification.

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