

Kadianis confined, ostracised in Kushtia village

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Fundamentalists have confined and ostracised at least 70 members of 10 Kadiani (Ahamadia Muslim Jamaat) families in Uttarbahbanipur village under Bheramara upazila, Kushtia since Friday afternoon.

According to sources, no member of the ostracised families dares leave home since the ostracism order was declared.

All villagers have been told to sever all contact with any Kadianis as social relations with the Kadianis have been declared against the inviolable truth of Islam, and all schools in the area have been told not to teach any Kadiani child.

The Kadiani families were requested to convert to Islam as they were declared to be non-Muslims.

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Dhaka, Colombo talk FTA Nov 1-2

UNB, Dhaka

After initiating talks on free trade agreement (FTA) with India this month, Bangladesh trade officials will next sit with their Sri Lankan counterparts on November 1-2 in the city to discuss FTA.

Dhaka and Colombo have a meagre bilateral trade, which too tilted to the Indian Ocean Island state. As of fiscal year 2001-02, Bangladesh's imports from Sri Lanka totalled \$ 6.12 million while her exports stood at \$ 2.07 million, leaving a \$ 4.05 million deficit.

Animal and vegetable fats, oil, plastic and rubber articles, and

textiles make the bulk of Bangladesh's imports from Sri Lanka, while her scanty exports comprise jute products, pharmaceuticals, battery and tobacco.

Among the seven member states of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Sarc), only India and Sri Lanka have got FTA on bilateral basis. Both India and Pakistan are willing to sign FTA with Bangladesh bilaterally.

Bangladesh and India initiated joint secretary level trade talks on FTA in Dhaka on October 20-22.

Since the prospect of a regional

FTA is feeble in the near future, member states now prefer to have FTA on bilateral basis.

As a regional trade group, Sarc lags far behind such blocs as North American Free Trade Agreement (Nafta), the European Union (EU), the Asean Free Trade Area, the Central American Common Market and Latin American Free Trade Area -- all having regional free trade agreements.

Established in 1985, Sarc could not materialise formation of South Asian Free Trade Area (Saftra) m a i n l y

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Cracked dams 20,000 marooned in 22 Khulna villages

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Over 20,000 people in 22 villages of three unions under Koyra upazila have been left homeless and marooned due to erosion by river Kobadek and cracks in two embank-

ments. There is water 4-5 feet deep in all offices including Koyra Police Station. All schools and colleges have been closed. Local people and political parties have asked for

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Vajpayee now offers talks to Naga rebels

AFP, Guwahati

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee yesterday offered unconditional peace talks with separatist groups in India's northeast to end decades of insurgency in the region.

"Our doors for dialogue with any militant group in the northeast are open," Vajpayee told a public rally of 25,000 people in the remote mountainous Nagaland state capital Kohima.

"We want all militant groups to shun the path of violence and come forward for meaningful negotiations with the government," he said.

The prime minister arrived in Kohima Monday on a three-day visit to boost the ongoing peace process between the federal government and separatist guerrillas, primarily leaders of the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, known as NSCN (IM).

He announced a 45-million rupee (one million dollars) development package for Nagaland to improve its roads and other infrastructure.

On Monday, the Prime Minister launched the first mobile telephone

service in Nagaland.

The premier's programme in the province bordering Myanmar includes meeting delegations representing tribal groups and church leaders.

Early Tuesday, the S.S. Khaplang faction of the NSCN -- known as NSCN (K) -- warned Vajpayee that all parties had to be included in talks on the restive state's future for lasting peace to be achieved.

"It would be the greatest mistake on the part of the Indian government to hope for a permanent solution to the Naga problem by entering into a deal with only the NSCN (IM)," the NSCN (K) said in a statement.

New Delhi is currently holding peace talks with the NSCN (IM) after the two sides entered into a ceasefire in 1997. The last round of talks concluded in Amsterdam in September.

The NSCN (K), which is fighting for an independent homeland for the tribal Nagas, entered into a ceasefire with the Indian government in 2001 but formal talks are yet to start.

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Kashmiri rebels vow more attacks during Ramadan

7 killed on first day

AFP, Srinagar

Seven people were killed and 45 others injured yesterday in Indian Kashmir in a bloody start to the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Kashmiri rebels have vowed will be soaked in violence.

Ramadan began in Kashmir on Tuesday with a warning from hard-line Islamic militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba that it would increase attacks during the holy month.

"There will be an escalation in the activities of mujahedin (holy warriors) in the month of Ramadan," Abu Huzaifa, the spokesman for the Lashkar-e-Taiba group told the Greater Kashmir newspaper.

The newspaper said: "People should keep themselves away from the security installations as according to him (Huzaifa) they could become the unintended targets of such attacks."

A few hours after Muslims filled mosques for dawn prayers across the restive state, three soldiers were

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Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
2	29		5-25
3	30	4-42	5-24
4	31	4-43	5-23

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 29		5-22 pm
Oct 30	6-03 am	

Prayer Timings

October 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-41	4-47
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation



Thousands flock to Chawk Bazar in Old Dhaka to buy iftar specialties, unique to the area, on the first day of Ramadan yesterday.

DU students set car afire for hitting rickshaw

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Dhaka University set fire to a car and beat up its owner in front of Jahurul Haque Hall after the vehicle hit a rickshaw, injuring one of its passengers yesterday.

Rashlan Hossain, owner of the car and student of an UK university, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with severe injuries. He came to Bangladesh a few days back.

Witnesses said Rashlan was driving the car to Nilkhet. The car hit a rickshaw carrying two women students of the DU. Students stopped the car and began to damage it.

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Envoy to ROK recalled over graft probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government on Monday recalled Ambassador to South Korea Humayun Kamal following a probe into financial corruption in the embassy.

First Secretary of the embassy Borhan Uddin and another staff Manjurul Kader have also been recalled from Seoul for their alleged involvement in the corruption.

The expatriate Bangladeshis in South Korea had been alleging that officials in the embassy did not deposit to the exchequer money

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