



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia offers prayers at the Masjid-ul Haram in Makkah on Wednesday night.

Khaleda offers Kiamullail prayers at Masjid-ul Haram

BSS, Makkah

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, now in Saudi Arabia to perform the holy Umrah, offered 'Keyamullail' prayers in congregation with lakhs of devotees at Masjid-ul Haram late Wednesday night.

After the Namaj, she prayed for the welfare, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and for world peace.

Khaleda Zia also offered Asr, Maghrib, Esha and Tarabi prayers in congregation and had her Ifar with lakhs of devotees at the Masjid-ul Haram. She spent her time in prayers, tasbeeh and tahlil.

The prime minister was accompanied by her youngest son Arafat Rahman, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin, Prime Minister's political secretary Alhaj Mosaddek Ali and Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia SK Sarjil Hassan.

Earlier, she performed the holy Umrah Tuesday night on her arrival here from Madina.

4 get life for murder

UNB, Sunamganj

A court here Wednesday convicted four people and sentenced them to life term rigorous imprisonment for killing a man.

The convicts are Nazir Ahmed, Ashik Ahmed, Saiful Islam and Sitara Miah of Mashalghat village in Jamalganj upazila.

According to the prosecution, the accused hit their neighbour Golam Azam with lethal weapons on April 24, 1995, following a land dispute, leaving him seriously injured. Later, he died on way to hospital.

After examining the records and witnesses, Additional District and Sessions Judge AKM Salimullah pronounced the verdict.

One chopped to death

UNB, Kishoreganj

A youth was chopped to death in a clash over land dispute at Mathia village in Sadar upazila Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Sohel, 22, son of Mahram Ali of the village.

Police said Sohel was chopped to death during a clash between the supporters of Sunil and Srimanta of the same village. Sohel was the supporter of Srimanta.

A case was filed in this connection.

Garments workers demand bonus, arrears

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Garments workers under the banner of various associations staged demonstrations in the city yesterday demanding festival bonus and salary arrears ahead of Eid.

In a statement, the Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) urged the garments factory owners to pay the workers all their dues before Eid.

The Bangladesh Joint Garments Workers Federation staged a sit-in in front of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters' Association office demanding payment of arrears and festival bonus as part of its ongoing movement.

Federation President Tofazzal Hossain said that it is inhuman that the workers do not get salaries after having worked month after

month.

"We have placed a 12-point demand to establish the rights of garments workers in line with the labour laws," said Federation General Secretary Moinuddin Mandal.

The Garments Tailors Workers' League demanded formation of workers' compensation commission to compensate the workers in case of any accident or disability or causality.

The Bangladesh Garment Workers' Unity Council will stage a protest today demanding festival bonus, payment of dues, and an end to repression of workers.

The Bangladesh Garments Majdur Union will also hold a rally at Mirpur today demanding trial of killing of a garments worker in Narayanjanj, issuance of appointment letters, and payment of dues.

IFIC Bank employee arrested

UNB, Sylhet

An employee of IFIC Bank was arrested on charge of misappropriating about Tk 9 lakh from the bank's Ambarkhana branch in the town in January.

Farid Uddin, now cashier of bank's Moulvibazar branch, has been charged with embezzling the amount of expatriate salary of Juned Ahmed.

Police said the incident came to light when Juned Ahmed wanted to know his balance on Monday and found to his utter astonishment that Tk 8.70 lakh he deposited in four times was missing.

Soon the matter was brought to the notice of the branch manager, who after inquiry found that the then cashier Farid Uddin received the money.

Police arrested Farid Uddin from his house at Bagbari in the town. Meanwhile Farid in a confessional statement on Wednesday also admitted that during his tenure in the branch he misappropriated some Tk 40 lakh from the bank.

Mother's work bad for children

Say researchers

BBC ONLINE

Children of mothers who return to work when they are small perform less well at school, researchers have found.

A report from the Institute for Social and Economic Research said having a working mother also affected a child's emotional development.

They say the effect is more pronounced in children of poorer mothers.

The researchers said they did not believe mothers should stay at home - instead employers should look at more flexible working arrangements.

The team looked at the research which has been carried out into the effects of parental employment on children's development.

The children had been assessed throughout their childhood.

It was found that children of mothers who had gone back to work before they started school developed more slowly emotionally, and performed less well in reading and maths tests, than children of mothers who had

stayed at home.

The effect continued into the children's teenage years, with a mother's early return to work reducing a child's chance of progressing to A-levels from 60 to 50%.

But the negative effects of having a working mother were found to be less severe for the children of better educated mothers.

The researchers said the beneficial effects of a higher family income may 'cancel out' the negative effects of having a working mother.

They add that other factors, such as the amount of time mothers spend with their children were also important in influencing development.

Professor Marco Francesconi, one of the report's authors, told BBC News Online: "Whether or not a mother works is just one dimension of family life.

"There are other things that are directly relevant to children's development, such as money and the time parents spend with them."

He added: "There are many families where both parents need, or want, to go to work, but this doesn't preclude them from having lots of constructive, rich experiences with their children."

Professor Francesconi, said he did not want the findings to be used as evidence that mothers stay at home.

"Rather than worrying about them, or dismissing them, we need to look at how we could actively think about how we could give more choices to working parents.

"We need to change the culture in the workplace, and policy makers could learn from the experiences of other countries."

A spokeswoman for the National Family and Parenting Institute said: "The research is perfectly valid. But the way it might be used is to say to mothers 'get back in the home' - which is not useful to anybody.

"For many parents, particularly in the south-east, they simply have no choice but to both go out to work."

Some changes in DU admission rules

UNB, Dhaka

Dhaka University authorities have made some changes to the qualifications of the applicants of Gha Unit for the admission test in 2003-04 academic session.

According to the changed criteria, the Gha Unit applicants must have minimum 50 per cent of the total marks, excluding the grace marks, in Bengali and English (at least 200 out of

400 marks) in HSC or equivalent level. Applicants having a total of 6 grade points in Bengali and English in the HSC or equivalent level will be eligible for the test. But, anyone having less than two grade points (Grade C) in any of the two subjects will be disqualified.

DU Deans Committee at a meeting with Vice-chancellor Prof SMA Faiz in the chair took the decision, says a press release.

Yasmin murder case Three accused sent to jail

BSS, Rangamati

Three accused in the housewife Yasmin murder case were sent to jail yesterday.

Yasmin Akter Chowdhury, 33, a mother of five, was killed allegedly by her husband Shah Alam on November 10 at his residence of Kathaltali in the town. The arrestees were Shah Alam's father Nurul Islam, mother Ayesha Begum, and younger sister Sultana Razia.

Police arrested the three on Wednesday and produced them before

the magistrate's court yesterday. The court sent them to jail after recording their statement. No prayer was submitted for their bail, police said.

Police arrested the three from their house following a murder case filed with Kotwali police on November 18 by the victim's elder brother Rafiqul Islam Chowdhury.

The body of Yasmin was exhumed from Banarupa Graveyard in the town on November 14, four days after burial, for postmortem. Police said they were trying to nab four other accused in the case.

Punishment to Mizan's killers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Local people of the city's Kafrul area including the family members of slain businessman Mizanur Rahman held a protest rally at Muktangan yesterday demanding proper investigation and punishment to the killers.

Addressing the rally, Mizan's elder brother Dewan Ruhul Amin said the father and a brother of Baby, wife of Mizan, took a loan of Tk 12 lakh from the deceased.

He suspected them for their involvement in the killing.

Ruhul Amin said Baby's father and two brothers, who are influential at Kafrul area, are now threatening to kill them.

The rally was also addressed by Mizan's five brothers, four sisters and some other relatives from the victim's village home at Matlab in

Chandpur district.

Earlier, a few hundred locals of Kafrul and the family members of Mizan brought out a procession demanding punishment to the killers.

Sources said Mizan was strangled to death inside the bedroom of his house and then his body was cut into three pieces.

Police recovered the mutilated body packed in a sack from Shewrapara in Kafrul in the early hours of Saturday.

Baby and his paramour Mamun have admitted to police that they hired two men to kill Mizan as a sequel to family dispute over her character, police added.

Ruhul Amin identified his brother's body at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College Hospital on Tuesday.

WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country till 6pm today.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and Cox's Bazar and the lowest 19.7 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:18pm today and rises at 6:06am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature In Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.4	21.7	53	62
Chittagong	34.0	22.7	74	65
Rajshahi	30.8	20.5	79	82
Khulna	32.5	23.2	74	75
Barisal	32.0	21.6	78	87
Sylhet	30.2	21.0	81	76
Cox's Bazar	34.0	23.0	73	65



The Dutch-Bangla Bank Foundation donated Tk one lakh to the Health Promotion Limited (HPL) to help the underprivileged. Picture shows Managing Director of the bank Md Yeasin Ali handing over the payment order to HPL Managing Director Dr Halida Hanum Akhter at a simple ceremony in the city on Monday.



Matsushiro Horiguchi, ambassador of Japan, and Mirza Tasadduq Hussain Beg, secretary, Economic Relations Division, sign an agreement on Japanese grant of Tk 1.72 crore in the city on Wednesday. Japan will provide the grant for the detailed design of construction for multipurpose cyclone shelters.