

Eid jamaats

FROM PAGE 1
be held at Dhaka University Central Mosque at 8:30am and 9:30am, Gulshan Central Mosque at 8:30am, Mirpur Baitul Falah Mosque at 8:00am and 9:00am, Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute Eidgah at 8:30am, Khilgaon Pallima Sangsad at 8:00:30am, South Kallyanpur Anjuman-e-Quaderia Mosque at 8:30 am, Mirpur Section-1 Masjidul Akbar Complex Eidgah at 8:30am, Azad Muslim Club Playground at 7:45am and 9:00am, Dhaka University Salimullah Hall Mosque at 8:00am, Shahidullah Hall Mosque at 8:30am, BUET Playground at 8:00am, Aeroplane Mosque at Elephant Road at 8:30 am, Khilkhet North Namapara Darjee Bari Mosque Eidgah at 8:30am, Kurmitola High School Eidgah at 8:30 am and 9:15am.

Eid congregations will also be held at Azimpur Community Centre at 9:00am, Laxmibazar Nurani Jam-e-Mosque at 8:30am, Katabon Mosque at 8:15 am, Joar Shahara Baitun-Noor Jam-e-Mosque at 8:30am, Alipara Jam-e-Masjid at 8:30am, Muslim Friends Society Playground at 9:00am, Kalachandpur Dakkhin Para Baitul Nur Jam-e-masjid at 8:00am, 8:15am and 8:30am, Lalmatia Shahi Masjid Complex Eidgah at 9:00am and Azimpur Daira Sharif Mosque at 10:00am.

Meanwhile, the last Eid congregation in the city will be held at Dayemia Shahi Mosque of Dayemi Complex Bangladesh at Azimpur at 11:30am. Peer of Dayera Sharif Hazrat Shah Sufi Nurul Alam will conduct the munajat while the prayer will be conducted by Mufti Hazrat Maulana Abu Bakar Faruqui.

Eid congregations will also be held at K M Das Lane Golapbagh Masjid, Doyaganj Jam-e-Mosque, Dhupkhola Eidgah Ground, Jatrabari Crossing Park Ground, North Jatrabari Ahle Jamaat-e-Hadith Mosque, Golapbagh Playground, Dhalpur Jam-e-Mosque, South Jatrabari Baitul Aman Jame Mosque, Tamirul Millat Madrasa Ground at Wari, Dholiapara High School Ground, Muradpur Madrasa Mosque,

Jurine Mazar Sharif Mosque, Armanitola Ground, Jhikatala School Colony Ground, Hazaribagh Park Ground, Ganakuli Eidgah Maidan, Nawabganj Bara Mosque, New Paltan Irani Ground, Pilkhana Jam-e-Mosque, Nawabganj Park and Balurghat Eidgah Maidan, Lalbagh Fort Maidan, Madrassah-e-Allia Ground, Islambagh Eidgah Maidan, Khilgaon Chand Jam-e-Mosque Maidan, Goran Bhuiyan Mosque Maidan, Meradia School Ground, Bashaboo Eidgah Maidan, Kadamtala High School Ground, Motijheel Colony Eidgah, Dhanmondi Eidgah Maidan, Madhubazar Jam-e-Mosque, Siddheswari High School Jam-e-Mosque, Mohammadpur Tajmahal Road Eidgah Maidan, Adabar Jam-e-Mosque, Mohammadpur Shaheed Park, Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard Mosque, South Paikpara Eidgah Maidan, Shewrapara Eidgah Maidan, Agargaon Taltala Government Colony Mosque, Mirpur Bangla High School Ground, Baridhara Mosque, Banani Charman Bari Eidgah Maidan, Titumir College Ground, Mirpur Baitun Sunnat Jame Mosque and other places in and around the city.

The biggest Eid congregation in the country will be held at Solakia Eidgah Maidan in Kishoreganj where the devotees from across the country as well as from foreign nations like India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and other Muslim countries will take part.

In all congregations, special prayers will be offered for unity and integrity of the Muslim ummah, and peace, progress and prosperity of the nation.

Jamal's family

FROM PAGE 1
Sunday with a fresh ransom demand of Tk20lakh.

The senders of the letter asked the family to place the ransom on a culvert near a dormitory of Bangladesh Agriculture University in Mymensingh after December 1 midnight.

Eid shopping

FROM PAGE 12
Plaza, Riffle Square, Jahanara Bhaban and the other adjacent shopping malls.

Designers' boutique shops including K Crafts, Anjan's, OG, Dressy Dale and Soul Dance were able to attract many customers. On the other hand, traditional handicrafts and clothing shops Aorong, Nipun, Kumudini, Grameen Fashion and Grameen Uddog catered to a large number of customers.

Retailers of brand items like Arrow, Wrangler, Lee, Levis, Van Heusen, Park Avenue, Reebok and Nike attracted a wide range of customers, too.

"Young people are increasingly showing interest in brand items," said a salesman at a Reebok shop at Elephant Road.

"I have come here although we have bought almost everything necessary for Eid. But there are also some other items remaining on the list, it never ends," said Shahana, a shopper at ARA Centre.

One shopkeeper at Eastern Plaza said, "So far we have cleared majority of our stocks and are now trying to sell some of the remaining stuffs."

"Even we are offering a reduction as trendy items will become old after the Eid," Sarwar, a shopkeeper, added.

Midnight shopping is continuing almost in all shopping malls as customers are streaming in. Shopkeepers are keeping their shops open till late at night. "Last year we had kept our shop open till two in the morning," said a shoe seller at Elephant Road.

"If law and order permits we hope to do so this year," he added.

Eid delicacies

FROM PAGE 1
The prices of liquid milk and milk powder, vermicelli, butter oil, soybean, onion, garlic and other spices, finerice, chicken, beef and mutton have all spiked sharply.

Prices of liquid milk and milk powder have gone up 40 percent in the city markets. Milk Vita liquid milk was selling at Tk 32 a litre yesterday, which was Tk 26 a week back. Half a kg of Milk Vita milk powder sold at Tk 110 yesterday, which was Tk 90 two weeks back.

The vermicelli prices hit a record high this year and were at Tk 70 a kg yesterday.

"We are selling loose vermicelli at Tk 50 a kg, up from Tk 35 last year. The prices of different brands of vermicelli available in packs are also high. A 400 gm pack is now priced at Tk 28," said a trader in the city's Karwan Bazar kitchen market yesterday.

Broiler chicken sold at Tk 75 a kg yesterday, which was Tk 60 a week ago. A kg of local variety chicken sold at Tk 130 yesterday, up from Tk 100 a week ago.

Mutton sold at Tk 160 a kg yesterday against Tk 140 a week ago. Beef was priced at Tk 100 yesterday, which was Tk 90 a kg last week.

"Meat prices may go up further as most people will rush to the market tomorrow (today). We have limited stock, so the prices of tomorrow will depend on the demand," said a trader

at Mirpur market.
Fine rice (polao) sold at Tk 36 a kg yesterday, which was Tk 28 a month back.

With the increase in the prices of soybean and palm oil, the prices of different brands of butter oil have gone up substantially this year.

Retailers were selling half a kg of canned butter oil at Tk 150 yesterday, which was Tk 140 a month ago.

The onion prices have hit the highest this season as the local variety sold at Tk 34 a kg and Indian variety at Tk 24, up from Tk 30 and Tk 22 two weeks ago.

The local variety of garlic had a price tag of Tk 70 a kg yesterday, which was Tk 58 two weeks ago, while imported garlic sold at Tk 40 a kg against Tk 30 two weeks ago.

The prices of spices have also gone up substantially, with cumin seeds (zira) selling at Tk 110 a kg yesterday. It sold at Tk 90 a kg a month back.

People of the low-income bracket and the poor will have to cut down on the number of special food items on the Eid day to adjust with price hikes. It should not be a problem for the rich.

"I was planning to add a few new items on the list of special foods on the Eid day. As the prices of most items went up sharply I had to throw my plan in the rubbish basket," said a housewife in the city's Dhanmondi area.

Anti-govt unity

FROM PAGE 1
Bangladesh Chhatra Moitree and Samajbadi Chhatra Jote joined the JSD-backed Chhatra League at its office to take iftar and discuss strategies.

The meetings of the opposition fronts took place on the heels of a meeting between the BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Jamaat-backed Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) who vowed to resist conspiracy against the government.

Asked to comment on the probable unity, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said: "Yes, our front and associate organisations are working to the same goal -- forming unity."

He said grounds for a stepped up anti-government movement were in the making.

Jalil had earlier told the press that his party wanted to see a change of government by March or April next year, much ahead of the five-year tenure of the present government.

On several occasions, Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina sought mid-term elections.

JSD leader Hasanul Haq Inu, who has been leading a unity process among anti-government political parties since July, found in the unity moves undertaken by opposition student and youth organisations a very positive development.

Inu said a unity among the youth and student fronts would act as a springboard for greater opposition cohesion and an all-out anti-government movement.

BB

FROM PAGE 12
The Motijheel office also exchanged bills worth Tk 276 crore on Saturday and Tk 140 crore on Thursday.

The central bank will print 1,155 million new notes by June, 2004 to help people replace torn and soiled notes. BB sources said the central bank has already printed 800 million new notes and 400 million have been released through commercial banks. The central bank distributed the rest.

Cabinet

FROM PAGE 1
the festival."
In her absence, several ministers and policymakers sat to discuss different issues and decided to hold a meeting with the prime minister."

"I strongly believe that major changes will take place immediately after the Eid," he said.

A top BNP leader, who would not give his name, said there were specific allegations of corruption against some ministers and officials at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

"Strident steps against them can send a message of the government's sincerity to stamp out the ill," he said. He felt the urgency of changing the portfolios of some ministers who are failing to run their ministries smoothly.

A policymaker said the BNP chief was also expected to sit with party policymakers after Eid to work out a strategy to repair the damage to the party and the government caused by B Chowdhury's comments.

An influential official at the PMO said a proposal was prepared to bring immediate changes there as 'many of the staff are involved in controversial interference in the administration, business deals and abuse of authority'.

They are accused of brokering business deals and having hands in administrative transfers and postings for personal benefits and undertaking frequent foreign tours, he added.

"Some of them maybe removed and some given foreign postings," he said.

Earlier, a similar move failed because of opposition by an influential official at the PMO.

AES's power

FROM PAGE 12
about US\$ 500 million in investment.

Representatives of the two foreign companies and officials concerned of Power Division, Ministry of Industries, Power Development Board and Titag Gas signed the transfer agreement.

The agreement cleared the way for the AES to transfer the ownership of its Horipur and Meghnaghat power plants to CDC Globeleq, a sister concern of Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC).

The AES set up a 360mw power-generation plant at Horipur in September 1998 and another 450mw plant at Meghnaghat in July 1999, both in private sector, on 'build-own-operate (BOO)' basis.

At present the plants add 810mw of electricity to National Grid, meeting nearly one-fourth of the country's total demand for power.

The World Bank, Asian Development and some other financial institutions extended credit support to the AES investment in Bangladesh's power sector.

Youth shot

FROM PAGE 12
sister.

They shifted to a rented house at Purba Jurain area of Shyampur a few months ago, said Rafiqul Alam, the victim's father.

Johnny was a tailor at the Shyampur Bazar, his younger brother Ronny is an apprentice electrician and his mother Hawa Begum works in a nearby pharmaceutical factory.

SSC examinee Sonia Akhtar, 16, and her sister Poly Akhtar, 15, are studying at Purba Jurain Adarsha High School.

Poly, a class-nine student, told The Daily Star, "The local boys, Palash, Julhash, Bilash -- three brothers and Sentu, Basar, Shukkur, Shikder used to hurl abuses at us."

"Later, they used to pull our scarves or dragged us by the arms. They even once threw coloured water on us," she added.

The sisters complained to their elder brother Johnny about the teasing and showed the locals who used to tease them.

Johnny came from the village home two days before the incident, and went to talk to the teasers around 8:30pm on Sunday. The hoodlums stabbed him four times in the abdomen and shot him pointblank.

Howa Begum told The Daily Star, "Three days earlier while I was returning home, Mithu threatened to kill my son."

Ronny filed a case. None has been arrested till filing of this report in the evening.

Slow loris

FROM PAGE 12
the wild for its survival, a leading zoologist said yesterday.

"It will die, if it is not freed soon," warned Dr. Ali Reza Khan, director of Dubai Zoo.

"Slow loris does not survive in the zoo. It's a sensitive animal. The best we can do is leave the animal back to where it was caught," he told The Daily Star.

The indigenous Bom people found the ash-white and owl-eyed slow loris in the forest near Shailpourt Tourism Centre in Bandarban Saturday.

The monkey weighing about 5kg with big eyes and long black stripes on the back is shy and hides its face behind paws.

Infrared rays of sunlight severely harm the eyes of the animal, Reza said, adding: "This is the reason it tries to cover its eyes from the sun all the time."

"Slow loris is rarely seen in the open, as it does not come out in daytime. I believe there are some slow lorises in Sylhet, where I have recently seen three of them caged by a poacher," he pointed out.

The monkey, collected by the district administration from the indigenous people in Bandarban, fuelled curiosity among locals.



PHOTO: AFP

A TV-grab shows firefighters trying to douse flames engulfing a University of Peoples' Friendship hostel in Moscow yesterday, that left 32 mainly Asian and African students dead and hospitalised another 139, including seven Bangladeshi students. Many suffered broken limbs after jumping out of the five-storey building to escape the inferno.

Moscow fire kills 32

FROM PAGE 1
students were being treated as soon as the news of the fire reached them.

"People were jumping from the windows because it started on the second floor and there was no other way out. It was absolutely horrible," Richard Mallobe, a sociology student from Liberia, told Reuters.

"It happened very fast. Some people jumped and were burned so we tried to get them into ambulances."

Students said the concrete building -- a typical example of buildings hastily thrown up across the Soviet Union in the 1960s -- had housed newly arrived students awaiting medical checks, and was notorious for being filthy and overcrowded.

Among the casualties were students from China, Bangladesh, Vietnam and a number of African countries, the trade union of foreign students told Interfax news agency.

The semi-official China News Service said 17 Chinese students were missing and 33 others injured in the fire. Chinese embassy officials were not immediately available for comment.

"Twenty-eight people died inside the building, three bodies were discovered outside and one person died later," a city police spokesman told Reuters.

He could not confirm their nationalities.

He said 139 people had been treated for injuries and a total of 272 people, including students from China, Vietnam, Ecuador, Tahiti, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Angola were registered as living in the block.

FILTHY, OVERCROWDED
The university, founded in 1960, was named after Congo's first president after the African nation gained independence from Belgium. It was designed to provide subsidized Socialist education to students from the developing world.

Vashish, 22, a medical student from Mauritius, said one of its two staircases was blocked.

"There were only supposed to be two people in each room, but there were always three," he said. "There were absolutely filthy communal bathrooms and people used to try to move out and get into a new building as soon as they could."

Silvio Fernandez, 24, a language student from Cape Verde, said the blaze began at about 2 a.m. in two rooms on the second floor and spread to the rest of the building.

"I could see people in the windows of the fifth floor leaning out and shouting," he said.

"I've never seen anything like this." NTV television showed fire crews working through heavy snow to control the blaze, which gutted the top three

floors of the building. They had extinguished the fire by about 5:30 a.m., the police spokesman said.

Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov told NTV that investigators suspected the fire was caused by an electrical fault.

"It is difficult to talk about the cause," he said. "According to preliminary information, which we have now investigated, the cause was domestic. Most likely, there was a short circuit in room 203."

However, Russian agencies reported a criminal investigation had been opened and authorities were not ruling out arson.

Sheikh Niamat

FROM PAGE 12
He left behind his wife, one son, two daughters and a large number of relatives and admirers.

Film director, producer, and activist, Sheikh Niamat Ali received National Award for feature film 'Surja Dighal Bari'. His film 'Dahan' also got National Award.

OC closed

FROM PAGE 1
TK 28,000 from the accused as bribe, and released him, Bagarhat Police Super Mesbah Uddin quoted the investigation report as saying.

The OC used to take bribes by implicating innocent persons in false cases and freed criminals for money, the police super added.

Eid tomorrow

FROM PAGE 1
the last minute to spend time with their relatives.

The government and semi-government offices went on a four-day Eid holiday from yesterday. The offices will open next Saturday.

Most of the private offices and business houses closed their offices a few days back to leave the staff with plenty of time to celebrate Eid.

In capital Dhaka, people gathered in large numbers at every shopping centre and shopping malls to buy clothes and goods of their choices.

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday in separate messages extended the warmest greetings and then heartiest facilitation to all heads of state and government of Muslim countries on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Chopper crash

FROM PAGE 12
helicopter. The personnel on board were Army and Air Force," Major Mike Escudie, a spokesman for the US Central Command, told AFP.

The only other US helicopter of the MH-53 series, the Sea Dragon, belongs to the Navy and is used in minesweeping operations.

In a three-paragraph written statement, Central Command said the cause of the crash remained unknown and was under military investigation.

"The service members were supporting Operation Mountain Resolve," the command said without providing any further details.

But Escudie said the helicopter crashed as it was heading into the mountains from Bagram Air Base at about sunset and was destroyed on impact.

Earlier, a US CH-47 Chinook was shot down by a surface-to-air missile near Fallujah, killing 16 US soldiers.

Body of listed criminal found

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Body of a listed criminal, who also happens to be a workers' leader, was recovered at Channari ferryghat in Labonchhara of Khulna yesterday.

Khulna police recovered the body of Saddam Hossain, treasurer of BNP-backed Handling Workers' Union at Skidghat, by the river Bhairab in the early hours.

Later, police handed over Saddam's body to his father Mohabbat Sheikh in the afternoon after autopsy.

Saddam was a drug peddler and accused in several cases with various police stations in Khulna, police said.

"The joint forces shot dead my son on Friday night when he tried to escape arrest," Saddam's mother Abejan Begum alleged.

An unnatural death case was lodged with Khulna Police Station.

Ahmedul Kabir

FROM PAGE 1
University Central Students Union from 1945-46. He was elected to the East Pakistan Legislative Assembly in 1965. In 1979 and 1986, he was elected to the Jatiya Sangsad as independent candidate.

Kabir took part in different international conferences, including of the Commonwealth, FAO, UNCTAD and EEC in the 1970s.

Widely regarded as a progressive politician, Kabir was an organiser of the War of Liberation and arrested by the Pakistan occupation army in 1971.

As the editor of country's one of the oldest dailies, Kabir was the pioneer of freethinking and made invaluable contribution to the nation at its crucial junctures.

Kabir was also the Bangladesh chapter chairman of the Commonwealth Press Union and member of the Governing and Trustee Board of the Bangladesh Independent University. He was the central member of Pakistan National Awami Party (NAP) and served as its Dhaka district unit president for several years. He established the Gonotantri Party in the 1980s.

The body of Kabir will be brought to Dhaka today if a Biman flight is available, or tomorrow, said a press release.

His wife Laila Rahman Kabir is an industrialist and former president of the Metropolitan Chamber. His eldest son Altamash Kabir is the executive editor of the Sangbad and youngest son Ardashir Kabir is one of the leading businessmen. His only daughter Nihad Kabir is a barrister.

The body would be taken to the city house of the deceased to the Sangbad office to the Jatiya Press Club before burial at his family graveyard at Ghorashal after a namaz-e-janaza at Baitul Mokarram National Mosque.

Trucker killed

FROM PAGE 12
Senior police official Abdul Khaledue said "Our patrol team came under attack of angry villagers when it was on an operation to foil a dacoity bid at Mitachhara Bazar". Ten people were arrested for the attack on police and additional police force was deployed at the Bazar as tension rose high following the incident, he added.

But the arrest fuelled an agitation by angry villagers and they barricaded Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Panthapukur under Durgapur Union. Thousands of vehicles with homebound passengers on the eve of the Eid were stranded for nine hours till 4:00 pm yesterday, snapping road communication between Chittagong and other parts of the country.

They demanded immediate release of the arrested people.

Deputy Commissioner of Chittagong Md Shafiqul Islam, Superintendent of Police Mahbubur Rahman and other senior officials rushed to the spot this noon but the agitators refused to lift the road barricade until release of the arrested.

Later, the barricades were withdrawn at 4:00 pm when a court released the arrested on bail.

Mohammad Kamal of Durgapur alleged that police clubbed the villagers indiscriminately while hunting for the attackers on police.

A local woman, Mariamnessa alleged police didn't spare even females and picked up some innocent people.

Saber files defamation suit against Sangram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leader Saber Hossain Chowdhury yesterday filed a damage suit seeking compensation of Tk 50 crore against the editor, publisher of the daily Sangram and its Khulna correspondent for carrying a "false" news item.

In his plaint with the Court of First Joint District Judge, Dhaka, Saber Chowdhury, political secretary to the Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, accused the daily's Editor Mohammad Abul Asad, Publisher Shafi Uddin and reporter Sheikh Helaluddin of fanning his reputation in the political arena.

"The report is false, fabricated and concocted," the plaint said.

On November 8, the daily ran a report titled "Conspiracy to create fresh violence in the south-western region". The report claimed that three sophisticated M-16 rifles and 169 bullets were seized from sealer MV Banga Lanka, a ship owned by Saber Chowdhury. However, Saber said the vessel is owned by HRC Group, headed by his elder brother Sayeed Hossain Chowdhury.

Earlier, Saber filed a defamation case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka on November 17.