



President Iajuddin Ahmed exchanges greetings with the members of Christian community at a reception hosted by him on the occasion of Christmas Day at Bangabhaban yesterday.

'Ensure voting rights of expatriates'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expatriates Voting Rights Movement and Welfare Parishad yesterday urged the government to ensure the voting rights of the expatriates having Bangladeshi passports.

Addressing a press conference, parishad leaders said they were having talks with the government over the years on their voting rights but no action has been taken so far in this regard.

Parishad President Golam Kabir Ahmed Chowdhury proposed that the government could ensure their voting rights by including their names in the voters list or taking their votes through the embassies or introducing electronic voting system.

Golam Kabir also demanded measures to stop unnecessary harassment of the expatriates at the airports of the country.

He also called for providing security to the guardians who

come to the country to get their daughters married with suitable bridegrooms.

Many unscrupulous persons try to marry the expatriate girls forcibly and even abduct them on some occasions, he added.

Golam Kabir urged the government to take steps in this regard for the sake of the security of the expatriates.

The parishad leaders said they would organise rally and roundtable, lay siege to election commission office and submit memorandum to the prime minister, home minister, law minister and the leader of the opposition to press home their demands.

Senior Vice-President Eng M Shahidullah, Vice-President Maliha Chowdhury, General Secretary Nazma Salam, Joint General Secretary Mostak Ahmed, and International Affairs Secretary of the parishad Quamrun Nahar Mannan were present.

Security beefed up at Bishwa Ijtema venue

UNB, Tongi

Amid rising incidents of terror attacks in various parts of the world, the police administration has taken special security measures to ensure security to the devotees at the Bishwa Ijtema beginning tomorrow.

Organisers hoped that about four million devotees from home and abroad would take part in the three-day congregation on the bank of river Turag in Tongi this year.

Some 2,500 uniformed police, along with a huge number plainclothesmen, will keep vigil in and around the Ijtema ground. Detective Branch of Police will also be active in the area.

Seven video cameras would be set up at different strategic points to keep surveillance on the Ijtema ground, official sources said.

They said police have started working in the area since December 6 and already held five meetings, including a coordination meeting with the Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Police Super Yasmin Gafur said the police administration has wide-ranging plans to maintain law and order in and around the Ijtema ground. Plainclothesmen have been deployed in each 'Khitta' while special security measures taken at the site earmarked for the foreign devotees, he added.

Metal detectors would also be used to check people at various points, the SP said.

The home minister, the state minister for home affairs and high police officials have already visited the Ijtema venue to see the different measures taken by the administration.

Canada introduces permanent resident card

Canadian permanent residents returning to Canada will have to present a Permanent Resident Card or a Facilitation Travel Document issued by the Canadian High Commission as a proof of their Canadian residence from December 31.

The Record of Landing (IMM 1000) will no longer be accepted as a proof of residence from that date, says a press release of the Canadian High Commission.

If a permanent resident tries to present that document as proof of status, they will not be allowed boarding and instead be referred to the Canadian High Commission where they should apply for a facilitation travel document.

Permanent residents, wishing to travel after December 31 and who are not in possession of a Permanent Resident Card, are requested to contact the Canadian High Commission from Sunday to Wednesday in between 8.00am to 12.00 noon for a Facilitation Travel Document.

The Permanent Resident Card can only be obtained in Canada, the release added.

1,548 more held, 13 firearms recovered

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested a total of 1,548 people, including three identified criminals, during their ongoing countrywide drive in last 24 hours till 6.00am yesterday.

The law enforcers also recovered 13 firearms, one weapon, 18 bullets and 15 explosives during the period. Ten cases were filed against 14 people under the Arms Act, said an official handout.

Meanwhile, devotees in large number have already started arriving at the Ijtema premises.

The visiting pilgrims, however, alleged that deployment of the Fire Services units was not at satisfactory level due to inadequate number of fire extinguishers. They demanded installation of fire extinguishers at each khitta. The entire canopy on the Ijtema venue has been divided into 24 khittas.

Air Vice-Marshal (retd) Sultan Mahmud, who attended a meeting on December 20, also demanded that the low lands at the Ijtema venue be filled up.

All departments concerned, including roads and highways, public works, information and power and health, have taken all preparations for smooth holding of the Ijtema.

The Information and Mass Communication Department will set up 200 loud speakers on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway and the Tongi-Pubail road to enable the people to take part in the Akheri Munajat over a 12-km area.

This year, the number of toilets has been raised to 6,000. Besides, two special toilets have been kept reserved for the VIPs.

Although the organisers decided not to allow setting up of makeshift shops on the connecting roads to the Ijtema venue, over a hundred shops have already been set up on the southern side of Bata Shoe factory and the Station Road, creating traffic jam.

The organisers, however, allowed shops to be set up at Tongi Bazar and on the open field around Monnu Textile Mills, Sena Kalyan Bhaban and the western bank of Turagriner.

District Civil Surgeon Dr AM Ruhul Amin said 15 medical teams and 10 sanitation teams started working in the Ijtema area and at Sadar Hospital from yesterday. Besides, additional 40 beds, one burn unit, one orthopedic unit and one cardiology unit have been arranged at Sadar Hospital.