

High security planned for Pahela Baishakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the Bangla New Year on Friday, the home ministry has designed stringent security measures for the capital, especially the main celebration venue Ramna Park.

Yesterday's home ministry meeting on security during Pahela Baishakh celebrations also ordered bringing more areas of the city under the security coverage as there is apprehension of the militants' possible attack to avenge crackdown on them and arrests of their top leaders.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will guard the Ramna Park and its surrounding areas.

Police, Rab and intelligence agencies will be put on alert at the park's two main gates and six other small ones during the celebration hours.

Besides, 22 plainclothes detective teams will keep watch on the Ramna Park-goers that day.

Law enforcers with metal detectors will be kept ready for checking people while female police personnel will check women.

Security men will sweep the ground with device-detectors prior to beginning of the celebration programmes.

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Ad arches galore defying rule

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Different business organisations, educational institutions and other establishments continue to erect overhead arches in the capital for advertisements defying the municipality ordinance, 1983.

Thousands of such arches have been built on roads and pavements in Dhanmondi, Lalmatia, Gulshan, Banani, Uttara, Mohammadpur, Moghbazar and many other areas.

Abu Taleb, chief estate officer of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), who is responsible for advertisement spaces in the city, said they have allowed only two hospitals to erect arches on special grounds such as their contribution to healthcare for the poor.

"All the remaining overhead arches are illegal, and we are demolishing them during our continued drive against unauthorised billboards," he said.

DCC Estate Department has

only one demolition team, which is too busy doing various other duties for the department in addition to demolition, Taleb said. "Every day we request the police headquarters to send us escort for the demolition squad but that is not available even for 10 days a month."

He said there are no rules allowing erection of overhead arches that destroy the city's beauty and also create public nuisance.

A number of private universities, English medium schools, colleges, hospitals, clinics and business houses have indiscriminately built arches, occupying part of footpaths and roads in Dhanmondi, Lalmatia, Banani, Uttara and Gulshan.

A reputed business house on Dhanmondi Road-8A, which has a large overhead arch on top of two others at the entrance to the road, claimed it had bought the space from Chitropuri, an advertisement firm, and pays annual rent. Mohiuddin Murad, manager of

Chitropuri, admitted they do not have permission from the DCC for this. But he added, "The DCC had earlier issued permission, which expired some years ago. Now they are refusing to renew it."

Meanwhile, a five-member DCC technical committee headed by its chief town planner is now reviewing the policy guideline for billboards in the city.

DCC sources said that under political pressure, they have issued permission for more than 100 new advertisement spaces in the last six months. And more than 500 applications for this are now awaiting approval.

A 16-member committee, comprising top officials of different departments of the DCC, must approve allocation of advertisement spaces.



An overhead advertisement arch built illegally on a road in Uttara in the capital.

PHOTO: STAR

ACC appoints 13 lawyers to tackle cases

UNB, Dhaka

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has temporarily appointed one lawyer each for 13 districts to conduct the cases filed by the watchdog while a secretary was appointed to the ACC yesterday.

A highly placed ACC source said one lawyer each was appointed for Sylhet, Mymensingh, Khulna, Bhola, Rajshahi, Tangail, Rangpur, Noakhali, Barisal, Kishoreganj, Patuakhali, Jessore and Brahmanbaria. Earlier, a lawyer was given a temporary appointment to the district of Chittagong.

He said appointment letters of

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Barisal JCD men not happy with spiralling prices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Leaders of Jatiyatobadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, expressed concerns over the unchecked price hike of essentials at the divisional conference in Barisal yesterday.

Senior BNP Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman inaugurated the daylong conference at the Barisal divisional stadium with JCD Central President Azizul Bari Helal in the chair and Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain as the chief guest.

Although asked to voice their opinions freely, local leaders seemed hesitant to say anything against the corruption and irregularities of the government machineries and local

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2 die as trawler sinks in Meghna

15 missing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Two bodies were recovered and at least 15 others are still missing as a trawler sank in the river Meghna during a nor'wester Saturday evening in Bhairab upazila.

One of the dead was identified as Moyna while the other's identity could not be known.

The trawler had 17 people on board and was also heavily loaded with 200 sacks of rice and 15 baskets of fish. The trawler was going to Pulla Bazar from Ajmiriganj of Bhairab upazila, police sources said.

Firemen and divers are still looking for the missing people of the sunken boat.



A woman fetches water from the Wasa supply tap at Nayabazar in Old Dhaka yesterday amid acute water shortage in the area.

PHOTO: STAR

Qaeda not linked with London bombings

Reveal leaked probe findings

AFP, London

al-Qaeda played no part in the London bombings last July, instead they were planned on a low budget from information off the Internet, the leaked findings of an inquiry into the blasts revealed yesterday.

The Observer newspaper, reporting the leak, said the government probe into Britain's worst terrorist attack concluded that it was a "simple and inexpensive" plot

dreamt up by four suicide bombers intent on martyrdom.

The first forensic account of the July 7 bombings, which killed 52 people, found it was the product of a small-scale operation by the four men alone rather than an international terror network, according to the Observer.

The newspaper cited the first draft of the government's definitive report into the blasts. The findings are due to be published in full in a

few weeks.

"The London attacks were a modest, simple affair by four seemingly normal men, using the Internet," a government source told the weekly newspaper.

This conclusion will likely alarm the authorities by revealing Britain's vulnerability to an attack by such an inexperienced group.

Mohammad Sidique Khan, 30, Shehzad Tanweer, 22, Hasib

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AL to repeal law if voted to power

Moudud too fears intelligence men's abuse

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said he fears that the law allowing the intelligence men to tap telephones might be misused while Awami League (AL) lawmaker Suranjit Sengupta said his party would repeal it if voted to power.

"There is a scope for misuse of this law. That's why the home minister or state minister for home will have to issue a written order in case of tapping the conversation of a particular person," Moudud told a roundtable conference.

He however said the government had no ulterior motive behind passing the Act. Everyone would like to see the militants being rooted out and the law was

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HEROIN SMUGGLING TO UK BD Foods Ltd wiggles to shake off stigma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The management of the company accused of smuggling heroin to the United Kingdom claimed their innocence yesterday at a news briefing.

The UK Customs and local customs intelligence reports found BD Foods Limited and five of its sister concerns involved in smuggling 147kg heroin to the UK.

The managing director of BD Foods, Badrul Haider Chowdhury, said his company sacked one of the accused employees Nazmul Haider Bhuiyan (Bulbul) and show-caused another accused employee Md Mainuddin.

But investigation reports revealed that the two accused continue to have communications between them.

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Iran shoots down spy plane

AFP, Tehran

Iran has shot down an unmanned surveillance plane in the south amid reports that the United States is planning military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, a press report said yesterday.

"This plane had taken off from Iraq and was filming border areas," a report in the hardline Jumhuri Eslami newspaper said.

It added the Islamic Republic "officials have obtained information from the plane system and recordings", without giving any

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Hundreds detained as Nepalese defy curfew

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepalese police firing tear gas and rubber bullets clashed yesterday with thousands of pro-democracy protesters who defied a curfew despite warnings that violators could be shot, opposition parties said.

A second death was reported among demonstrators demanding that King Gyanendra give up the absolute powers he seized 14 months ago.

Home Minister Kamal Thapa said 253 people had been arrested Sunday and blamed the protests on Maoist rebels.

"The ongoing protest programme is clearly that of the Maoists," Thapa told reporters. "They are trying to create armed revolution, so the government has been compelled to impose the curfew."

In Kathmandu, a spokesman for one of the sidelined political parties that organised the protest against

Gyanendra said thousands of people were on the streets in small pockets despite the curfew and tight security.

Dozens of protesters were injured, including a 17-year-old man hit by a rubber bullet allegedly fired by police in the capital, said Rajendra Pandey, of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist). A doctor at the Kathmandu Hospital had earlier confirmed the shooting.

In Boudha on the outskirts of Kathmandu, around 1,500 protesters demanded the restoration of democracy and chanted anti-royal slogans. Others blocked roads throughout the capital with burning tyres while police used tear gas to disperse them, a police officer said.

"We are trying to resist and contain them," said the police officer, who did not want to be identified.

In the southwestern town of

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Bangla Bhai remanded for 10 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) second-in-command Siddiquil Islam alias Bangla Bhai was placed on a 10-day remand yesterday in an arms case.

The Detective Branch (DB) of police, accompanied by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members, produced Bangla Bhai before the No 2 Cognisance Court here at around 11:45am. He was wearing a helmet and bullet-proof vest.

After the hearing, First Class Magistrate Smriti Rani Karmakar granted the remand sought by DB Sub-inspector Mainul Islam for interrogating the militant kingpin.

This is for the third time Bangla Bhai was placed on remand. He was remanded for 20 days earlier, 10 days each in Rab assault case and explosives case.

Other accused in the arms case are his wife Fahima Khatun,

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Owners of circus are now compelled to seek charity from shopkeepers as they find it difficult to feed the elephants from their waning business. The photo was taken at Fakirpuri in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Prayer Timing		
April 10		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-35	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-24	6-28
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation