

7 lakh reach Jeddah to perform Hajj

DUBAI, May 23: More than 700,000 Muslims from around the world including 100,000 Iraqis have gathered in Saudi Arabia for the annual pilgrimage to Islam's holiest city, reports Reuters.

Thousands more were arriving each day by air, land and sea for the pilgrimage to Mecca, birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad, Saudi press reports said. Every Muslim who can afford to is obliged to perform the pilgrimage, or Hajj, once in a lifetime.

The Hajj reaches its climax on May 30, ninth day of the holy month of Zil-Hajj, when a million white-robed pilgrims gather at the Mount Arafat, site of Muhammad's last sermon 14 centuries ago, and three monuments representing Satan are stoned.

The following day Muslims celebrate the start of their most sacred festival, Eid ul-Azha, when animals are slaughtered to commemorate God's test of Abraham, who was about to sacrifice his son Isaac but was permitted to kill a ram instead.

The Saudi Minister of Pilgrimage Affairs and Endowments, Abdul-Wahhab Abdul-Wasie, said the kingdom expects the same number of pilgrims as last year when up to two million people, almost half of them Saudis, performed the Hajj.

He said the number of pilgrims last year was 40 per cent higher than in 1991 when the Gulf War over Iraq's occupation of Kuwait led many airlines to cancel flights to Saudi Arabia.

Abdul-Wahhab said in a newspaper interview on Saturday that Saudi Arabia was taking all steps to ensure a

trouble-free Hajj. "The kingdom is sparing no money or effort to help pilgrims perform their pilgrimage in security and safety," he said.

Donors praise outcome of FAP conference

Development partners of the Flood Action Plan (FAP) have praised the outcome of the recent third conference of the FAP as its deliberations have brought to fore increasing people's participation in the projects to minimise the consequences of floods and benefits of effective water management, reports BSS.

They have also appreciated the decision to set up an environmental cell in the Flood Plan Coordination Organisation (FPDO) to deal with aspects of environment in the floods and water development projects.

Official sources said that the outcome of the conference came for review and discussions at a meeting in Dhaka participated by the donor countries and multilateral organisations.

The meeting of the Local Consultative Group (LCG) was presided over by Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation, Water Resources and Flood Control M Asafuddin.

In total 53 representatives from the development partners participated in the meeting. Ambassadors of the United States, France, Canada, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Japan, Australia, Switzerland and representatives of the embassies and organisations attended.

Road mishaps in N'ganj kill one, injure 30

From Our Correspondent NARAYANGANJ, May 23: Two road accidents on the Dhaka-Narayanganj highway today left one person killed and at least 30 others injured.

In both the cases, the drivers managed to flee.

According to witnesses, the first occurrence took place at Aliganj at about 12:30 pm when a truck dashed a baby taxi and injured the driver along with two passengers.

One of the two unidentified passengers died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) while the other and the driver were admitted there.

In another accident at Masdar at around 4:15 pm two buses collided head-on.

At least 27 passengers of the two buses were wounded. Of the injured, three persons - identified as Anwar, 30, Barchu Mia, 45, and Abdul Kader, 42, were admitted to the Hospital for the disabled in the capital. Abdul Halim, 25, and Ali Ahmad, 45, were admitted to the DMCH while 11 others to the Narayanganj Hospital.

3 killed in Pabna bus plunge

PABNA, May 23: At least three people were killed and 20 others injured when a mini bus fell into a roadside ditch at Chandina in Ullapara thana of Sirajganj district today, reports UNB.

Police sources said the accident occurred as the Bogra-bound over-loaded mini bus from Nagarbari skidded off the road while overtaking a bullock cart at about 11 am.

The victims were identified as Abul Khair (42) of Purna Basundia and Khitish Chandra Ray (50) of Bera thana. The body of another young man killed could not be immediately identified.

Of the injured, 12 people were admitted to Purnimatgati Health Complex with serious wounds.

Padma Nadir Majhi wins prize

CANNES, May 23: India's Gautam Ghose won a prize awarded by the International Council for Film and Television, jointly with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, for his film "The Boatman of Padma," the jury announced today, reports AFP.

The jury awarded the ICFT/UNESCO prize for best short film to a British film, "Springing Lenin" by Andrei Nekrasov.



Professor Abdus Salam was nearly moved to tears while receiving the honorary Doctor of Science degree at the special convocation yesterday.

Poor management

From Page 1 Col 4
Surely a late discovery! We had known about this problem for past 40 years, since, as students, we held debates in this hall and staged Shakespearean plays. Then, we resolved the problem by using as many loud speakers as we could afford to hire.

The other, perhaps the most important, case of bad planning related to the use of Bangla as the principal language for the occasion. Except for the citation for Prof. Abdus Salam going with the award, presented in English, all other addresses were in our national language. They included the one from Prime Minister Begum Zia, paying her tribute to this outstanding scientist of the world. The pity of it all was that Salam did not even know at that stage what was being said about him by the Bangladeshi leader.

Whether or not we should have turned to the use of English in what was undoubtedly an international occasion may be debatable. What should not have been debatable was to provide English translations of the main addresses, including those by the Prime Minister and the Vice Chancellor, printed inside the colourful brochure.

This would have made a major difference to nearly two dozen foreign diplomats who were present on the occasion. A more innovative move would have been to borrow the simultaneous translation facility from the International Convention Centre for the benefit of foreigners who were invited to this historic occasion.

Star photo



Police lobbed teargas shells to disperse students belonging to the BCL who were demonstrating near the Jagannath Hall in the city while the special DU convocation was being held at the Curzon Hall yesterday.

BCL activists clash with Prof Salam

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Chancellor of the Dhaka University, arrived right on time and entered the Curzon Hall in a convocation procession at 10 am and gave the DSc to the Pakistan-born scientist of world repute.

The Chhatra League had earlier declared that they would not allow Begum Zia on the campus unless she makes a clear announcement about fulfilment of the 10-point demand of the students before coming to the convocation.

Trouble erupted when a big procession of the BCL marched towards the Curzon Hall at about 10.30 am in a bid to obstruct the PM's entry into the campus.

Police, who had earlier blocked all the roads passing around the venue, used teargas and watered batsons at the demonstrators when they started pelting stones and blasting firecrackers.

During the melee, several big hand-made bombs were blasted and gunshots fired in

simultaneous translation facility from the International Convention Centre for the benefit of foreigners who were invited to this historic occasion.

All this called for planning. May be this is what was lacking in organising the special convocation.

According to lists published in the brochure, two separate committees had been set up for the purpose, headed by the Vice Chancellor, a high-level one included several deans and chairpersons of various departments. It was called the "Nirbahi Committee", whatever might have been its functions. It is distinguished from the Organising Committee which, also headed by the Vice Chancellor, consisted of 81 members.

Whatever these committees did during the past weeks, a careful planning was certainly not their strong point. Or was it a case of too many cooks spoiling the broth?

Yet, all said and done, there was one thing worth remembering about the occasion. It was the dignified presence of Prof. Abdus Salam who, despite his indifferent health, had come here to help this country in the field he knows best, the spread of scientific knowledge among our people. Even without the special convocation, the man on the wheelchair would have left a lasting impact on Bangladesh.

DU honours Salam

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University would follow the path of the Nobel laureate in their pursuit of knowledge and intellect and the students would receive a sense of direction and groom themselves accordingly to lead the nation.

In his acceptance speech, Prof Abdus Salam said that he was immensely honoured and proud. He expressed his gratitude to the Dhaka University authorities for doing him such an honour.

Prof Salam also appreciated the feelings of the Prime Minister, saying "I find some of the reflections similar to those of the former British Prime Minister) Margaret Thatcher."

Recalling his meetings with the eminent scholars of the Dhaka University including Prof SN Bose, he said that he was very happy to return to this great seat of learning.

The Nobel laureate told the audience that he had been working on the problems of the origins of life and the universe for the last two years applying his Electroweak Interaction Theory, the centre-piece of all modern researches in Particle Physics.

He underlined that the physical sciences should be emphasised as much as the biological sciences for the development of the country.

A number of distinguished physicists from Bangladesh were carrying out researches at the International Centre for Theoretical Physics at Trieste, Italy, Prof. Salam informed his

BCL (M-I) demands VC's resignation

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League yesterday demanded immediate resignation of the Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed for his "appeasement policy" towards the government, reports UNB.

To press the demand and protest police action on its activists during yesterday's violence on the DU campus during a special convocation, the BCL also announced a three-day action programme beginning today.

The programme, announced at a hurriedly called press conference at the BCL central office in the evening, includes demonstration on the Dhaka University campus today, a countrywide demonstration on May 26 and a student-masses rally at Bangabandhu Avenue on May 28.

The BCL leaders alleged that the VC had lost his neutrality and expressed their vow to continue agitation until he steps down.

They condemned police action on them during the demonstration against the presence of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on the campus.

A written statement read out by BCL central President Moynuddin Hasan Chowdhury alleged police had "attacked a peaceful procession-marching towards the university gymnasium to resist Begum Zia's entry into the campus."

audience. Dhaka University Vice Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said that the university was proud to have been able to honour a personality like Prof Salam.

However, the gracious mood of the convocation was marred by total mismanagement of the organisers.

The protocol of the function was violated as many junior faculty members were seen taking their seats in the front rows among the audience while many senior teachers remained standing throughout the ceremony.

Shouts like "get out... why have they been invited" were heard from a section of the teachers when press photographers vied for snaps of the convocation.

Earlier, a convocation procession of teachers, academic council, syndicate and senate members entered the hall.

Wearing a black-and-golden robe and the Chancellor's head-gear, the Prime Minister trailed the procession of the Vice Chancellor, Deans and Prof. Salam.

Following the national anthem, the DU Vice Chancellor read out the Bangla-version of the citation, with the recipient looking on blankly.

Prof M Mashuzzaman, Dean of the DU Science Faculty, conducted Prof Salam to the Chancellor for receiving the degree.

The special convocation concluded with the departure of the procession led by the Prime Minister.

DUCSU thanks teachers, students

Leaders of the DUCSU yesterday thanked the Dhaka University authorities, teachers, students and employees and other organisations for the successful holding of the special convocation at which Nobel laureate Prof Salam was conferred the honorary degree of Doctor of Science (DSC), reports BSS.

In a statement, they also regretted the pro-Awami League Chhatra League activists' attempts to create anarchy at the Shaheed Minar, TSC and Arts Faculty areas while the convocation ceremony was going on.

The leaders termed the trouble-makers as being opposed to progress, congenial academic atmosphere and incapable of showing respect to meritorious persons.

They condemned such acts and demanded punishment of the guilty. DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP, DUCSU GS Khairul Kabir Khokon and AGS Nazimuddin Alam signed the statement.

GCO activists assaulted on DU campus

Several leaders and workers of Ganotantrik Chhatra Oikya were assaulted by Chhatra League activists as they refused to demonstrate with them against Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's presence on the Dhaka University campus yesterday, reports UNB.

Campus sources and GCO said at least 10 student activists, including General Secretary of the pro-CPB Chhatra Union Sajjad Zahir Chandan, were manhandled by a group of BCL (M-I) activists.

GCO sources said the BCL men also attacked them for holding a meeting with the Prime Minister on May 20 where student leaders discussed with her campus and student problems.

Witnesses said Chhatra Union leader Chandan was beaten up near TSC area at about 11:50 am. GCO in a statement alleged "identified terrorists of Chhatra League (M-I)" assaulted Chandan as part of a government blueprint to foil ongoing student movement.

Another attack was made at about 6 pm at TSC in which two activists of pro-JSD (Inu) Chhatra League were beaten up seriously while they were miking for today's conference of their organisation, campus sources said.

The attackers damaged all the instruments of microphone, the rickshaw and beat the two campaigners. Chhatra Leaguers also chased GCO leaders and workers present in TSC areas and warned them not come on the campus, the sources said.

They dubbed GCO men "government agents" and declared that they would eliminate "all government agents" from Dhaka University campus. President of the pro-Awami League BCL Moynuddin Hasan Chowdhury at a press conference, however, denied their involvement in the attacks.

GCO, an alliance of eight left-leaning student organisations, blamed the Awami League student wing for attacking its leaders and activists.

The gangsters, numbering 15 to 16 blocked the microbuses at about 11 pm and robbed the passengers.

The Midnight File

Army to conduct Pak polls

ISLAMABAD, May 23: Pakistan's army will conduct July 14 general elections, the Defence Ministry announced today. "The army has been entrusted, on the basis of a national consensus, the task of supervising and conducting the general elections to be held on the due date," it said, reports AFP.

Truce commission to disarm Afghan Mujahideen soon

ISLAMABAD, May 23: Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani said here today that a multi-party ceasefire commission would soon start disarming Mujahideen combatants for a permanent peace in Afghanistan. The commission would start work in the next two or three days, he told a news conference here, stressing that the move to collect all heavy weapons would end the hostilities "forever". Rabbani, who arrived here Friday after the peace agreement reached in Jalalabad on Thursday among the leaders of nine guerrilla factions, said the parties had devised a mechanism for taking over the arsenal, reports AFP.

Plea to escalate attacks on Israelis

GAZA, May 23: Islamic and PLO militants in the occupied Gaza Strip issued a rare joint statement today calling for unity and escalation of guerrilla attacks on Israelis. The two groups, long bitter rivals, warned Arabs to keep away from "Zionist targets." They said they killed two Palestinians in error in a joint operation a week ago in which two Israeli vegetable merchants and two Arabs were shot dead. It was only the second joint statement issued by the Islamic resistance movement Hamas and PLO militants, reports Reuters.

100 hurt in Ctg

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Hall, stopping traffic movement. They also raided the hall. Police arrested one NDA activist named Siraj and recovered from his possession one powerful explosive.

A few minutes later police recovered 15 crackers and cocktails and a huge quantity of bomb-making material kept in four 'brifany' packets inside polythene bags. The packets were detected by a city special branch personnel.

After recovery police showed the bomb-making materials, crackers and cocktails to the pressmen present.

Police also recovered several hundred sticks from inside the Muslim Hall. About 15 platoons of police were deployed around the Muslim Hall and adjacent Shaheed Minar to prevent possible violence after the NDA and the Chhatra League and Jubo League gave calls for simultaneous rallies at those premises.

Police had banned the holding of the Chhatra Jubo League rally in front of the Muslim Hall and Shaheed Minar at 3 pm.

As a result, the activists and supporters of the Chhatra League and Jubo League shifted their rally venue to the Darul Fazaal Market where later they fought battles with the police.

However, amid tight security the NDA leaders including Khondakar Mushtaque Ahmed, Chairman, Col (Rtd) Abdur Rashid, Executive Chairman and Anwar Zahid, Secretary

General, arrived at the meeting venue at 4:40 pm and addressed the closed door gathering inside the hall.

Addressing the meeting, the NDA leader Khandaker Mushtaque Ahmed said the course of politics set on August 15, 1975, could not be changed in distant future.

According to UNB, the elderly leader cautioned the government against repression on political opponents.

Mushtaque had assumed the presidency during the August 1975 changeover that ended one-party rule introduced by Awami League in January that year.

Mushtaque told his critics that no single individual should be given credit for the independence of Bangladesh. He pointed to his role in the formation of Awami Muslim League, the language movement and the 1971 war of independence.

The NDA leader urged the government to take the Farakka problem to international forums "failing which the people will not absolve BNP government".

Presided by local NDA convenor Mohammad Nurullah, the meeting was also addressed by Anwar Zahid, Col (Rtd) Abdur Rashid and ASM Solatman.

Anwar Zahid said extending transit facility to India will jeopardise our independence. He called for unity of nationalist forces to resist such a move.

DC-10's recovery

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The hanger by Sunday night. The nose of the aircraft was placed on a 26-wheeler tank transporter on Saturday and the two flank wheels which were stuck in the mud were pulled free.

"If the damage is major it may take four to five months to repair," a Biman official said.

He said that the national carrier had already chartered a wide-bodied TU-26 aircraft from Aeroflot to maintain its partially-disrupted schedule.

Biman operates in 29 international and seven domestic destinations.

Meanwhile, the 15th meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism was held yesterday at the Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban with its chairman, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan in the chair, reports BSS.

ALCWC

From Page 1 Col 7
committee comprising Sajeda Chowdhury, Mohammad Nasim and Shamsur Rahman was formed to settle the dispute in the party's Narsingdi unit soon.

Abdur Razzak, while addressing the meeting, felt it was time for an all-out agitation against the government. He observed that the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) had ignored the AL by showing its indifference to the November 1990 joint declaration of the three political alliances and the four-point understanding reached with the party during the last budget session of Parliament.

Razzak did not, however, make any comment on the district-level leaders' proposition regarding unity with other political forces.

Razzak also kept silent on the district leaders' demand for disciplinary actions against Dr Kamal Hossain.

Alauddin Ahmed felt the need for a clear stand on the country's economic situation especially since the budget session of Parliament is near.

The meeting of the committee is scheduled to resume at 3 this afternoon.

The meeting was informed that the re-carpeting and necessary repair works of the runway of Zia International Airport will be done within next winter from Bangladesh Civil Aviation authorities own fund.

The meeting gave suggestions to apply to the government for allocation of funds for the development project of the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation in the next budget.

Later, the committee members visited Zia airport to see the recovery work of the aircraft.

Myanmar

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a friendly visit."

At the talks with his Bangladesh counterpart the Myanmar Minister will lead an 11-member delegation. The Myanmar delegation includes senior officials of the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and the Departments of Immigration and Police.

Neither Myanmar nor Bangladesh, he said, was responsible for the slowing down of the process of repatriation.

"We did not slow it down. By we, I mean Myanmar and Bangladesh," he said when asked why the repatriation had slowed down.

"From our side there will be no difficulty. We will take them back" the Myanmar Minister said, adding, "Neither Myanmar nor Bangladesh is doing anything to slow it [repatriation process] down."

Lt Gen. Mya also said that representatives of the UN agencies are now observing the repatriation and resettlement on the Myanmar side.

Ambassador Soe Myint said that since he is a member of the Myanmar delegation, he could answer most of the questions.

The Myanmar minister will call on the President and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Communications and Relief. He will visit the Ansars Academy at Shafpur and go on a river cruise to have a glimpse of rural Bangladesh. He is scheduled to leave for home Thursday.

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