



Preparations are underway for holding the Bishwa Ijtima at Tongi in the city suburb. — Star photo

Preparations for Ijtima nearing completion

From M A Matin

GAZIPUR, Jan 10: Preparations are almost complete to hold the three-day Bishwa Ijtima on the eastern bank of the river Turag in Tongi.

The Ijtima, the second largest Muslim congregation of the world, will begin on January 15.

The organisers of the Ijtima, the Tablig Jamaat, has already covered an area of about five square miles with canopy and installed electric, gas and water supply facilities.

At least two million devotees from Bangladesh and some 60 countries are expected to attend the Bishwa Ijtima.

The participants, rich or poor, will sleep under the same canopy for three days imbued with the teachings of Islam.

Some 10,000 volunteers from home and abroad have also built two podiums from where the Islamic scholars will address the devotees.

The organisers have collected tins, canopies, bamboos, loud speakers and jute mattresses from different organisations. These would be returned after the congregation. The congregation, organised every year in cooperation with the Tablig Jamaat in Delhi, is usually held in January.

JS body faces problems

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Public Undertaking Committee. Schedule 4 also says, the corporations or institutions set up after formulation of the Rules of Procedure would also be considered as public undertakings.

According to the Convenor of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Banking, Dr Mizanul Haq, MP, the Rules of Procedure were passed in 1974, three years after liberation and the rules covered only those institutions, which were set up before '71 and after '74. So, what would happen about the institutions which were set up during the three-year period (1971-74) or started operating with new names after liberation (which the NCBs did), Dr Mizan questioned.

In fact, this is a loophole of the law and a proposal for amending the law with a view to bringing those under the jurisdiction of the PUC is under the consideration of the Amendment Committee of Parliament, he pointed out.

Referring to the statement of the State Minister for Finance, Dr Mizan said there are separate committees for looking after the matters of individual ministries and the Finance Committee is one of those committees which has been looking after the matters of the Finance Ministry and the financial and banking sector. But above all those, there are two committees, the Public Accounts Committee and the Public Undertaking Committee, to look after all the public undertakings and submit reports to parliament, he mentioned.

Moreover, the Public Under-

Drug sellers on strike

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had talked to the Finance Minister regarding the withdrawal of the enhanced fees as he, the Finance Minister, had the authority to withdraw the decision. The Health Minister also agreed to abandon the plan to enhance the licence fees.

The Health Minister asked us to withdraw the strike and invited us to a meeting at the Secretariat at 12 noon today. He assured us that he would issue official orders, Sadek said.

Following the discussion with the minister, we have talked to different district leaders of the samity and decided to continue the agitation unless we have the government order in our hands, the president of the samity added.

A seven-member team of the samity led by Sadek will sit with the minister today. If the talks fail, the samity will go for an indefinite shut-down of drug stores across the country from January 26.

The association's other demands are: increased commis-

sion for the sale of medicines, training for the pharmacists and immediate resumption of issuance of new drug licences.

Medicines worth Tk 900 crore are sold every year. Of this, the government supplies medicines worth Tk 30 crore. The rest is supplied by the private sector.

There are also some 40000 drug stores in the country which are operating without any licence, according to the samity.

BUET guard killing: 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

Three people were arrested yesterday for their alleged involvement in the killing of a BUET security guard, Wahid.

The arrested include Saleha Khatun, the mother of Asma who was allegedly molested earlier by the guard. The others are Anisur Rahman Sajal, 18, and Belal, 20.

PM's directives for holding Ijtima smoothly

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday directed all ministries and organisations, concerned to extend all-out support and cooperation for smooth holding of the Bishwa Ijtima at Tongi, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister also asked all concerned to make the stay of the pilgrims comfortable. The directives came during a high level meeting regarding smooth holding of the Ijtima. Chaired by Begum Zia, the meeting at the Prime Minister's office yesterday afternoon.

The meeting was organised to review the arrangements made so far for the congregation, including easing of traffic, steps for maintaining law and order, running of special trains for pilgrims, supply of drinking water and water purifying tablets, setting up of mobile hospitals and medical teams, and building of four bailey bridges over the river Turag.

BSP seeks more funds for ads

The Bangladesh Sangbad-patra Parishad (BSP) yesterday demanded increase of fund for advertisement, equal distribution of advertisements by the DFP and allocation of fund for payment of advertisement bill, reports UNB.

The demand came at a meeting of the parishad held with Kazi Shahed Ahmed, president of the parishad in the chair.

The meeting said the newspaper industry is in serious trouble due to the non-supply of newsprint. They urged the BCIC to supply necessary newsprint in time.

The parishad expressed its grave concern at the suspension of publication of the Daily Ittefaq and hoped it would resume publication shortly.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Barrister Mainul Hossain, Saher Chowdhury, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Enayet Ullah Khan, Liaquat Ali and Mahfuz Anam.

No new inclusions in voters' list until Jan 31

The Election Commission will not accept any application from the people for inclusion of their names in the voters' lists and any other amendments from today to January 31 of the current year in connection with the four city corporation elections scheduled to be held on January 30, reports BSS.

The Election Commission in a press release yesterday said many have submitted applications for inclusion of their names in the voters' lists for the city corporation elections.

People have been advised not to come to the Election Commission for this purpose during the specified period.

100 Indians pushed into Bangladesh

LALMONIRHAT, Jan 10: Indian border guards pushed in some 100 Bangla-speaking Indians into Bangladesh in the last 24 hours when the two countries began a two-day border talks in Delhi today, reports UNB.

Officials sources, however, confirmed the pushing of 17 Indian Muslims through the frontier points in Lalmonirhat sadar thana and Daikhawa since early today. They will be pushed back into India tonight, officials said.

They said the Muslims had been picked up from Shimapuri in New Delhi for the unofficial and inhuman deportation.

Unused aid

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April 1994 when a four-month grace period for submission of claims against the credit will end.

According to informed sources, the reason behind the WB's reluctance to allow more time for Bangladesh to use the 24 million dollar savings for expansion of rural electrification is the long-standing dispute between the BPDB and the REB over service area.

The current demarcation of service area provides that the REB will operate in all areas except the divisional and district towns and other municipal areas, industrial areas, cantonments and universities. But, the BPDB has been extremely slow in transferring its distribution facilities to the REB. Until October 1993 only 4.5 km of lines were transferred to the REB out of a target of transferring 230 km of distribution lines during January-March 1993.

After the closure of its Second Rural Electrification Credit the World Bank will continue to provide assistance for rural electrification through its Third Rural Electrification Credit of 105 million dollars. Continuation of this credit line has recently been linked with transfer of BPDB lines and facilities to the REB according to an agreed plan.



The newly appointed Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Abdullah Omar Barni called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

PM to tour SAARC states

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recognise Bangladesh. The Irish Defence and Marine Minister David Andrews is presently in Dhaka on a four-day visit and had talks with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister on the expansion of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Osmany evaded direct replies to a number of questions asked by newsmen on Indo-Bangladesh relations including the water-sharing issue and the expected visit of Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao.

Asked if the date of the Indian Premier's visit had been fixed, the Foreign Secretary replied, "There is no information that we can share now."

Asked again if the visit was cancelled, he said, "I am not saying that either."

About a question on the water issue with India, Osmany said the main problem is "the question of sharing not a question of demanding."

When a correspondent wanted to know about the follow-up action of the water issue after it was raised by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at the UN General Assembly, he said there seemed to be no progress at the bilateral or multilateral level.

Referring to the recent Indo-Bangladesh JEC meeting in Dhaka, Osmany said the two sides had elaborate talks on economic issues. "The approach of both sides was posi-

tive as they identified ways of increasing bilateral cooperation."

Regarding the huge trade gap between the two countries, the Foreign Secretary said, "Efforts were being made to remove the trade imbalance."

Asked if India had linked the issue of transit with water sharing, he replied, "In political discussions many issues crop up."

Regarding repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis, Osmany said, "No significant progress has been made," and added, "we are trying to make some progress."

Responding to another question, he said there has been no slowing down of the repatriation of Rohingya refugees. "People are going."

About a report published in the Banglar Bani on the Pakistan High Commissioner's reported meeting with a foreigner at the outer anchorage of the Chittagong port earlier this month, he said the envoy had gone for deep-sea fishing with the knowledge of the Foreign Ministry. He said all Ambassadors and High Commissioners are very respected persons and he did not think they were involved in any prejudicial activities.

Pressed further on the subject, he said, "If the newspaper which published the report comes up with hard evidence, we will definitely look into it."



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, along with central leaders of her party, placing wreaths in front of the portrait of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the Bangabandhu Bhaban in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Foil plan to rig polls

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of terrorism and other criminal activities.

The AL candidate also reiterated that taxes and fees won't be increased and expenses in unproductive sectors would be cut off to meet expenditures for improving civic amenities.

"I'll form anti-terrorism committees at every ward and constitute a body to coordinate the jobs of different authorities looking after the civic amenities with a view to avoiding repeated digging of the roads," he announced.

Amid cheers and clappings, Hanif said, "I'll keep all my words, even at the cost of my life, if I win the polls."

The spacious Bangabandhu Avenue, from the Stadium gate up to Nawabpur Road was crammed with people. Many also listened to the speakers from atop the buildings on both sides and the gallery of the Outer Stadium.

Earlier, processions from dif-

ferent parts of the city carrying banners, placards and portraits and symbols of the mayoral and commissioner candidates assembled in the area.

Recalling Bangabandhu's return to independent Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina commented that the people got the real taste of independence after the return of the leader of the independence movement.

The opposition leader alleged that the ruling BNP did not believe in electoral and democratic system and reiterated her allegation that the BNP government was corrupting the administration from top to bottom and accused it of failing to solve all national problems.

The meeting was also addressed by the AL leaders Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed, MP, Mohammad Nasim, MP, Abdur Razzak, MP, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu and Mozazzal Hossain Choudhury Maya.

The Midnight File

Kabul radio resumes broadcast

ISLAMABAD, Jan 10: Forces loyal to Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani have shot down two rebel aircraft, state-run Kabul Radio said today, resuming its broadcast after several days of silence. The radio had remained off the air since its antenna was reportedly knocked out after fighting began on New Year's day. The broadcast, monitored here, claimed that the two jets were downed in the northern region, where Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam is based in the city of Mazar-i-Sharif, reports AFP.

Bosnia agrees in principal to Croatian peace plan

BONN, Jan 10: Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic agreed in principal upon a peace plan proposed by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman at today's peace talks, a Croatian delegation official revealed here today. But the two presidents still have disagreements on some details of the plan, including the allocation of land in central Bosnia between Croats and Muslims. Muslim demands for access to the Adriatic sea at Neum and the management of the divided Mostar city, said the official who declined to be named, reports Xinhua.

BSRS MD

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bank, as decided by the government, nor is it performing its role as a DFI.

The activities of the BSRS as a DFI came to a halt in 1983 after an embargo imposed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) because of the huge size of its non-performing loans and later, the process of privatising the Sangstha was disrupted by an injunction by the Petition Committee of Parliament.

The petition committee issued the injunction on the eve of handing over the shares and undertakings of the BSRS to a public limited company. Development Bank Limited (DBL), when the owners of BSRS-financed projects appealed to the committee for re-examination of the net worth of the corporation.

The BSRS was being sold out for Tk 83 crore, but the entrepreneurs of the projects claimed that the value would be much higher.

It is also reported that the BSRS, during the tenure of Mamunur Rashid, took a number of controversial decisions regarding rehabilitation of the sick units which, in some cases, were contrary to the government directive.

The Finance Secretary discussed the matter with the Managing Directors of the DFIs and the decision to transfer Mamunur Rashid reportedly followed that meeting.

Strike

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tion process of factories and industries and the ones working in the overseas post and telecommunications department are exempted from the work-stoppage.

The members of the police and the Ansars and the customs officials working at different ports of the country have also been left outside the purview of strike.

BSF renews firing in Muhurirchar

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FENI, Jan 10: Indian Border Security Force renewed firing Sunday night on villages in Muhurirchar ahead of Indo-Bangladesh border talks that began in Delhi today, reports UNB.

BDR returned the fire which continued about an hour, but no casualty was reported from either side, district officials said.

Indians backed by the BSF have been trying to forcibly harvest crops cultivated in Muhurirchar by Bangladeshi farmers since last month. A middle-aged housewife, Dhanb-ewa, of village Baurpathar in Parashuram thana was killed in BSF firing on Friday.

BMA strike

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with the Prime Minister and the Health Minister without any result. We will not withdraw our strike unless the government issues orders accepting our demands," he said.

The 21-point charter of demands includes increased budget allocation for the health sector, building up an infrastructure for primary health care facilities to ensure health for all by the year 2000, setting up hospitals and recruitment of more manpower for the health sector.

The other demands are: Autonomy for all medical colleges and institutions, equal pay scale for medical officials at the thana level and filling all the vacant health service posts.

The BMA handed over a copy of the charter of demands to the Health Minister last September and held rallies and brought out processions in support of its demands in November and December.

It also observed a token strike in December, which was followed by a hunger strike and a sit-in on December 28.

পলিথিন ব্যাগের ব্যবহার দেশে পরিবেশ সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করছে কেননা পলিথিন ব্যাগ পচনশীল নয়

- ☐ পলিথিন ব্যাগ পচে না এবং মাটির সঙ্গে মিশে না। পলিথিন মাটির পুষ্টি প্রবাহে বাধা সৃষ্টি করে। ফলে মাটির উর্বরতা শক্তি কমে যায়।
- ☐ পলিথিন ব্যাগ পানি আটকে রাখে। ফলে নালা-নর্দমার পানি আটকে পরিবেশদূষিত হয়।
- ☐ পলিথিন ব্যাগ ব্যবহার স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য ক্ষতিকর।
- ☐ সরকার পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণের জন্য 'রঙানি প্রক্রিয়াকরণ এলাকা' ছাড়া পলিথিন শপিং ব্যাগের উৎপাদন ১৮ই জানুয়ারী '৯৪ হতে বন্ধ ঘোষণা করেছেন।
- ☐ সরকার এই সঙ্গে পলিথিন ব্যাগ উৎপাদনকারী কারখানায় বিকল্প পণ্য উৎপাদনের পরামর্শ দিয়েছেন।
- ☐ আসুন পরিবেশ সংরক্ষণের তাগিদে সবাই মিলে সরকারের এ সিদ্ধান্ত বাস্তবায়নে এগিয়ে আসি।



পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর

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