

May Day observed Fresh pledge to protect workers' rights

By Staff Correspondent

The historic May Day was observed in the country Wednesday with a renewed pledge to protect and uphold the fundamental rights of the working people.

Different trade unions and socio-cultural organisations planned programmes which included rallies, processions and discussions on the significance of the day.

The day was a public holiday.

The day is observed every year in remembrance of the eight workers who were killed in a police firing in the US city of Chicago on May 1, 1886. They were holding a rally demanding an 8-hour working day.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman in separate messages recalled the significance of the day. Political leaders also gave similar statements marking the day.

Different political parties and labour organisations organ-

ised rallies and discussion meetings on the occasion.

BNP held a rally in front of its central office at Naya Paltan in the city. Party general secretary Abdus Salam Talukdar called upon all to take a fresh vow for maintaining the democratic trend and putting more relentless effort to improving the relationship between the owners and workers and boost production.

Bangladesh Communist Party (CPB) held a rally in front of its office at Purana Paltan. It was followed by a discussion meeting. Speakers at the meeting said that the working class was being exploited in Bangladesh by the capitalist political system. The speakers emphasised that this type of a political system should go.

Bangladesh Trade Union Federation organised a workers' rally at Purana Paltan on the occasion.

Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh broadcast special programmes on the significance of the day.

In Chittagong and Khulna, different political parties observed the day through holding discussions and organising rallies.

Indian polls

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companies Indian elections. Detainees usually are released after the balloting ends.

Press Trust of India claimed 300,000 people were under preventive arrest, but gave no basis for the figure.

Voting also was being held in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

In the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, guerrillas of the People's War Group were blamed for the explosion in Nizamabad, 160 kilometers north of the state capital of Hyderabad. The three policemen were searching for a jeep stolen by the rebels when they detonated the mine.

The guerrillas also snatched ballots from two polling stations to ensure that the voting would be invalidated, police said.

The militant outfit, claiming to represent landless peasants, an election boycott and had threatened to disrupt voting. It is opposed to elections and says only a Marxist state can end exploitation by landowners and oppression by police.

Opinion polls have indicated no party will win a majority in the 545-seat lower house of Parliament, forcing the party that receives the most seats to lead a coalition government.

The first exit poll published since voting began Saturday showed the governing Congress Party trailing the Bharatiya Janata Party, a Hindu nationalist party.

The exit poll of 3,000 voters in seven states Saturday, published in Outlook magazine, predicted the Bharatiya Janata Party would win 120 seats, up from its current 192, and Congress would take 142 seats, a loss of 90. No margin of error was given.

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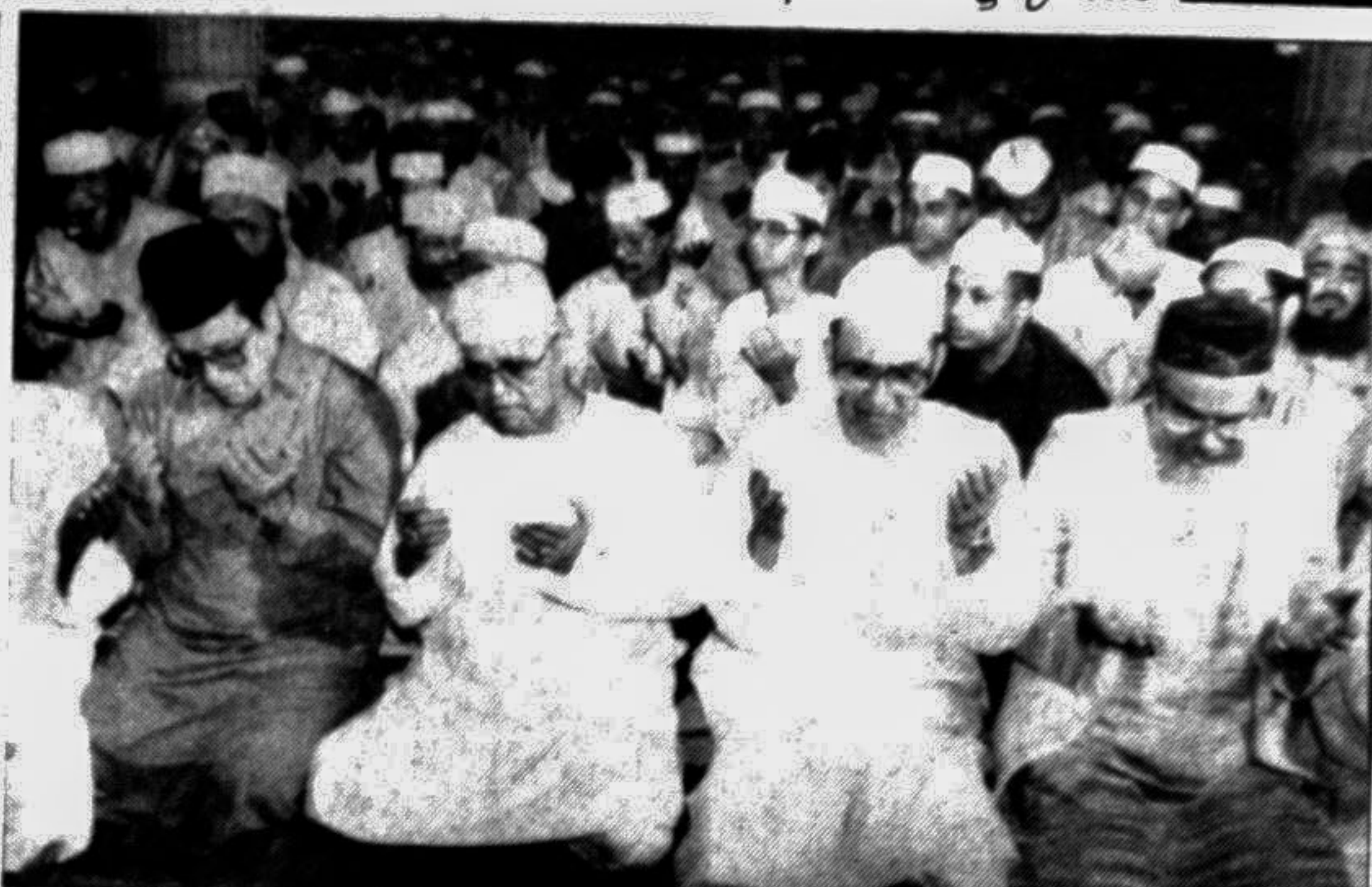
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The main Eid congregation at Baitul Mukarram Mosque on Monday.

— Star photo

Dhaka's call for increased ODA flow to LDCs

PRETORIA (South Africa).

May 2: Bangladesh has called for substantial improvement in the flow of overseas Development Assistance (ODA) to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), reports BSS.

Delivering a statement on the opening day of the plan- nery of the UNCTAD on behalf of the LDCs, the leader of Bangladesh delegation, commerce secretary A H Molazzam Karim, said the process of globalisation and liberalisation while creating job opportunities for countries had given rise to many challenges, particularly difficult for the LDCs.

The commerce secretary said the programme of action was drawn up against the backdrop of sharp decline in socio-economic conditions of the LDCs in the 1980s.

He noted with concern that although there was a recovery in the world economy, the LDCs, as a group, suffered decline in per capita income in recent years.

The erosion of trade preferences, higher prices for import of food, pharmaceuticals and essential capital goods and increased administrative cost for compliance in the aftermath of the Uruguay Round would create difficulties for the LDCs, he pointed out.

During the current UNCTAD IX conference being held in Midrand, South Africa, the commerce secretary also chaired a symposium on 'LDCs and Global Trade'. He also acted as one of the three panelists in the round table conference of the participating ministers on the challenges of development.

On Wednesday, police arrested two youngmen — Biplob and Sayeed — from Aliganj area of the town and recovered a gun from their possession.

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Eid celebrated

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Four other Eid jamaats were also held at the Baitul Mukarram mosque. Eid jamaats were also held at different city mosques and open places.

Special prayers were offered at all Eid congregations seeking divine blessings for continued peace, progress and prosperity of Bangladesh and for the solidarity and brotherhood of the Muslim ummah.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas hosted a reception in honour of the diplomats and distinguished citizens at Bangabhaban in the morning.

Chief Justice A T M Afzal, members of the council of advisers, judges of the Supreme

Court, chiefs of staff of the army, navy and air force, the governor of Bangladesh Bank, the vice chancellors of different universities, leaders of various political parties, editors of news agencies and national dailies attended the reception.

Earlier, members of the diplomatic corps based in Dhaka and heads of various UN agencies and international organisations attended the reception at Bangabhaban.

Chief Adviser Muhammad Habibur Rahman also hosted a reception in honour of the diplomats and distinguished citizens at 30 Hare Road.

The National Flag flew atop important public and private buildings. The main thoroughfares and roads leading from Zia international airport to Bangabhaban were decorated with national flags, festoons and banners inscribed with 'Eid Mubarak' both in Bangla and Arabic.

Radio and TV aired special programmes highlighting the significance of the day while the national dailies brought out special supplements.

Improved diets were supplied to inmates of orphanages, hospitals and jails across the country.

The government had announced a three-day national holiday on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha from May 28.

BSS adds: In Chittagong, the main Eid congregation in the city was held at the Jamiatul Falaah complex premises.

The other main Eid congregation under the Chittagong Central Eid Jamaat Committee was held at the Chittagong Stadium.

In Khulna, the main Eid congregation was held at the local Circuit House Maidan. Eid congregations were also held at different places in the city.

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