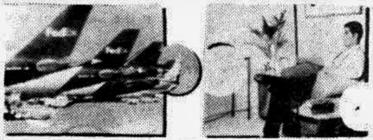


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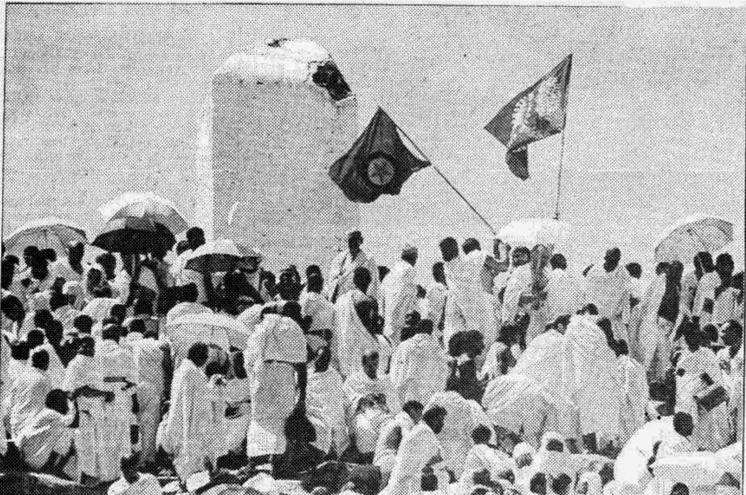


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Hajj performed safely



Muslim pilgrims from around the world stand on the Arafat plain in western Saudi Arabia on Friday during the Hajj. Some two million Muslims took part in the five-day Hajj.

MINA, Mar 27: Some two million Muslim pilgrims performed the symbolic ritual of stoning the devil before dawn here today, throwing pebbles at a massive pillar, reports AP. They then headed back to Mecca — some by foot, some by bus — to walk seven times around the Ka'aba, the black-draped cube in the centre of the Grand Mosque. The two rituals are considered the peak of the three-day pilgrimage, or Hajj, which began Friday. "I have stoned the devil. I have circled the Ka'aba. Thank God, I am a pilgrim now," said Mohammed Osman from Sudan. He spoke after catching breath from the strain of circling the Ka'aba among 200,000 other worshippers. Pilgrims took at least two

hours to cover the 10-kilometre journey from Mina to Mecca today. Such was the multitude that traffic inched along the road. People sat on the roofs of buses. Some even clung to the buses' back-windows, their feet dangling in the air. It was cool in comparison to Friday's daytime temperatures of 40-degree Celsius. Nobody was seen fainting. There was no pushing and shoving. Pedestrians spilled over into the desert alongside the road, walking among shrubs and small trees. For pilgrims, the day began with a ritual that symbolises the rejection of Satan's temptations. They threw seven pebbles at a 15-metre obelisk of light grey stone that represents the devil. With each pebble, the pilgrims chanted 'Allahu Akbar.'

or "God is Great." Saudi clerics urged pilgrims over loudspeakers to walk cautiously to Jamarat today, which also marks the first day of Eid-ul-Azha, or feast of sacrifice, when pilgrims and other Muslims around the world slaughter sheep, cows or camels, adds Reuters. Thousands of sheep and cows were being sacrificed at slaughter houses for the pilgrims. Much of the meat is traditionally donated to the poor, with some sent overseas. At least one million animals are expected to be sacrificed at the Hajj. Hajj is a pillar of the Islamic faith. Every able Muslim with the financial means must make the pilgrimage at least once, although some perform the ritual several times.

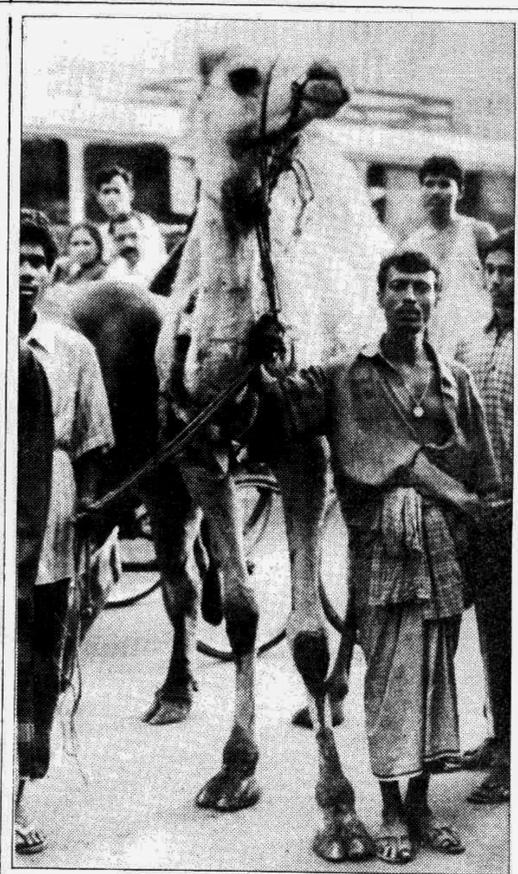
Pre-planned murder

From Page 1
ficers at 36 Minto Road had not been taken into custody and interrogated which police normally do in cases of mysterious murders. Meanwhile, the unnatural death (UD) case filed by a low ranking DB policeman (havlidar) on the day of recovery of the corpse was changed into a murder case Friday evening. The murder case was lodged by Sub Inspector Ali Azam Siddiqi of Ramna police station under Sections 302/201/34 CrPc Penal Code. "It was clear that the victim was taken to the rooftop and killed in a pre-planned manner by more than two persons and the body was concealed in the water tank," the sub-inspector said in the FIR after investigating the case secretly and interrogating the havlidar who had filed the UD case. The FIR mentioned that it was not a case of unnatural death.

The autopsy of the body was performed at the DMCH morgue Friday afternoon, led by Prof. Shamsul Islam of the Forensic Department. The autopsy report however could not give the exact time of the death. Doctors later told The Daily Star that the victim had been killed at least two days before the body was recovered. It was possible that he might have been killed even several days earlier. Forensic experts said since the body was dumped in an air tight compartment containing water, it was difficult to exactly determine the time of the death. It was learnt that for the first time the doctors involved in the autopsy visited the place of occurrence at the DB office immediately after the autopsy was completed on Friday. The body had been preserved at the DMCH morgue. Police did not contact the hospital till yesterday, a hospital official said. Normally an unclaimed body is preserved for 24 hours after the autopsy. Sources said that the hospital authorities may hand over the body to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam like any other unclaimed body. However, forensic experts said that the body should be preserved till its identity is established for the sake of investigation. According to sources, the DIG of Special Branch and the Chairman of the probe committee, Abul Kasem Howladar, along with other officials went to the DB office at about 10 am on Friday and interrogated some police personnel. Sources in the DMP said the probe committee had already interrogated the canteen boys, the manager and other employees of the DB office canteen. The committee also interrogated some staff of the DB office from constable to sub-inspector but none above in the rank. The committee has asked the other officials to submit their statements in writing. They may be interrogated later on the basis of their statements, the sources said. The CID investigation team also went to the DB office at around 11 am on Friday to visit the spot. Some sources in the DB said the incident may be a sequel to

an incident involving one Habibur Rahman Babu. Babu was taken to the Ramna park by two persons from Nawabpur level crossing in the city on March 11, claiming that they were DB men. They had claimed that they were sent by a senior DB official. Later he was taken to the Ramna park where they claimed money. Babu then said he could hand over the dollars only on the DB office premises. Later Babu was taken to the DB office canteen in an autorickshaw. According to a case filed by Babu with Sutrapur thana on March 12, they first took 12,000 Dollars from him, and later returned 4000 Dollars. Chairman of the Police Probe Committee DIG Abul Kasem Howladar told The Daily Star last night, "We are trying to establish the identity of the victim. It is most important to establish the identity first. We have sent teams to different places." He said, according to his investigation, the victim was not a policeman. "He may be a detective branch source."

He said they are not using any detective branch men for the investigation. "We are using CID and Special Branch personnel only." CID investigation team have taken one Matin, a DB source, for interrogation. According to CID, they have sent several teams to Askona under Uttara thana and Dhalpur. They have interrogated one Nurul Islam at Dhalpur are looking for another Nurul Islam who hails from Noakhali. But Nurul Islam of Dhalpur hails from Munshiganj. Sources in the CID said they are looking for one Mafizur Rahman of Askona who might have been involved in the matter. They however did not confirm whether Rahman is a police source or a Dollar trader. A Sub-inspector of DB, Mujibur Rahman, known to be close to a DB official was taken to the CID office for interrogation but was later released. The DC DB said no logbook or register is missing and those are very much up to date. "We have all police personnel accounted for." The DC DB office in Dhaka has scores of on-duty policemen working round the clock and some 210 informers who are paid "source money". When asked the DC DB said they do not have any register of the "sources" who are "secretly controlled by different units". The DC South who has his office on the same premises said, "This is my administrative office. I do not have provision for custody of any person within the premises. A peon is posted in front of my office which is closed when I am not in the office." The building houses the offices of the DB and the DC south Zone. They have a sanction of 399 personnel but at present there are 206 personnel. Of them, 203 were present on Friday and three were on leave. Leave for the Eid festival was cancelled by a notice on Friday. All police personnel at the DB and DC South office were asked not to leave the station without prior permission of the CID investigation team.



From the desert to the land of rivers Very few in number though, camels come to cattle markets ahead of Eid-ul-Azha every year. — Star photo

2 killed, 100 hurt as nor'wester hits Panchagarh

PANCHAGARH, Mar 27: Two people were killed and over 100 injured when a nor'wester lashed more than a hundred villages in sadar and Tetulia thanas Friday evening, reports APB. About 50 thousand dwelling houses, including two BDR outposts and educational institutions were damaged in the storm. The dead were identified as Ramisa, 25, of Dalua Fakirpara, and Julekha, 50, of Dhanshuka in sadar thana. Of the injured, 15 were admitted to Rangpur Medical College Hospital, 44 to Panchagarh Sadar Hospital and six to Tetulia Hospital in a critical condition. The rest were given first aid.

Nasim
From Page 1
John Holzman called upon the ruling party and the opposition to sink their differences for the greater interest of the country. "We hope both the sides would take into heart the letter issued by the development partners," he said. Holzman added: "Whatever political confrontation is going on in this country, the leadership should look for higher national interest, and the development partners want to jointly carry out development works here." Chairman of Pacific Group and BNP leader M Morshed Khan MP said: "We believe in dialogue. Talk is the means of communication."

Eid tomorrow

From Page 1
The government earlier declared a three-day Eid holiday from today and took up elaborate programmes on the occasion. The Radio and HSTV will put on air special programmes. Newspapers will remain closed for three days from today. The main Eid congregation will be held at the National Eidgah on the High Court premises at 8 in the morning. Four Eid congregations will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, beginning from 6:30 p.m. The National Flag will be hoisted atop all public and private buildings. In the city, the main streets and road islands will be tastefully decorated with fastoons and bunting reading Eid-Mubarak in Bangla and Arabic. Important public buildings will be illuminated with kaleidoscopic lights on the night of the Eid day. Laks of people have left the city since Thursday to celebrate the Eid with their near and dear ones at home. Trains, buses and launches have been leaving the city overloaded with home-bound passengers. Rush of home-going people at Gabtali, Mohakhali and Syedabad bus terminals, Sadarghat launch terminal and Kamalapur railway station will continue till today. Passengers complained that tickets were being sold at more than double the rates. The government has arranged special trains on the occasion. Improved diet will be served at hospitals, jails and orphanages.

Petrobangla

From Page 1
Presently only two gasfields — the offshore Sangu field developed by Cairn and the Jalalabad field developed by Occidental under PSCs — are supplying gas to the National Grid. In a few years, Occidental may start gas production from Bibiana — unofficially said to be the biggest gasfield in the country. Sangu and Jalalabad fields are supplying about 200 to 240 mcmcf of gas per day. The monthly bill for this gas is around nine lakh US dollars and by selling it, Petrobangla earns around 6 to 7 lakh dollars. The price of Sangu gas is now 1.4 dollars per unit and that of Jalalabad gas around 1.2 dollars. Petrobangla sells this gas at 1.1 dollar in the internal market. Sources pointed out that the prices of both Sangu and Jalalabad gas, adjusted quarterly against the price of High Sulphur Fuel Oil (HSFO) in Singapore, are 'at their lowest'. The prices of gas developed by foreign oil companies are fixed on the basis of the price of HSFO in Singapore market, which is currently very low due to the global trend in oil prices. "But even if the price of HSFO declines further, the prices of Sangu and Jalalabad gas would not go down further. It is because the Gas Purchase Sales Agreements (GPSAs) signed by Cairn and Occidental with the government have a lowest ceiling and a highest ceiling of HSFO price fluctuations for mutual benefits," one source explained. "Right now, the prices of both Sangu and Jalalabad gas are at their lowest."

BCL leader

From Page 1
His abdomen and throat only 15 yards away from Keshabpur police post. The victim was going to Haragram Court Bazar riding a motor bike along with a friend from his residence at Munshipara. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital. The two ruling party groups had a long rivalry over toll collection from Damkura cattle market, contract of a ghat and supply of sand to Bypass Road, police said. Morshid was expelled from local BCL unit recently for organising protest against the killing of Kishore, one of his associates. A case has been filed accusing 12 activists of local Awami League and its front organisations. Meanwhile, hundreds of people brought out a procession carrying the body of Morshid in the city this noon.

Suu Kyi's husband dead

BANGKOK, Mar 27: Banned by Myanmar's military government from seeing his wife one last time, Michael Aris, the husband of opposition leader and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, died today in a London hospital, according to a statement released by Suu Kyi, reports AP. Myanmar's military government had denied Aris, who was ill with prostate cancer that had spread to his spine and lungs, a visa to enter Myanmar for a final meeting with his wife before he died. Aris, a scholar who specialized in Tibetan studies, died on his 53rd birthday. He passed away at 6:30 am London time, diplomats in Yangon said. Western governments and international human rights groups and been urging the Myanmar government to grant Aris a visa on humanitarian grounds, but the military government refused and instead urged Suu Kyi to leave the country and visit her husband in Britain.

Korean garments unit gutted at DEPZ

A closed Korean Garments Factory in Dhaka Export Promotion Zone (DEPZ) at Savar was gutted in a fire yesterday, reports BSS. Official sources said, the fire originated from the ground floor of the three-storied building at about 10 am when a few staff of the factory were cleaning the building to re-start it after Eid-ul-Azha. The fire soon engulfed the entire garments factory. Ten fire fighting units from different fire stations in Dhaka and Savar rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after four and a half hours. One fire man Noor Islam of Kurmitola Fire Station received burn injuries during the operation. Fire brigade officials said the cause of the fire and the loss could not be ascertained immediately. The General Manager of the EPZ Authorities said the fire fighters saved the machinery and instrument of the factory but the building owned by the EPZ was badly damaged.

Standoff

From Page 1
permit any other elections but parliamentary vote under caretaker administration." Ruling party sources told UNB that the diplomats would meet the Prime Minister on April 4 over a dinner at her Ganobhaban official residence. US Ambassador John C. Holzman has already requested President Shahabuddin Ahmed to exercise his "moral authority" in helping the government and the opposition reach an agreement for restoring political stability averting confrontation. The President assured the envoy that he was "fully aware about this matter and trying within constitutional limits, to bring the parties closer." The donors also sought an appointment with the President and April 1 was fixed as a tentative date. But Bangabhaban sources said the date has not been finalised.

Ananda Shankar dead

CALCUTTA, Mar 27: Ananda Shankar, renowned musician and son of choreographer Uday Shankar, died at a south Calcutta hospital home yesterday morning, family sources said, reports PTI. He was 50 and is survived by his choreographer wife Tanushree and a daughter. Ananda Shankar had been suffering from cardiac problems. Son of legendary dancer Uday Shankar and nephew of renowned sitarist Ravi Shankar, Ananda Shankar was brought up in an atmosphere where music, dance and culture harmoniously co-existed. Regarded as one of the foremost exponents of experimental music after Tahir Barun, the greatness of Shankar's composition lay in the fine blend of West and the East, without for a moment diluting the uniqueness of Indian music. His work drew from the Ravisankar gharana, epitomised by the blend of legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin's style with his uncle's.

Zimbabwe lift title

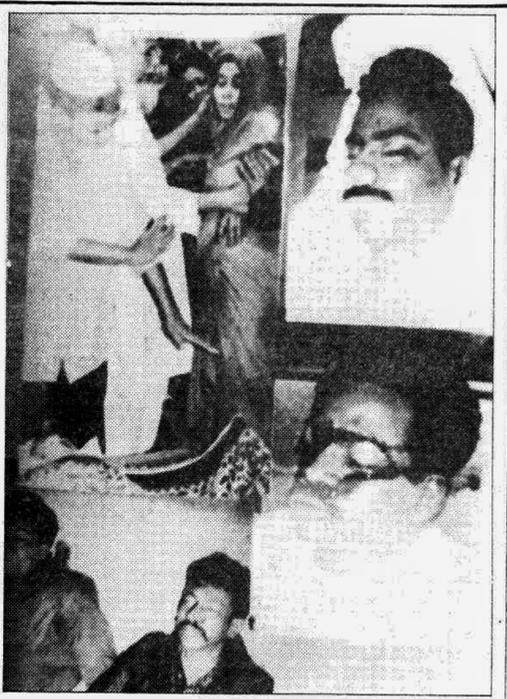
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were a disappointing lot with a rather meek and mild performance. Grant Flower scored a career-best 140 off 125 balls to lay the foundation of the mammoth Zimbabwean total after his opening partner Neil Johnson returned to the dressing room in the very first over for a duck. Grant Flower, whose previous best score was 112 against Sri Lanka, set the pace of the Zimbabwean innings, putting on 98 runs off 92 balls for the second wicket with one-down Murray Goodwin. The latter fell for 22 off 36 balls. The two were eventually separated when Grant, who clubbed a dozen of fours and a couple of sixes, ran himself out while chasing a non-existent second run in the 40th over. But, by that time, Zimbabwe were strongly placed on 239 for four with ten more overs to go. Guy Whittall carried the Zimbabwean onslaught from where Grant had left, making 67 off 76 balls with the help of five boundaries. Zimbabwe plundered 86 runs from the last ten overs in which Carlisle smashed 42 off 29 balls and hard-hitting Heath Streak scored a quickfire undefeated 39. Among the Kenyan bowlers, Martin Suji earned some respect from the marauding Zimbabweans while others, including captain Asif Karim, who conceded 64 runs, Kenya, needing a world-record performance to topple Zimbabwe's total, which was also the highest innings total at the Bangabandhu, were never up in their chase for a well-nigh impossible proposition.

Road mishaps in 4 dists kill 32

From Page 1
On Friday, another unidentified man aged about 45 died on the spot after he was run over by a truck at Amjader Bazar in the same thana. A minor bus helper Nurul Islam Raju, 23, died on the spot as the vehicle hit a truck at Neemsar in Burichang thana at 5 am on Friday. In Chittagong, nine people were killed and 12 injured, in three road accidents in Hathazari thana early hours of yesterday. Of them, four died on the spot and two succumbed to their injuries at Chittagong Medical College Hospital, police and hospital sources said. Police said four passengers of a minibus died on the spot when it fell into a ditch after a collision with a truck on Chittagong-Nazirhat road after midnight. Three of the dead were identified as minibus driver Yusuf, 29, Fatema Bibi, 18, and Takirul Bibi, 20. Six critically injured were rushed to the CMCH where two died soon after admission. The condition of four others was stated to be critical. On the same road, two passers-by were run over by a speeding truck near gate No 1 of Chittagong University. Of the dead one was identified as Siddique Ahmed, 50, while the other could not be identified. In the morning, one Nurul Alam was killed when a tempo overturned at village Botoli on its way to Madarsha from Fatehabad. At least nine people were killed and 30 injured in a road accident at Navon in Jessore in the early hours of yesterday. Six of the victims were identified as Delwara Jahan, 22, Salma, 12, of Sathkira, Rezau, 32, and Jasim, 22, of Devhata and Sawkat, 45, and Farid, 48, (bus driver) of Kalaroa. Witnesses and police said, the accident took place at about 4:15 am when a Sathkira-paribahan night coach of Balaka Paribahan from Dhaka overturned and fell into a ditch near Akiz Biri Factory. Six, including the driver, died on the spot while three others died at Jessore and Sathkira hospitals. They could not be identified immediately. Of the injured, 20 were admitted to Jessore General Hospital while the 10 others to Sathkira Sadar Hospital. Police took the bodies to the hospital for autopsy. In Feni, three people were killed in separate road accidents on different roads and highways in the district on Friday. Police said an unidentified person was killed when a speeding truck hit him on Dhaka-Chittagong highway. A tempo passenger, named Abdul Halim, 18, was killed when he fell down from the vehicle on Chhagolaiya road near Feni Sadar Friday afternoon. A head-on collision between a truck and a tempo at Sekandarpur in Feni-Majidee road left tempo rider Rahimullah, 28, dead on the spot.

Cattle traders

From Page 1
to pay Tk 500 as toll at different points on his way to Gabtali market in the city. In some markets, it was found that the supply of the animals was normal and the prices were relatively low owing to lack of enough buyers. Average size cows were being sold between Tk 7,000 and Tk 15,000. There were some big cows for which more than Tk 50,000 each was being demanded by the sellers. There were also reports of dacoity on vehicles and launches carrying cattle. Decoits attacked a truck carrying goats at Joydevpur square. Police chased them and foiled their attempt. Dhaka City Corporation allowed 17 cattle markets in the city areas. Besides over 10 markets were set up by local people. Cattle are brought to the city markets from as far as Rajshahi, Kushtia, Jessore, Mysenigh, Tangail, Jamalpur, Noakhali, Comilla, Chandpur, Faridpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj.



Death comes so easy As rival lessees of temporary cattle markets at Keraniganj, near Dhaka, raced to clinch better deal for themselves, police were alleged to have sided with one group. Allegations had it that these bodies recovered from the Buriganga yesterday were the result of the police foul play. The picture also shows relatives of one of the dead wail (top left). — Star photo

Liberation war monument at CU demolished

CHITTAGONG, Mar 27: Unidentified people demolished a liberation war monument on the Chittagong University campus and set fire to it on the night of Independence Day, reports UNB. The monument was erected on the eve of second convocation of the university. Earlier in the evening, activists of Jamaat-e-Islami's student front Chhatra Shibir attacked a leader of the ruling party-backed Chhatra League.

Rain

From Page 1
some parts of the city yesterday as clouds hazed the sun for sometime in the afternoon. But the Agargaon Met office could not record any precipitation. In its forecast for Sunday, the Met office said there may be temporary rain / thunder-shower, accompanied by gusty winds at one or two places over Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and in Rangpur, Pabna, Bogra, Kushtia, Jessore, Barisal, Comilla and Noakhali. The weather may remain mainly dry with scattered sky. Slight fall in day temperature is expected, the forecast said.

Jubo League

From Page 1
Panna joined Jubo League from Opposition BNP backed Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in 1997. He was arrested along with his wife on June 2 last year for keeping illegal arms. But they were granted bail in July the same year.

Homage to martyrs

From Page 1
lowered at half-mast. Ministers, members of parliament, chiefs of the three services, high civil and military officials were present on the occasion. Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia placed wreaths at the National Memorial as a mark of respect to the martyrs of the War of Liberation. Political leaders, freedom fighters, cultural activists and hundreds of people representing different socio-cultural, professional and political organisations visited the National Memorial and placed wreaths there paying homage to the martyrs. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina visited the Bangabandhu Bhawan in the morning and placed a wreath at the portrait of Bangabandhu. The day was a public holiday. National flag was hoisted atop all public and private buildings in celebration of the day. Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television aired special programmes while newspapers brought out special supplements highlighting the significance of the day. All city squares and avenues were specially decorated and important government and private buildings illuminated on the occasion. Special prayers were offered in all places of worship all over the country seeking blessings of the Almighty for the peace and progress of the nation. President Shahabuddin Ahmed hosted a reception at Bangabhaban on the occasion.

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