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Down to Earth

City's Trade in Old Clothes

By A S M Nurunnabi

With the advent of cold weather, a colourful phenomenon appears on some important sidewalks and select areas in the city. This refers to the makeshift markets in old clothes that proliferate in variety and range with the gradual drop in temperature as the cold season progresses. This form as much a part of winter milieu as the season's fruits and vegetables.

This scenario, however, shrouds an unedifying aspect of our social and economic life. In summer, the poorer sections of our people can make do with the minimum of clothing. But on the onset of the cold weather which is not so severe in this part of the world the situation changes. These people, particularly the children and the aged, need thicker covering especially at night and until the warmth of sun's rays make them buoyant.

Most of these old clothes are imported from abroad from affluent countries. These affluent people tend to wear their new clothes for a comparatively short period. When these are disposed of, they ultimately find their way to markets of poorer countries through exports, some of these old clothes keep their shape, colour and texture that sometimes do not lose their appeal to those having poor sartorial standards and not much squeamish about using used clothes.

These markets in old clothes, once in the past, used to be called "Nixon Market" or "Reagan Markets." The implication of snobbery implied by these expressions now seems to have largely disappeared and the erstwhile hesitation among certain sections of people in buying second-hand clothes also seems to have evaporated under economic compulsions.

The second-hand old clothes, offered through numerous sale outlets, cover a wide range of items. They include jackets, trousers, pullovers and cardigans, both for ladies and gents, of different sizes and colour, ladies' and children's garments. Even blankets of different attractive colours are found on sale. Some of the main centres for sale of the old clothes lie in the vicinity of Baitul Mokarram, GPO Buildings, New Market and Karwan Bazar areas. In old part of the city, Sadarghat and Chawkbazar areas and numerous other isolated spots, such sale outlets ply a brisk business.

There is another side to the story. This aspect is much less in sight, and wide-ranging in its subtle prevalence. It may not be much common knowledge that there is also a market for indigenous old clothes. There are some lanes in the Chowkbazar area where there are rows of shops dealing in these old kind of clothes. There are also other sundry items like old shoes and pieces of linen and sarees. It is understood that the sources for these wares are mostly those peddlers who go about selling various wares of plastic, aluminum, etc. strung on bamboo rods across their shoulders in exchange for our old clothes, shoes and other knick knacks. It is well understood what kind of customers these indigenous old things attract.

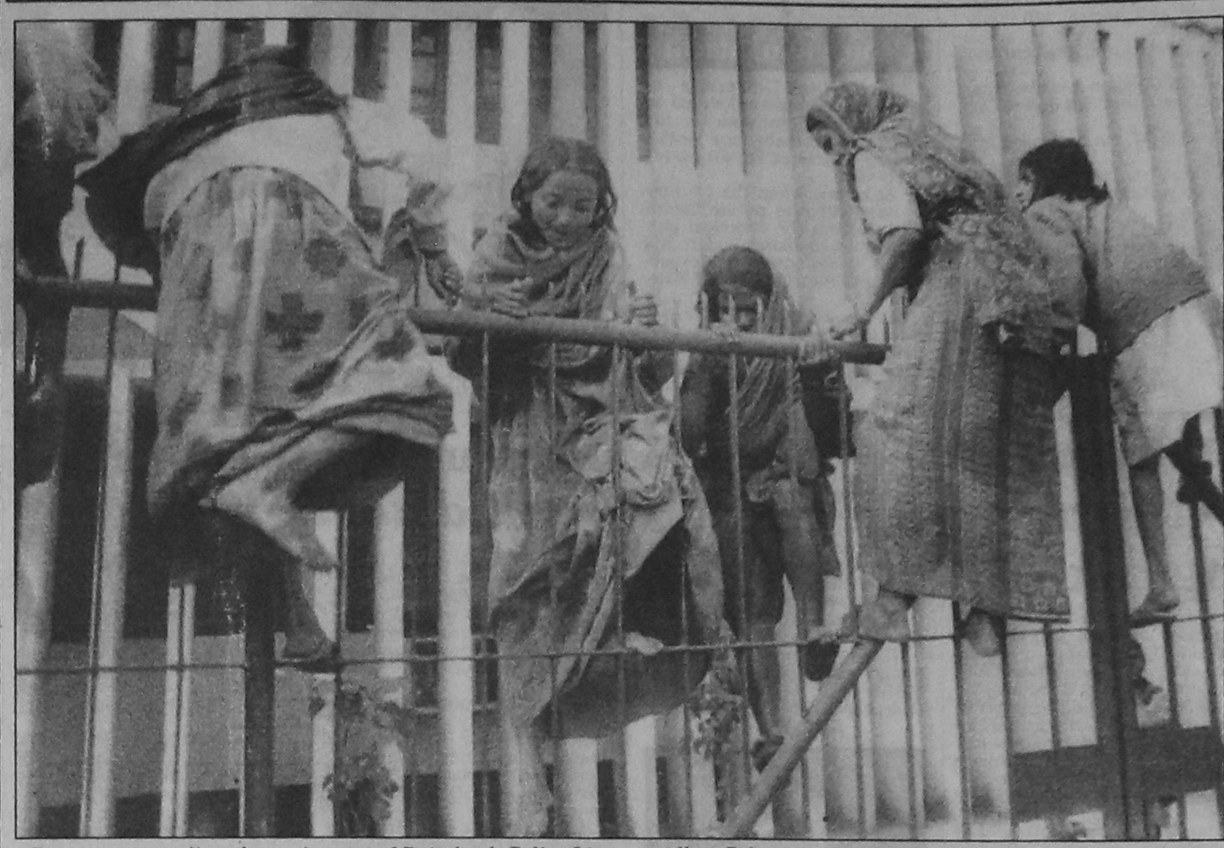
Customers of old clothes of imported varieties stress one important point to buy anything from these markets, it is essential to launch a hard battle of haggling. The sellers initially demand exorbitant prices for their wares. It requires a high level of haggling abilities to make the sellers agree to a substantial reduction in their demanded prices. This may entail a lot of patience on the part of the intending purchasers.

In many parts of the city sidewalks, the hawkers dealing is old clothes take up much of the pavements sometimes overflowing on to the main roads. This puts the pedestrians off the occupied parts of the pavements, thereby enhancing the risk of accidents from the passing vehicular traffic.

It is a sad aspect of city life that there are many shelterless people in the city who have to pass their nights out of doors under open spaces in public buildings and even on footpaths. For these people, the advent of winter nights brings on sufferings which increase in degree as the cold spell intensifies. In some instances in the past, we have come across examples of donations of old clothes and blankets by some charitable organisations to such shelterless people. This is undoubtedly a noble gesture for mitigating their suffering to some extent. But because of the magnitude of the problem, such isolated instances of good deeds do very little by way of relief to their suffering.

There is, however, no denying that the availability of old clothes at cheap prices go a long way in relieving the poor people's sufferings. From that angle, the proliferation of selling points of old clothes all over the city seems gratifying, even though in some areas, they make heavy encroachments on city pavements.

It is alleged that there are cases of smuggling of imported old clothes across the borders to places where such clothing items fetch better prices. This is the regrettable part of the story, because it interferes with some humanitarian aspects of the trade.



Poor women scaling the main gate of Rajarbagh Police Lines to collect Zakat *saree* yesterday disregarding their safety.
— Star photo: Anisur Rahman

Eid-ul-Fitr tomorrow

From page 1

"Eid-ul-Fitr comes to the Muslims carrying the great message of brotherhood, harmony and equity," Hasina said wishing the nation as well as the Muslim Ummah a joyous festival.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia greeted the countrymen on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. She also wished happiness, peace, progress and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

Arrangements have been made to hold Eid congregations in *eidgahs*, mosques and open spaces in the capital and elsewhere 9in the country.

The government has taken up elaborate programmes to celebrate the Eid.

The main Eid congregation in the city will be held at the National Eidgah at 8 in the morning. There will also be arrangements for Eid prayers for women.

In case of inclement weather, the main congregation will be at the Baitul Mukarram mosque.

Besides, four Eid congregations will be held at the Baitul Mukrram -- the first at 7am, the second at 8 am, the third at 9am and the fourth at 9:45 am.

On the day, the National Flag will be hoisted atop public and private buildings throughout the country .In the capital, the main streets and road islands will be decorated with numerous miniature National Flag and buntings inscribed with the words Eid Mubarak, both in Bangla and in Arabic.

Many government and private buildings will be illuminated on the Eid night.

The government has announced a three-day Eid holiday from today. It has virtually become a four-day holiday for many as the two-day weekend began yesterday.

Offices of all newspapers in the country will also remain closed for three days from today. No newspaper will, therefore, be published on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

In the last few days, lakhs of people left the city for their village homes to celebrate the Eid with their near and dear ones.

Bangladesh Television and Bangladesh Betar will put up special programmes highlighting significance of the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Improved diet will be served in hospitals, jails, orphanages, vagrant homes and destitute welfare centres.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed will host a reception for diplomats, politicians and elite at the Bangabhaban at 10:30 am on the Eid day.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will exchange Eid greetings with the people at the Ganabhaban from 8:30 am to 1 pm. She will exchange greetings with diplomats and other foreign dignitaries from 10:15 am to 11am. In the afternoon, the PM will exchange Eid greetings with the President at the Bangabhaban.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will host a reception for diplomats at her official residence at 10 am on the Eid day and another reception at 10:30 am for politicians, professionals, intellectuals, industrialists and others.

Eid Congregations and Timing:

In the capital, Eid congregations will be held at Dhaka University Central Mosque at 8:30 am and 9:30 am, Dhaka University play ground at 8:30 am, Salimullah Hall mosque at 8:30 am, Fazlul Haq Hall play ground at 8:30 am, BUET play ground at 8:30 am, Aeroplane mosque at Elephant Road at 8 am, Kataban mosque at 8 am and 9 am, Dhanmondi Eidgah at 8:30 am, Shahjadpur Gausul Azam Jame Mosque at 9 am .Mosjidul Akbar Complex Eidgah maidan at Mirpur-1 at 8:30 am, Mohammadpur Jame Mosque at 8:30 am, Rasulbagh Jame mosque at Mohakhali at 8 am, Banani Chairmanbari maidan at 10:30 am, Banani central mosque at 9 am, Lalbagh Islambagh Eidgha maidan at 7am, Syedabad Chistia Sayedia Darbar Sharif Jame mosque at 7am, Purana Paltan Jame mosque at 8 am, Sutrapur Jame mosque at 8 am, Nilkhet Babupura Marium Bibi Shahi mosque at 8:15 am and 10 am, Azimpur Community Centre play ground at 9 am, Gulshan-1 Eidgha maidan at 8:30 am, Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals graveyard ground at 10:30 am, Kurmitola Eidgah maidan at at 8:30 am and 9:15 am, Mahakhali Gausul Azam Jame mosque at 7:30, 8:30 and 9:30 am, Mirpur Outer Stadium maidan at 9 am and Sukrabad Jame Mosque at 9 am.

The last Eid congregation in the city will be held at 11 am at Daemia Shahi Jame Mosque at Azimpur.

In Chittagong, the Central Eid Jamaat Committee will organise 79 congregations in the port city.The main congregation will be held at MA Aziz Stadium at 8:30 am. Chittagong City Corporation will arrange Eid congregation at Jamiatul Falah Mosque at at 8:30 am.

In Rajshahi, the main congregation will be held at Shah Makhdum Central Eidgah maidan at 9:30 am.

In Khulna, the main congregation will be held at Circuit House Maidan at 9 am and in Barisal at Central Eidgah maidan at 9 am.

Eid celebrated in S Arabia

CAIRO, Jan 7: Muslims in Saudi Arabia and most other Gulf countries fasted for a last day from dawn to dusk yesterday, marking an end to the holy month of Ramadan to start the three-day feast of Eid-ul-Fitr, reports AP.

Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Oman, however, declared Friday as the last day of Ramadan, meaning they will begin Eid-ul-Fitr on Saturday.

Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest sites, and Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, the Palestinian territories, Qatar and Yemen celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr today.

•AFP says, Iran is to mark the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan tomorrow, a day later than most of the Middle East, the country's religious authorities announced today.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei will deliver the sermon at the main morning prayers marking the launch of the three-day Eid-ul-Fitr holiday at the Mosala arena in north Tehran.

Malaysia will celebrate Eid tomorrow.

This was announced by the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal, Engku Ibrahim Engku Ngah, late Thursday after failing to sight the new moon.

For the first time, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's lavish new official residence at Putrajaya south of the capital will be open to the public on Saturday as part of celebrations, officials said.

Hundi trade: 2 held in city

By Staff Correspondent

The Detective Branch of the DMP yesterday arrested two persons and seized Tk 114,000 in cash, a cheque worth Tk 30 lakh and documents allegedly showing their involvement in *'hundi'* business or money-laundering from a house at Ahsanullah Road, Nawab Bari area in Islampur on Thursday.

A DMP press release said yesterday that a case has been filed against the arrested persons Abdur Razzak , 67, and Faiz Hossain Chanchal, 28, with Kotwali thana.

Sutrapur thana police arrested Rafiqul Islam Mamun, 22, and Alamgir Hossain, 22, allegedly with a home-made pistol loaded with a 303 rifle bullet yesterday morning from an under-construction house at RK Mission Road. Police described them as snatchers. A case has been filed in this connection.

Lalbagh police arrested an alleged extortionist, Sabu, from Dehidas Ghat area on Thursday and later recovered a foreign-made revolver with three rounds of bullets from his residence on the basis of his 'confession', said a press release of the DMP yesterday.

Thick fog: 15 killed in Pak road mishaps

LAHORE, Pakistan, Jan 7: At least 15 people were killed in three road accidents after a thick fog enveloped central Pakistan's Punjab province overnight, police said today, reports AFP.

Six people were killed in the Chund area outside the provincial capital of Lahore when a truck rammed into a passenger van last night, they said.

Another six were killed and 12 injured in a collision between a passenger bus and a truck on the Lahore-Sheikhupura road.

A further three in Okara, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of here, died when their car smashed into a stationary tractor due to poor visibility, the police said.

Dense fog and mist has gripped central Pakistan for the past several days, disrupting rail, road and air traffic.

Officials at Lahore airport said at least seven outgoing flights were cancelled late Thursday while several incoming flights were diverted to other places.

The Meteorological Department said the dry winter was responsible for the foggy weather which may continue until expected rain arrives next week.

Prime accused

From page 1

cial Branch office to volunteer information about the incident. They told police that they tried to rescue her.

Police said Manum and Mokhter were arrested as they were 'identified and accused' by the victim who lodged a complaint with the Detective Branch.

She gave a statement identifying her abusers and contradicted the claim of Mamun and Mokhter that that they tried to rescue her.

Detective police said they tracked her down at her house somewhere in Dhaka (We are concealing her address and identity).

Russel was reportedly seen at his village home in Sherpur but police failed to arrest him.

"We are hopeful of nabbing the culprits tonight. Sleuths have already fanned out to nab them", Deputy Commissioner Abdul Hannan told The Daily Star yesterday.

UNB adds: The fact-finding committee of Dhaka University will meet on Monday in the process of probe into the molestation of a young lady on the Dhaka University campus on the New Year's night.

Member-secretary of the committee Prof AKM Nur-Un-Nabi told UNB that they were meeting almost everyday and examining various information about the incident.

"The university is closed for Eid-ul-Fitr but we are working on it," he said.

As per an earlier decision, the committee, headed by pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Shahadat Ali, will hold another meeting on January 16.

Anyone having any information has been asked to contact the committee members.

Although they were assigned to submit a report by Monday (January 10), the member-secretary of the committee said they got information about involvement of a student and expelled him on the third day of the committee's activity.

"We are scrutinizing photographs of other people to find whether any other DU student is there," he said.

The authorities also requested the law-enforcing agencies to immediately arrest Russell and take legal action against him.

Try Maulana Azhar, US asks Pakistan

WASHINGTON, Jan 7: United States has asked Pakistan to prosecute militant leader Maulana Masood Azhar and sternly warned that it will hold Islamabad responsible for all his terrorist activities which threatens the lives of Indian and US citizens, reports PTI.

We would hold the government of Pakistan responsible for Masood's activities which threatens the lives of our citizens, State Department Spokesman James Rubin said in Shepherdstown yesterday referring to a speech by Masood Azhar in Karachi where he threatened Indians and Americans and vowed to continue the separatist fight in Kashmir.

Rubin said, with respect to the issue more broadly of the speech of Masood Azhar, we find deplorable and unacceptable his reported remarks about destroying America and India. Such language feeds a climate of hostility against both countries and incites violence.

Pakistan must adjure the safety of Americans, Indians and all foreigners in Pakistan, he said.

Rubin called on Pakistan to investigate whether the activities of Masood Azhar, one of the three militants freed by India in a swap for hostages on the hijacked Indian airlines plane, were legal and insisted that no country permit terrorist activities to be organised from its soil.

We urge Pakistan to investigate carefully whether his actions have violated any Pakistani law. If so, he should be prosecuted accordingly, Rubin said.

US knows that Masood Azhar is the secretary general of the renamed terrorist organization (Harakat ul-Ansar) transformed into (Harakat ul-Mujahideen), he added.

Road accidents kill 3 in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three young men died and another was critically wounded in two separate road accidents in the city yesterday, police said.

Sumon, 21 and Jalil, 20 died on the spot and Zakir, 18 was critically injured when a truck crushed their auto-rickshaw at Paltan inter-section at 5 am.

They were going to Sadarghat river terminal. Zakir was admitted to Chest Diseases Hospital.

In another accident, Ali, 20, was hit by an auto-rickshaw at Chawkbazar around 8-30 am. He was rushed to Dhaka Medical Hospital where he succumbed to injuries in the afternoon.

Promotions

From page 1

uary 9.

Meanwhile, following the retirement of Maj Gen Azizur Rahman on Jan 1, none has yet been appointed Director General of BDR. Shah Muhammad Muhiddin is holding temporary charges.

Major General AMSA Amin, Bangladesh envoy to Jordan, retired from military service on January 3.

Three Group Captains have recently been promoted to the rank of Air Commodore in the Air Force. The newly promoted are: Air Commodore Iqbal, who has been appointed Chairman of Civil Aviation; Air Commodore Taher Quddus, appointed Air Officer, Commanding BAF Base Zahurul Huq, Chittagong, and Air Commodore Zakiul Islam, appointed Asst Chief of Air Staff, Maintenance.

Air Commodore Manzur Alam has gone on retirement from January 1.

Security forces clash with jail inmates in Turkey

ISTANBUL, Jan 7: Security forces clashed today with inmates from a radical Islamic group who were resisting attempts to break up wards that the prisoners run, leaving one inmate dead and three soldiers injured, reports AP.

In retaliation, inmates in another prison held 18 guards and a lawyer hostage for six hours before freeing them, news reports said.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said the prisoner was killed in clashes between security forces and inmates belonging to the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front. The group is seeking to replace Turkey's secular government with Islamic rule. The clash occurred at Bandirma prison in western Turkey when guards attempted to transfer a small group of prisoners, Turkey's Independent Human Rights Association said. Three soldiers were injured in the ensuing clashes, the Anatolia news agency reported.

After hearing of the fighting, inmates from the Great Eastern Islamic Raiders Front took guards and a lawyer hostage in Istanbul's Metris prison, news reports said.

Hasan Olcer, a lawyer for the inmates, said the prisoners freed their hostages after they heard that the fighting in Bandirma had ended, Anatolia reported.

Young man stabbed to death in Ctg

From Our Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: A young man was stabbed to death by some miscreants at West Madarbari under Double Mooring thana in the city last night.

The victim, identified as Aminul Islam alias Jamal, 25, came under attack by the miscreants at around 7:30 pm.

Jamal succumbed to injuries on way to hospital.

A case was filed with Double Mooring thana in this connection, but none was arrested till filing of this report at 8 pm today.

8 houses gutted in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Eight dwelling houses were gutted in a fire at Patharghata on the Bangshal Road here this morning, Fire Brigade sources said, reports BSS.

They said the fire originated from electric short circuit and soon engulfed the adjacent houses.

Four fire fighting units rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze.

None was, however, hurt in the fire.

Tripura rebels

From page 1

Earlier on January 5 last, the ultras of the same outfit set ablaze 10 huts in the area.

Meanwhile, the banned People's Libecation Army (PLA) today claimed the responsibility for yesterday's ambush on Assam rifles personnel in which seven jawans were killed and 10 injured at Pungdombam area near Imphal.

A PLA spokesman told PTI over phone that the outfit's women wing launched the attack by exploding two powerful bombs when the security personnel were passing through the area.

Maoists

From page 1

The officers were then tied up and locked in a house for several hours before being taken out one by one and beaten with sticks. Nine were then shot at close range, he said.

Sen had both hands cut off with an axe before being shot, Singh said. He said police reinforcements had been sent by helicopter to the area to hunt the guerillas.

In other incidents four guerillas were killed in clashes with police in Rolpa district in the Northwest, he said.

Three Maoists died in Pang village during an hour-long gunbattle on Tuesday while one was killed in a clash in Jugad village on Wednesday, Singh said.

At least 1,070 people have been killed, more than two-thirds of them Maoists, since the extremists launched a people's war in February 1996.

Terrorists swoop on home bound bus passengers in Chittagong

CHITTAGONG, Jan 7: Terrorists took away more than Tk 59 lakh in cash and valuables from home bound bus passengers in Anwara today, reports UNB.

A group of about 35 terrorists equipped with firearms swooped on 12 passing buses one after another in Dhanpur Bazar area on Tailerdeep Road under Anwara thana from 6 pm to 7 pm and looted more than Tk 59 lakh in cash and valuables of home bound passengers.

Sarwar Jamal Nizam MP has filed a case in connection with looting the bus passengers, police said.

Meanwhile, Kotwali police recovered the body of a 35-year old unidentified man in front of Jalalabad Hotel adjacent to the police headquarters. Quoting local people police said that three youngsters brought the body in a taxi and left it in front of the hotel. The body bore marks of stabbing.

Chandgaon police said they recovered the body of Rina, 17, from a house on DC Road. Police suspect the young woman died of torture by her husband.

Cricketers

From page 1

of the World Championship in South Africa, where they won the Plate title defeating strong West Indies in the final, are likely to find it tough in crossing the first round hurdle.

Hannan's boys will play their second group league match against the Kiwis on January 14 before taking on Holland on January 16.

Only top finishers of the four groups will advance into the final round. England are the defending champions of the meet.

US-China military talks Jan 24

WASHINGTON, Jan 6: The United States and China will hold high-level military talks here this month in hopes of re-establishing military ties that were derailed last year by the US bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, a Pentagon spokesman said, reports AFP.

Lieutenant General Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of the People's Liberation Army general staff, will lead the Chinese delegation in the talks at the Pentagon, in two days of talks starting January 24, Lieutenant Commander Terry Southerland said.

Walter Slocombe, undersecretary of defence for policy, will lead the US side, he said.

"They will discuss the framework and content of the military-to-military relationship between China and the United States," he said.

The Pentagon hopes the talks will clear the war for a resumption of contacts, including visits by US Defence Secretary William Cohen and the commander of US forces in the Pacific, Admiral Dennis Blair.

A senior US defence official told the New York Times the goal is "to have a modest increase ... that acknowledges the delicacy of the environment, politically, and to take careful steps given what has transpired."

Xiong's visit here will be a follow-up to a November 20 meeting in Beijing between US and Chinese that launched talks aimed at re-establishing military contacts.

Relations between the two countries, which hit a low after a US B-2 bomber mistakenly bombed the Chinese embassy in Belgrade May 7, began warming after Presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton met in New Zealand in September and a November agreement on Beijing's entry to the World Trade Organisation.

In December, the United States agreed to pay 28 million dollars in compensation for the damage caused to the Chinese embassy, bombed during NATO's air strikes on Kosovo. Three Chinese nationals were killed in the bombing.

White papers

From page 1

at once and a committee was formed to probe the matter, which will begin on Tuesday, the source said.

A gang of currency racketeers and some bank employees were involved in the criminal act, he said but he could not say when it started. It is yet to be ascertained how many such bundles and white papers were burnt so far instead of soiled notes. Everything will be investigated, he said.

The racketeers must have taken away the soiled notes by inserting white papers in the bundles with the help of their accomplices in the bank and exchanged theose with fresh notes, the source said.

Confirming the incident, Fazlul Latif, Joint Manager (Cash) of Khulna branch of Bangladesh bank, said stern legal and departmental action will fellow the probe.

There is no Examiner at the Khulna branch of BB for last ten years to look into matters relating to soiled currency notes and burning those, sources said.

Acid thrown on 2 sisters in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Jan 7: Two sisters received burn injuries in their faces as miscreants threw acid on them at Singha village under Harinakunda thana of the district in the early hours of today.

Rubian, 15, and Rozia, 12, daughters of Jalaluddin were asleep in their house when the miscreants threw acid through a window.

Both the girls were admitted to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital.

A case was filed with Harinakunda thana accusing four persons — Salok, Atiar, Noor and Bari, of the same village.

None was, however, arrested till filing of this report late tonight.

Jumatul Wida

From page 1

Wida at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque. Islamic Foundation authorities made special arrangements at the mosque for the devotees.

Members of the Muslim community also offered *'fateha'* at the graves of relatives on the occasion. Thousands of devotees visited different graveyards, including those at Azimpur, Banani and Mirpur and also the mazars of saints in the city yesterday.

Besides, the devotees offered night-long prayers on Friday night and held, *qurankhwani* and *milad mahfils* across the country.

Tamil rebels

From page 1

lice picked up a 16-year-old Tamil maid from a Sinhalese home after they found out that she had not registered herself with the police. All Tamils living in Colombo must register themselves with the police. The Tamils oppose it, saying such rules should be applicable to all people.

Some 4,500 security officials fanned out across Colombo to search for Tamil rebels and their sympathizers, a police official said on condition of anonymity.

The security clampdown came a day after police arrested the parents and a sister of a woman whose blew herself up outside the prime minister's office and killed 13 people.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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