



Employees of Wool Work garment factory who didn't get paid for the last three months went to the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday to tell journalists about their hardship and desperation prior to the Eid (left) while their fellow citizens crowded the city's Bangabazar for some cheap buys (right).



PHOTO: STAR

Five killed as buses collide in Chandpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chandpur
Five people were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident at Khatra Bilbaria near Hajiganj upazila of Chandpur district yesterday morning.
Police said the accident occurred when a Chandpur bound bus carrying newspapers from Dhaka collided head on with a Kachua bound microbus at about 6 am.
All the victims were passengers of the microbus.
The dead were identified as Md Fazul Haque, 30, Radha Rani Mandal, 20, Nifa Rani, 9, Simul, 8, and Utpal, 7.
Of the injured, eight were admitted to Chandpur Sadar Hospital and two others to Comilla Hospital.
The driver and conductor of the bus fled the scene.
A case was filed with Hajiganj thana.

Gas export

FROM PAGE 1
Mosharrar said the task of technical committee would be to survey the actual reserve of gas and determine how much would be needed for next 10 or 20 years taking into account country's different socioeconomic scenarios.
And the second committee would review the extent of financial involvement in dealing with gas affairs, including investment in extraction.
Replying to a question, the energy minister said after formation of the committees it would be given a month's time to submit their reports.
Thereafter, the government will take its decision on the burning issue placing the topic onto political table and finally in the Jatiya Sangsad.
Asked when they would take final decision, the state minister for energy said, without specifying, it would take some time.

Tora Bora overrun

FROM PAGE 1
On the mountain range had surrendered.
AP says, anti-Taliban fighters yesterday gave loyalists of Laden until 8 am local time today to surrender at Tora Bora hideout of face annihilation.
The demand was given by anti-Taliban commanders at a face-to-face meeting with Al-Qaida representatives who indicated they were ready to discuss surrender terms, according to Mohammed Zaman.
Zaman said he told Al-Qaida fighters they must surrender unconditionally and be handed over to the "international community" for trial.
"It's finished," Zaman told journalists. "They told us: 'We don't want to fight with you. We surrender.'"
The commander, who has been insisting for days that bin Laden is also holed up with the last of his fanatical fighters in the forbidding White Mountain range acknowledged that he was no longer sure.
"Until today I was sure he was here," he said. "Now I don't know exactly."
Zaman said he did not discuss bin Laden with the Al-Qaida fighters when he discussed their surrender, which he said was unconditional.
"They must come down, get out from the holes and the caves, they must hand over their weapons," he said.
AP says, it was unclear whether all of the al-Qaida forces around Tora Bora would take part in any truce or were willing to commit to a full surrender. In the past, forces loyal to Osama bin Laden, as well as their Taliban allies, have vowed to fight to the death only to give up in the face of overwhelming force.
Hazrat Ali, a senior commander with the tribal eastern alliance, claimed that tribal intelligence

Biman finally recruits fresh cabin crew

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh Biman has finally recruited a fresh batch of cabin crew in view of a shortage that has been threatening its flight operations including the Hajj flights beginning next month.
Sources said although the recruitment process of 33 cabin crew was completed during the caretaker government's tenure, dilly-dally on the part of the new government to let the new crew join delayed their training.
Finally last week, 31 persons were given appointments as cabin crew when Biman management realised it was going to face a manpower crisis during its Hajj flights operations.
The airline has arranged a crash course to train and get the new recruits ready for the Hajj flights beginning January 23.
Another reason for the delay in the recruitment is due to a high-up in the civil aviation ministry who took an active interest in getting several candidates from his district recruited as cabin crew in violation of rules on the district quota system, the sources said.
The official in question has developed such a keen interest in Biman that his cronies are reportedly scouting around various sections of Biman for business, including purchase of aircraft.
Their interest was apparently prompted by a comment of State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Nasiruddin who told Ekushey Television that Biman would procure new aircraft replacing its fleet of six DC-10s.
But he did not say how the purchase would be financed.
Biman last year invited request for proposal for lease or purchase of four Boeing-777 or Airbus 340 to take the pressure off its aging fleet of DC-10s.
But the initiative had fallen through due to the cash crunch the national airline is facing and the country's dwindling foreign exchange reserve.
Meanwhile, Air Vietnam yesterday announced it was going to purchase four Boeing-777s for 440 million dollars at a 20 per cent discount.

AL: vendetta

FROM PAGE 1
BNP leaders during the AL's tenure in power. "But now, those cases are being quashed," he said.
Referring to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's maiden address to the nation, the AL acting president said, "She (Khaleda) did not address the country's immediate needs, rather, she let loose investives against the AL."
In a democracy, the opposition is considered as an integral part of governance, noted Samad Azad, adding that the present government has "unfortunately" missed out on that spirit of partnership.
Awami League Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim rejected outright the corruption cases against his party leaders as false and politically motivated.
"This is another way of repression. This filing of false cases again proves that this government wants to eliminate Awami League through repressive measures," he said.
"When the law and order situation has plunged to its worst, the government has resorted to vengeance against its political foes instead of improving the situation," Samad Azad stated.
Former state minister AK Fayezul Haq, who is one of the ex-ministers accused in the corruption cases, told The Daily Star that he would fight the case in the court.

ALCWC meeting today

UNB, Dhaka
An emergency meeting of Awami League Central Working Committee will be held at 11 am at Dhanmondi office today.
Awami League acting President Abdus Samad Azad will chair the meeting.

White Mountains

Earlier yesterday, the fighters loyal to Osama bin Laden made a fierce stand from the wind-swept mountain top.
Tribal soldiers overran al-Qaida positions in the Milawa and Tora Bora valleys yesterday morning despite barrages of small arms fire. Tribesmen responded with blasts from aging Soviet tanks and heavy machine-guns.
Because of heavy fighting, it was not possible to determine whether all al-Qaida troops had abandoned Tora Bora's vast network of caverns and tunnels or were holding out in shelters deep underground.
US warplanes pounded the mountainous area before and after dawn, but stopped midmorning to allow tribal warriors to move forward on the ground.
Shelling and heavy machine-gun fire echoed across the valleys as B-52s and US surveillance aircraft circled above. US helicopters were also sighted.
Afghan troops said dozens of heavily armed US soldiers made lightning raids against al-Qaida command centers overnight and returned to a camp at nearby Paicr village before sunrise.
Meanwhile, in southern Afghanistan, US Marines stepped up their hunt for fleeing Taliban fighters by widening their operations near the city of Kandahar.
Although US officials have described Tora Bora as bin Laden's most likely hiding place, they also have said he and fugitive Taliban supreme leader Mullah Mohammed Omar could be sheltering somewhere around Kandahar.
The Taliban surrendered Kandahar on Friday to tribal forces. Many Taliban fled then, but others might still be hiding there.

ISP licence fees

FROM PAGE 12
regulatory official.
Meantime, M Akhtaruzzaman Manju, president of Bangladesh ISP Association, has condemned the government's move to increase license fees and telephone line rent. "It will equally affect the ISPs and the Internet users," he said, adding that the ISPs would be compelled to pass on the increased charges to the end users.
He also apprehended that many ISPs may have to close down their businesses if the new licensing provision was enforced. He explained that instead of directly buying the bandwidth, the small ISPs share VSAT capacity with larger ones.
"The new licensing provision would diminish the economics of shared bandwidth and eliminate the emerging ISPs from the market," Monjusaid.

EC move

FROM PAGE 12
about the latest developments, the EC sent another letter to the law ministry requesting it to produce the government notification before the court.
The last city corporation polls were held in 1994. The government changed delimitation of the city corporation wards from time to time and till 1999, the number of wards in Dhaka was raised to 100 from 90, in Khulna to 37 from 31 and in Rajshahi to 35.
On expiry of the tenure of the country's four city corporations in January 1999, the government asked the EC to hold elections to all the city corporations in Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna. But the commission could only hold elections to the Chittagong City Corporation, leaving that of three others pending due to legal barriers.
According to political insiders, the BNP-led coalition would contest the local body elections under the present alliance while the Awami League would not go for any election under the incumbent Chief Election Commissioner MAsyed.

Moyeen Khan

FROM PAGE 12
tribulation to this end.
In reply to a question about resumption of publication of the now defunct trust papers, Dainik Bangla and Bangladesh Times the information minister said financial viability of the government-run newspapers would have to be explored.
Press Advisor to the BNP Chairperson, Rezauddin Ahmed, Press Club President Khandaker Monirul Alam, journalists union leaders, senior journalists of dailies and news agencies and high officials of radio, television and the Information Ministry were present.

7 missing as boat sinks in Meghna

UNB, B'baria
Seven people were missing after a boat capsized in the river Meghna near Ashuganj launch ghats in the district yesterday.
Police said the Aruaal-bound boat, carrying 20-25 people, sank in the river in the afternoon.

DUTA election

FROM PAGE 12
"White Panel". Sharifullah Bhuiyan got 474 votes.
Prof. Abul Khayer of the 'White Panel' was elected Vice President beating the 'Blue Panel' candidate Prof. Hossain Mansur. They got 488 and 445 votes respectively.
The 'White Panel' candidate Prof. Anwar Hossain (494 votes) won the post of treasurer beating Mahfuzur Rahman (446 votes) while 'White Panel's Tahmina Akhter Tofy (478 votes) was elected joint secretary beating Dr. Mujib Uddin Ahmed (446 votes).
The elected candidates from the 'White Panel' in the posts of executive members are Prof. Mohammad Asaduzzaman (589 votes), Prof. Syed Abul Kalam Azad (562 votes), Mohammad Ferdous Hossain (530 votes), Prof. Abu Ahmed (514 votes), Prof. Mohammad Abul Bashar (506 votes), Prof. AKM Sirajul Islam Khan (491 votes), Prof. Syed Rajshidul Hasan (473 votes) and Dr. Tajmeri SA Islam (447 votes).
The elected executive members from 'Blue Panel' are Prof. AAMS Arefin Siddique (527 votes) and Prof. RIM Aminur Rashid (486 votes).
Prof. Mohamamad Asaduzzaman

Hanumans

FROM PAGE 12
Schedule I of CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), which means that they cannot be traded internationally.
Dr Khan pointed out that most mammals including Hanumans enjoy the highest protection and come under Schedule III of the Bangladesh Wildlife (Preservation) Act, 1974. But the Department of Forest, which is responsible for the protection of wildlife and implementation of Act, is not capable of managing wildlife due to lack of manpower, absence of wildlife conservation policy and ignorance.
The government should a wildlife/bio-diversity bureau or a separate wildlife department under the ministry of Environment and Forests for proper conservation of wildlife, he suggested.

'Kala' Jahangir

FROM PAGE 12
area.
Collecting modern and sophisticated arms is Jahangir's hobby, sources said, adding that he and his accomplices have a good collection of firearms. He now possesses sophisticated weapons like AK-47 and Falcon revolvers.
Sources said Jahangir was a disciple of one of the top terrorists of the city -- Gopal Kar. After the assassination of Gopal along with his two accomplices in 1996 by Swden Aslam, another notorious criminal now in prison, Kala Jahangir stepped into the limelight to take over Kar's activities.
Sources said Jahangir has been enjoying the blessings of different influential political leaders as well as of a section of the police for long.

Attack on Tipu

FROM PAGE 12
Masterpara residence of one Debobrata Ghosh at around 2:00 am yesterday. Bidhan along with Hajari and his associates has been absconding since a joint team of police, BDR and army raided the house of Hajari in August last.
Police yesterday produced Bidhan before the sadar Thana Magistrate's Court and prayed for placing him on a seven-day remand. The court however granted a four-day remand.
While giving his reaction to The Daily Star following the arrest of Bidhan, journalist Tipu said "More information regarding the attack on me and the criminal activities of Joyal Hazari will be disclosed if Bidhan is interrogated in a joint interrogation cell."
Critically injured Tipu was sent to Bangkok twice this year for treatment after he was treated initially at the Orthopaedic Hospital in Dhaka.

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9 BNP, JCD men held in N'ganj on charges of terrorist acts

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj
Police arrested nine BNP and JCD men on charges of terrorist activities from different areas of Narayanganj town in last 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday.
A special team of Narayanganj police arrested JCD leader Jewel, 27, from Khanpur area of the town yesterday.
Jewel is the younger brother of Marikullah David, new 'Godfather' of Narayanganj. He is accused in several cases including extortion and terrorism.
On Monday night, police arrested JCD leaders Monwar Hossain Shokhon, 28, from Deovogh area, Biplob, 25, from Baburaj area and Asaduzzaman Biddut, 28, from Golacata area. They are also accused of terrorist activities.
On the same night Fatullah

Strike at RMCH: 50 patients have died so far

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur
Fifty patients have so far died at Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) since six hundred employees of the hospital demanding immediate payment of Eid bonus and other benefits went on strike that entered its third day yesterday.
Agitating employees including internee doctors, nurses and sweepers barred four RMCH officials from leaving the hospital compound while all except 21 patients of the 600-bed hospital have already left.
Sources said the strike was triggered by the theft of Tk 13.13 lakh of bonus money on December 5.
Police have so far taken into remand four persons including the cashier Ali Reza for interrogation.
A tense situation was prevailing on the RMCH campus.

One held with foreign currencies at Benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna
BDR personnel arrested a marine engineer at Benapole checkpoint yesterday and recovered foreign currencies, including US\$ 19,667, from him.
They also seized electronic goods and mobile telephone sets from Surya Sen Nath, 42, an employee of Petroships Private Limited in Singapore.
Nath allegedly bribed customs officials to release his luggage. BDR personnel on suspicion searched his luggage again and found the foreign currencies.
No case was filed in this regard till writing of this report yesterday evening.

Corruption cases against Hasina

FROM PAGE 1
Mostafa Chowdhury, former secretary Jagannath Dey have also been accused, among others.
Some of the accused bureaucrats have recently been given forced retirement by the BNP government.
The graft cases have been linked to purchase of Mig-29s, printing of passport books, preparation of the site of Meghnaghat power plant, selling of property of Bangladesh Jute Corporation (BJC), 'irregularities' in Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authorities (BEPZA), 'misappropriation' of abandoned property under the Public Works Department, 'corruption' in the Public Service Commission, 'irregularities' in the Food-for-Work project and allocation of public land.
All the cases were filed under Article 5(2) of Anti-Corruption Act, 1947. This is the first such filing of anti-corruption cases by the four-party coalition government that came to power through the October 1 elections.
Sheikh Hasina along with some top defence officials have been accused of scam in the purchase of Mig-29s in a case filed with the Tejgaon police station. It has been alleged that the purchase caused the state a loss of Tk 700 crore since there was no real need for these eight fighter aircraft.
The same case also implicated former air chief air vice-marshal Jalal Uddin Ahmed, former defence secretary and incumbent Comptroller and Auditor General Syed Yusuf Hossain, Brigadier General (ret'd) Iftekhar Ahmed and former deputy secretary of defence ministry Hasan Mahmud Delwar.
Hasina has also been accused in another case filed with the Tejgaon police station in relation to 'embezzlement' of Tk 2.1 crore from BEPZA 'in connivance with' former state minister for foreign affairs Abul Hossain Chowdhury, former principal secretary Dr. SA Samad and BEPZA executive chairman Brigadier General MAB Siddik Talukder. The case said the persons employed a US lobbyist for the garment industries in the BEPZA although there was no need to do so, thus inflating the nation Tk 2.1 crore loss.
Mohammad Nasim has been accused in two cases. In the first case

thana police arrested five BNP activists from Aliganj industrial area.
The arrested are, Sramik Dal leader Mosharaf Hossain, 35, Sazzad Parvez Mona, 32, Iqbal, 25, Sabuz, 24, and Akter, 30.
OC of Fatullah thana KM Abdullah said, there are specific allegations against the arrested persons.
They were also involved in a clash with Sramik League workers in Fatullah on Monday.
Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury is expected to visit Narayanganj today to attend the district Law & Order Committee meeting.
Fatullah Sramik League leader arrested
OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj
Kawser Ahmed Polish, president of Sramik League Fatullah thana unit was arrested on Monday night.
Fatullah thana police said Palash was arrested for his involvement in terrorist activities in the area.
3 beaten
FROM PAGE 1
and managed to stop it in front of Dhanmondi Private Hospital at 19/E Green Road. Pedestrians then chased the gang and caught two of the muggers while the rest including the auto-rickshaw driver managed to escape unhurt with the money.
The angry mob then beat up the two muggers and also attacked police as they came to the spot. Later, police somehow managed to save the two from the wrath of the public and sent them to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).
The auto-rickshaw used by the gang was set on fire by the mob.
Duty officer of Dhanmondi police station said last night that he was aware of the incident but did not receive any complaint in this regard.
In another incident, an alleged extortionist was beaten up at Malibagh in the city yesterday while trying to cash a check for Tk 1 lakh of extortion money.
Sources said a gang of five had gone earlier to an electronics shop at Malibagh bazar and claimed Tk 5 lakh as toll money, forcing the shop owner to write them a check for Tk 1 lakh.
At one point, when local people caught one of the extortionists, other members of the gang opened fire as they escaped. The shop owner was hit by a bullet in the head.
Later, one of the extortionists Ashik was caught and beaten up by people when he went to a local bank to cash the check. He was sent to the DMCH.

filed with the Ramna police station, it has been alleged that Nasim manipulated tender bids to award a contract to Francois Charles Oberthur, France, the second lowest bidder, in the supply of 10 lakh passport books. This caused the nation Tk 81 lakh loss, it was alleged. During the process, Nasim ignored opinion of the tender committee to award the job to the lowest bidder, Calcutta Security Printers Ltd., India. Others accused in the case are former home secretary and incumbent Election Commissioner Shafiqur Rahman, former joint secretary Janibul Haq Chowdhury, former deputy secretary Md. Abu Taiyab Sikder and Chairman of ACE Business Systems Abdur Razzak.
The other case filed with the Mohammadpur police station accuses Nasim of 'irregularities' in selling government property under the public works ministry. It has been alleged that he along with 20 others inflicted a monetary loss to the tune of Tk 4.25 crore in selling government property. Nasim initially held the works ministry portfolio in the AL government. They were involved in selling of a one bigha plot at Lalmita to a phoney society. Former secretary Jagannath Dey, chief engineer Juned Ahmed, Deputy Commissioner of PWD Aminur Rahman, personal secretary to former home minister Abdul Malek, assistant commissioner Yakub Ali and the other officials later took possession of the land.
Former public works minister Mosharrar Hossain has been accused of graft in a case filed with the Sutrapur police station. According to the case, he along with some others caused the nation a damage of Tk 5 crore through embezzlement of an abandoned property. The others accused in the case are former secretary Jagannath Dey, former joint secretary Yakub Ali, deputy secretary KM Abul Kalam, senior assistant secretary Chittaranjan Das, administrative officer Wares Ali, Commissioner of Ward 74 Abul Bashar and one Nisha Rani Devi.
Former state minister for power Rafiqul Islam has been accused in a graft case filed with the Ramna police station. It was accused that he ignored views of high officials for personal benefits in awarding a site development contract for the