

Preparation for Biswa Ijtema going on

UNB, Gazipur
Hundreds of volunteers are working round-the-clock for preparing the huge pandal of Biswa Ijtema on the bank of river Turag.
The three-day Ijtema, known as the second biggest Muslim congregation after Hajji, will begin on January 19.
The work began in November, followed by a 10-day "joot" programme on the Ijtema premises, attended by over 10,000 devotees.
Bamboo poles for the one-kilometer long pandal have already been put up.
In addition setting up of a tin-

shed pandal for the foreign devotees at the northwestern corner, titled "Bideshi Nilbash", is nearing completion.
An organiser told UNB that although a huge quantity of bamboo sticks, electricity equipment and mats are in their store, most of these are unusable.
He said a fence is needed to protect devotees from the cold wave but they do not have funds for it.
The organisers have been demanding eviction of illegal slums in the Ijtema premises, for smooth running of the programme.

Chief Whip returns home

UNB, Dhaka
Chief Whip Khondakar Delward Hossain returned Dhaka Wednesday night after attending a regional forum on "Effective Legislative Oversight for Transparency and Accountability Conference" in Manila.
The Chief Whip led a four-member parliamentary delegation in the three-day conference from December 9 to 11, said a Parliamentary release.
Other members of the delegation were MPs Abu Hena, Chief Whip of the Opposition MA Shahid and Hamida Banu Sova.



Slum-dwellers and destitute women wait outside the Motijheel police station as the IG of Police distributed Zakat clothes at the thana yesterday morning. Some of them waited throughout the day even after the distribution of clothes was over.

Govt programmes to celebrate Eid

UNB, Dhaka
The government has drawn up elaborate programmes to celebrate holy Eid-ul-Fitr with due religious fervour.
President AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will give separate messages on the eve of Eid, one of the biggest religious festivals of Muslims.
The main Eid congregation will be held at National Eidgah Maidan at 8.30 am, depending on fair weather. In case of inclement weather, the main Eid jamaat will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at the same time.
National flag will be hoisted atop all government and non-government buildings on the Eid day.
The city roads from Banani Dhaka Gate to Bangabhaban will be decorated with banners where 'Eid Mubarak' will be inscribed both in Bengali and Arabic.
A number of government buildings will be illuminated.
Bangladesh Betar and BTV will put up special programmes while newspapers publish supplements highlighting the significance of the day.
Special seminars and discussions will be arranged on the occasion.
Improved diets will be served in hospitals, jails, orphanages and childcare and vagrant centers, and destitute homes.
All government and private children parks will remain open on the Eid day for orphans and destitute children without tickets.
The government directed all divisional commissioners, deputy commissioners, UNOs and local government organisations to take up programmes in line with the national programmes.
Muslim diplomats living in the country will be invited to Eid jamaat. Bangladesh missions abroad will also celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with due respect and religious fervour.

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Attacks on minorities Speaker urged to form probe body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Naripakha convenor urged the members of parliament to take steps to bring back normalcy in their constituencies and to rehabilitate the displaced people.
In another letter to the Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina, the Naripakha urged her to attend parliament session at least once to project the recent attacks on religion minorities and demand trial of those involved in such incidents.
It also urged the Speaker to hold a general discussion on minority repression in parliament.
The organisation made the appeal to the Speaker in a letter, signed by its convenor Rina Roy, on December 9.
Expressing concern over the attacks on minorities and women, it noted that such incidents have increased alarmingly after the October 1 general election.
"Even the home minister told the parliament that 266 people were killed and 213 rape incidents took place across the country in 25 days since October 1," the letter said. "But there was no step to stop the attacks and to ensure the security of the people."
Members of the Naripakha have visited four areas where such incidents took place and organised two meetings to restore communal harmony in those areas.

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Candidate Profile:

- Age: Above 35
- Articulate, equally adept in English and Bengali
- Extrovert, presentable, well-groomed, possessing flair
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FEMA urges EC Expose those who yet to submit statement on polls expenses

BSS, Dhaka
Fair Election Monitoring Alliance (FEMA) yesterday urged the Election Commission (EC) to publish names of those candidates who participated in the October 1 general elections, but are yet to submit their election expense statements.
In a statement, FEMA said "the law stipulates that the election expenditure statement must be submitted to the Returning Officer within 15 days of the gazette notification. But most of the candidates have not yet submitted their statements."
It said many people believe that statements submitted by the candidates do not reflect their actual election expenses.
The statement added that it is very unfortunate that lawmakers themselves do not follow the rules, although The Representation of People's Order, 1972, stipulates that if a candidate fails to submit his or her expense return in time, he or she will be subjected to a maximum of seven years rigorous imprisonment with a fine, or a minimum of two years of both RI and fine.

Obituary

Ustad Govinda Rabidas, a music teacher and vocalist of repute, died of a cardiac arrest on Monday. He was 55, says a press release.
He was buried at Postagola Rabidas community graveyard on Tuesday after a condolence meet and memorial service at Wari Guru Rabidas Dahm compound.
He was a popular Radio and TV artiste of classical songs.
He left behind his wife, three sons and a daughter and a host of relations and admirers to mourn his death.
Alhaj Nazma Saleha Rashid, wife of former Joint Commissioner of Customs Alhaj Abdur Rashid Mollah, died of heart attack on Wednesday at her residence. She was 53.
Alhaj Saleha left behind her husband, four sons, a grand daughter and many relatives and admirers to mourn her death.
She was buried at Shahjahanpur graveyard after Namaj-e-lanaza at Goran Bazar Bhuiyan Jume Masjid on that day.
Her qalikhwan will be held today after Asr prayers at her residence at 131 North Goran.

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