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Robbers loot Tk 5.4cr in gold, cash from jewellers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Robbers stripped two jewellery shops of Tk 5.41 crore in gold ornaments and cash after knocking two guards unconscious at the upmarket Karnaphuli Garden City in Shantinagar early yesterday in one of the capital's biggest heists.

The gang broke open the locks of Sultana Jewellery and Mahanagar Jeweller's on the third floor of the multi-storey market that remained closed during Eid-ul-Azha celebrations.

Police took six people including four guards and the owner of the security provider, Sharp Security, into custody for questioning and are chasing guards Jalal of Chandpur and Karim of Barisal, who were on duty Tuesday night and are believed to have links to the robbers.

"The robbers looted up to 4,000-tola gold ornaments and Tk 3 lakh in cash from my shop," said a shell-shocked Pradeep Sarker, manager of Sultana Jewellery.

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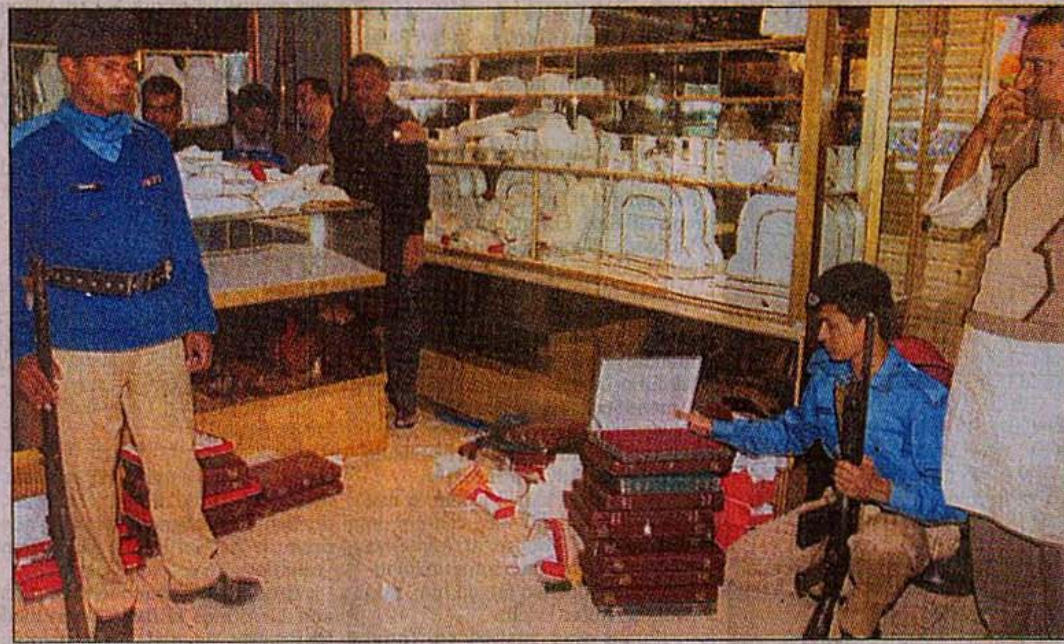


PHOTO: STAR

Police check empty ornament boxes after robbers looted Tk 5.41 crore in gold and cash from two jewellery shops at the upmarket Karnaphuli Garden City in Shantinagar early yesterday in one of the capital's biggest heists.

Eid celebrated

UNB, Dhaka

The Eid-ul-Azha, the second greatest religious festival of the Muslims, was celebrated across the country on Monday with millions joining Eid congregations and praying for purgation of the soul and peace, progress and greater unity of the Muslim Ummah.

People wearing pajama, panjabi and cap turned up at the eidgahs and mosques in the morning to say Eid prayers.

Later, the well-off sacrificed animals in the name of Allah, reminiscent of the spirit of sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (A), and distributed meat among relatives and poor people.

However, the festivity was marred a bit as several Bangladeshis were among the Hajj pilgrims killed in the stampede at Mina in Makkah on Sunday.

In the capital, the main Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah, where President Iajuddin Ahmed said his prayers.

The government took up elaborate programmes on the occasion and granted a three-day public

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Notice

As The Daily Star offices remained closed due to Eid holidays, there will be no Rising Stars today. We regret to have inconvenienced our readers.

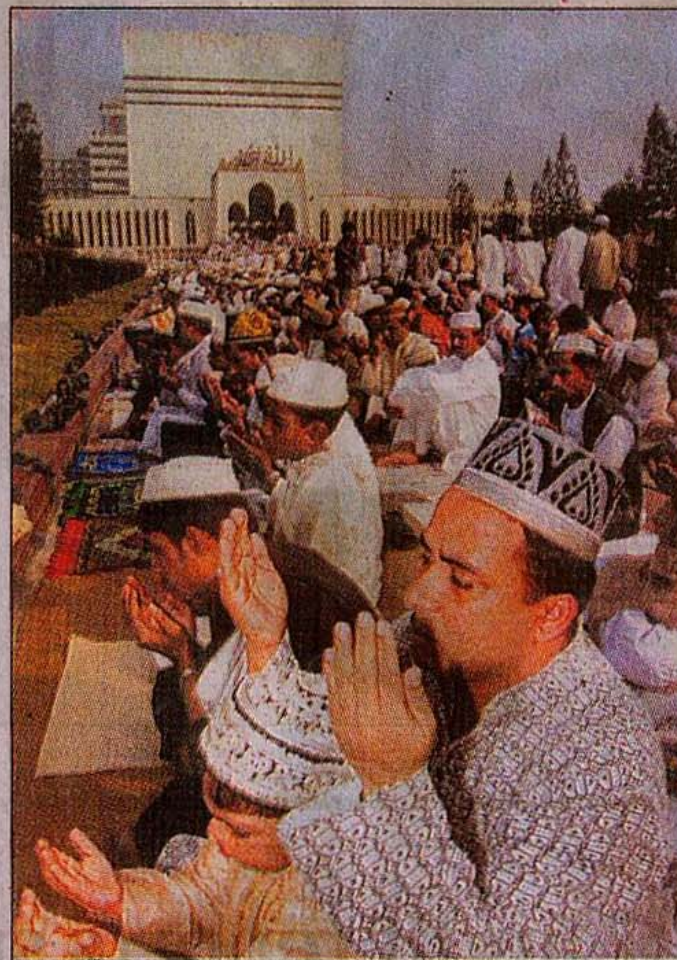


PHOTO: STAR

Hundreds of devotees offer their Eid-ul-Azha prayers at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in Dhaka on Monday.

8 Bangladeshis among Makkah dead

UNB, Dhaka

Eight Bangladeshi pilgrims, including two women, were among the 251 who died in Sunday's deadly stampede during "stoning of the devil" as a Hajj ritual at Mina near the holy city of Makkah.

Six of them had gone to perform Hajj from Bangladesh and two others were expatriate Bangladeshis in Saudi Arabia.

Bangladesh Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sarjit Hassan told the news agency by telephone yesterday that Bangladeshi fatalities stood at eight, with no new information of death.

He would not confirm western media reports that put the Bangladeshi death count at 10. He said one minor boy who was included in the 10 was identified as a Pakistani national.

The six who went to Saudi Arabia from Bangladesh to perform the Hajj are: Rowshan Ara Begum, wife of Abdur Rahim Sarkar of South Jatrabari under the Demra Police Station in Dhaka; Mohammad Ali, son of the Late Shaheb Ali of Village Goeshpur in Daudkandi upazila in Comilla district; Mokbul Hossain, son of the late Late Inser Ali Mondol of village Shalijan under Mahadebpur Police Station in Naogaon; Abul Hossain Pradhan,

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Bandarban resort hotelier kidnapped for Tk 2cr

'Arakanese Army' outfit robs foreign tourists in overnight heist, search for abducted owner proves futile



Hasan Mahbub Bablu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

An unnamed indigenous outfit abducted a resort hotel owner on Monday night and demanded a ransom of Tk 2 crore for his release in the second such incident in seven days in restive Bandarban.

Witnesses said a gang of 15 broke into Ri Gri Khong, the restaurant of Hillside Resort, at about 8:00pm and kidnapped at gunpoint Hasan

Mahbub Bablu, one of the hotel owners, in Milonchhari, some four kilometres southeast of the district town.

The operatives in AA (Arakanese Army)-embossed army uniform and camouflage helmet robbed three foreign tourists of money and credit cards in the 15-minute heist.

At least 24 foreign tourists -- 13 Sri Lankans, seven Americans, three Frenchmen and one German -- were

staying overnight in the hotel that earned wide popularity for its beautiful location in rolling hills with the Shangu river flowing at the bottom.

"An operative pointed his AK-47 rifle at him (Bablu) and forced him to give money and the key to the cash locker," tour official Zemy said, adding five others intimidated the foreign visitors into giving money and credit cards.

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KIDNAP Businessmen set free on ransom in Ctg

Joint forces rescue Lama businessman from deep forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Abductors released a businessman apparently receiving a hefty ransom while police rescued another businessman from a deep forest hideout of kidnapers during the Eid-ul-Azha holidays, witnesses and police said.

They said Jahangir Arman, 40, was released on Tuesday morning, 78 hours after he was picked up for a ransom of Tk 10.

Police rescued Nasir Uddin, 26,

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Makkah uplift ordered as 251 hajis trampled dead

Hajj "great success" and stampede dead "met their fate": minister

AFP, Mina

Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has ordered "overall plans" to be drawn up to modernise the holy cities of Makkah and Medina after 251 pilgrims died in a stampede, official media reported Monday.

With the annual Hajj still underway, the ruler issued a royal decree covering a 20-year project to be undertaken by a body chaired by Municipal and Rural Affairs Minister

Mutaab bin Abdul Aziz, the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said.

Makkah regional governor Abdul Majid bin Abdel Aziz, Medina regional governor Muqrin bin Abdul Aziz and Hajj minister Iyad bin Amin Madani would sit on the committee which would "gradually put forward proposals" and could call on expertise from abroad as well as within the kingdom, it said.

The body would benefit from a "special budget", the decree said without specifying any figure.

A total of 251 Muslim pilgrims were trampled to death or suffocated and about 240 injured on Sunday, the first of three days of the ritual stoning of "Satan" pillars marking the end of the pilgrimage to Makkah.

Fourteen pilgrims were killed in a stampede last year during the first day of the same ritual and 35 in 2001, while in 1998 118 were killed and more than 180 hurt at the pillars in the valley of Mina, just outside Makkah.

The worst toll of the pilgrimage was in July 1990, when 1,426 pilgrims were trampled to death or suffocated in a stampede in a tunnel, also in Mina.

The modernisation plan was announced after Hajj minister Madani told a post-stampede press conference on Sunday that "all the infrastructure and all the deployment preparations cannot prevent the will of God."

But he added that the kingdom

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Hunt for Iraq's Arbil bombers on, death toll tops 100

AFP, Arbil

The US-led coalition was left reeling Wednesday from double suicide bombings in northern Iraq, the deadliest post-war attacks in the country, as US FBI agents probed what officials said could be work of al-Qaeda-linked extremists.

The death toll from the bombings rose to at least 100 late Tuesday, as Federal Bureau of Investigation agents were drafted in to investigate what US officials suspected had been perpetrated by foreign militant terror groups.

US officials said at least 247

people were wounded when bombers detonated vests packed with explosives Sunday in Kurdish political party offices during celebrations to mark a major Muslim holiday.

The local interior ministry revised its official toll up to at least 100 dead, according to a television station owned by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of the targeted parties.

If confirmed, the figure would well exceed the 83 people, including leading Shiite politician Ayatollah Mohammad Baqer al-Hakim, killed in a car bombing in the southern holy city of Najaf last August.

The Kurdish provinces were deep in mourning Wednesday, one day after thousands of people joined funeral corteges for leading officials of the KDP and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) who died in the attack.

Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, deputy operations chief of the US-led coalition in Iraq, said Tuesday FBI forensic teams had begun sifting through the debris, adding that foreign fighters were probably to blame.

Leaders of the two Kurdish political groups targeted by the blasts in

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Pak scientist seeks clemency for nuke leaks

REUTERS, Islamabad

Pakistan's top nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan appeared on state television yesterday to confess and apologise for leaking nuclear secrets to other countries, while absolving the government of any responsibility.

Khan, revered at home as the father of the country's nuclear bomb, has been accused of leaking atomic weapons secrets to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

"My brothers and sisters, I have chosen to appear before you to offer my deepest regrets and unqualified

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Gunmen ambush Pangsha top cop to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Pangsha Police Station of Rajbari Mizanur Rahman, 32, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at Jagirka village in Patta union on Saturday night while leading a police team on an operation to nab extremists.

The assailants shot him in the head at about 11:00pm and fled firing blank shots and showing their thumb to police.

Witnesses said the police team that included Sub-inspector (SI) Asaduzzaman and six constables did not even try to chase and nab the killers and fired not a single shot.

The OC was rushed to Pangsha upazila health complex and doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Patta union is infested by cadres of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP, M-L). But none has claimed responsibility for

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Niazi dead

PTI, Islamabad

Lt. Gen. Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, the top Pakistan army commander who surrendered to the Indian army and Bangladeshi freedom fighters along with 90,000 of his troops after the fall of Dhaka in 1971, died of a heart attack in Lahore. The 89-year-old diabetic fell ill after breakfast and was taken to the hospital where he breathed his last yesterday, family sources said. Born in 1915 in Mianwali, Niazi was commissioned in the united Indian army in 1942 and later opted to join the Pakistan army in 1947. He was one of Pakistan's most decorated army officers. Niazi was the commander of Pakistan troops who were overwhelmed by Bangladesh's Mukhti Bahini and the Indian Army in 1971. He surrendered to Indian Commander Gen. J S Arora along with his troops. Niazi's surrender was considered a national humiliation as it resulted in the division of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. He returned home

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PHOTO: STAR

A cross-section of people pays last respect to Justice Debes Chandra Bhattacharya at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday. Debes died of old-age complications at a Dhaka clinic on Monday night.

Thousands mourn Justice Debes's death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of people yesterday paid their last respect to Justice Debes Chandra Bhattacharya, who died of old-age complications at a Dhaka clinic on Monday night at age 89.

His body was taken to the Central Shaheed Minar at 11:00am, where a cross section of people including leaders of various political and socio-cultural organisations paid their homage to the former judge, also a veteran civil and human-rights activist.

Eminent lawyer Dr Kamal Hossain, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda, former justices KM Sobhan and Mejbah Uddin Ahmed, economists Rehman Sobhan, Wahid Uddin Mahmud and Mozaffer Ahmed, frontline Awami League

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Eid holiday hangover continues in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital continued to cling on to holiday hangover yesterday although public and private offices returned to operation after the three-day Eid vacation.

The metropolis looked forlorn as most shops and business centres kept their shutters down.

The holidays began on February 1 with most of the city dwellers heading for their village or small town homes to celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha, one of the biggest Muslim religious festivals, with their near and dear ones.

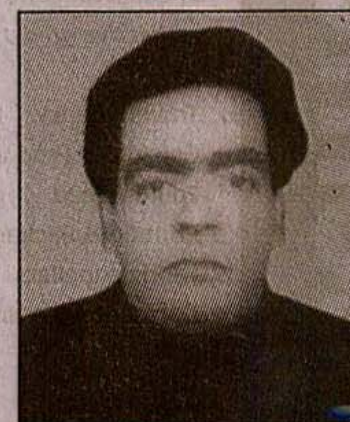
During the last few days, the notorious Dhaka traffic has been behaving in complete contrast to its normal character.

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26th Death Anniversary

(Abul Company) The founder of Abul Khair Group noted industrialist and social worker

Late Janab ABUL KHAIR



Death: 4th February, 1978

In accordance with the will of almighty Allah the beneficent, you left this mundane world, leaving us and many of your relations overwhelmed by grief. In our everyday life your bright ideals serve as veacom. You are immortal in your death. We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul.

May Allah the beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

Your loving
Son, Daughters and Relatives.