

Makkah uplift ordered

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would "draw the conclusions to revise the organisation of the pilgrimage and improve" services offered to "the guests of God".

Such projects are not new and at the end of 1991, Saudi government planners approved the building of a controversial residential and shopping center on the site of an Ottoman fort at Makkah.

It was just one of several mega-schemes underway to improve the holy city.

The Makkah development plan, to be completed over several years, will enable the area to accommodate more than 1.2 million people, compared with under half a million today.

The plan also envisages an increase in car-parking capacity from today's 586 spaces to a massive 45,000 vehicles, and to expand the pedestrian area from 6,000 square meters to 120,000 square meters.

Traditional souks around the Grand Mosque are today scattered over an area of 180,000 square meters. Ultra-modern malls and markets are planned to cover 660,000 square meters.

One of the major projects is the six-billion-riyal (1.6-billion-dollar) Omar mountain, overlooking the Mosque. Several hundred old buildings are due to be cleared.

Some 120 residential towers, each 20 storeys high, with a total capacity for 100,000 people are planned for the 160,000-square-meter mountain, named after the second Caliph in Islam, Omar bin al-Khattab.

Under another scheme a multi-tower residential and shopping center

will rise from the site of the old Ajyad Hospital, located on the very edge of the Mosque. A modern hospital will also be built as part of the center.

HAJJ'A GREAT SUCCESS'

The Hajj season was a "great success" in every possible way, Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdul Aziz said yesterday, adding that the 251 people trampled to death during the stoning of the devil ritual "met their fate".

"I want to congratulate you on your great achievement ... all the security, safety and traffic plans were carried out according to the highest standards and those who say otherwise are ungrateful or hate this country," Prince Nayef told the men charged with the security of the annual pilgrimage to Makkah, the SPA reported.

He said the mostly Asian pilgrims who perished Sunday as they pressed to throw stones at three pillars representing Satan in the valley of Mina near Makkah "met their fate because their place and time of death has been decided the moment they were born."

But despite the fatalism, Nayef said some of the pilgrims who died in the tragedy were partly to blame for losing their cool.

"Our pilgrim brethren should have been, or we would have hoped that they would be, calm and moved slowly to respect those who fainted or fell to the ground dying and not to trample on them," said Nayef, who also heads the Supreme Hajj Council.

Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Husain, Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, ministers and judges of the supreme court attended the main Eid congregation. Moulana Obaidul Huq, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, conducted the prayers.

President Iajuddin hosted a reception at the Bangabhaban for diplomats and elite of the city on the occasion.

Dean of the diplomatic corps Shahta Zarab, ambassadors and high commissioners of different countries in Bangladesh and chiefs of international agencies, among others, attended the reception.

The speaker, the chief justice, lawmakers and leaders of political parties also attended the function.

The guests included vice-chancellors of universities, academics, recipients of national awards, freedom fighters, journalists, litterateurs, artists, business leaders, religious personalities and high civil and military officials.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia exchanged Eid greetings with people of all walks of life at her Hare Road office.

Ministers, MPs, leaders of the ruling four-party alliance, ambassadors and senior civil and military officials also came there.

Later, the prime minister visited the mazar of president Ziaur Rahman and laid wreaths. Her family members and colleagues were present.

Awami League President and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina exchanged Eid greetings with a cross-section of people and diplomats at her Dhanmondi office.

Pabna JP leader

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granted him bail in the case.

Critically injured Kadar was admitted to the Combined Military Hospital.

Arzu's body was brought to his Gopalpur residence in Pabna on Monday. He was later buried at Pabna Sadar graveyard.

deputy KDP provincial governor who died in the attack, and Shokran Abbas, a PUK party member, among the last officials to be buried.

Processions began outside the bombed party headquarters, with mourners dressed in black or wearing black armbands. Cars were draped with black cloth.

At the city's cemetery, Abbas' weeping son and daughter -- embraced by former PUK prime minister Kawthar Ali Rassoul -- stood by their father's grave as the casket draped in the PUK flag was lowered.

"These attacks will never stop us from keeping our Kurdistan and we will keep our rights alongside our Arab brothers to build a new Iraq," a cleric overseeing the burial told mourners.

Once pitted against each other in a bloody power struggle, the PUK and KDP, who jointly control three northern Iraqi provinces, have vowed to work together to pursue their vision for virtual autonomy under a new federal Iraq.

A Kurdish television station on Tuesday broadcast the picture of a man it said could be one of the suicide bombers who blew themselves up in the Kurdish city of Arbil in northern Iraq, killing at least 100 people.

The channel run by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), one of two Kurdish political parties targeted in Sunday's attacks, said the picture was taken by a photographer at the KDP offices to cover celebrations of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha.

The image showed a mustachioed man, who appeared to be in his late teens or early 20s. The broadcast urged viewers to provide any information about the suspect to the KDP-controlled interior ministry in Arbil.

Violence

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Ali's house and threatened him with death, the relatives alleged.

Our Narayanganj correspondent reports: On the Eid day, local hoodlums went from house to house at Chashara, Galachipia, Madair, Galakata, Deokon, Baburail, Nandipara, Anlapara, Missionpara, Khanpur, Isdair, Bhola, Kashipur in the town and at Kadamtoli, Adamji and Mijmiji in Siddhirganj. They asked the people to sell the rawhides of their sacrificial animals at Tk 500 per piece to them and threatened of dire consequence if anyone refused to do so.

Such groups that undertook the moneymaking venture also locked into clashes in almost all of the afore-said areas.

That day, after buying 200 rawhides from Narayanganj, a hide-trader named Bachchu was returning to Keraniganj by a trowler. A group of local hoodlums swooped on them at Aliganj on the Buriganga and hijacked the trowler to Kandapara in Keraniganj. Snatching Tk 90,000 from Bachchu, the assailants pushed him into the river and went away with the hides.

In another incident, members of a gang stabbed hide-trader Jahirul Haq at Sheharar in Fatulla and looted the rawhides he had purchased.

Joint survey

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the ministry yesterday.
The meeting was told that Tk 400 crore has been earmarked for construction of the 31-kilometre-long road from Ramu to Buchidong of Myanmar. The meeting was further informed that in future Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazar-Yangon highway would get importance as part of the Asian Highway.

The minister said the government has attached great importance to the construction of the road to establish direct link with Southeast Asian countries including Yangon, Thailand and China and to utilise the huge trade potentials in the region.

3 bodies

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Locals recovered another body from the river Monday afternoon, whose identity could not be known till yesterday, while the fourth passenger is still missing, police said.

Niazi dead

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from captivity in 1974 and was held in detention by the army for about a year. After his release, Niazi became a strongest critic of the policies of the Pakistan army and made an unsuccessful bid to enter politics. After his retirement from public life, he published a book *Betrayer of East Pakistan* in 1998 in which he outlined his version of events that lead to the division of Pakistan. Niazi is survived by two sons and three daughters.

Daughter

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involvement of the two groups who also enjoyed the night as projection offices in the village of two rival BNP chairman candidates in the upcoming municipal election, he added.

After Usha's autopsy, Dr Emdadur Rahman, head of the forensic department of Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, said two or more adults committed the rape and her sexual organ was 'violently ruptured' causing huge bleeding.

Usha took her dinner at around 8.30pm and went out to watch television in a neighbour's house. At 9:00pm, she called her friend Lovely, but went missing since she started for home after Lovely's parents refused to let her go with Usha at the night.

"I rushed to the field hearing of a dead body from a santal woman and found my daughter was lying stripped off and her blood-stained, torn cloths were found around her body", said her father Nazrul.

Sub-Inspector Omar Faruk of Kakonhat police investigation centre said there was blood and signs of human bite on Usha's face and breasts and many scratch marks of nails were found between her head and thighs.

The victim's father Nazrul filed a case under the Woman and Child Repression Prevention Act of 2000 with Kakonhat Police Investigation Centre accusing none.

Police arrested two youths on suspicion. They are Moslem Uddin, 15, son of Mozahar Uddin and Zamilul Hossain, 14, son of Ayub Hossain of the same village.

The arrestees were placed before a magistrate's court yesterday and police sought five days' remand against them. The court will hear on the remand prayer today.

Inferno

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have been doused much earlier had the fire brigade reached the spot in time.

The fire brigade sources however could not specify the damage although preliminary estimates put it at around Tk 5 crore. They claimed that they rushed to the spot immediately after receiving the information.

The shopkeepers on the ground floor first noticed the fire and informed Teigan fire service and Teigan Police Station about the flames.

Four fire brigade vehicles rushed to the spot immediately after getting the news of fire.

The number of shops on the first floor of the market is around 350 and one third of them on the northern side was affected mosst, said an officer-bear of Karwan Bazar Wholesale Shop Owners Association.

Tk 10 to 15 lakh worth of goods were there in each shop, the association leaders said.
"I have three shops on the (first) floor and I think two of them were gutted by the fire damaging at least Tk 20 lakh worth of goods," said Polish Chowdhury, a shop owner standing on the road near the fire.
Police cordoned off the area to protect the market from criminals.

Pak scientist seeks

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apologies to a traumatised nation," Khan said on Pakistan Television, speaking in English. "I also wish to clarify that there was never even any kind of authorisation for these activities by the government."

Khan also asked for clemency from President Pervez Musharraf, the government said.

Musharraf is believed to be considering whether to prosecute the scientist, revered at home for developing Pakistan's atomic bomb.

"Dr A.Q. Khan submitted before the President that he accepts full responsibility for all the proliferation activities, which were conducted by him during the period in which he was at the helm of affairs of Khan Research Laboratories," the government said in a statement.

Khan headed KRL, the country's main nuclear research organisation, until 2001.

"Dr Khan has submitted his mercy petition to the president and requested for clemency, in view of his services to national security," the statement added.

Intelligence sources said Khan had

called the meeting in a last-ditch bid to strike a deal and avoid prosecution.

Many Pakistanis and Western diplomats feel that Khan has been treated as a scapegoat, and that he could not have acted as he did without the knowledge of senior military officials.

Pakistan's military has strongly denied remarks attributed to a friend of Khan saying the scientist had told investigators Musharraf was among those who knew he had given nuclear know-how to North Korea in the 1990s.

In his first public remarks since an investigation into the nuclear leaks by Pakistan was launched over two months ago, Khan told state-run Pakistan Television he had requested the meeting.

"The president was extremely kind and understanding. We discussed this ongoing affair, the international campaign against Pakistan about nuclear matters," he said.

"I explained to him all the things. I gave him the background, what is happening, what had happened and he appreciated the frankness with which I gave him the details."

Justice Debesh's death

FROM PAGE 1
leaders Abdus Samad Azad and Abdur Razzak, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and Daily Manabjamine Editor Motiur Rahman paid homage to Debesh there, among others.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury and leaders of Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Oikya Parishad, Workers Party of Bangladesh, Ekattorer Ghatika Dala Nirmla Committee, Bangladesh Awami Seccha Sebak League, Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad and Jagannath Hall Alumni Association expressed their shock, among others.

Debesh's body was also taken to the Supreme Court, Ramkrishna Mission and Dhakeswari National Temple premises, where Chief Justice Syed JR Mudassir Hussain, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, former judges, members of the Supreme Court Bar Association and religious leaders paid their tribute to the prominent jury.

The body of Debesh was taken to his home village in Kalihati upazila in Tangail yesterday where he was cremated in the evening.

Debesh left behind his wife, two sons, a daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn him.
His wife Chitra Bhattacharya is a former lawmaker, elder son Debapriya Bhattacharya is the executive director of the Centre for Policy Dialogue, a civil society think tank, and younger son Debdarshi Bhattacharya is a physicist. Deblina Roy is his only daughter.

Debesh, who took the oath of office

as a judge on June 21 in 1972 soon after Bangladesh's independence, was appointed an appellate division judge of the Supreme Court in June 1975. He retired in 1977.

Debesh was born on November 3, 1914 into Elenaga Zemindar family in Tangail. He passed Matriculation in 1931 with government scholarship from Tangail Bindubasini High School and Intermediate of Science from Kolkata Presidency College in 1933 and obtained the Bachelor of Science degree in 1935.

He earned the Bachelor of Law degree from the University Law College in Kolkata in 1938 and Masters of Arts in Economics from Kolkata University in 1940 before joining Mymensingh Bar in 1941.

He served two years in Memensingh jail as a political prisoner from 1949 and began legal practice at the High Court in Dhaka after release in 1950.

He taught law at City Law College from 1955 to 1971.

Debesh was the founder organiser of Bangladesh Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Puja Uddipan Parishad and Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee.

A citizens' condolence meeting will be held at the Central Shaheed Minar at 3:00pm on February 15 to mourn the death of justice Debesh.

A 501-member committee with justice KM Sobhan as convener and Advocate Subrata Chowdhury as member secretary, has been formed to that end.

Mystery virus exposed

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During the same period, three patients with similar symptoms were detected at Shivaloy of Manikganj district, which is located directly opposite to Goaland across the Padma. The Shivaloy patients included a child who died. The last death linked to these clusters of illnesses occurred on January 24.

A joint team from the DGHS and ICDDR,B began a field investigation on January 22 and returned from Goaland on January 26 with specimens of diseased tissues and fluids from the patients.

"Because of the reports of avian influenza outbreaks in South and South East Asia, we requested the CDC to urgently evaluate whether that could be the cause of these severe illnesses. The CDC laboratories however ruled out the possibility of influenza viruses, including the avian influenza," Professor Rahman said.

The DGHS officials also said additional tests are being carried on to determine the exact nature of the killer virus.

Nipah-like viruses were explained as the causes of two previous encephalitis outbreaks in the country. The first one occurred during the spring of 2001 at Chandpur village in Meherpur district that resulted in nine deaths. The second outbreak happened in

January 2003 at Chalksita and Bilpania villages in Naogaon district, affecting at least 17 residents and resulting in eight deaths. Both of these previous outbreaks due to the Nipah-like virus were brief.

Meanwhile, at the request of the DGHS and the World Health Organisation (WHO)-Bangladesh, the WHO office in Geneva has sent a four-member team of experts to Bangladesh, who are already in the city, to assist in identifying the source of the Nipah-like virus and the mechanisms of its transmission to human body. These information will be used to develop and implement strategies to prevent any such cases in future.

Occurrence of all the three outbreaks of illness due to this newly recognised pathogen since 2001 in the western part of the country suggests that its source may also be located in the area.

"We are asking the team of experts to help us to determine why these outbreaks occur here and to design practical approaches, which will hopefully prevent them in the future. The team may also assist in examining any other reported case of similar illnesses elsewhere," said Dr Rober F Breiman, head of Programme on Infectious Diseases and Vaccine Science of ICDDR,B.

Eid holiday hangover

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Yesterday too, number of pedestrians, rickshaws, three-wheelers, mini-buses, cars and other vehicles were far less than usual. And for a change, public buses had empty seats in abundance. But rickshaw-pullers and auto-rickshaw drivers charged higher fares to compensate the shortage of passengers.

Attendance was very thin at the Secretariat, the headquarters of most of the ministries, and other government offices yesterday. However, a good number of ministers and high up were present. Sources said many officers and employees were on additional leave to spend more time with their kin and friends "as they find a three-day vacation too short for satisfaction".

Secretariat sources said only a few staffers turned up in the offices and that too only for a few hours. They appeared busy in exchanging Eid greetings and the customary hugging each other, while the talks mostly spun around sacrificial animals and other details of the Eid celebrations. Virtually no office work was done, sources added.

Office chambers of ministers and secretaries were open for officials and employees of all ranks to exchange Eid greetings. And almost all the ministers and secretaries also passed a "very relaxed" day yesterday.

Robbers loot

FROM PAGE 1
Equally shocked was the owner of Mahanagar Jeweller's, Tarak Gupta, who said: "They took Tk 4.75 lakh in cash and all gold ornaments from my shop."

THE HOURS TO BREAK-IN

Guards Jalal, Karim and Enamul and their supervisor ABM Waliullah had been deployed inside the market and their colleagues Anis, Rahim and Iqbal outside since 10:00pm Tuesday.

Another team of three guards, coming to the building for morning duty, found the front gate open with no guard around.

"We found Enamul lying unconscious on the floor as we moved in," said Majed Sarker, who figured in the morning team. "We rushed to the security co-ordination office on the third floor and found Waliullah also unconscious in bed."

Enamul and Waliullah were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with police escort.

The security guards called the leaders of shop owners, who grilled for information the three guards posted in front of the market.

"I was acting as proxy for the security-in-charge, Yasin, as he went on leave," Waliullah said after he regained his sense shortly before 3:00pm.

The robbers took away several keys from the supervisor, given by Yasin before he went on leave.

Waliullah also said two men arrived at the entry to the building and one of them identified himself as a bank manager and wanted to check out on the bank inside. The two left the building some time later and Waliullah came back to office.

"Karim and Jalal also went out for dinner and returned to work. I don't know what happened next," Waliullah said of the final hours to the robbery.

Jalal, who had worked as a guard at the market for 27 days, landed Karim a job with the security company, Waliullah said.

Ramna police said no-one filed any case until yesterday evening.

3 killed

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Firefighters recovered bodies of Alauddin, 40, and Rozina, 7, daughter of Awlad Hossain, and sent the injured to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Farzana, two and a half year-old daughter of MA Habib, died.

The firefighters said the damage was estimated at around Tk 20 lakh.

Dwellers claimed that local miscreants set the slum afire to evict them.

2 robbers held

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robbers arrested were identified as Faisal and Mizan.

Mizan told the reporters at the DMCH that they met other gang members at Kallyanpur bus stand and after a brief meeting they started towards Noorjahan Road at Mohammadpur.

"We decided to commit robbery at the house while we were passing it," he told our DMCH correspondent.

Four separate cases were filed with Mohammadpur Police Station.

Bangladesh eligible

FROM PAGE 12
and security across the globe."

These states that won the right to compete for Millennium Challenge Account cash:

- Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan

- Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia, Burkina Faso

- Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo

- Djibouti, East Timor, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, - Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Kiribati, Kyrgyz Republic

- Laos, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania

- Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria

- Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone

- Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Togo, Tonga, Uganda

- Vanuatu, Vietnam, Yemen and Zambia.

Businessmen

FROM PAGE 1
owner of a brick kiln, from the hide-moon bodies and other private business houses in Motijheel Commercial Area, the business hub of the country, opened back yesterday to business, the number of attending staff seemed too inadequate to run the operations as usual.

Presence of officials and employees at state-run banks, post offices and, in some cases, private banks and commercial establishments also was less than normal. However, transactions at banks went as usual.

Trading resumed at Dhaka Stock Exchange yesterday. But the holiday hangover also had its mark on the floor, with fewer brokers and a sluggish tempo in business.

With a thinner traffic since Saturday, city-dwellers got some relief from the everyday hustle and bustle they are subjected to. They seemed happy with the present look of the city, as they could move with fewer hazards in a light traffic and breathe better with almost zero air pollution.

City-dwellers also appreciated the hectic garbage cleaning drive that the city corporation launched on the Eid day. Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka himself supervised the cleaning drive that continued till yesterday, sources said.

Bandarban hotelier

FORM PAGE 1
"The gang threatened us not to inform army or police about it," said Bablu's brother Hasan Monsur, also co-owner of the resort hotel, a unit of Guide Tours Limited in Dhaka.

The abduction underlined security fears in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), often rocked by waves of violence between the pro-peace pact Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity and its rival United People's Democratic Front in the wake of the 1997 agreement that ended two decades of bush war.

Joint forces in 11 groups have carried out a series of raids on suspected hideouts since Tuesday morning and scoured outlying Bepchhara village, where the 40-year-old was believed to be in captivity.

But the security forces could not trace Bablu to the village that saw men fleeing home for fear of arrest, police told The Daily Star.

Guide Tours that established Hillside Resort on five acres of gentle slopes in September 2001 also launched searches with the help of locals but returned empty-handed.

Seventeen foreign tourists left the hotel on Tuesday and seven others left yesterday, but Hasan Mahmud Khokon, another co-owner of the hotel, said: "The tourists checked out on schedule not in fear."

The district administration deployed two police teams to the hotel, as security was tightened in and around the tourist spot.

Army, Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police held an impromptu meeting

in Bandarban, one of the three hill districts, and decided to provide foreign tourists with security escorts in an effort to allay fears triggered by the kidnap, said Deputy Commissioner Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan.

Hotel authorities filed an abduction case with Bandarban Police Station.

Locals believe the group operating from Chhangya close to town has a role in the abduction that came after apparently the same gang's ransom threat to villagers to pay Tk 1 lakh by February 10.

"The operatives prowled the Shangu riverbanks in army and BDR uniforms," said a local resident, asking not to be named.

"The hotel management did not respond to our repeated requests for taking security measures," Bhuiyan said.

But the Hillside Resort director said the management could not afford a police or ansar team for security, adding: "We will have to spend up to Tk 40,000 a month, if we hire a security team."

Acting Superintendent of Police Mohammed Muslim and senior army officials visited the scene.

An unidentified gang on January 26 abducted a brick trader, Nasir Uddin, from Lama upazila in Bandarban with a history of ransom-motivated abductions. Police rescued the 26-year-old businessman from deep forest in Nalkhandhari upazila on February 2.

Gunmen ambush

FOM PAGE 1
the murder of the OC.

The police official's body was brought to his paternal house at Nazirghat road under Sonadanga Police Station of Khulna city on Sunday night. He was buried on Monday at the family graveyard after Namaz-e-Janaza following the Eid-ul-Azha.

Pangsha police said acting on a tip off over phone, Mizanur Rahman led the police team to Jagirkara village to arrest extremists. "We believe the extremists gave him false information with the motive to murder him," said Asaduzzaman.

There was no exchange of fire between the police and the killers, the OC's family members said quoting some witnesses who accompanied his coffin to Khulna.

An FIR was filed without naming any accused for the murder.

Thirty-one people were picked up for questioning. But none of them appeared to be involved in the murder, said SI Mashiur Rahman of Pangsha Police Station over tele-

phone yesterday.

Mizanur Rahman took over as OC on November 11 last year on being promoted as inspector. He went to Angola, Kosovo and Bosnia as a member of UN peacekeeping force fter joining police service in 1989. He received UN awards for his performances, said his father Hemayet-uddin.

A few hours before his death, Mizanur sent his wife Shahnaj and son Alif to Khulna from Pangsha to celebrate the Eid his parents and he was scheduled to go next morning.

Unconfirmed reports hinted at involvement of outlaws in the murder of the OC for his tough stance against them. He received death threats from unidentified callers over phone recently for arresting some extremists allegedly backed by ruling BNP leaders.

The superintendent of police of Rajbari could not be contacted as he was conducting a drive following the murder.