

Rome ready for Pope's funeral today

REUTERS, Vatican City

Presidents, royalty and millions of pilgrims massed in Rome yesterday for the funeral of Pope John Paul II in the biggest gathering of the powerful and the humble in modern times.

In death the Polish Pontiff who travelled to more countries than any other pope in 2,000 years was drawing millions from around the world for his funeral, to be held outdoors on Friday morning in St. Peter's Square.

Thousands of pilgrims, among at least 4 million who have packed into the brisk morning air after an all-

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RABBANI MURDER 3 get life, prime accused 5 yrs

Court orders action against IO

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rabbani.

Judge M Hasan Imam of the Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal, Chittagong gave the verdict in which none of the accused was awarded capital punishment due to weak and faulty investigation of the case by the investigation officer concerned,

court sources said.

The judge cited lack of adequate witnesses and loopholes in the investigation report as the reason for not giving any of the accused a death sentence.

The court acquitted two others.

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KIBRIA KILLING Asma still hopeful about trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People from all walks of life took to streets in the capital yesterday to demand punishment of the mastermind behind the killing of former finance minister and Awami League lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria.

A silent procession of people in blue marched through the busy streets of Motijheel commercial area. Led by Asma Kibria, widow of the slain leader, senior Awami League leaders, university teachers, cultural activists and a large number of commoners participated in the demonstration styled 'Blue for Peace'.

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Asma Kibria, wife of slain Awami League lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria, stands with others in a line at city's Muktangan yesterday to demand trial of the perpetrators of Habiganj carnage.

95 hurt in Gaibandha nor'wester

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

At least 95 people were injured as nor'wester lashed 17 villages in three upazilas of the district early yesterday.

Of the injured, 35 were admitted to Gaibandha Sadar Hospital, seven to Rangpur Medical College Hospital and the remaining 53 to upazila health complexes.

The badly affected villages are Falchari, Kachipara, Udakhali and Uria under Falchari upazila and Bariyerjan, Purbo Kamornai.

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The first bus from the Pakistan-controlled Kashmir arrives with 30 passengers on their way to Indian-controlled Kashmir yesterday at the Chakothi post on the Line of Control, some 61 kilometers east of Muzaffarabad, Pakistan.

'Caravan of peace' makes historic trip

REUTERS, PEACE BRIDGE, India-Pakistan border

Some crying with joy, 31 Pakistani Kashmiris crossed the "Peace Bridge" into Indian Kashmir yesterday, marking the first bus service linking the divided Himalayan region since it was split by war almost 60 years ago.

"I can't control my emotion. I am setting foot in my motherland," said a tearful Shahid Bahar, a lawyer from the capital of Pakistan Kashmir, Muzaffarabad.

"I am coming here for the first time to meet my blood relations," said Bahar, whose father crossed over in 1949. "It was my dream. It is unbelievable. Everyone is here."

Attacks by Islamic separatists -- who have threatened to turn the buses into rolling coffins -- scared off some passengers but failed to derail one of the most significant and emotive steps in South Asia's unsteady peace process.

"The caravan of peace has started," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said as he sent off the Pakistan-bound bus in front of a crowd of thousands braving freezing drizzle at the Lion of Kashmir stadium in Srinagar, summer capital of Indian Kashmir and the region's heart and soul. "Nothing can stop it."

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River-linking won't affect neighbours

Indian minister tells Mosharraf

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India yesterday told Bangladesh that its river linking project would focus on connecting peninsular rivers and it would not do anything which could have implications on its neighbouring countries.

Union Water Resources Minister Priyaranjan Dasmunshi made the remarks at a meeting with visiting Health and Family Welfare Minister Khandakar Mosharraf Hossain in the Indian capital, according to a press release issued by Bangladesh High Commission.

It said Hossain briefed Dasmunshi on Dhaka's concerns over the proposal of inter-linking rivers and India's move to go ahead with the Tipaimukh dam. Mosharraf expressed the fear that these would have "devastating effects" on the ecology of Bangladesh.

He pressed for holding the next meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission at an early date so that the two countries could discuss all

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Bangladeshi girl held in New York

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Two 16-year-old girls from New York City, including one Bangladeshi, were arrested last month and charged with immigration violations after the FBI asserted that they intended to become suicide bombers.

Their families however said the accusation was false and the government had probably misinterpreted a school essay written by the Bangladeshi girl.

Quoting a government document, the New York Times (NYT)

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AHSANULLAH KILLING Defence terms charges false

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The defence lawyers in the murder case of Awami League (AL) lawmaker Ahsanullah Master began their arguments yesterday.

Advocate Nazrul Islam made submissions for about four hours on behalf of the four accused - Pappu Sarker, Mahbubur Rahman, Mohammad Ali and Ayub.

During the arguments, Nazrul Islam told the court that the charges brought against the four are false.

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Stop Rab 'crossfire' to protect people's rights

Urge lawyers at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The exercise of excessive power and "crossfire" by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) should be stopped immediately, noted lawyers told a roundtable yesterday.

Speakers also said the rampant misuse of sections 54 (arrest on suspicion) and 167 (jurisdiction to seek remand) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) must be stopped to protect rights of the citizen. They said police do not have any licence to kill even a killer and that both the police and state will be accountable for any lapses.

In response, Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Moudud Ahmed said, "I also believe that criminals also have their human rights," adding that those who were

2 outlaws killed in 'crossfire'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

A regional leader of the outlawed Sarbahara party and his bodyguard were killed in a "crossfire" between police and the members of the extremist outfit in Sreepur upazila of Magura district early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, police from Magura sadar, Sreepur and Shailakupa police stations raided a bush at Daribila village of Sreepur upazila and arrested regional Sarbahara party leader Waliur Rahman alias Raju, 38, and his bodyguard Nabab alias Naba, 32, on Wednesday noon.

Led by the Assistant-Superintendent of Police (ASP) Shamsul Alam, the police team seized one shutter-gun, one pipe-gun and eight bullets from their possession.

Waliur, who faced 23 criminal

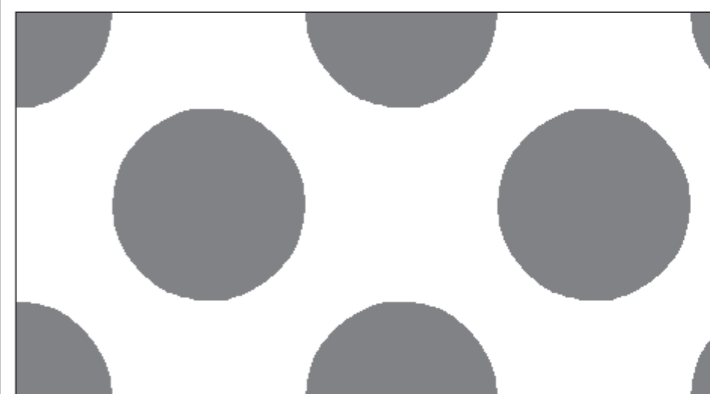
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CCC POLLS Rivals woo voters with promises

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The ruling BNP-backed mayoral candidate Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin will announce a 'comprehensive plan' for the development of the port city after submitting his nomination papers for the May 9 Chittagong City Corporation

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No trace of 2 abducted DB men yet

A CORRESPONDENT, Madaripur

Four days into their abduction, the fate of the two Detective Branch (DB) men is still unknown and they have not yet been rescued.

Inspector Abul Khair of the Special Branch (SB) of police yesterday

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Prayer Timing		
April 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-40	5-15
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation