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Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second largest religious festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated across the country tomorrow amidst due religious fervour and spirit of sacrifice.

However, the usual enthusiasm for the festival will be missing among the Sadr-hit people of southern districts this year, many of whom had lost everything in the devastating cyclone last month.

To commemorate Hazrat Ibrahim's devotion to almighty Allah proven by his readiness to give up his dearest son Hazrat Ismail, well-to-do Muslims will sacrifice animals and share the sacrificial meat with their relatives, neighbours and poor people.

Hazrat Ibrahim, who had been asked by Almighty Allah to sacrifice his dearest son, arranged everything to implement Allah's order at Mina near Makkah. Satisfied by his sincere intent, Allah ordered Ibrahim to sacrifice an

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Mad rush for home

Thousands stream out of Dhaka as Eid holiday starts today

RASHIDUL HASAN and
MAMUN AL MOSTOFA

With the Eid-ul-Azha only a day away, thousands of city dwellers are braving a lot of troubles to go back to their village homes to celebrate the second biggest religious festival of the Muslims with their near and dear ones.

The usually busy metropolis looked a little different yesterday as a large number of people already left for home in the three-day holiday comprising the weekend and public holiday on the Victory Day, December 16.

Although the rush for returning home started a few days back, a virtually unending stream of people crowded inter-district bus terminals at Gabtoli, Sayedabad and Mohakhali,

Kamalapur railway station and Sadarghat launch terminal yesterday.

And the rush will climax today as a three-day Eid holiday begins today.

The home-goers seemed to ignore the hazards of journey by overloaded vehicles to be with their family members or relatives on the occasion of the Eid.

Taking advantage of the situation, unscrupulous transport staffs greatly raised bus fare in various routes.

BUS TERMINALS

Due to relaxed traffic control and haphazard plying of vehicles, heavy traffic congestion was created on the roads near Gabtoli, Mohakhali and Sayedabad bus terminals yesterday morning. As a result, many home-goers could

not reach the terminals timely. Hundreds of people were seen walking towards the terminals carrying their luggage.

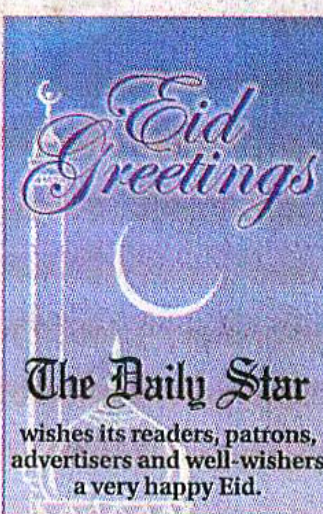
Ticket counter staffs at different bus terminals tried to capitalise on the huge demand for tickets and charged Tk 250 to Tk 200 more than normal fare.

Sirajul Islam, passenger of a Jhenidah-bound bus of Shohag Paribahan, said, "The staffs took from me Tk 250 for a ticket instead of Tk 150".

Asked about this, a staff member of the transport company admitted that they were overcharging the passengers on the eve of the Eid.

Executive Member of Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association Salahuddin Ahmed said each of the 125 transport

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HOLIDAY
The Daily Star offices will remain closed on December 20, 21 and 22 on account of Eid-ul-Azha and there will be no issue of the newspaper on December 21, 22 and 23. The Star Weekend Magazine (Dec 21) and Star Lifestyle (Dec 25) will not come out due to the Eid holidays.

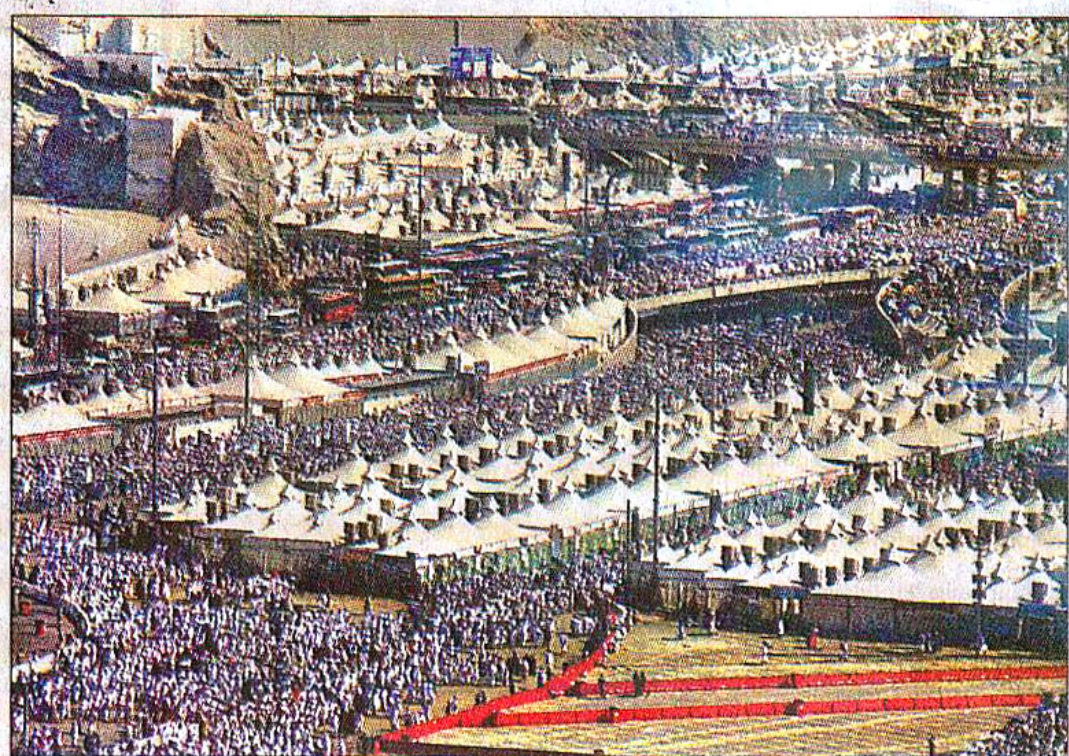


PHOTO: AFP

Muslim pilgrims leave their tents to head toward the stoning of the column symbolising Satan at Al-Jamrat in Mina near the holy city of Makkah.



HOME COMING... Thousands of people leaving Dhaka every day to celebrate Eid at home with their near and dear ones. This photo was taken from the Buriganga Bridge yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

WAR CRIMINALS

News reports, photos enough for trial

ZAYADUL AHSAN and
SHAKHAWAT LITON

The International Crimes Act 1973 provides the government with enormous power to still try the war criminals of 1971 by setting up tribunals without facing legal hurdles since the law makes newspaper reports and photographs of war crimes admissible in court as evidence.

The act which was promulgated under the blanket immunity for the government provided by the first amendment to the constitution in 1973 for trying war criminals, also scraps the usual protections ensured for the accused in the Criminal Procedure Code 1898 and in Evidence Act 1872, in an effort to ensure meting out of punishments to war criminals.

It empowers the government to establish an agency for the purpose of investigating war crimes, and provides the officers of the agency with enormous power to investigate the crimes, despite the cancellation of Bangladesh Collaborators Order 1972.

Legal experts said the government may enforce the law any time and may set up tribunals by issuing gazette notifications for trying the war criminals. A war criminal may be tried based on newspaper reports and photographs as the International Crime Act empowers the court to admit those as evidence.

The legal experts also said reports and statements, which were published in the Daily Sangram, the official voice of Jamaat-e-Islami, during the liberation war of Bangladesh, about the activities of the anti-liberation forces, might be sufficient to try the collaborators of the Pakistan occupation forces. Other national and international newspapers published during the liberation war also ran news and photographs about the activities of the anti-liberation local forces, which are also admissible in courts according to the law, said the experts.

Now it requires a government move to set up a tribunal, which according to the act will have

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Hajj pilgrims stone Satan in Mina

AFP, Riyadh

Around two million Muslims massed in the holy Saudi city of Mina on yesterday for the symbolic stoning of the devil, one of the high points, but also one of the most risky, of the annual hajj.

Amid tight security, with helicopters hovering overhead and a fleet of ambulances standing by, the human tide converged on the area for the stoning of pillars, which will continue on Thursday and Friday.

The crush as pilgrims seek to ensure their stones hit Satan has led to hundreds of deaths in the past, including 345 during the ritual in January last year. A similar tragedy in 2004 saw 251 people trampled to death.

The Saudi Gazette newspaper said 10,000 troops had been deployed in Mina to beef up security and control pedestrian traffic on Jamarat Bridge, from where many throw their stones.

Saudi authorities have built a third level on to the bridge complex to ease the pressure, allowing more than 200,000 faithful an hour to cast pebbles they collected the previous day.

In another change after the deaths of the last hajj, the three "Jamarat" pillars have been extended, each of them effectively being turned into a large wall. This has made them an easier target and lessened the need for pilgrims -- many elderly and feeble -- to push to get closer.

"By casting my pebbles I am saying that I will not give in to Satan's worldly temptations," said one middle-aged Arab, who identified himself as Jassem.

According to tradition, Mina is the place where Satan appeared first to Abraham, to his son Ishmael, and to Ishmael's mother Hagar. The word Mina is a derivative of an Arabic word meaning "wish," since it was here that Adam wished for heaven.

After the stoning, the pilgrims celebrate Eid ul-Azha, literally the day of sacrifice, when animals, normally sheep but also goat, cows and camels, are sacrificed, in remembrance of Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son to God.

The Saudi government prefers hajjis to buy coupons instead of directly buying and sacrificing a beast, to avoid meat being wasted.

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Bhuiyan sued for giving 'death threat' to lawyer

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and two others have been sued for giving death threats to a lawyer.

Meanwhile, a Dhaka court sent detained former president of Jatiya Chhatra League Jahangir Sattar Tinku to jail for violating the Emergency Power Rules (EPR).

Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday summoned BNP leader and former LGRD and cooperatives minister Bhuiyan and two others to appear before the court on March 17, 2008 in connection with the case.

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Khaleda's nephew sued for graft

ACC also files case against ex-minister Redwan, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday filed cases against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's nephew and a detained former state minister for amassing wealth beyond known sources of income and concealing information about it.

The commission in the last couple of days also approved filing cases on the same charges against former state minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir's wife Sitara Alamgir, former superintendent of police Mojibul Haque, his wife Shahida

Haque and son Shahidul Haque.

Yesterday's cases were filed under sections 26 (2) and 27 (1) of the ACC Act and 15 d (5) of the emergency power rules.

Assistant Director Taufiqul Islam filed the case against Khaleda's nephew Shahrin Islam Tuhin with Gulshan Police Station accusing him of illegally accumulating Tk 2.9 crore and concealing information about Tk 1.43 crore wealth.

The complainant in the first information report (FIR) said Tuhin in his wealth statement showed

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UK offers \$60m to tackle climate change fallouts

\$160m for other schemes; Minister Douglas says UK supports restoration of democratic process in Bangladesh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

UK Secretary of State for International Development Douglas Alexander yesterday announced over \$200 million as grant for various programmes in Bangladesh, including \$60 million to help the country adapt to the impacts of the global climate change.

He also urged the international community to help Bangladesh face the future threats of climate change.

He reiterated UK's support for the roadmap to a free, fair and credible election by 2008 and urged the authorities to follow the due legal procedures in trying the



Douglas Alexander

political leaders now detained. "We support restoration of democratic process in Bangladesh," he said.

Douglas was speaking at a news briefing in Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the capital concluding his two-day visit to cyclone affected Barguna and Barisal, and his meetings with Foreign Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam. British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury also spoke.

Replying to a question, the high commissioner said: "We have asked for clarification when the state of emergency will be lifted."

The new UK grant includes \$6.3

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