

World leaders greet president on Eid

UNB, Dhaka

US President George W Bush joined heads of state and government of Muslim countries in greeting President Iajuddin Ahmed on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha, being celebrated in the country tomorrow.

Egyptian President Mohammed Hosny Mubarak and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov are among the Muslim leaders who sent messages of greetings.

In the messages, they prayed to Almighty Allah for continued peace and prosperity of Bangladesh and welfare of the people.

Bush, in a separate message to Iajuddin, offered his "best wishes" on the occasion.

"My hope is that in the spirit of the blessed celebration we can work together to achieve freedom and peace throughout the world," he said.

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo also greeted the president and the people of Bangladesh on the occasion.

20 injured as train derailed in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

At least 20 passengers were injured when two compartments and the engine of Dhaka-bound Balaka Express from Mymensingh derailed at Dhala Station at Trishal at around 4:30pm.

Rail communications on this route remained suspended till filing of this report at 7:30pm.

However, the reason behind the accident could not be known immediately.

Superintendent of Mymensingh Railway Station Md Nazrul Islam told this correspondent that a relief train was sent from Mymensingh to the spot at 6:10pm and it will take three to four hours to fix the problem.

Following the accident, hundreds of homebound people remain stranded at different stations between Dhaka to Jagannathganj Ghat and Bahadurabad Ghat in Jamalpur to Mymensingh.

Uttara-6 cattle market shifted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday formally shifted a makeshift cattle market from Azampur Primary School premises in Uttara to nearby places as the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) did not allow cattle traders to enter the market.

The DCC had set up the makeshift cattle market at Uttara sector-6 on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Azha.

But the BDR personnel protested it and drove away the traders with their cattle from the makeshift market on Tuesday night. The BDR did not allow the cattle market at the place as they have been running a kitchen market there.

When contacted, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "I am aware of the incident and asked the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to take necessary steps in this regard."

DCC CEO Abu Muhammad Yusuf said, "As the BDR did not allow the cattle market, we decided to set up the market in the neighbouring areas."

He also said, "We shifted the market as the place belongs to the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk)."

Talking to this correspondent, Col Mujibul Huq, BDR sector commander, Dhaka, said, "The BDR has set up a kitchen market to rehabilitate the traders evicted from different places in the city. But setting up the cattle market there is an attempt to evict them again. So, we cannot allow this."

He further said, "The DCC has no authority to set up a cattle market at a place where the BDR runs a market."

In reply to a question, he said, "None of our members beat anybody at the market."

Death anniversary

The 12th death anniversary of Comrade Abdul Haq, an eminent communist leader, will be observed on Saturday, says a press release.

On the occasion, different organisations have chalked out programmes, including placing wreaths at his Mirpur grave at 8:00am.

Born on December 23, 1920 in Jessore, as a communist leader Abdul Haq contributed to various movements throughout his life.



PHOTO: STAR

Finding no room in the overcrowded train, people eager to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha with their near and dear ones at their home districts travel on the roof of the train to reach their destinations. The picture was taken at the Airport Railway Station in the city yesterday.

'TB issue still neglected in media'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The issue of tuberculosis (TB) is still neglected in the media of the developing countries, speakers at a seminar and research publication programme said yesterday.

The research also revealed that the country lacks accurate and enough reports on the government initiatives to prevent TB. Misconceptions like TB is contagious or genetically inherited disease are still prevailing, they added.

Panos Institute Bangladesh and Brac jointly organised the seminar and research publication programme on 'Tuberculosis and Media' at Brac Centre auditorium yesterday to motivate the journalists to write more specific and informative reports.

The media did not give information about which age, sex and professional group is more vulnerable to tuberculosis, though some positive reports were published and broadcasted by this time, said Line Director of TB and Leprosy Control Programme of the Directorate of Health Services Dr Pravat Chandra Barua.

Chief of Brac Health Programme Jalal Uddin Ahmed presided over the seminar while journalist Hasan Shahrir, former director of National Institute of the Diseases of Chest and Hospital (NIDCH) Prof Dr AKM Shamsul Haque and Country Director of Panos South Asia, Bangladesh SM Moyeen Ahmed were also present.

AGM of MIDAS held

The 15th Annual General Meeting of Micro Industries Development Assistance and Services (MIDAS) was held at its head office in the city on Monday, says a press release.

SM Al-Husainy, chairman of Board of Directors, chaired the meeting where the Directors' Report and Annual Accounts of the Company for the year 2006-2007 were adopted.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Mahabhat Jan Chowdhury and Parveen Mahmud were re-elected to the Board of Directors in the meeting. The meeting ended with the vote of thanks from Managing Director (MD) of MIDAS Abdul Karim.

Shaik Abdul Halim, Mirza Ali Behrouze Ispahani, Parveen Mahmud, Maniruzzam Chowdhury, Abdur Rashid Gazi, MD of MIDAS Financing Ltd, and ASM Mashi-ur-Rahman, GM, MIDAS, were also present.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Nat'l advisory council soon to tackle natural disasters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A decision was taken yesterday to form a national advisory council to tackle cyclone and other natural disaster, says BBC last night.

The council, which will probably be led by Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, will help National Disaster Management Committee take necessary measures to fight natural disasters.

The warning system needs to be entirely changed, said Prof Jamil in an interview with the BBC.

He added that the warning system of cyclone and tidal surge was formulated in 1898 for the internal river ports where there are signals from 1 to 10 and even 11.

"But people often do not understand the meaning of the signals. We found out the faults of the signal system 15 years ago when the massive plan of cyclone shelters were being prepared," said Prof Jamil adding that in the current signal system the wind speed is same in signal number 8, 9 and 10. But people cannot understand the meaning. They think that the situation becomes worse as soon as the signal numbers rise.

The signal system was prepared for seaport. If the wind blows

towards the south of the port, the signal shows 8, if it moves towards the north, it is 9 and if it blows over the port, it shows signal 10, he said.

Similarly, the wind speed is same in signal 5, 6 and 7. But the directions are south, north and above. In Mongla they are east, west and above, he added.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury also said that it is the duty of the department of meteorology to reshape the warning system.

"On the basis of scientific information and mathematical models they would say the speed of wind, when and where it would strike and the messages would be disseminated among the people in local dialect not in classical language as the local people find it hard to understand," he said quoting a survey.

He also said that around 40,000 volunteers of Cyclone Preparedness Committee under Cyclone Preparedness Programme might be involved in these activities.

At the same time, in national level, the signal system should be changed in such a way that would indicate severity of the situation with the rise of signal numbers.

A recommendation comprising the changing mechanism of signal system will be sent to the ministry in the first week of January, he added.

Road accidents kill 4

STAR REPORT

At least four people were killed and nine others injured in separate road accidents in Gopalganj and Dinajpur yesterday.

UNB from Gopalganj reports: Three people were killed and six others injured in a road accident at Gerakhola in Kashiani upazila yesterday.

Police said a Dhaka-bound bus rammed into a Nasiman, a local human hauler, at about 2:00pm, leaving three passengers killed and six others injured.

Identities of the deceased could not be known immediately. Police suspected that all the deceased were passengers of the Nasiman.

Our Correspondent from Dinajpur adds: At least one person was killed and three others were injured critically in a road accident

at Kabirajhat under Birganj upazila of Dinajpur yesterday.

The dead was identified as Surja Hemrom, 30, son of Philip Hemrom of village Dabarhat under Bochaganj upazila of Dinajpur.

Birganj police quoting witnesses said a sand-laden tractor turned upside down when a Thakurgaon-bound speedy night coach hit it from behind on Thakurgaon-Dinajpur highway at Kabirajhat village, leaving one dead on the spot and three others wounded critically.

The injured were rushed to Birganj Health Complex from where they were shifted to Dinajpur Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

The injured are tractor driver Babul, 30, son of Samiron Ali, of village Tagphuria under Birganj upazila, Shameem Ahmed, 22, son of Surul Ali and Sham Shoren, 24, son of Shudhi Shoren of Sadar upazila.

US NGO's help for underprivileged children

BSS, Dhaka

The Distressed Children International (DCI), a US-based non-government organisation, will provide education expenses to 800 underprivileged children in 2008, DCI President Dr Brian M DeBroff said yesterday.

Besides, DCI would carry out a survey to identify the blind children for operating as many of them as possible to restore their sight, he said at a press conference.

Partnership between the hospitals of US and Bangladesh is needed for preventing child blindness in the country, he said.

The visiting DCI Executive Director Dr Ehsanul Hoque said that DCI organised free cataract operation to restore sight of 25 children and operated 67 children with cleft lips in four districts in the last two years.

DCI will organise more free of cost surgeries to prevent blindness among the children in the rural areas, he told the press conference at the DCI office here.

Diabetic Association of Bangladesh Secretary General Dr AK Azad Khan said DCI would organise more eye operations for children in Feni, Patuakhali, Nilphamari and Sylhet districts under its Sun Child Sponsorship (SCS) programme and Childhood Blindness Prevention Programme.

Extortion at Mawa Ghat alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dakshin Anchal Sarak Paribahan Malik-Sramik Joutho Parishad yesterday alleged that BIWTA and Munshiganj Zila Parishad are realising tolls from the vehicle owners separately at the Mawa Ferry Ghat, says a press release.

In a joint statement, leaders of the organisations alleged BIWTC and Munshiganj District Council are charging Tk 18 per person instead of Tk 16.

They urged the authorities concerned to take immediate steps in this regard.

Rescue operation suspended at Rangs Bhaban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fire fighters yesterday suspended the rescue operation at Rangs Bhaban in the capital after twelve days of partial collapse of the building.

The body of a security guard is believed to be trapped in rubbles.

However, Rajuk magistrate ASM Emdadur Dastagir claimed that they would continue the rescue operation with construction labourers at the building that collapsed partially on December 8.

Mizanur Rahman, uncle of missing security guard Shahidul Islam of Chapainawabganj, was waiting near the building on Monday for Shahidul's body.

He said Shahidul's shoes and mobile phone were found on the second floor of the building where he was on duty when the building caved in.

Fire fighters recovered 11 bodies from the rubbles since Tuesday morning.

The Director (operations) of Fire Service and Civil Defence told The Daily Star that they had suspended the rescue operation due to shortage of manpower.

"If necessary, we shall resume the rescue operation," he added.

Special arrangements for Christmas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As Christmas approaches with all its excitement and wonder, Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, like other major hotels across the globe, has made special arrangements for the guests.

The hotel is ready to offer marvellous services to the guests -- be it a family night out or a romantic candlelight dinner -- during the period from Xmas Eve on December 24 to Xmas Day on December 25.

The guests can also enjoy the decorations with traditional Christmas trees and interior lighting, and carols, one of the central features of the major feast of the Christians, which is also attended by the people of all faiths worldwide in a festive fashion.

Sonargaon Hotel, located at Karwan Bazar in the city, has also prepared a wide range of food items for the feast, buffet at Café Bazar and grill and oriental foods at Jharna restaurant, said Sonargaon's Public Relations and Communications Manager Selina Momen.

Cultural activist Akbar killed in Barisal road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Akbar Hossain, a freedom fighter and a cultural personality in the city, was crushed under the wheels of a truck on C and B Road in front of Barisal BADCO office yesterday morning.

Sixty-year-old Akbar, a pioneer of group theatre movement in Barisal, was a bachelor and dedicated his life to promoting cultural activities.

He was the founder president of Kheyal Group Theatre, Gono Shilpi Sangstha and directed 75, acted in 104 and wrote eight dramas and received 'Giasuddin Padak' from Barisal Sangskritik Sangathan Samonnaya Parishad for his achievements in cultural area.

His body was taken to Kheyal Group Theatre and Gono Shilpi Sangstha offices for the people from all walks of life to pay last respect to the cultural personality.

He was buried at Tablig Markaj Gorosthan after namaz-e-janaza in front of the Barisal Aswani Kumar Hall and Tablig Markaj Masjid in the afternoon.

Hundreds of freedom fighters, socio-cultural and political leaders paid their last respect to Akbar.



Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed receives a cheque for Tk 25 lakh from National Bank Chairperson Parveen Haque Sikder for the cyclone victims recently. Bank's Director Zakaria Taher, Managing Director Md Abdur Rahman Sikder and Assistant Vice President Saidur Rahman were present on the occasion.



S Manzer Hussain, resident director of Tata Group, hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed in the city recently. N Ramchandran, country head of Tata Motors, was also present.

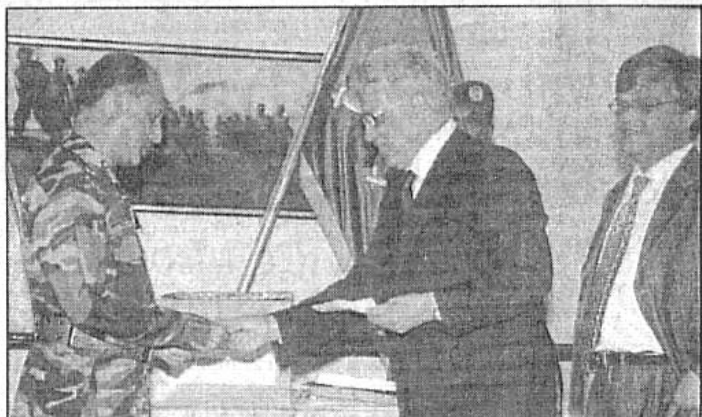


PHOTO: ISPR

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury hands over children's clothing donated by UK Company Marks and Spencer to Chief of General Staff of Bangladesh Army Major General Sina Ibn Jamali for the cyclone victims on December 18.



Sajjatz Jumma, founder chairman of Shahjalal Islami Bank Limited, hands over a cheque for Tk 20 lakh to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed for Sidr victims on December 15. Board of Directors Chairman Alhaj Akkas Uddin Mollah and Executive Committee Chairman Alhaj Anwer Hossain Khan are also seen.



Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) President Abdul Hye Sarkar hands over a cheque for Tk 50 lakh to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed for the Sidr-affected people on December 10.



Mohammed Israil, director of Rahim Steel Mills Co (Pvt) Ltd., hands over a cheque for Tk 25 lakh to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed at Dhaka Cantonment for the cyclone-affected people recently.



Mutual Group Chairman Azim Uddin Ahmed and Country Manager of Arla Foods Ahmed Kabir hand over DANO Milk and blankets worth 25,000 US dollar to Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed for the cyclone victims recently.

WEATHER

T O D A Y

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Mild cold wave that sweeping over the regions of Ishwardi, Jessore, Chuadanga and Rajshahi may improve, Met Office said, adding that night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Highest temperature 27.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakundu and lowest 8.2 degrees Celsius at Jessore.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:16pm today and rises at 6:37am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	25.6	15.0	58	53
Chittagong	26.0	14.6	74	71
Rajshahi	25.5	10.5	65	71
Khulna	25.6	12.6	68	70
Barisal	26.0	12.0	69	79
Sylhet	26.7	13.7	63	71
Cox's Bazar	27.4	17.4	50	72

Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow

FROM PAGE 1
animal in place of his son.

Marking the event, which symbolises highest loyalty and submission to the Almighty, Muslims at Mina and around the world sacrifice animals on the 10th day of the month of Zilhajj.

On the occasion, main streets and road islands will be decorated with miniature national flags and banners inscribed with 'Eid Mubarak'.

However, the government offices will not be illuminated this year due to Cyclone Sidr tragedy.

Thousands of people have already left Dhaka for their village homes to celebrate the festival with their near and dear ones after going through the hurdles of managing tickets for buses, trains and launches.

The rush for home will end today, though many fear they cannot make it on time due to unavailability of tickets.

A three-day government holiday for Eid-ul-Azha begins tomorrow. Newspaper offices will also remain closed on these days.

In separate messages, President Iajuddin Ahmed and Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed greeted the people of the country on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. The chief adviser is in Mecca at present performing the Holy Hajj.

The main Eid congregation will be held at the National Eidgah at 8:00am, attended by President Iajuddin Ahmed among others.

Separate arrangements have been made at the Eidgah for women, diplomats and their wives.

Besides, five Eid congregations will be held at the Baitul Mokarram National Mosque at 7:00am, 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am and 10:45am.

In case of inclement weather, the 8:00am congregation at the Baitul Mokarram will be considered as the main congregation, says a handout of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh.

Eid congregations will also be held at different mosques and eidgahs in Dhaka and elsewhere in the country, with the biggest congregation at Sholakia Maidan in Kishoreganj.

Like the previous years, the DCC

will organise a total of 361 Eid congregations with four in each of the 90 DCC wards in the city and one at Dhaka University playground.

The president will host a reception at Bangabhaban on the Eid day at 10:00am to exchange greetings with dignitaries and foreign diplomats.

The state-run Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television (BTV) and private TV channels will air special programmes on the occasion. The national dailies have brought out special supplements today highlighting the significance of the Eid-ul-Azha.

Special meals will be served at jails, orphanages, vagrant centres and dormitories on the day.

To celebrate Eid, Shilpakala Academy has organised a cultural function at National Music and Dance Centre at 4:00pm on the Eid day.

Dhaka City Mayor Sadek Hossain Khoka, acting BNP Chairperson M Saifur Rahman, Bangladesh Hindu-Buddhist-Christian Oikya Parishad greeted the people of the country on the occasion.