

WAR CRIMINALS

Freedom fighters, parties boycott Bangabhaban Eid reception

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Freedom fighters and major political parties boycotted the presidential reception programme at Bangabhaban on Eid day to protest against invitation of the war criminals in Jamaat-e-Islami.

However, BNP leaders who were invited attended the reception hosted by President Iajuddin Ahmed and his wife Anwara Begum at the presidential palace.

The invited leaders of Awami League (AL), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), Workers Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), and the Sector Commanders Forum refused to attend.

They also boycotted the Victory

2 Paris-bound statues stolen from ZIA

France finds it 'highly suspicious'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amid tight security, two 1,500-year-old terracotta Vishnu statues bound for an exhibition in Paris were stolen while in the custody of Air France at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Saturday.

Named 'Vishnu' and 'Bust of Vishnu', the statues are from Gupta era of the seventh century. Since being discovered in a dig at Mahasthangarh of Bogra, they had been kept at the National Museum.

Their insurance value totalled 45,000 euros that is equivalent to around Tk 45 lakh, sources at the cultural ministry said.

Despite protest from art connoisseurs, the government was sending the statues along with 143 other artefacts to the Guimet Museum in the French capital under a deed signed with France. In the first phase, it sent 42 relics on December 1.

The civil aviation authorities formed a five-member investigation committee yesterday to find out within the next three days those responsible for the heist.

"I had committed myself to bringing those back home safely. But I am shocked that such an unpleasant incident has occurred even before sending them,"

Education and Cultural Affairs Adviser Ayub Quadri told The Daily Star at his office yesterday.

Lately at a press conference he had said it was a government level exhibition and all the artefacts would surely be returned by April 2008.

A statement from the French Embassy in Dhaka yesterday described the disappearance of the box as highly suspicious and said it could be the result of a conspiracy to embarrass France and Bangladesh.

About importance of the stolen works of art, Dr Shamsuzzaman

Govt to think about lifting emergency if EC wants so

Says Mainul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Mainul Hossain yesterday said the caretaker government would discuss lifting the state of emergency if the Election Commission (EC) wants so in the interests of local government elections.

"It is the Election Commission who will fix the schedule and hold the elections. So let them say first what they want. We will discuss it with the chief adviser," he said replying to a query.

The present government does not need the state of emergency to remain in power, he said adding that they would withdraw emergency

Public servants asked to disclose wealth by Dec 31

SHAMIM ASHRAF

All government servants must declare the amounts of their wealth by December 31 as required by the government as part of its newest move to boost the ongoing anti-corruption drive through ensuring transparency in the administration.

The move requires public servants to declare the amounts of their wealth at the time of their joining the service and updating those every five years.

While issuing an order regarding the matter in the third week of this month, the establishment ministry circulated two tables one for statements listing movable and immovable properties owned at the time of joining the service and

another for updating the declared list for preparing a central database of wealth of about 10 lakh public servants.

Meanwhile, there is a strong possibility of extending the December 31 deadline as the establishment ministry received a number of requests for the extension, according to reliable sources.

The Government Servants (Conduct) Rules, 1979, which requires every government servant to declare his or her or any of the family members' movable and immovable properties at the time of joining the service, and an update showing any increase or decrease in the amount of the declared property every five years, has not been followed properly for a long time, according to the estab-

lishment ministry.

In the wake of the ongoing anti-corruption drive, Joint Secretary (Admin) to the Establishment Ministry Main Uddin Khondoker issued an order on August 28 asking all public servants to declare to the government through proper channels by December 31 any purchase and sale of valuable properties by them, construction of buildings on owned lands, and the amount of their wealth.

Establishment Secretary M Abdu Salam Khan issued another order on December 10 asking government servants to declare the amounts of their wealth in compliance with Government Servants (Conduct) Rules 1979.

Talking to The Daily Star at the

Eid-ul-Azha celebrated

BSS, Dhaka

The holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second greatest religious festival of the Muslims, was observed on Friday across the country with due religious fervour.

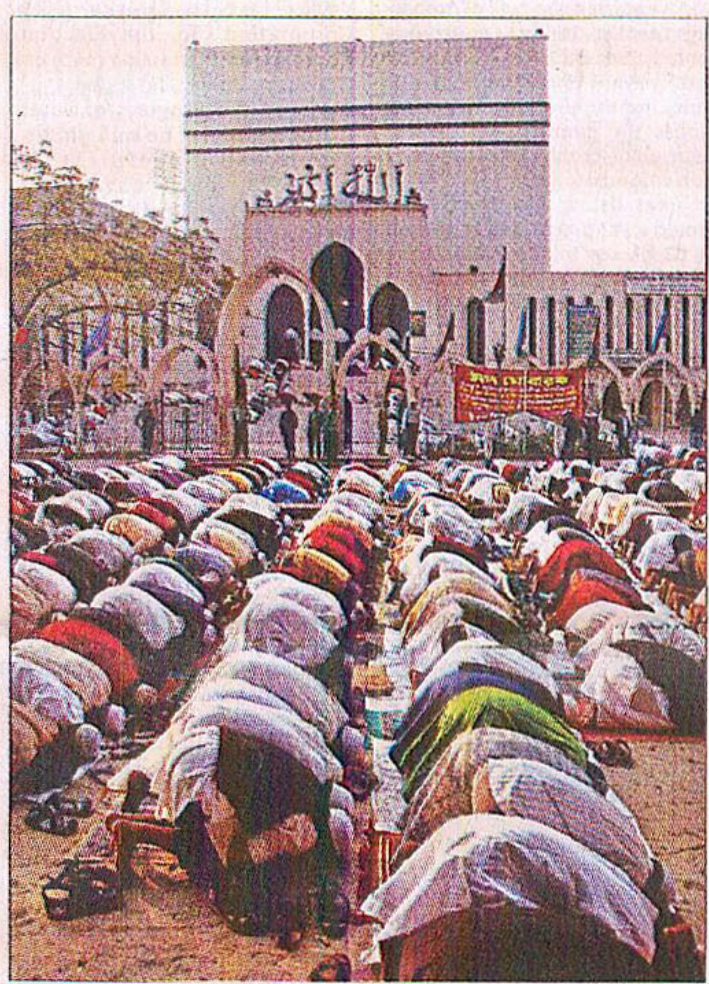
The Muslims celebrate the Eid-ul-Azha commemorating the readiness of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail (AS) to fulfil the wish of Almighty Allah. Marking the occasion, the Muslims all over the world sacrifice animals and distribute meats among the poor and relatives.

The main Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah Maidan on the premises of the Supreme Court under the auspices of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in the morning.

President Iajuddin Ahmed offered his Eid prayer at the National Eidgah. Besides, five Eid congregations were held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at 7:00am, 8:00am, 9:00am, 10:00am and 10:45am.

Eid jamaats were held at 361 other venues in 90 wards of the capital while another Eid-jamaat was organised on the Dhaka University playground.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, Chief Justice M Ruhul Amin, advisers of the caretaker government, DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain



Hundreds of people offer Eid prayers on the road along Baitul Mukarram Mosque in the capital as the national mosque could not give space to all devotees.

City still in holiday mood

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government offices, banks and courts opened yesterday after a three-day Eid-ul-Azha holiday with the capital still wearing a rare deserted look.

As tomorrow will be a public holiday for Christmas, most of the city-dwellers who had left for their village homes on Eid vacation, did not return.

In addition, many government and private employees have taken additional two days' leave ahead of the weekly holiday to enjoy an extended period of vacation. As a result, the usual office work is expected to resume by next week.

Many businessmen, especially the small traders, and garments workers are still leaving the capital for their village homes as the weekly holiday is around the corner.

The bus terminals, Kamalapur Railway Station and Sadarghat launch terminal are experiencing huge gatherings due to this.

Many members of the Christian community are also leaving capital to celebrate the Christmas with their near and dear ones.

Most of the shopping malls and markets remained closed and there was less than usual traffic on the streets.

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Road accidents kill 41 during Eid holidays

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 41 people were killed and over 150 injured in separate road accidents in the capital and elsewhere in the country during the Eid vacation.

Seven, including three women, were killed in the capital. They are Shahid, 38, Shahnaz, 16, Taqdir, 17, Laizu, 22, Iqbal, 23, Khorsheda Akhter, 35, and Arfiq Ullah, 23.

Shahid was killed when a bus knocked him down at Gulistan on Saturday. Shahnaz of Mymensingh was crushed under the wheels of a microbus at Joarshahara on Thursday.

Taqdir died on Eid day at Shyamur as a bus hit him, while another bus ran over Laizu of Barisal at Sadarghat on Thursday.

Iqbal, Atiq and Khorsheda were knocked down by separate buses in Khilgaon, on Airport Road on Wednesday, and in Old Dhaka on Saturday.

At least 12 people were killed and 45 injured in separate road accidents on Thursday and Saturday, reports our Sirajganj correspondent.

At least eight were killed and 35

others were injured when a Kushtia-bound truck with around 70 passengers skidded off the road at Simantabazar Swalpo Mahmudpur in Sirajganj on Thursday.

Meanwhile, a bus and a truck collided head-on in Sayedabad on Dhaka-Bogra Highway killing two unidentified people and injuring 10. Another unidentified person of about 32 died as a bus hit him in Datadighor on the same way in Raiganj upazila the same day.

Eight-year-old Nayeem was crushed under the wheels of a truck in Talgachhi on Bogra-Nagarbari highway on Saturday.

The injured were committed to Sirajganj General Hospital, Bogra Mohammad Ali Hospital and other local clinics.

BOGRA At least five people were killed and 10 injured in road accidents in the district, says our Bogra correspondent.

The dead are Mohammad Selim

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6 drown falling off train

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Palna

At least six people drowned and 15 others were injured as they slipped into the beam of a bridge and fell into the Gumani river from the roof of a train on December 20.

The accident occurred on the day before Eid as the Neelsagar Express was crossing Kaidanga Rail Bridge in Bhangura upazila around 3:00pm.

Witnesses said the roof of the Nilphamari-bound train was

crowded with home-going passengers due to the Eid rush. As the train entered the bridge, at least 21 of them fell into the river after being hit by the metal beam, they added.

Rescuers rushed to the spot and found a body on the spot. After two days' thorough search, the rescuers recovered five more bodies on Eid day.

The dead are Md Dulal, 32, Sabedul Haque, 30, Md Muktar Hossain, 22, Md Abdur Razzak, 18,

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Language Movement hero Mahbub no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mahbub ul Alam Chowdhury, who wrote the celebrated poem on Amar Ekushey 'Kadte ashini, fashir dabi niye eshechhi', has passed away at the age of 82.

The language movement veteran was admitted to the United Hospital in the capital on Friday as he slipped into a coma. The attending doctors pronounced him clinically dead at around 1:30pm yesterday.

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63 killed in Pak suicide attacks

AFP, Peshawar

A suicide bomber in Pakistan killed seven people and wounded almost 30 yesterday when he rammed his car into a military convoy in the restive northwest valley of Swat, the army said.

Earlier on Friday, at least 56 people were killed in another suicide bombing at a mosque in northwest Pakistan targeting a former interior minister and close ally of President Pervez Musharraf.

Yesterday's attack took place near the town of Mingora in the troubled valley, a former tourist haven that has become a flashpoint for violence where the military has been battling followers of a hard-line pro-Taliban cleric.

"A suicide bomber in a white car struck a military convoy near Mingora," chief military spokesman Major General Waheed Arshad told AFP.

In a separate statement, the military said four security forces personnel and three civilians were killed. It said 15 soldiers and 14 civilians were wounded.

FRIDAY'S BOMBING At least 56 people were killed Friday in a suicide bombing at a mosque in northwest Pakistan targeting a former interior minister.

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AUG 21 ATTACK

Arrest warrant against brother of ex-deputy minister Pintu

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday issued a warrant of arrest against Alhaj Maulana Tajuddin, brother of former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu, to capture him through Interpol in a case filed in connection with the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Golam Rabbani passed the order after Mohammad Fazlul Kabir, an assistant superintendent of police (ASP) of Criminal Investigation Department (CID), the investigation officer of the case.

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SIDR VICTIMS

4 decomposed bodies found in paddy field

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four decomposed bodies were recovered from paddy fields and a shrimp enclosure of Sharankhola upazila in Bagerhat on Friday, 36 days after cyclone Sidr battered country's southern part.

The dead are Rahimon (60), wife of Gani Mian of Rayanda, Kushum (30), wife of Ali Howlader of Bakultala, Abu Bakar (10), son of Manik Mia of Uttar Sonatala and Babul (12), son of Gani Sheikh.

They were buried on Friday. Upazila Nirbahi Officer Shahnawaz Talukder said now the total number of bodies recovered in cyclone-hit Sharankhola upazila stands at 682.

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