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CA may meet Myanmar PM during Bimstec meet in Delhi

UNB, New Delhi

Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to continue with high-level contacts at a meeting here yesterday between Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and his Myanmar counterpart U Nyan Win.

"We agreed to continue with high-level contacts, including a meeting between the Myanmar prime minister and the chief adviser, when they both arrive in New Delhi," Iftekhar told media after the meeting held on the sidelines of the Bimstec foreign ministers conference.

The meeting covered a wide range of issues, which included the recent incidents in the Bay of Bengal as well as potentialities of cooperation in political and economic fields, according to a message received in Dhaka.

The foreign adviser said, "It was

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BTTB staff knew how to share bribes

Tk 15,000- Tk 1.5 lakh they used to get each every month, reveals Tac

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Officials of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) nakedly get Tk 15,000 to Tk 1.5 lakh each every month as a share of collective illegal income, says the Truth and Accountability Commission (Tac).

These top-to-bottom level officials of BTCL, former BTTB, are committing gross corruption for long, causing a huge loss to the government exchequer every year.

Whenever a committee was formed to look into corruption and take departmental action, the issue was suppressed in course of time, as the investigators themselves were involved. Moreover, whenever the authorities were forced to

take action, lower-level officials were made the scapegoat.

Tac Chairman Justice Habibur Rahman Khan yesterday said these as an example of how corruption is deeply rooted in the government institutions.

"The country's administration is not functioning properly and the entire system should be changed," said Justice Habibur during a regular press briefing at Tac headquarters in the capital.

"Governance will improve automatically and the people would be benefited if institutional corruption is eliminated," he said, adding the institutions working against corruption must be more effective.

"If the institutions working to

curb corruption work with sincerity more graft incidents would be unearthed," said Maj Gen (retd) Manzur Rashid, member of the commission. He claims that Tac has achieved mentionable progresses to learn the nature of institutional corruption within a short period.

The commission identified the nature of graft in BTCL following confessions by four deputy director-level graft-accused. The four faced Tac through the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), which had earlier filed a case against seven BTCL officials involving around Tk 12 crore graft.

The Tac however decided not to award clemency to the four and will

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AL-JP meet soon to talk poll strategies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) and Jatiya Party (JP) are likely to sit together in a couple of days to discuss the election strategies and other substantive issues.

"We shall hold a meeting with Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in a day or two," JP acting chairman barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud told The Daily Star yesterday.

The issue of forming a grand electoral alliance will also be discussed at the meeting to be held at Hasina's Sudha Sadan residence in the capital's Dhanmondi, sources said.

If the BNP-Jamaat coalition does not contest the national elections, JP might contest the polls separately in 300 constituencies after reaching an understanding with the AL, sources added.

Various issues including sustainable democracy, economic growth, accountability of the

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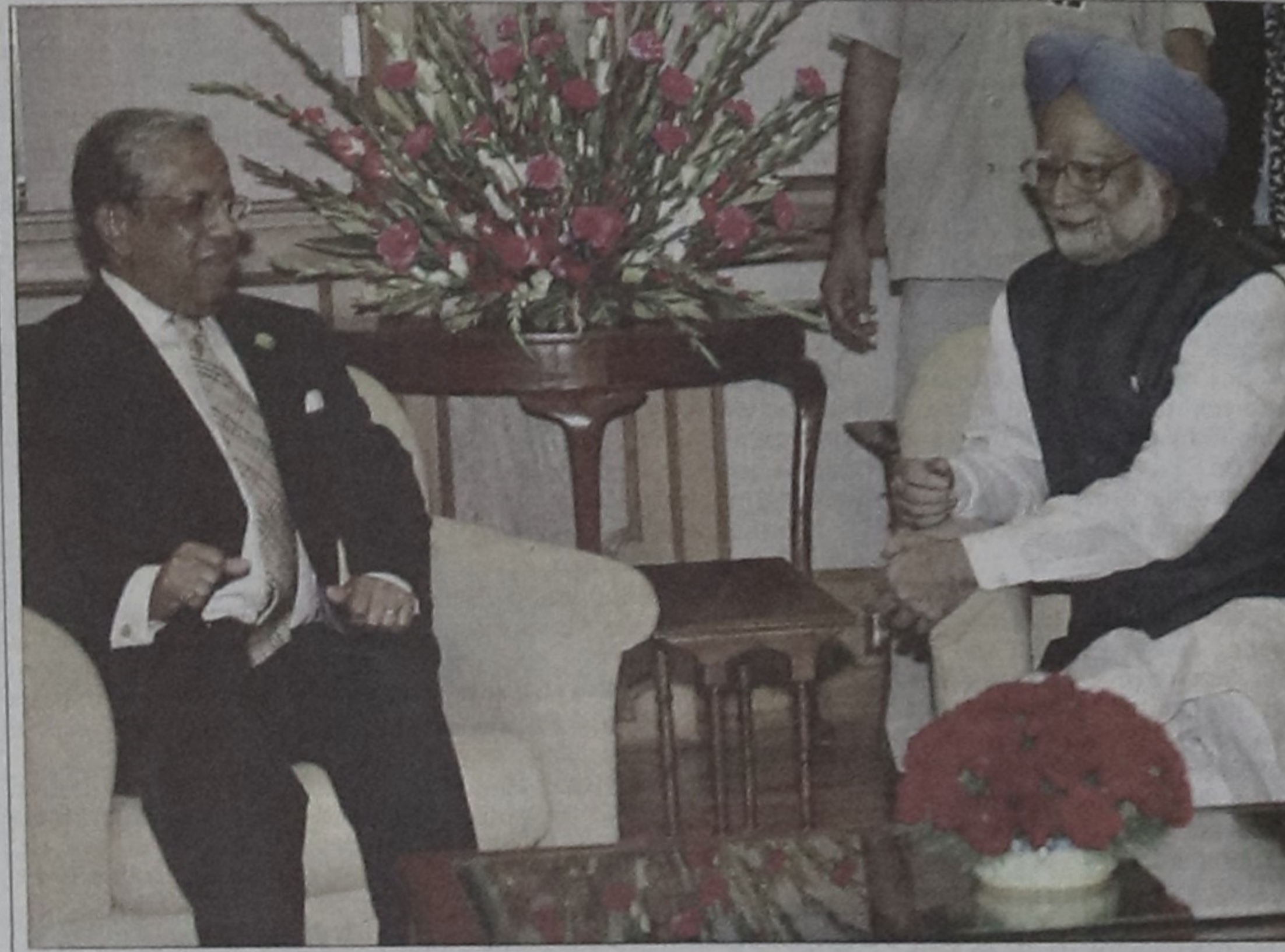


PHOTO: PIB, INDIA

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, now in New Delhi to attend the second Bimstec summit, calls on Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday.

Human chain calls for honest candidates

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan), a coalition of individuals working for good governance, formed human chains across the country yesterday demanding honest and competent candidates in the upcoming polls.

As part of its countrywide programme, Dhaka city unit of the coalition formed a human chain at Manik Mia Avenue in the city at 10:30am.

Shujan president and eminent economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad presided over the programme which was addressed, among others, by Shujan secretary Dr Badiul Alam Majumder, Gano Shastha Kendra director Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury, actor Ilias Kanchan, environmentalist Dr Nuruddin and educationalist Dr Meher-e-Khoda.

Addressing the programme, Prof Muzaffer said qualitative change in country's politics could be ensured through electing honest and competent candidates who

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PHOTO: STAR

The picture shows two bridges on the second bypass around Bogra town that still awaits completion despite huge overspending.

Project costs continue to go up but never ends

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

After overspending the estimated Tk 27.95 crore project costs by more than Tk 18 crore, the Roads & Highways Department (RHD) in Bogra has asked the government for another Tk 2.8 crore for a second bypass around Bogra town.

The department say the fund is required to complete the project by constructing half a kilometre road on farmland.

It invited fresh tender in past October for the work. Authorities have not yet allocated any funds.

The project, widely known among RHD officials as a pork barrel, began in 2000. About 48.89 hectares of farmland were acquired to build the 15.8-kilometre road.

The government in 2005 extended time for completion of the project by four more years

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RMG export bracing for huge fall

IMF forecasts global meltdown fallout

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday forecast that the growth of garment exports from Bangladesh might drop to single digits in the current fiscal year (FY09) due to global economic turmoil.

It also said the country's GDP growth in the year would come down to 5.5 percent, which was projected at 6.5 percent by the present government.

The predictions came when a three-member delegation of the Fund met Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam and Bangladesh Bank Governor Salehuddin Ahmed.

According to meeting sources, the IMF team said the outlook for garment exports looks bleak because of severe economic downturns in the US and Europe. The

RMG export growth is likely to fall to 9 percent and risks remain of even more substantial adverse effects.

The last time the growth rate came down below double digits was FY02-03 when it was recorded 9.39 percent.

It ranged between 14 percent and 21 percent from FY04 to FY08.

Led by IMF Asia and Pacific Department Adviser Thomas Rambough, the team is visiting Dhaka to assess the impact of global economic recession on Bangladesh economy.

According to Export Promotion Bureau statistics, the country's overall exports grew by 42.85 percent in July and August of FY08-09.

During the period, the RMG sector has clocked a significant growth in export. Sales of woven clothes to other countries grew by

35.55 percent and knitwear by 52.84 percent.

After meeting the delegation, the BB governor told reporters that the IMF has asked them to stay alert to the possibility of garment export being badly hit by the global economic slump.

In response to the concerns, Salehuddin said, "We are cautiously hopeful. The garment exports may not grow as fast as it is now, but it will not nosedive either."

The finance adviser said the recession would not affect garment exports if it does not linger and gets deeper. It would rather create some opportunities for Bangladesh.

The IMF delegation said the growth momentum heading into FY09 was strong and it continues to back the economic activities.

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10 killed as truck ploughs through roadside shop

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cnawabganj

At least 10 people died and 20 others were injured when a fruits-laden truck crashed into a roadside grocery shop at Dhobra Bazar under Shibganj upazila of the district yesterday evening.

The dead are Ismail Hossain, 35, Chiku Miah, 55, Saidur Rahman, 19, Abdul Latif, 35, Khairul Islam, 30, Razzak, 32, Masud Rana, 19, Badiur, 45, Tahir, 18, and Shish Islam, 19.

The injured were admitted to local hospitals and clinics. One of

them, Karim, was shifted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) as his condition deteriorated.

Witnesses said the Chapainawabganj-bound truck from Sonamasjid land port was carrying imported fruits. When the truck reached Dhobra Bazar at around 7:00pm, its driver lost control over the steering, they added.

They further said the truck ploughed into the shop where at least 50 people were watching television.

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JP, Workers Party slate govt ban on rallies before November 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party and Workers Party yesterday criticised the government for its decision not to allow political parties to hold rallies or processions before November 27.

Jatiya Party (JP) led by Anwar Hossain Manju demanded lifting of the ban on political activities the government imposed on Tuesday.

In a press release, JP Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam urged the government to create a level playing field by ensuring equal treatment of all political parties.

Workers Party of Bangladesh

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Govt can now confiscate Janata Tower property

SC upholds HC order; Rawshan, 16 others have to pay fine or face imprisonment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court (HC) verdict that had fined Tk 10,000 or two years in jail to each of the 17 accused, including Jatiya Party Senior Presidium Member Rawshan Ershad, in the Janata Tower corruption case.

The four-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin also upheld another HC order that had directed the government to confiscate the properties of Janata Tower.

However, the apex court

granted an appeal filed by the government against the High Court order, which earlier directed the government to hand over Janata Tower to a group led by Shukur Ali Pradhan.

The SC delivered the verdicts after dismissing separate appeals filed by the government and the accused.

Deputy Attorney General Zahurul Islam Mukul, who represented the government, told reporters that the properties of Janata Tower would remain as government properties after the SC verdicts.

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Banglalink chief takes up Mobilink job in Pakistan

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Banglalink Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Rashid Khan will take the reins of Mobilink, Orascom Telecom Holding's subsidiary in Pakistan, in December.

Khan's tenure as Banglalink's

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Azad Siddiqui arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Azad Siddiqui, younger brother of Krishak Sramik Janata League (KSJL) President Abdul Kader Siddiqui, was arrested in the district town yesterday.

Ashraf Hossain, officer-in-charge (OC) of Tangail Sadar Police Station, told The Daily Star that they arrested Azad in connection with a case filed under Women and

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450-strong team to set Obama's policy

AFP, Washington

US president-elect Barack Obama is sending evaluators to study the sprawling US bureaucracy to help him determine how best to meet his administration's goals when he takes office on January 20.

Obama's 450-strong transition team will scour more than 100 departments and agencies for data to underpin new policies once his presidency gets underway.

Transition co-chair John Podesta promised on Tuesday that Obama would publish the names of aides due to begin burrowing into government monoliths such as the State Department, Treasury and the Pentagon as early as Monday.

"This is part of our commitment to make this the most open and transparent transition in history," Podesta said at his first post-election press conference.

"Under president-elect Obama and vice president-elect Biden, the American people will see a transition of government that is efficient, that is organized, that is bipartisan and more open and transparent than others before."

Podesta said the transition team would employ around 450 people in the US capital and Obama's

hometown Chicago, with a budget of 12 million dollars.

Podesta said more than 100 interim security clearances had already been issued to transition personnel, part of an accelerated effort to get the government up and running at a time of international turmoil.

During his first post-election press conference last week, Obama said he would move with "deliberate haste" to fill cabinet positions.

He has yet to make any nominations, though White House staff announcements are expected soon before the major cabinet posts are announced.

The president-elect, honoring protocol that there is "only one president at a time," will stay away from the weekend's international economic summit in Washington. Some of his aides however will likely meet foreign delegates.

On Tuesday, Obama advisors tried to dispel suggestions of tensions with the White House after it emerged that he had pressed President George W. Bush for immediate aide for struggling US auto giants in private talks the day before.

The New York Times cited unnamed sources as saying the

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6 killed as suicide bomber attacks Afghan govt office

AP, Kandahar

A suicide bomber driving an oil tanker detonated his explosives outside an Afghan government office during a provincial council meeting yesterday, killing at least six people and wounding 42, officials said.

In another incident, only hours earlier in Kandahar two men on a motorcycle threw acid on eight Afghan girls walking to school injuring three schoolgirls seriously.

A doctor at the hospital they were admitted to, Dr Sharifa Siddiqi, said that three of the girls suffered serious burns. Three others were treated and released.

The attack in at the council office, at a former Taliban strong-

hold in southern Afghanistan, flattened five nearby homes and damaged the offices of the country's intelligence service.

The bomb dug a crater some 15 feet into the ground.

Six people died and 42 were wounded in the blast, said Rahmatullah Raufi, the governor of Kandahar province. Among the dead were two intelligence agents, a police officer and three civilians, Raufi said.

He blamed Taliban militants for the attack.

"The Taliban want to disrupt law and order in Kandahar," Raufi said.

The blast came as the provincial council was hearing constituent complaints. Two council members

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PHOTO: STAR

Police check on an activist of Islamic Law Implementation Committee before he joins a demonstration in front of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque yesterday to protest alleged blasphemy in plays staged by Udichi and Dhumketu.

Prayer Timing
 November 13

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5:00	5:35
Zohr	12:45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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