

City is still in Eid mood



The city is slowly coming back to life on the first working day after the Eid holidays. The photo was taken from New Market area in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

RAKIB AHAMMED

The huge clock of Dhaka City Corporation struck 12:00 noon. The usually busy corridors of the corporation looked deserted yesterday -- the first working day after a five-day Eid vacation.

Like most other government offices in the capital, activities at the DCC were yet to get back the normal pace.

"The corridors become crowded every day with city-dwellers and DCC staff. They are empty today as it's the first working day after the Eid," said

Abdur Rahman, acting chief public relations officer of DCC.

This year, officials enjoyed a five-day holiday, as a two-day weekly holiday was added with the three-day Eid vacation. Many have taken additional leave to spend more time with their families.

Attendance at secretariat, Wasa, Shikha Bhaban and Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (Banbeis) was also thin. Those who joined spent their time mostly by exchanging Eid greetings.

Private and public banks also functioned leisurely.

"It's a commercial area but there aren't that many transactions today [yesterday]," said Mahbubul Alam, manager of Premier Bank, at his Karwan Bazar office.

Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) President Shakil Rizvi said business at the stock market was average.

Officials at private and government offices said activities will resume in full swing within a few days.

The regular buzz on the city streets was also not there.

"There wasn't that much traffic since I started at 6:00am," said

Mahbubur Rahman, a traffic police, at Karwan Bazar intersection around 1:00pm.

City's bus, train and launch terminals, however, looked busy as people continued to return to the city from their village home.

"I went home the night before the Eid day. I returned hurriedly fearing that the owner of my CNG-run auto rickshaw may rent it out to others," said Abdul Karim at Mohakhali bus terminal. He went to his home in Jamalpur after one year.

Touhiduzzaman, who works at a private company, also returned from

Nogaon yesterday even before his official leave ended.

He said he got married last month and it was the first Eid in his marital life. He had to come back for emergency official duty.

However, a number of passengers complained that they had to pay an unusually high fare to reach their destination, as there was not enough transport on the roads.

"I had to hire a CNG-run auto rickshaw for Tk 400 to go to Mirpur, which is much higher than the usual rate," said Arif Hossain at Sadarghat launch terminal.

29 houses gutted as fire breaks out at two city slums

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 29 houses, a rickshaw garage and a furniture shop were gutted in separate incidents of fire at Mohammadpur and Khilgoan slums in the city last night.

Fire brigade sources said the fire originated from a house at a slum at Mohammadpur embankment at around 8:00pm and spread to the adjacent house.

Four units of fire brigade managed to douse the fire, which damaged at least 25 houses, after a hour-long effort, source said.

In another incident, four houses, a rickshaw garage and a furniture shop were gutted at Taltala slum in Khilgoan at the same time.

Four units of fire brigade doused the fire after one hour.

State burial for Mir Shawkat today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lt Gen (retd) Mir Shawkat Ali, a veteran war hero and one of 11 sector commanders of country's Liberation War, will be laid to eternal rest with state honour today after Johr prayers at the army graveyard in the city.

His first namaz-e-janaza (funeral prayers) will be held at 10:00am at Labagh Shahi Mosque. People from all walks of life will pay their last tributes to the brave son of the soil at the mosque.

The second one will be arranged at 11:30am at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, Jahanara Begum, a cousin of the valiant soldier, told The Daily Star yesterday.

It will be followed by a third and final one at the Army Central Mosque after Johr prayers, she added.

Meanwhile, Tahmina Shawkat, wife of the deceased, and her three daughters reached Dhaka from London yesterday afternoon. From the airport they directly went to Combined Military Hospital mortuary, where the body of Mir Shawkat was kept.

Mir Shawkat often expressed frustration over the intolerance and unfriendly attitude among the political parties, especially between the two major parties Awami League and BNP, added Jahanara.

"Even two days before his death, he expressed displeasure at the way politics is going on in the country."

The eminent freedom fighter died at his Gulshan residence on Saturday evening following a massive cardiac arrest.

During the 1971 Liberation War, he revolted against the Pakistan government and was appointed commander of sector-5. For his gallantry he was awarded 'Bir Uttam'.

Arif held at jail gate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch once again arrested Dhaka City Corporation ward councillor Ariful Islam from jail gate while he was freed on bail yesterday.

Deputy Commissioner Monirul Islam of Detective Branch told The Daily Star that they have arrested Ariful Islam from the Dhaka Central Jail gate in the afternoon.

However, he did not dis-

close on what charge Ariful was arrested.

Earlier, Ariful, councillor of DCC Ward- 53 in Ramna, was arrested for his alleged involvement in the August 21, 2004 grenade attack on an Awami League rally and was sent to Narayanganj jail.

On November 16, he was arrested from Narayanganj jail gate and was freed on bail and sent to Dhaka Central Jail through a court.

New law on cards to bring back laundered money

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to enact another law styled Mutual Assistance Act to bring back the money laundered abroad and prevent terrorist financing.

The act is being drafted and it is expected to be passed by the Jatiya Sangsad in June next year.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith said this while talking to journalists following a meeting of the National Coordination Committee on Anti-Money Laundering held at the secretariat yesterday.

Muhith said when the law is made it will be easy for the government to get information regarding laundered money. At present separate agreements are signed with different countries for getting such information. But the new law will facilitate collecting information from all countries under a single agreement.

The finance minister could not say for sure how much money can be brought back, but he said information would be available. If there is any allegation of money launder-

ing against anybody, specific charges could be brought against him.

An anti-money laundering global body named Financial Action Task Force (FATF), at a meeting last month in Paris, expressed satisfaction at the steps taken by Bangladesh against money laundering activities and terrorist financing.

This was mentioned at the coordination council meeting yesterday.

Bangladesh has already prepared an action plan on the advice of the FATF to amend anti-money laundering act and terrorist financing act. It will also prepare two reports in this regard.

For quick implementation of the action plan, a working committee headed by the banking secretary was formed at yesterday's meeting. It will include representatives of various ministries and departments concerned and regulatory agencies.

Besides, the meeting decided that a deputy secretary-level official will coordinate the work of related ministries and departments.



President Zillur Rahman, top, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, bottom, pay homage to members of the armed forces martyred during the War of Liberation in 1971 after placing wreaths at the Shikha Anirban in Dhaka Cantonment yesterday.

PHOTO: ISPR



WEATHER TODAY

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

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

Light to moderate fog may occur over the river basins of the country during midnight till morning.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:19am 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	29.1	20.2	44	52
Chittagong	28.1	23.0	82	81
Rajshahi	28.6	14.1	80	63



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia speaks at the party's national standing committee meeting at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Death anniversary of Jebunnessa today

BSS, Dhaka

Today is the 12th death anniversary of Jebunnessa Jahangir, wife of Shaheed Lt Col NAM Janangir.

On the occasion, her family members have taken various programmes including doa and milad mahfil, a press release said.

Relative, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the doa mahfil and pray for peace of the departed soul.

Special munajat will also be held at her grave.

Jebunnessa is the third daughter of former speaker of the then Pakistan National Assembly late Abdul Wahab Khan.

Mathematics textbooks worst in world, say speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a programme yesterday said the quality of the country's mathematics textbooks is the worst in the world.

Quality textbooks are crucial as arithmetic and algorithmic knowledge are vital in almost every field of science including information communication technology (ICT), they said.

The speakers said these at the Fourth Jahurul Haque-Abdullah Al Muti Memorial Lecture organised by Bangladesh Biggyan Jonopriokaran Samity at the Mohammad Shamsul Haque auditorium in the city.

"Giving away computer labs to educational institutes would not help build programmers as most people in the country lack fundamental knowledge on mathematics," said the samity's Convenor

Munir Hasan.

In the programme, decoder of jute genome Dr Maqsudul Alam and nanotechnology expert Dr Farseen Mannan Mohammady delivered the memorial lectures.

"India has taken long strides in biometric technology over the years. It has secured \$6.23 billion through outsourced projects in this technology," said Maqsudul, an expatriate Bangladeshi scientist who also decoded the genome of papaya and rubber.

"Our country has a lot of talented people who need to be utilised.

"I have worked with a team of 28 people in the jute project, and the chemistry in the team was fantastic, something I have not seen anywhere in the world."

Prof Mohammady, who also teaches at Bangladesh University of Engineering

and Technology (Buett), said nanotechnology would transform the future in ways that cannot be conceived.

"It would revolutionise how we use technology in our everyday life," he said, "the things that we seen in movies would become real, thanks to this technology."

Nanotechnology is the study of manipulating matter on an atomic and molecular scale. It may be able to create many new materials and devices with a vast range of applications, such as in medicine, electronics, biomaterials and energy production.

The country has been lagging behind in many areas of science but more research and education on nanotechnology would give Bangladesh an edge and a strong standing in the scientific community in the future, he said.