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2nd phase of Biswa Ijtema begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second phase of Biswa Ijtema, the largest Muslim congregation after Hajj, begins today on the bank of Turag in Tongi with the participation of lakhs of devotees from home and abroad.

Tens of thousands of devotees with winter clothes, blankets and cooking utensils, have already gathered at the Ijtema venue to seek divine blessing of Allah.

Devotees from 32 districts will join the second phase, which will conclude on January 22 after Akheri Munajat. The first phase of the Ijtema began on January 13 and concluded on January 15.

The Tablig-e-Jamaat has been organising the

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Army foils bid to topple govt

Spokesman says a group of 'fanatical' serving, retired officials behind plot; 2 ex-officers arrested; 2 top ranking officers face interrogation; court of enquiry formed

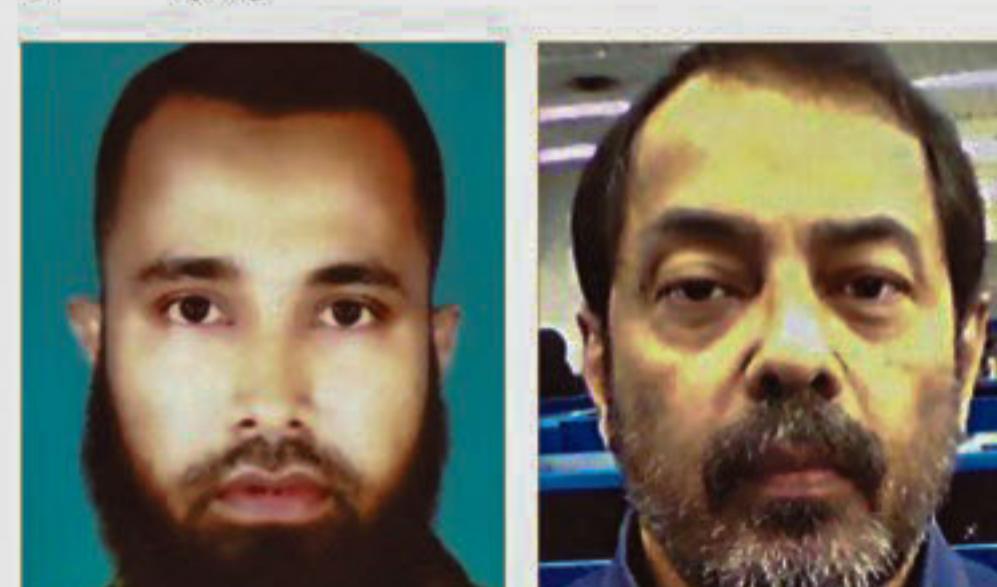
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The army has foiled a "coup attempt to overthrow the present democratic government", an army spokesman said yesterday.

A band of religious fanatics, comprising mid-ranking officers and their retired colleagues, was involved in the failed putsch.

At the instigation of some non-resident Bangladeshis, they sought to "disrupt democracy by creating anarchy in the army, cashing in on the fanaticism of others".

Brigadier General Muhammad Mashud Razzaq, director of Personnel Services Directorate, disclosed the information at an



Major Zia, absconding plotter

Ishraq Hossain, Zia's associate

unprecedented press briefing at the Army Officers Club in Dhaka cantonment. He was

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The army statement

Army Headquarters press briefing on ill attempts to create disorder in the army -January 19, 2012.

1. Journalists and others of different print and electronic media who have come to this press briefing at the invitation of Bangladesh Army and the army officials present- Assalamu Alaikum.

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Conspiracy days gone

Ashraf says all culprits to be identified, punished

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday talked tough against the conspirators in the Bangladesh army. It said they would be traced and punished sternly for plotting a coup.

"Those who want to destroy the democratic system will be identified and brought to justice, whoever they are. Stern action will be taken against them. None will be spared," LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashraful Islam told a press conference at Gono Bhaban at 6:30pm.

Around three hours earlier, the Bangladesh army at a press briefing disclosed that it had foiled a conspiracy to stage a coup to topple the government.

Ashraful, also general secretary of the ruling Awami League, urged all political parties, members of the civil society and the media to help continue and sustain the democratic system. He said an affected, wounded democracy will affect everybody.

"We might have differences of opinion, but there is no difference of opinion in the case of democracy. So it is the duty of all to protect the democratic system," said the

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Torture for mobile, torchlight, Rs 1,000

Cattle smuggler tells The Daily Star of the abuse by BSF men

RABIUL HASAN, Chapainawabganj

Not having a mobile phone, torchlight and a thousand rupees as bribe almost cost the life of a Bangladeshi who was caught on camera while being tortured by Indian border guards.

Stripping him, the jawans of Border Security Force (BSF) tied his hands and legs and beat him up before dumping his unconscious body in a mustard field near Raninagar camp in Paschimbanga's Murshidabad district.

"When I opened my eyes, I was not sure if I was alive. I lay in the mustard field for a while to pull myself together. Though I

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CAUGHT ON CAMERA: BSF BRUTALITY

TV GRAB
The footage of BSF men torturing a Bangladeshi who has been identified as Habibur Rahman, inset, of Shibganj, Chapainawabganj.

Dhaka protests

Delhi orders full probe

STAR REPORT

Dhaka yesterday officially lodged protest with New Delhi over an incident of torture of a Bangladeshi man by the Indian Border Security Force last month.

"The Government of Bangladesh has conveyed its utter dismay about the incident to the Indian side. It has protested such abusive and violent action by BSF personnel despite repeated assurance from the Indian leadership about exercise of utmost restraint by BSF personnel," said a Bangladesh

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Child killed as AL factions exchange fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A clash between two factions of the ruling Awami League over control of a market left an eight-year-old child dead in Keraniganj yesterday.

Mohammad Sohel, a student of class-I at Ambagicha Govt Primary School, died after a stray bullet fired by one of the factions hit him in the head.

Sohel, son of rickshaw puller Hafiz Uddin, was playing in front of his home along with friends when he was hit.

Witnesses said locals brought out a protest procession with Sohel's body after the incident. Police later took the body from the protestors and sent it to Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue for an autopsy.

The clash erupted when a group of people led by local AL leader Mujibur Rahman and Suvadda union parishad Chairman Mohammad Iqbal attacked Momtaz Market at Purba Aganagar around 11:00am with a view to taking

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NARSINGDI BY-POLLS Brother succeeds Lokman in big win

RASHIDUL HASAN, from Narsingdi

Voters in Narsingdi municipality by-election yesterday apparently showed "posthumous honour" to slain mayor Lokman Hossain, casting their votes wholesale in favour of his brother Kamruzzaman ensuring his landslide victory.

Awami League supported candidate Kamruzzaman bagged 35,569 votes to succeed his brother. His nearest rival Montaz Uddin Bhuiyan, president, Narsingdi city AL, supported by Posts and Telecommunications Minister Raju Uddin Ahmed, got 13,813 votes.

Four other candidates -- Amzad Hossain (1,589 votes), Afzal Hossain (553 votes), Mosabbir Ahmed (463 votes) and Ariful Islam (151 votes) -- lost deposited money as

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Kamruzzaman



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