

Devotees swarm

FROM PAGE 1

Though there is no provision for women joining the Ijtema, several hundred females have already reached near the venue. Many have rented spaces near shops and houses adjacent to the Ijtema ground.

Devotee Fedousi Begum said if women can perform Hajj, then why they will not be allowed to attend the Ijtema, the largest congregation of the Muslims after Hajj.

TIGHT SECURITY

A five-layer security system by over 20,000 uniformed and plainclothes policemen and members of Rab and intelligence agencies is in place at the Ijtema ground.

Three helicopters of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have been hovering over the venue since the beginning of the Ijtema. Besides, 14 watch towers of Rab and police have been set up to ensure security, said Abdul Baten, police superintendent of Gazipur.

Tongi police said a mobile court has sentenced three muggers to 10 days rigorous imprisonment each for mugging near the Ijtema ground.

FREE MEDICAL SERVICE

A physician of Gazipur Sadar Hospital said some 3,180 devotees received treat-

ment at their medical camps at the Ijtema ground till 2:00pm yesterday.

Apart from the government medical booths, a good number of privately run free medical camps are providing medical services to the devotees.

TEMPORARY BUSINESSES

Many people have opened businesses near the Ijtema venue to make some bucks.

Selling of different kinds of food items, prayer mat, cap, charging of mobile phone handsets, and water purification are among the businesses. Many students were selling newspapers and masks.

"I've come here to sell masks to earn some money, with which I'll pay my exam fees," said Monir Hossain, a class-V student of Sunflower School at Tongi.

THREE DIE

Omar Ali, 48, of Keraniganj in Dhaka, Abdul Majid Pramanik, 65, of Belkuchi in Sirajganj and Shahjalal, 26, of Sufiyabad in Feni died of cardiac arrest, old age complications and diarrhoea early on Friday, said Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury, resident medical officer of Tongi Upazila Health Complex.



With severed tendons in both hands Noorjahan Begum undergoing treatment at Pangu Hospital in the capital yesterday. A member of Mobarakpur union parishad in Chapainawabganj, she was attacked by criminals Wednesday night.

PHOTO: STAR

Light emitting

FROM PAGE 16

first light-emitting plant.

It is a genetically-modified version of a regular pot plant called *Nicotiana glauca* and glows continuously during its lifetime.

The firm is auctioning the first batch of glowing shrubs and taking pre-orders for further plants it is currently nurturing.

The company said its plants light emission 'machinery' is encoded in its cells to let it constantly emit visible light during its life cycle of between two and three months.

"The glow of Starlight Avatar is best described as comparable in strength to starlight," the company said.

It suggests that people should appreciate the plant's 'dim ambient glow' in a darkened room and it might take a few minutes for their eyes to adjust to appreciate the effect.

It took Dr Alexander Krichevsk, bioengineer and the founder of Bioglow, several years to make the plant prototypes, which for the first time show that plants can emit light on their own.

Bioglow aims to bring cleaner, sustainable and affordable plant-based light alternatives to the world.

2 killed

FROM PAGE 16

Dulal and Samej succumbed to their injuries on the way to Jamalpur General Hospital. Driver Palash, 32, was later referred to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital from the general hospital as his condition deteriorated.

A case was filed with the GRP.

Caab eyes 7,000 new staff

FROM PAGE 1

Once the organogram was approved, the Caab would start recruiting necessary staff and train them up in phases, he added.

"In the last 30 years we couldn't recruit any additional manpower although the aviation activities have increased by 10 to 15 times," the Caab chief said.

The new organogram proposes posting of an air vice-marshal from the air force on deputation as the chairman of the Caab. It also suggests creating seven posts of members, including one for the aviation security department, said sources in the civil aviation ministry.

Other member posts have been proposed for the departments of operations and planning, air traffic management, engineering, administration, finance, flight standard and regulations.

Currently, the Caab has only two posts of members.

As per the new organogram, joint secretary-level officials will be appointed as members to the administration and finance departments, while the chief engineer will become the member of the engineering department.

The organogram also proposes appointment of four air commodore-ranked officers from the air force.

Besides, the security department headed by a member will have around 2,200 staff.

Each of the three international airports -- Dhaka, Chittagong, and Sylhet -- and the Cox's Bazar Airport, which would also be upgraded to international standards, will get

NEW CAAB ORGANOGRAM		EXISTING ORGANOGRAM
Chairman	1	1
Members	12	4
Directors	55	12
Deputy Directors	181	18
Assistant directors	497	49
First class officers	976	187
Second Class officers	1443	82
Third class staffs	5462	2449
Fourth class staffs	2067	914

an executive director under the security department.

Officers from the air force will serve as executive directors on deputation.

Caab officials said there would be around 60 posts for directors and superintendent engineers, who would be ranked on a par with the directors.

The posts of directors will be filled up either by promotion or from officers from the air force on deputation. The posts of around 2,200 aviation security guards will also be filled up either from the existing staff or from the air force personnel, the officials informed.

At present, there are only 921 security guards to maintain security at the four airports of the country.

French army kills 11 militants in Mali

AFP, Bamako

A French counter-terrorism offensive in rebel-infested northern Mali ended yesterday with 11 Islamist militants killed and a French soldier wounded, military sources inside the operation told AFP.

The action came as Paris steps up its campaign against armed groups linked to Al-Qaeda holed up in Mali's vast desert, following the former French colony's recent return to democratic government after a coup which plunged the country into chaos.

"The French military operation in the Timbuktu region is completed. Eleven terrorists were killed. A French soldier was wounded but his life is not in danger," said an official from France's Operation Serval military mission in its former colony.

Strong blasts rock Cairo

FROM PAGE 16

The bombing also damaged the nearby Museum of Islamic Art, bringing down ceilings and damaging exhibits, culture minister Mohamed Ibrahim told AFP.

State television said investigators had found the remains of the suspected suicide bomber.

Hours later, a small makeshift bomb exploded near a police vehicle close to a metro station, killing a police conscript, security officials said.

That was followed by a bomb outside a police station on a road leading to the Giza pyramids that caused no casualties, the interior ministry said.

"They don't want the people to celebrate," the January 25 anniversary, the interior minister, who is also named Mohamed Ibrahim, said of the assailants.

The president's office vowed to "avenge our martyrs."

"Whoever planned, participated, financed, or incited (the attack) will be punished with the worst form of punishment," it said.

Later yesterday, at least one person was killed when Islamist protesters clashed with their civilian opponents and police in several cities, security officials said.

The Islamists, who object to the military's overthrow of Morsi in July, condemned the security headquarter's bombing but said they would go ahead with "peaceful" protests.

A witness who lives in an apartment about

200 metres (yards) away from the police building said he had been awakened by the explosion.

"My buildings shook," Yahya Attiya said.

Riot police pushed back hundreds of onlookers, some of whom chanted slogans against the Muslim Brotherhood.

Militants have escalated attacks since the military overthrew Morsi after only a year of turbulent rule.

Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood has denied involvement in those attacks, but was blacklisted as a terrorist group after 15 people were killed when a suicide bomber blew up a vehicle at a police headquarters north of Cairo in December.

An al-Qaeda inspired group, Ansar Beit al-Maqdis, claimed responsibility for that attack, but many blame the Brotherhood.

"I can now call the Muslim Brotherhood the terrorist Brotherhood," said Attiya, as he surveyed the wreckage outside the police headquarters.

Scores of soldiers and police have been killed in the restive Sinai Peninsula and militants in the desert region have begun to expand their operations to densely populated areas of the rest of the country.

There have also been several bombings in Cairo, including a failed assassination attempt against the interior minister in September, weeks after policemen killed hundreds of Islamist demonstrators in clashes at a protest camp.

Rishipara

FROM PAGE 1

but came back following bomb blasts near the school. The polling was postponed. "Actually, we could not vote," he said.

However, some other families of the community had voted, locals said.

BNP-Jamaat leaders and supporters at a meeting at Dhakuria bazaar on January 7 decided to "punish" the Rishi community, reads the confessional statements of two detained suspects Shahabuddin Shihab and Mofizur Rahman.

The BNP-Jamaat alliance had boycotted the election.

As per the meeting decision, a gang of nine divided into two stormed Rishipara around 1:30am, said Shihab, a BNP supporter.

Shihab, Mofiz, Saiful, Sohrab and Ilias went to a house and raped a woman after beating and tying up the males.

Rezaul, Siddique, Abu Taher and Alim did the same in another house. They were carrying sharp weapons.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the confession, given before Senior Judicial Magistrate Amirul Islam of Jessore.

Mofiz in his statement also named Uttam, a Rishipara resident now in detention, as one of the accomplices.

But villagers say Mofiz, a local loan shark, intentionally framed Uttam, who owe him some money.

Monirampur police on January 10 recorded a case in connection with the rape. Other members of the gang are yet to be arrested.

Jessore Superintendent of Police Joydeb Bhodro said two arrested suspects had given confessional statements and justice for the rape incident will be done now.



PHOTO: STAR

Criminals vandalised idols of Shanerpar Durga Temple in Palash upazila of Narsingdi yesterday.

One year passes

FROM PAGE 16

the Dhaka city unit committee and that the issue had not been discussed in party forum since the council.

Party sources said most of the city and some central leaders were in favour of keeping the city committee in one piece for the sake of organisational strength. They think the Dhaka unit has always played a key role and its being intact is vital to face any opposition movement.

Other top AL ranks, however, want the city unit split saying that the party must uphold the government decision that divided the city corporation.

AL city unit joint general secretary Shahey Alam Murad told The Daily Star that the party president was the only one to decide on the city committee.

"Our president will announce it when the time is right," he said.

Many thana-, ward- and union-level leaders under the city unit have expressed disappointment over the delay. They raised question about the point of holding the last city council in a hurry.

A large number of city unit leaders have also expressed frustration over its acting president MA Aziz and general secretary Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya for not taking steps to announce the committee.

The city council of December 2012 was held nine years after the previous one on June 18, 2003. The committee was announced on February 5, 2004 with late Mohammad Hanif as its president and Maya as the general secretary. After Hanif's demise on November 28, 2006, MA Aziz was made the acting president.

Not only Hanif, the present committee's law affair secretary Khorshed Alam Bacchu, its later law affair secretary Shamsuzzaman Nilu, advisor Rafiqul Islam alias Ada Chacha have also passed away while its organising secretary Kazi Mostaque Elen settled in the USA.

Sources said the city AL is now running under the leadership of Maya, who has also been included in the cabinet as a minister. Acting president Aziz is now in India for medical care.

The city AL is now considering holding its thana, ward and union councils. In its January 20 meeting, the unit decided to hold the councils as early as possible. To do so, it is going to hold its extended meeting on January 28.

Sources said the city unit would fix a deadline for holding the councils in the extended meeting. A total of 26 thana, 103 ward and 17 union units fall under the city unit's jurisdiction.

Injured worker

FROM PAGE 16

Miah for interrogation.

Salma went to bed with Babu around 11:45pm on Thursday. After getting up at around 6:00am, Babu found his wife hanging from the ceiling with a scarf and informed the police, Kamal Hossain, sub-inspector of Turag Police Station, told The Daily Star, quoting the husband.

Babu told police that his wife had been suffering from severe headache due to her injuries from the Rana Plaza tragedy and she might have committed suicide as she could not bear the pain anymore.

Salma, a worker of New Wave Style garment housed in Rana Plaza, sustained severe head injuries in the deadliest industrial tragedy of the country's history and underwent treatment for five months at a hospital in Savar.

Later, she moved to Bamlartek in Turag and started living there with her husband Babu, a bus helper, from December last year.

Salma, who hailed from Kushtia district, managed a job in a garment factory in the area.

However, she could not overcome the mental trauma she experienced in the Savar tragedy, Babu claimed.

Police recovered the body yesterday morning and sent it to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for an autopsy. The body will be handed over to the family members after the autopsy today.

The exact cause of her death could be determined only after getting the post mortem report, police said.

ROHINGYA MUSLIMS IN MYANMAR

UN for probe into attacks

Govt denies accusation

AFP, Yangon

The United Nations has called on Myanmar to investigate reports that dozens of men, women and children were killed in attacks on Rohingya Muslims with the alleged involvement of police.

The UN said it had received "credible information" of a series of attacks in a remote area of strife-torn Rakhine state earlier this month, in the latest statement of international concern over the fresh bout of unrest.

Myanmar, whose sweeping political reforms have been overshadowed by religious bloodshed, has vociferously denied civilians were killed but said a police officer was presumed dead after a clash.

"I deplore the loss of life in (the village of) Du Chee Yar Tan and call on the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation and ensure that victims and their families receive justice," the UN's human rights chief Navi Pillay said in the statement late Thursday.

The UN said it had information that eight Rohingya Muslim men were attacked and killed in the village, near the border with Bangladesh, by local Rakhine Buddhists on January 9.

Four days later, a police sergeant in the same village was captured and killed by Rohingya.

This in turn prompted police and local Rakhine to kill at least 40 Rohingya Muslim men, women and children the same evening, the statement said, adding that the UN had passed on the information it had received to the Myanmar government.

Presidential spokesman Ye Htut described the UN statement as "regrettable"

and based on "groundless sources".

"Because of these acts, mistrust and concern can increase in Rakhine state and trust in the UN organisations among local residents can decrease," he told AFP.

Myanmar's western Rakhine state remains tense after several outbreaks of inter-communal violence between Buddhist and Muslim communities since 2012 that have killed scores and displaced 140,000 people, mainly from the Rohingya minority.

The area where the latest violence is believed to have taken place is mainly populated by the stateless Rohingya, whose movements are strictly controlled by a heavy security presence.

Aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF), one of the few outside organisations permitted to operate in the region, said it had treated at least 22 patients with injuries believed to be from violence in the village on January 14, mostly from knife wounds but also one gunshot victim.

Activists said shortly after the January 13 attack that at least two women and a child were stabbed to death in the village, with possibly several dozen casualties.

Both the United States and Britain have raised alarm over the reports of the violence.

British Foreign Secretary William Hague said on his official Twitter account that he was "sickened" by reports that women and children had been killed.

New York-based Human Rights Watch said it had received information that police had authorised the arrest of all Rohingya men and boys over the age of 10 in the area.

It said Myanmar's initial denial of civilian casualties suggested reports of unrest were "not being taken seriously".

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