



People climb on a train near the Ijtima ground at Tongi yesterday to go home after the Biswa Ijtima, the second largest congregation of the Muslims, concluded with the Akheri Munajat.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Lakhs of Muslims join final prayer

FROM PAGE 1
The Ijtima ground on the bank of Turag river at Tongi and its adjacent areas turned into a human sea by the time of the prayer led by noted Islamic scholar Mawlana Muhammad Saad from India. The 33-minute munajat started at 11:22am.

Scores of people joined the Akheri Munajat standing on the roofs of trains and nearby houses, on boats and roads. Vehicular movement on the streets remained suspended for a couple of hours there.

Those who could not go to the Ijtima ground joined the prayer through their cell phones and television.

As many had to walk miles to join and return from the venue, some social organisations and individuals distrib-

uted juice, water and dry food at different points among the devotees.

Earlier, a sudden rain on the Ijtima ground around 4:00am yesterday caused the participants great trouble. Many had to buy polythene bags to protect their beds and luggage from the rain.

The devotees had started to throng the venue for the second phase of the congregation since Wednesday night.

The second phase was organised for the devotees of 32 districts. Around 10,000 foreigners from 90 countries

participated in the phase that started Friday. The first phase of the Ijtima was held from January 9 to January 11.

Tablig Jamaat has been organising the Ijtima every year since 1946. The Ijtima is being held in two phases since 2011.

Meanwhile, at least eight people, including a traffic police constable, died of cardiac arrest and other health related complications during the second and final phase of the Biswa Ijtima. Of them, three died yesterday.

Blockade or what?

Frustrated father asks after his college student daughter becomes victim of arson attack; three others also injured in the incident

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

"What kind of blockade is this? On one hand, public and private transports are plying the city road. On the other hand, they are being attacked.

"I would not have sent my daughter to college had there been no bus on the road," said Khokon Mia, whose daughter suffered burns in an arson attack yesterday afternoon.

His daughter Sathi Akhter along with three of her classmates was returning home from Eden College, when suspected blockade supporters firebombed the bus near the parliament building around 1:45pm.

The three others are Sharmin Akhter Juthi, Maimuna Akhter and Helena Akhter Mukti. All the four are first-year students of Islamic studies. They went to the college to collect papers for their year final exams.

Juthi suffered eight percent burns and Sathi three percent. The two others were injured while trying to jump out of the bus through the window.

The papers they had collected were burnt to ashes.

"We were sitting on the last row. We saw a motorbike with two men on it stop beside the bus. The man sitting on the back threw something through a window and the bus went in flame," said Sathi.

She and Juthi were taking treatment at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"I don't care who is in power. I want

to live without fear with my children," said Khokon, looking clearly frustrated.

For Abu Bakar and his family, what the violent politics has done is unspeakable.

Around 8:45pm on Saturday, the 28-year-old was coming from Pabna for the treatment of his elderly mother, who broke a leg a few months ago. His 80-year-old father and his younger brother were accompanying him.

As their bus came near Mohammadpur Beribadh, alleged blockade supporters set it on fire with petrol bombs.

His mother escaped unhurt, but while Bakar and his father suffered burns, his 21-year-old brother broke a leg while jumping through a window.

His father, Abu Taher Fakir, was being treated at the DMCH burn unit with 20 percent burns. His condition was said to be critical.

"We were coming to Dhaka for my mother's treatment. But we all now have become patients," Bakar told The Daily Star at the burn unit.

Bakar, himself a father of two, is now worried for the family and the treatment cost. "Who will run our family? Who will pay our treatment costs?"

Since the countrywide blockade began on January 6, 34 arson victims got admitted to the burn unit. Two of them died while 18 are taking treatment, said Partho Sankar Paul, resident doctor at the unit.

CJ stresses more transparency

FROM PAGE 1
examine test papers of candidates for the post of lower court judges. There is no shortcoming in the process. There is no instance of leaking question papers yet. This will not happen in the future."

Justice Sinha also emphasised on doubling the number of judges in courts across the country.

Around 3,65,059 cases are awaiting disposal at the SC and 24,95,944 cases in the district courts across the country, he mentioned.

Against such a huge number of cases, there are 94 judges in the SC while 1,500 in the district courts, he said. "It would be evident that the number of judges is quite disproportionate to the number of cases pending in different courts of the country."

Besides, the cumbersome legal system and complicated land administration of the country have made it difficult for a judge to take any shortcut approach in hearing and disposal of the cases, he added.

"In all cases, the judges should have an ultimate objective to provide a fair and just decision to the litigant people. In order to address those problems, we have no alternative but to increase the number of judges and that should be at least double of the existing number," Justice Sinha said.

He said terrorism cannot be curbed without a mechanism that would work effectively and ensure punishment of the actual offenders and perpetrators at minimum time and cost.

"Nowadays, our investigating agencies are not found sufficiently skilled and committed in collecting evidence and materials in support of the charge made against an accused," he said.

"Recently, in course of hearing of some sensational cases, it has been revealed to me that decisions ending up with the convictions of the accused persons cannot be upheld for lack of evidence and materials, which are supposed to be procured at the investigation stage."

The chief justice said instead of

paying attention to their duty of collecting evidence and supporting materials, some officers entrusted with criminal investigations appear more interested in "publishing the news and information regarding arrest and actions taken against an accused through electronic or print media".

He requested all members of law enforcing agency "to bring an attitudinal change in their duties avoiding publicities and become more professional than focusing on media."

The chief justice asked the media to cooperate with the judiciary through playing a constructive role so that it (judiciary) can run without any hindrance.

"On this occasion, I would request esteemed persons involved in media to cooperate with the judiciary playing a constructive role, so that this institution can run without any hindrance enjoying full public confidence and credibility of all," he said.

"We know the media and the courts work obviously in quite different ways. The courts proceed carefully through a fair process of law examining the evidence and materials on record produced by the prosecution. On the other hand, the media generally operates hastily to cover news which may not in some cases be in line with the real fact or occurrence."

Justice Sinha said, "I think the judiciary and media are two powerful public institutions, and if they could maintain harmony and good understanding with each other, that would reinforce the public confidence in the judiciary and enhance its credibility."

"The judiciary and law serve justice and the media helps to bring law and justice to the people at large. In true sense, their responsibilities are complementary not contradictory."

He urged all the judges to "become a bit more attentive for proper utilisation and time management of the court-hours."

"A good number of judges of the district courts, as reported, do not

perform any judicial work after the recess hour and they have recently developed a habit of leaving their stations without prior permission just to enjoy the weekends in Dhaka or elsewhere. In the Supreme Court, if we can perform judicial works at least 210 days in a calendar year, I believe it would yield a good result reducing the case backlogs by 20 percent," he said.

"We the judges are not supposed to proceed on leave unless it becomes unavoidable for us and should abstain from participating in any functions which may expose us to any public criticism," SK Sinha added.

Almost all the judges of the Appellate Division and High Court Division of the SC were present on the occasion.

JS goes to 5th session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fifth session of the current parliament is set to begin this afternoon amid the ongoing nationwide blockade by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

The Jatiya Sangsad is scheduled to go into session at 4:10pm and President Abdul Hamid is likely to deliver his speech at 4:25pm, Chief Whip ASM Feroz told The Daily Star last night.

It will be the first JS session of the New Year. The president will deliver his speech based on government activities highlighting development works, said sources.

The parliament business advisory committee will finalise the duration of the session during its meeting today.

Feroz said a bill related to the control of formalin is likely to be passed during the fifth session.

Opposition Chief Whip Tajul Islam Choudhury said the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party held a meeting yesterday to decide the party's stance on different parliamentary issues.

No Viber, no Tango

FROM PAGE 1
enforcement and intelligence agencies asked the regulator to take this step.

The government has specific information that subversive activities, including bomb and arson attacks, were being carried out with directives issued by the BNP high-command using Viber and Tango, claimed a police official concerned.

Intelligence agencies have recommended that the government block the popular services temporarily based on proof, the official added.

"We have information that those who had been issuing directives through mobile phones to carry out subversive activities had stopped using their phones and were using Viber and Tango instead," the policeman said, adding, "We have had proofs of such instructions for carrying out subversive activities in the last two to three days."

The blocking of the services might go on.

State Minister for Home Affairs Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal said Viber and Tango had been blocked based on an intelligence report. "Now criminals and militants interact using these [Viber and Tango] that cannot be monitored widely by our intelligence agencies," he told The Daily Star.

He declined to elaborate on the intelligence report.

A leader of the BNP told the BBC they used to communicate through Viber but are now facing problems as the service has been blocked.

The intelligence agencies can locate any caller when a regular call is made from a mobile phone but they cannot get the location when the caller is using Viber or Tango, claimed an official of the telecom regulator.

A notice circulated by the country's largest mobile phone operator Grameenphone said, "Grameenphone

and the other mobile operations in Bangladesh received a written as well as verbal request from Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission to temporarily restrict access to the messaging service Viber and Tango, citing security reasons."

Zahir Ahmed, managing director of BanglaTel, an international terrestrial cable company, told The Daily Star that they had disabled both the services in the wee hours of yesterday and the services would resume only after instructions from the telecom regulator.

Since yesterday, users of Viber who depend on the service to communicate with family and loved ones at home and abroad started having problems making calls and sending messages.

A Viber user wishing anonymity told The Daily Star, "I wanted to wish my sister who lives abroad a happy birthday but the call never went through."

Hunt down petrol bomb makers

FROM PAGE 1
the health condition of Shameem and asked doctors to ensure his proper treatment.

IGP Shahidul Haque and DMP Commissioner Mokhlesur Rahman were present during the PM's visit to the hospital.

Later, the premier went to see former army chief general (rtd) Mustafizur Rahman's daughter undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Meanwhile, the prime minister yesterday called upon all to be vocal against those BNP-Jamaat men who are now carrying out subversive acts across the country. She also wondered whether the BNP quarter wanted to bring in a 2008-like government.

"I urge all to be united and vocal against those miscreants who are unleashing destructive acts, hurling

petrol bombs at buses, CNG-run auto-rickshaws, private cars and other vehicles and thus killing people. Those miscreants should have to be caught wherever they are found... We can't let our country to be destroyed before our eyes," she said.

The PM made the comments while delivering her introductory speech at a meeting with senior officials of the Liberation War Affairs Ministry and its various institutions at its conference room.

Referring to the BNP, the PM said this political party has been out of parliament after taking a wrong political decision of boycotting the January 5 polls and is now trying to burn the country out of their despair.

Mentioning the horrific recent incidents of burning numerous people, including university students and

seven-month pregnant woman, through hurling petrol bombs, she said, "The BNP-Jamaat men are carrying out such activities as they do not believe in the country's independence and the Liberation War."

The PM urged all to be aware of them and directed the Liberation War Affairs Ministry to widely publicise the true history of the Liberation War.

Regarding the "self-confinement" of the BNP chief, Hasina reiterated that Khaleda has kept herself confined as she is unwilling to go back home. "She's taking food and other things from outside, giving directives to her party leaders and activities and attending telephone calls! So how could she [Khaleda] say she is in confinement?"

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque delivered the welcome address on the occasion.

fastest
banglalink 3G

64 district

banglalink 3G modem at an unbeatable price of Tk. 1,249 with FREE 6GB 3G internet

also receive 100% internet bonus on purchase of 1GB or 2GB internet pack

banglalink start something new

*for details, see inner

to know more: 121, *121(free) 111, 01911304111 (charge applicable) banglalink.com.bd facebook.com/banglalinkme