

Holidaymaking abroad

FROM PAGE 16

Country's tourism industry expects good business this Eid as some 13 lakh government employees will get a nine-day vacation starting on Friday. Hotel and resort operators received a lot of bookings in the run-up to the festival with some offering special packages.

Although several lakh people will go to their village homes to celebrate the festival braving difficulties on the way, the number of people travelling abroad or visiting domestic tourism spots during this Eid vacation is increasing with income of the middle-class people rising.

Tour operators say tourists on the home front would mainly head towards the country's main tourist destination, Cox's Bazar, the longest unbroken sea beach (about 125km long) in the world, during the Eid holidays.

Most hotels and motels in the beach town have already received a huge number of bookings in advance.

"The response we are getting from the tourists this year is greater than those in the past few years," said Mohiuddin Khan Khokon, director of sales and marketing at Hotel The Cox Today, a luxury hotel in Cox's Bazar.

He said the hotel is fully booked for July 8 and 9 with a few rooms available the next day.

Khokon, however, said more people would have travelled had there been a direct train to Cox's Bazar. "People want to travel and if the journey is smooth and cheap. This would boost domestic tourism significantly."

There are around 300 hotels, motels and guesthouses in Cox's Bazar which can accommodate over 68,000 people, said Abul Kashem Sikder, general secretary of Cox's Bazar Hotel-Motel and Guesthouse Owners Association.

"If the weather is favourable, about

2 lakh tourists may flock to Cox's Bazar a day after Eid," said Kashem.

Besides Cox's Bazar, domestic travellers will also flock to other tourist spots like Rangamati, Bandarban, Sylhet and St Martin's Island.

There are around 18 hotels and motels in Rangamati which are ready to handle the rush.

Sahadat Hossain, assistant manager of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, Rangamati, said the motels and guesthouses already have received 90 percent of bookings for the Eid vacation.

Sylhet, too, has been attracting a good number of tourists.

The occupancy rate is so far good at Nazimgarh Garden Resort in Khadimnagar and Nazimgarh Wilderness in Jaintapur, said its manager Hasan Murshed.

He, however, said things would be clear four to five days before the Eid as some people have to cancel bookings that time failing to get transport.

For travellers wishing to be near the city, there are resorts near Gazipur.

"For a break from the humdrum of everyday lives in Dhaka, going to nearby places is the best solution. It saves time and is economical as well," said Ishrat Jahan, who has booked a resort in Gazipur for two days after Eid.

Greentech Resort and Convention Centre, a popular resort in Gazipur, has 73 rooms and can accommodate 150 guests.

About two hours' drive from Dhaka, the resort has already registered around 70 percent advance bookings, said Nayan Talukdar, manager of the resort.

"There are still a few days to go before Eid, and we hope to be fully booked," he said.

Apart from domestic tours, a large number of people now go abroad on

holiday. Tour operators and airlines are rolling out promotional packages.

This year the number of outbound travellers will be higher than that of the domestic vacationers, according to industry insiders.

"People increasingly tend to take Eid vacation as an opportunity for holidaying. Nearly 2.5 lakh Bangladeshis are expected to go abroad this Eid," said Taufiq Rahman, director of Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB).

The outbound travellers will tour countries such as India, Malaysia, Thailand, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Maldives and a few European countries, he said, adding many of the travellers will go before the Eid due to the long vacation.

Explaining the reasons, the TOAB director said simplified visa processing and cheaper prices of air tickets are the reasons for the increase in outbound tourism.

"You can go to Nepal or Bhutan on a three-day trip with a cost of only around Tk 40,000," Toufiq said.

Borhan Uddin, chief executive officer of Green Holidays Tours, said an increased number of tourists would go mostly to India as the country simplified the visa procedure. People would also go to Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Thailand due to low travel costs.

Milon Hossain, an official of Miaz Tours and Travels, another tour operator, said the travellers would fly to Indonesia as the country is giving on-arrival visas. His agency will also arrange foreign visits for around 100 local people.

Domestic travel and tourism directly contributed Tk 407.6 billion or 2.4 percent to the country's GDP last year. This is expected to rise to 5.2 percent this year, World Travel and Tourism Council said in its latest study.

Israel razes homes of 2 Palestinian assailants

AFP, Qalandia

Israeli forces demolished the West Bank homes of two Palestinian knife-men whose December attack led to the death of two Israelis, including one by friendly fire, the army said yesterday.

The overnight demolitions took place in the Qalandia refugee camp, between Jerusalem and Ramallah, with four Palestinians wounded in ensuing clashes, an AFP reporter said.

A military spokeswoman said the forces had razed the homes of Issa Assaf and Annan Hammud, who were shot dead during a December 23 attack near Jerusalem's Old City.

"Armed with knives, the two assailants stabbed pedestrians at the scene, brutally killing rabbi Reuven Birmejer and wounding a civilian," the spokeswoman said. "In addition, Ofer Ben Ari was killed" by security forces who shot Assaf and Hammud dead.

"During the demolition, multiple violent riots erupted," with Palestinians throwing rocks and opening fire, the spokeswoman said. Israeli forces eventually opened fire at "main instigators," she said.

Four Palestinians were lightly wounded in the clashes, according to an AFP reporter.

Israel routinely demolishes homes of Palestinian assailants in what it says is a means to deter further attacks. Rights groups say it amounts to collective punishment, with families forced to suffer for the acts of relatives.

A wave of violence since October has killed at least 214 Palestinians, 34 Israelis, two Americans, an Eritrean and a Sudanese.

Fifth attacker

FROM PAGE 1

The young man identified as Shafiqul Islam Uzsal, 25, was son of Badiuzzaman, a farmer, of Tithulia Chollishpara village of Dhunat upazila, said Arifur Rahman Mandol, additional superintendent of police.

The attacker was a graduate and used to teach at a kindergarten in Ashulia on the outskirts of the capital. His sister-in-law identified him when she saw pictures of the attackers published by SITE Intelligence on Facebook, the police official said.

The family told police that Uzsal had remained out of contact with them since January.

Another Gulshan attacker was identified by Bogra police on Sunday as Khairul Islam Payel, 20, son of a day labourer.

Social media users and friends identified the three others seen in pictures released by SITE Intelligence soon after the pictures went viral. They were Nibras Islam, Rohan Imtiaz, and Meer Sameh Mubasheer - all from affluent families.

Launch, bus

FROM PAGE 16

public university, said she had bought a ticket for Tk 665 yesterday to go to Sathkira from Dhaka. Its normal fare is Tk 625.

Saidur Rahman has bought an AC ticket for Dhaka-Chittagong route of a Greenline Paribahan. He paid Tk 2,200 for the ticket, whose usual price is Tk 1,250.

The government has not yet fixed any fare chart for AC buses. It needs Tk 448 to buy a ticket for non-AC buses running on Dhaka-Chittagong route.

However, Khandaker Enayet Ullah, secretary general of Bangladesh Road Transport Owners' Association, denied the allegation of overcharging and claimed bus operators were charging as per the government-fixed fare chart.

People travelling by launches alleged that they had to pay extra to buy launch tickets.

"I have bought a ticket for double cabin for Tk 2,300. Usually, it needs Tk 1,800," said Raju Hamid, who was on his way to Barisal from Dhaka.

Talking to The Daily Star, college student Ibrahim Hossain said as there was a shortage of cabin ticket, the launch owners were charging passengers as per their wish.

Mad Rush
As Eid holidays for most of the non-government employees began yesterday, there was a huge pressure of home-goers in the capital's railway stations and bus and launch terminals throughout the day.

Many left their office early to catch their transports, whose tickets they bought earlier.

"My bus is scheduled to leave Mohakhali terminal on 3:00pm. So, I have to leave my office around 12:00 noon to catch the bus," said Anwar Hossain, who works for a private organisation.

A long tailback near Nabinagar intersection yesterday afternoon made buses late to reach their terminals on time. For this reason, passengers had to wait at different bus terminals for several hours to get buses.

At Kamalapur Railway Station, 36 trains left the city as of yesterday evening. Of them, three trains were delayed for around one to two hours. The rest left the station on time, said railway officials.

Most of the launches, that left Sadarghat Launch Terminal, were seen plying jam-packed with passengers. Defying the government ban, many were travelling on rooftops of the launches.

Around 60-70 lakh people will make their journeys by roads, rail and rivers to reach their destinations, according to transport operators.

2 'attackers' followed

FROM PAGE 1

trial for running propaganda for Islamic State.

Shami was arrested in December 2014 following an investigation into his Twitter account which was last active in August 2014. Anjem's Twitter account became inactive from August 2015 after terror charges were brought against him.

A controversial figure also in his home country India, Zakir Nayek is banned in the UK, Canada and Malaysia. He has become popular among a section of people in Bangladesh through his Peace TV although his preaching often demeans other religions and even other Muslim sects.

This means that at least Nibras and Imtiaz did not become radicalised overnight. They have been consuming radical materials for one to two years before finally disappearing from their families back in February-March.

SHAMI WITNESS

According to British media Channel 4 news, Shami Witness was charged by the police in India in June last year for operating the "single most influential pro-ISIS Twitter account".

A news investigation by Channel 4 in 2014 exposed IT expert Mehdi Biswas as the owner of the Shami Witness account. Indian police arrested him in December that year on charges of running the Twitter account that was followed by two-thirds of all the foreign jihadis on Twitter according to research by ICSR at King's College London.

On Twitter the City Crime Branch of Bengaluru City Police, India, said: "Charge Sheet against Mehdi Masroor Biswas is filed under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act; it contains 35,000 pages & 122,000 tweets."

The 24-year-old office worker from Bangalore admitted to police that he ran the Twitter account and shut it down.

He is charged with supporting a terrorist organisation, waging war against the State, unlawful activities, conspiracy, sedition and promoting enmity, according to Joint Commissioner of Police M Chandrashekhar. The charges include aiding and abetting a terrorist organisation on Twitter.

ANJEM CHOUDARY

His Twitter account says: I am a Muslim who believes that Islam is something we must believe in (Tawheed), live by (Shari'ah) and struggle and sacrifice for (by way of Daw'ah and Jihad).

Anjem Choudary was previously a solicitor and served as the chairman of the Society of Muslim Lawyers, and, until it was proscribed, the spokesman for Islam4UK.

According to Telegraph report on June

Two suspects detained

FROM PAGE 16

The suspects would be taken on remand and interrogated once a case is filed, he said at a discussion in the capital.

Meanwhile, all preparations for filing a case over the attack were complete last night, said police sources.

"We are drafting the First Information Report and will register it tonight. Apart from the attackers who were killed, some suspects might be named as accused in it," said a top police official last evening.

Even though the IGP talked about detaining two suspects, Detective Branch (DB) of police officials told The Daily Star about more suspects.

They said one of them appears to be a Rohingya man.

Despite repeated queries, he was not saying anything, said a top DB official, wishing not to be named.

He said the young man was trying to get out of the restaurant during the hostage situation when law enforcers shot and detained him. He was now undergoing treatment at a city hospital.

Another suspect is a Bangladesh born Canadian citizen. He returned home only the day before the attack and went to the restaurant with his two female friends, the official said.

The girls were students of a private university where some of the attackers also studied, said the official, who also did not wish to be named.

A former teacher of the same university was also a suspect.

He is a Bangladesh-born British Citizen. He returned to Bangladesh around one and a half years ago after spending 20 years in the UK.

Another suspect was from Jaldhaka of Nilphamari, said the official, adding

that he gave investigators nothing but his name during the interrogation, leading to suspicion.

These men were among the 27 people who were either rescued or detained from the Gulshan restaurant following Friday's attacks.

Police said it takes time for filing a case over the incident as they had to coordinate with the army and different units of law enforcement agencies who were a part of the rescue operation.

IGP Speaking at the discussion yesterday, IGP Hoque, quoting survivors, said the attackers brutally murdered the foreigners within 20 minutes of storming into the upscale eatery in Gulshan.

The programme was organised at the Rajarbagh Police Lines to remember the two police officers killed in the attack.

They are Assistant Commissioner of Detective Branch of Police Rabiul Islam and Officer-in-Charge of Banani Police Station Salauddin Khan.

The police chief told his audience they had information that terrorists could carry out more subversive activities in the capital and that they were looking for them as suspects.

He also urged people to notify police immediately if any of their family members, who could be radicalised, goes missing. He also announced to give Tk 20 lakh to each of the families of the two brave police officers.

FORENSIC FINDINGS

Four forensic doctors and five staff of the Dhaka Medical College conducted postmortem on 20 bodies of Gulshan restaurant attack victims at the medical morgue.

Almost all the victims were stabbed in the shoulders and necks with sharp weapons, said doctors.

Sohel Mahmud, an assistant professor who was a member of the doctors' team, said the bodies bore the hallmark of militant attacks.

The postmortem on the other bodies, including that of the attackers, would be performed today.

AN ATTACKER WAS IN MAKING CNN reports, the last time attacker Meer Sameh Mobasheer's family saw him was when he walked out the door, munching on popcorn headed to an examination preparation class.

That was February 29.

For four long months, the family looked for him, considering and dismissing scenarios after scenario: Maybe he ran away. Maybe he fell in love and eloped. Maybe he was kidnapped.

Through it all, Mobasheer's family worried about another possibility: Maybe he was recruited by Islamists. On Saturday, the family learned their worst fear had become reality.

Relatives showed them a picture of Mobasheer posted on an ISIS-affiliated site that identified him as one of the attackers in the deadly attack on the Holey Artisan Bakery in Dhaka.

"That's not my son, that's not my son," Meer Hayet Kabir said. "He was full of humanity."

Mobasheer spent the previous six months studying hard for his upcoming A-level examinations. But the family did notice one change: He had stopped sketching.

Kabir said theirs is an upper middle class family -- he's an executive in a telecommunications company.

Kabir said he has yet to identify his son's body. The pain is still too raw.

China offers Philippines talks if S China Sea court ignored

REUTERS, Shanghai

China is ready to start negotiations with the Philippines on South China Sea-related issues if Manila ignores an arbitration ruling expected next week on their long-running territorial dispute, the official China Daily reported yesterday.

The Philippines brought the case to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague and a ruling is expected on July 12. The case contests China's claims to the bulk of the South China Sea, a body of water through which \$5 trillion in ship-borne trade passes every year. China has said it plans to ignore the Court's ruling which would represent a snub of the international legal order.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei have overlapping claims with China in the area. Beijing has rejected the arbitration case, claiming the court has no jurisdiction and saying it wants to

solve the issue bilaterally. In recent weeks it has ramped up its propaganda campaign downplaying the outcome of the case.

Negotiations between China and the Philippines could cover "issues such as joint development and cooperation in scientific research if the new government puts the tribunal's ruling aside before returning to the table for talks", the China Daily said.

China's main, government-run English newspaper did not name its sources but identified them as "close to the issues between the two countries".

"Manila must put aside the result of the arbitration in a substantive approach," it quoted one source as saying.

China's Foreign Ministry last month said the two countries had agreed in 1995 to settle disputes in the South China Sea "in a peaceful and friendly manner through consultations on the basis of equity and mutual respect".

China and the Philippines have held many rounds of talks on the proper management of maritime disputes, though have had no negotiations designed to settle the actual disputes in the South China Sea, it said.

In the arbitration case, the Philippines is contesting China's claim to an area shown on its maps as a nine-dash line stretching deep into the maritime heart of Southeast Asia, covering hundreds of disputed islands and reefs.

"Objectively the tribunal has no jurisdiction over the dispute," Sienho Yee, a law professor at the China Institute of Boundary and Ocean Studies at China's Wuhan University, told Reuters in a government-arranged interview on Friday.

"Negotiation has been agreed upon as the way to resolve the dispute," he said.

Gone with Tonu joys

FROM PAGE 16

The family will visit her grave on Eid day to remember the once cheerful girl.

Y ar H ossain, father of T onu, said his daughter chose the panjabi and pajama for him last year.

"This year, no one would choose my dresses. Killers brutally killed my ma (mother)," said H ossain with a sigh.

"Tears rolled down my cheeks during Ifar every day."

With a choked-up voice, Hossain said he now only demands the arrest and trial of Tonu's killers.

But justice for T onu , who had talents in singing, dancing a nd painting, seems a distant thing.

The two autopsies done on her body could not determine the cause of her death though Y ar H ossain saw the back of his daughter's head smashed and injury marks on her nose when he found the body in a bush on the night of March 20.

The police inquest report also did not cite any sign of injury to the body.

According to t he first autopsy conducted on M arch 21 by S harmin S ultana, a lecturer of the forensic m edicine d epartment of C omilla M edical College, there was no sign of rape.

"N o sign of forceful sexual intercourse is found. T he victim was not pregnant. T he cause of her death could not be determined," says the report.

I t was the D N A test results that found T onu was raped before being killed.

Revealing the findings, Criminal Investigation Department officials on M ay 16 said the DN A tests of the specimens collected from T onu's clothes found three spermatozoa of three males.

A three-member medical board

28, Anjem has gone on trial accused of terrorism offences.

The 49-year-old is charged alongside another man, Mohammed Rahman, 33, in connection with speeches posted on YouTube.

They were charged on 25 August 2015 with offences contrary to terrorism legislation over speeches that appeared on the internet. Both men deny the charges.

The charges relate to a string of social media posts made between June 29, 2014 and March 6 last year when it is alleged both Choudary and Rahman sought to validate the legitimacy of the "Caliphate".

The pair has also been accused of urging others to support or obey Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the brutal terror group Islamic State.

Choudary also allegedly told supporters to travel to territory controlled by the barbaric regime in Syria and Iraq. Anjem helped form al-Muhajiroun, an anti-western organisation which was eventually banned by British government. He also founded Al Ghurabaa, which too was banned. Sitting in London, Anjem generated controversies by praising those responsible for the US Twin Tower attack of September 11, 2001. He supports implementation of Sharia Law in UK.

Dr Zakir Nayek Zakir Naik is a popular Islamic orator and founder of Mumbai-based Islamic Research Foundation. He is termed as an authority on comparative religion and seen as "perhaps the most influential Salafi ideologue in India".

Zakir is banned in the UK and Canada for his hate speech aimed against other religions and all Muslim sects except the Sunni followers.

Zakir is also among 16 banned Islamic scholars in Malaysia. But in April he visited Malaysia to attend a conference prompting various rights activists to protest.

Malayonline on April 17 in a report from Malaysia said that 40 Malaysian-Indian groups signed a resolution urging the government to ban Dr Zakir Naik from entering Malaysia again, claiming he posed a threat to national security.

"He's noted for mocking Hinduism and making disparaging remarks about other religions and various sects in Islam," observes a Malaysian rights organisation Hindraf Makkal Sakthi Chairman P Waythamoorthy on April 17.

Hindraf has demanded the Government of Malaysia immediately cancel the upcoming programmes of "deviant foreign preacher" Zakir Naik and refuse his entry into Malaysia.

5 killed as launch

FROM PAGE 16

the accident. The steamer was later tugged to the Barisal port with its passenger cabins on the lower and upper decks being severely damaged.

The bodies of the victims were recovered by the firefighters using gas-cutter from the damaged cabins, said Faruk Hossain, Barisal station officer of Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Other passengers were evacuated from the vessel and sent to the port by BIWTC vessel MV Madhumati, said Mustafizur Rahman, Barisal River Port officer and deputy director in charge of passenger safety and traffic of BIWTA.

The deputy commissioner of Barisal, officials of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) and members of Barisal Metropolitan Police, river traffic police and fire service have visited the spot and the injured in the hospital.

The district administration has formed a seven-member probe committee comprising representatives of the administration, police, fire service, BIWTA and BIWTC headed by Abul Kalam Azad, additional deputy com-

missioner, said Dr Gazi Md Saifuzzaman, deputy commissioner of Barisal.

Three of the dead were identified as Filing this report last night. They were Sima Aktar, 20, of Morelhanj, Tamanna, 13, of Kawnia area in the city and Mukta, 18, of Jhalakathi.

Five critically injured were identified as Kalu, 30, of Kashipur in the city, Farzana, 19, of Morelhanj, Shakil Sardar, 22, Rubel, 22, of Bagerhat and Nurul Islam, 49, of Chandpur. They were admitted to the orthopaedic and surgery unit of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

"We have temporarily suspended Suravi-7 from the Dhaka-Barisal route," said Commodore M Mozammel Haque, chairman Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), after visiting the victims at the hospital.

"The families of the dead will get Tk 50,000 each and the injured Tk 10,000 each," said Saidur Rahaman Rintu, vice-president of Launch Owners' Association.