

Travel



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Bangladesh Tactical: US Embassy issues security advisory for ongoing Bishwa Ijtema event in Dhaka until February 16; maintain vigilance

Current Situation:

- Tabligh Jamaat is holding the 58th Bishwa Ijtema, the second-largest annual congregation of Sunni Muslims in the world, at Bishwa Ijtema ground in Gazipur's Tongi Upazila in the Dhaka Division, until February 16. The gathering will take place approximately 3 km north of the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC), which services Dhaka.
- The event will be held in three phases, with the first scheduled between January 31–February 2, second between February 3–5, and the final from February 14 to 16.
- The US Embassy in Dhaka issued an advisory for the event, stating that the anticipated turnout of approximately four million visitors will likely lead to significant disruptions to vehicular and pedestrian traffic throughout Dhaka.
- The Inspector General of Police (IGP) announced that authorities are maintaining heightened security measures in the vicinity of the Bishwa Ijtema ground, including the deployment of police, the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and other law enforcement and intelligence agencies.
- The authorities strengthened the surveillance with CCTV coverage of the entire Ijtema ground and installed control rooms and archways at entry and exit points. The authorities have also established check posts at Cherag Ali Bus Stand, Tongi-Kaliganj Road, in front of Uttara North Tower, and in Ashulia, Kamarpada.
- Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) announced traffic directions for the Bishwa Ijtema, particularly on

February 2 and 5. As per directives, district buses, trucks, covered vans, and other heavy vehicles are advised to avoid Abdullahpur and Dhour Bridge intersections and instead use the Dhaka Elevated Expressway going through Mohakhali-Bijoy Sarani-Gabtoli route from 04:00 (local time) on February 2 and 5.

- Commuters heading through Airport Dakshinkhan Road, Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway are advised to use Kuril Flyover, Pragati Sarani, and Bishwa Road crossings. Additional details regarding the traffic advisory can be found [here](#).

Source: [Dhaka Tribune](#), [US Embassy](#), [BSS News](#), [Facebook](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. The security deployment is largely precautionary in nature, considering the expected turnout and the overall significance of the gathering. The authorities will likely prioritize crowd management while seeking to prevent altercations. Further, the heightened security measures are likely intended to serve as a deterrent against the potential risk of inter-sect confrontations. This concern is particularly relevant given the December 18, 2024 clashes between two factions of the Tablighi Jamaat over control of the Biswa Ijtema ground, which resulted in at least four fatalities and 50 injuries. In response, the authorities are expected to implement stringent security measures across Dhaka and Gazipur until February 16, including an increased police presence, enhanced patrols, and systematic checks on both individuals and vehicles.
2. These security arrangements are likely to result in considerable disruptions to travel and business operations in Dhaka in the coming weeks. DAC is anticipated to experience heightened passenger volume and more rigorous security screenings, which will likely contribute to extended travel times, as cautioned by the US Embassy in its advisory. Additionally, authorities are expected to introduce citywide traffic restrictions and diversions, which could disrupt logistics and supply chains. Consequently, certain businesses and public services may suspend operations during the event. Furthermore, localized disruptions to both pedestrian and vehicular movement are likely in proximity to the designated event site until February 16.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in Dhaka until February 16 are advised to maintain vigilance in the vicinity of the Biswa Ijtema ground due to the event and associated risks of clashes while allotting for travel disruptions.