

Gunshot at PM's office

By Staff Correspondent

A gun shot was fired at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) at Tejgaon in the city at about noon yesterday. The bullet hit glass panes of a window of a first-floor room. None was hurt, confirmed an official of the PMO.

The bullet struck glass panes of the office room of Dr SA Malek, Political Advisor to the Prime Minister. Dr Malek was not in his office then.

Immediately after the incident, police and intelligence personnel rushed to the Prime Minister's Office and the Nakhaipara neighbourhood nearby and started vigorous investigation. A senior security official told The Daily Star that the charge of investigation was

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HOLIDAY

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed from today to January 31. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper from January 30 to February 1.

NOTICE

There will be no Star Weekend Magazine on Friday, 30 January 1998, as there will be no issue of the newspaper on that day due to Eid-ul-Fitr holiday.

—Management

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Eid tomorrow if moon sighted today

Muslims across the country will celebrate the holy Eid-ul-Fitr with due solemnity and religious fervour tomorrow subject to sighting of the Shawal moon today, report agencies.

A meeting of the National Moon Sighting Committee will be held today at 6 pm at the head office of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh in the city.

If the Shawal moon is sighted anywhere in Bangladesh,

persons sighting the moon have been urged to contact the committee over telephone — 9559493, 9555951, 9555947, 9550280, 9559643, 9556407, 9558337 — or fax 9563397.

The celebration of Eid will mark the end of a month-long fasting during the holy Ramadan. This is one of the greatest religious festivals of the Muslim community.

President Justice Sha-

habuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia conveyed Eid greetings to the people through separate messages.

A three-day public holiday marking the Eid will begin today.

Sales in shopping malls and retail stores have reached its peak as the people are crowding for the last-minute shopping ahead of the festival.

Many people of Dhaka have already left the city for their village homes to celebrate the Eid festival with their near and dear ones.

The traffic jam, a regular phenomenon in the city, is likely to ease further with many others expected to leave by today.

The government as well as social and religious organisations have drawn up elaborate programmes to celebrate the Eid.

The programmes include Eid congregations, reunions, decorations of roads, illumination of buildings and discussion meetings.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will exchange greetings with the cross section of people at the Ganobhaban of the Eid-day.

In the capital, the main Eid congregation will be held at the National Eidgah in the High Court premises at 8 am.

In case of inclement weather, the congregation will be held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at the same time.

Four more congregations will be arranged at the Baitul Mukarram at 7 am, 8 am, 8:45 and 9:30 am, said an Islamic Foundation press release.

In Chittagong Eid congregations will be held at as many as 13 places.

The main Eid prayer will be held at Chittagong Stadium premises at 8:30 am while the other main congregation will be held at Jamiatul Falah complex at 8 am.

National Flags will be hoisted atop public and private buildings across the country on the Eid day.



LAST-MINUTE SHOPPING: Eid shoppers choosing sarees at a shop in Gaziabazar Market in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Election of 103 pourashavas to be deferred by 3 months

By Mizan Ali and Reaz Ahmad

Election of 103 pourashavas due in March, will be deferred by three months to make structural changes in the country's municipal bodies and consequent delimitation of wards, according to official sources.

According to the proposed structural changes, the number of wards in the pourashavas will be raised three times and there will be one elected woman commissioner for every three wards, doing away with the pre-

sent provision for nominated women representatives.

The plan for the changes was drafted at a meeting here on Sunday, attended by the LGRD Minister, Law Minister and the Election Commission and police officials.

Mentionably, the government recently made provisions for election of three women members in each Union Parishad.

Raising the number of wards

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ranges from three to 13 depending on the size, population and area of a municipality.

The changes will require amendments to the Pourashava Act, which must be passed by the Jatiya Sangsad after Cabinet clearance.

The authorities are yet to decide whether the incumbents will be asked to continue as caretaker administrators.

Raising the number of wards

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Biman yet to lease plane for Haj pilgrims

By Shehab Ahmed

Bangladesh Biman has failed to finalise leasing of a wide-bodied aircraft to ferry at least 15,000 Haj pilgrims to Saudi Arabia from March 3.

It is facing intense lobbying by different suppliers offering a variety of aircraft, some of which the airlines never operated before, Biman sources said.

The management of the national airline earlier short-listed four out of 24 companies to charter the aircraft. But it failed to arrive at a decision after several meetings, the last one taking place yesterday.

The short-listed companies include the local representative of a Nigerian company, which reportedly did not participate in the bid earlier, the sources said.

A meeting to finalise the charter of the aircraft for the Haj flight continued after office hours yesterday. But it failed to arrive at a decision. It will be taken after the Eid holidays, the sources said.

Ganges Barrage Project WB likely to conduct feasibility study

The World Bank (WB) is likely to conduct a feasibility study on construction of Ganges Barrage Project, WB sources said in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

The bank recently conveyed its desire to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) during meetings with the senior officials of the government, sources said.

Bangladesh had proposed to the WB to become the lead donor for construction of the Ganges Barrage. It also held a series of

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Eid Greetings



The Daily Star wishes its readers, patrons and well-wishers a happy Eid-ul-Fitr.

26 convicted for Rajiv murder, to die

POONAMALLEE (Madras), Jan 28: Former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's assassins linked to a Sri Lankan separatist group were convicted today.

All but three of the 29 were sentenced to death, reports AP.

The judge in southern India found a total of 41 conspirators were responsible for the 1991 suicide bombing, but 12 committed suicide before the trial and three are at large in neighbouring Sri Lanka. The judge did not sentence the three in Sri Lanka because they were not present for his ruling.

Though only two of the 26 sentenced were convicted of murder, all had been tried under special terrorist laws that made the death penalty possible.

Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, and his top two aides were convicted in absentia. Other members of the Sri Lankan group, one of the deadliest rebel forces in the region, were also convicted.

Though death sentences are rare in India, hangings were

carried out for those convicted in previous political assassinations — the 1984 killing of Rajiv Gandhi's mother Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the 1948 killing of independence leader Mohandas Gandhi.

The sentences, relayed to re-

porters by DR Karthikeyan, the federal investigator who solved the case, came hours after Judge V Navaneetham announced his guilty verdicts. Reporters were not allowed into the court room for security reasons.

The accused heard the court verdict in silence, betraying no reaction, said Jacob Daniel, one of the prosecutors.

Nearly 2,000 local people gathered in the market place listening to radio reports on the case and asking journalists for more information.

Gandhi and 17 others were killed in an explosion at a political rally near Poona Mallee, about 1,700 kilometers (1,000 miles) south of New Delhi.

The dead included a Sri Lankan rebel, apparently angered by Gandhi's support of her government, who approached on the pretext of offering flowers and set off a half kilogram of plastic explosives packed with 10,000 metal pellets strapped to her body.

• The man who built the bomb and a woman strapped it around the waist of the suicide

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BNP reportedly shifts stance

Reinstallation of floating bridge now 'top priority'

By Nazmul Ashraf

In a major shift from its previous stance, the opposition BNP is now giving 'top priority' to reinstallation of the floating bridge leading to the mazar of its founder, late President Ziaur Rahman, as a condition for its return to the Jatiya Sangsad.

This was learnt from some top policy planners of the party.

The issue of the floating bridge has replaced BNP's main demand for 'proportionate representation in the parliamentary standing committees

which was on top of the agenda during its negotiations for going back to the Sangsad.

BNP has been boycotting parliament sessions since August 30 last year.

The change in the priority list has been influenced by a 'government conspiracy' centring Zia's mazar at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city, party sources told The Daily Star.

The largest parliamentary opposition has also given up its

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Gherao for arrear wages continues in 3 jute mills

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Jan 28: The situation in four private jute mills remained tense till this evening as workers continued to press the management for Eid bonus, arrear wages and advance against the Wages Commission Award.

The jute mills officials are under confinement in their offices and residences since Tuesday morning. Additional reinforcement of riot police have been deployed around the mills.

Meanwhile, the Jute Spinners Limited was declared laid off today.

The management of Sonali and Ajax jute mills today agreed only to pay Eid bonus, but not the arrear wages and advance against salary. But a CBA leader, when contacted, ruled out any possibility of

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নতুন বছরে সম্পূর্ণ নতুন রূপ...

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