



Eid tomorrow if moon sighted today

By Staff Correspondent

Eid-ul-Fitr, the biggest religious festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated in the country tomorrow if the Shawal Moon is sighted today.

There is still uncertainty over the sighting of the moon today. See page 11 col 7

Holiday

Owing to uncertainty over sighting of the moon, the office of The Daily Star will remain closed for four days from today instead of the originally scheduled three days, i.e. December 26, 27, 28 and 29, due to the Eid-ul-Fitr. The next issue of the paper would therefore come out on December 31.

Under special arrangement, The Daily Star Tenth Anniversary Bonus will be distributed from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. today.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 26		5.19 pm
Dec 27	6-39 am	

Prayer Timings

December 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-14	5-20
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



Sehri, Iftar timings

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
29	26	5-14	5-23
30	27	5-14	5-23

Magurchhara blowout

Unocal asked to submit insurance documents

By Sharier Khan

Petrobangla has asked Unocal to submit insurance documents related to the Magurchhara blowout as a follow-up to the US company's claim that it has paid some 332 crore taka to different aggrieved parties as compensation.

Unocal has not yet responded to the Petrobangla directive to submit the compensation documents, sources said.

Following the Magurchhara blowout in June 14, 1997, Occidental and later Unocal claimed insurance money to the insurer who reportedly paid an undisclosed amount of money. Unocal used the money to bear the expenses for the remedial measures to stop the blowout as well as to pay to parties affected as compensation.

A couple of months back, Unocal heated up the Magurchhara issue by claiming in its official documents that it had paid over 332 crore taka. This followed a warning from Petrobangla, which pointed out that the government was not aware of any such payment and that Unocal should be cautious while spelling out facts and figures.

Nevertheless, Unocal remains firm on its claim. It has somewhat redefined its version on how the compensation package totalled 332 crore taka, though.

Out of Tk 332.32 crore, the US company explained later, nearly Tk 40 crore was paid to railway authorities, tea estates and local people; Tk 158 crore was spent on remedial measures for the blowout; and Tk 134 crore was projected as 'sacrifice' of profit in case of future gas production from Moulavibazar-2 gas field. The rest was paid to various third party contractors.

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Autorickshaw and tempo drivers went on rampage in and around the city yesterday demanding action against the ring of autorickshaw thieves and trial of Taslima, reportedly girlfriend of Rehanuddin, and six others arrested on Sunday. The agitated lot put up barricades at the Jatrabari crossing for seven hours from six in the morning (top left), causing extreme misery to the homeward bound passengers (top right). Elsewhere angry activists damaged the autorickshaw of 'renegades' (bottom left), burnt tyres (centre) and roughed up a fellow driver who dissented (bottom right).



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--Star photo

Car bomb explosion kills 5 outside Srinagar Army HQ

SRINAGAR, Dec 25: A suicide bomber set off a car explosion outside the Indian army headquarters in Kashmir's capital today, killing four civilians and a soldier and wounding 23 other people, officials said, reports AP.

Seven soldiers were among those injured in the explosion in Srinagar that occurred nearly 50 metres (yards) from the heavily guarded entrance of the army headquarters, police and home ministry officials said. Some shops across the street burned down following the blast.

The bomber was among those killed, army officials said.

The car was moving when the bomb went off. It seems the person in the car was trying to get inside the headquarters and set off the explosion when he realized he could not, Major Bharat A. Shahane, the army spokesman in Srinagar, told The Associated

Press. The soldiers wounded in the attack were standing outside the headquarters gate.

A Pakistan-based rebel group called the Jamaat-ul Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the explosion in telephone calls to local newspaper offices.

Also Monday, a series of bomb explosions also rocked cities across the border in Pakistan, injuring 45 people. The first bomb ripped through a crowded market in the eastern border city of Lahore, injuring 36 people, while the second bomb exploded at a railway station in Faisalabad, also in eastern Punjab province, wounding three people, officials said.

The third explosion occurred in a passenger bus in Hyderabad in the southern Sindh province, injuring six people. The fourth explosion in Kharian, 165 kilometres (70 miles) north of Lahore,

did not cause any injuries.

Police blamed arch-rival India of seeking retaliation for Friday night's attack on India's historic Red Fort in the heart of its capital of New Delhi, in which two soldiers and a civilian guard were killed. Two gunmen entered the Red Fort and escaped after attacking an army supply depot there.

Indian authorities did not immediately respond to the accusation, but New Delhi has in the past denied similar charges from Islamabad. India in turn alleges that Pakistan arms and funds the insurgency in Indian Kashmir, while Pakistan says it offers only moral and diplomatic support to the militants.

The Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, a Pakistan-based Islamic group fighting to separate the Himalayan province of Kashmir from Hindu-majority India, claimed responsibility for the Red Fort attack. Kashmiri militants regularly attack Indian soldiers in the disputed Himalayan valley of Kashmir.

The attacks came as India and Pakistan began trying to seek a

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Passengers suffer as dense fog at ZIA disrupts flights

By Special Correspondent

Dense fog enveloped Zia International Airport (ZIA) early yesterday, forcing landing of 15 flights only in three hours and causing a jam at the arrival lounge.

Departure of a number of flights was also delayed due to fog.

The incoming passengers were in trouble getting their baggage and finding vehicles to return to their destinations. Touts and rickshaws at the parking lot took advantage of the situation.

Flights from Europe, Far East and Middle-East which usually land at ZIA in the early hours landed after 8 am when the thick blanket of fog started evaporating.

Between 8 am and 11 am, 15 flights landed with about 2000 to 2400 passengers, straining the handling capacity of ZIA.

There are only four conveyor belts to deliver baggage at the arrival lounge. Inadequate number of trolleys paved the way for a section of airport staff to make a quick buck by 'lending' trolleys, many passengers complained.

When they finally came out of the airport, rickshaws in the name of getting them vehicles charged money. Operators of minibuses then charged fares at whims, passengers alleged.

However, Chairman of Civil Aviation Authority (CAAB) Air Commodore Iqbal Hossain said they were well prepared to handle the situation yesterday as fog delayed landing of flights also on Friday.

Police helped ensure smooth departure of passengers. Extra CAAB personnel were also engaged to handle the situation, he said.

100 vehicles damaged in city Auto-rickshaw drivers go on rampage, lay siege to police station

By Staff Correspondent

Unruly auto-rickshaw and auto-tempo drivers went on the rampage in different parts of the city yesterday and damaged at least 100 vehicles protesting police action and arrest of their colleagues in Sepoybagh area on Sunday.

They also laid a siege to Khilgaon police station for about one hour from about 9 am, triggering clashes with police, which spread to nearby areas.

Police said they charged batons and fired tear gas shells and blank shots to bring the situation under control in Khilgaon area. Several people and at least six policemen were injured in the clashes, they said.

The drivers put up barricades and clashed with police also at Jatrabari, Sayedabad, Rampura, Paltan, Motijheel and Gulistan areas.

Hundreds of people were stranded at Jatrabari-Sayedabad area as transports went off the

roads.

Auto-rickshaws did not come out on streets yesterday.

Sunday's clash centred around the alleged ring leader of auto-rickshaw thieves, who was beaten to death by some unidentified persons at Badda on the previous day. Police arrested 26 auto-rickshaw drivers during Sunday's clash.

The clash had ensued when auto-rickshaw drivers cordoned the Sepoybagh house of one Taslima, where Rehanuddin's associates took shelter along with the body. They took shelter there after they failed to bury the body at Sepoybagh graveyard following a chase by auto-rickshaw drivers.

During yesterday's siege of Khilgaon thana, the drivers also demanded trial of Taslima.

They put up barricades on the road from Khilgaon intersection to the police station and hurled brickbats at the police station.

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আমাদের সম্মানিত গ্রাহক, পৃষ্ঠপোষক,
শুভানুধ্যায়ী ও দেশবাসীকে পবিত্র ইদ
এবং ইংরেজী নববর্ষের শুভেচ্ছা

ইদ মোবারক শুভ নববর্ষ

অগ্রণী ব্যাংক

দেশ ও জাতির সেবায় প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ

Eid Greetings

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