

Delhi cops foil terror plot

Bangladeshi Huji man held with arms

AGENCIES, New Delhi

The Delhi police have arrested three persons, including a Bangladeshi, claiming yesterday that it has foiled a terror plan to kill some leading politicians and target software parks, market places and railway stations across the country.

Two of the suspects, Hilaluddin from Bangladesh and Bengal-based Nafiqul Biswas, were arrested at Murshidabad when they were exchanging weapons smuggled in from Bangladesh, Joint Commissioner (Special Cell) Karnal Singh told reporters yesterday. The third, Md Ibrahim, was arrested by police in Hyderabad and brought to Delhi for interrogation.

Interrogation revealed that Hilaluddin, a resident of Rajshahi

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

BIMAN FLIGHT CRISIS

Journey of over 5,000 hajj pilgrims uncertain

Agencies seek PM's help

REAZ AHMAD

Some 5,000 to 6,000 hajj pilgrims now face uncertainty as the combined carrying capacity of Biman Bangladesh Airlines and foreign aircraft that are to make Hajj flights is much less for flying 52,000 pilgrims who got Saudi visas till yesterday.

The hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) blamed the national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines for not arranging adequate flights for the intending pilgrims and said Biman would not be able to carry more than 35,000 pilgrims in total while foreign carriers might fly 6,000 to 7,000 more.

Against the backdrop, Haab once again sought the prime minister's intervention in resolving the hajj flight crisis and announced a grand rally of Hajj pilgrims and agencies in front of Biman's Motijheel office at 2:00pm today.

Haab will also stage protest after the Jumma prayers on Friday near the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque.

This is for the second time in the current hajj season that the prime minister's interventions were solicited. Earlier, the PM's intervention saw axing of ex-civil aviation state minister Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin on November 17 upon his failures to arrange flights for over

50,000 pilgrims at a reasonable fare.

By 63 hajj flights till yesterday, Biman carried 26,935 Hajj pilgrims to Jeddah and by 21 more flights up to January 4, it would be able to carry 12,000 more, Biman sources said.

But at a news briefing in the city yesterday, Haab leaders expressed fear that Biman with its "aging and dwindling fleet" would not be able to carry more than a total of 35,000 pilgrims while other foreign carriers could fly a maximum of 7,000.

A top Biman official speaking on condition of anonymity, however,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Primary school teachers start fast unto death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Non-government primary school teachers yesterday went for a fast unto death at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital to realise their one-point demand for nationalisation of their jobs.

Wearing shrouds, 20 teachers started the programme at 5:00 pm, which will continue until their demand is met.

Leaders of Bangladesh Non-government Primary School Teachers' Association said

if the government does not meet their demand by 11:00am today, they will lay siege to the prime minister's office afterwards.

Their scheduled programme to lay siege was not held yesterday as the prime minister was out of the city, they said.

Earlier yesterday, the association brought out a procession from the Shaheed Minar, joined by several hundred teachers. They

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

NSI objects to GP's rural expansion

Cites security as reason in 20 dists along border

ABU SAEED KHAN

The National Security Intelligence (NSI) has objected to a GrameenPhone (GP) plan for expanding network in the rural areas of 20 districts along the Indo-Bangladesh frontier, saying such expansion will further stimulate terrorism, smuggling and subversive activities.

The GP last October submitted its plan to the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) for installing 43 base stations in the 20 districts.

After about two months, the BTRC referred the case to the NSI on December 15 instead of processing the routine prayer.

In its letter dated December 22, 2005, the NSI squarely blamed all

private mobile phone operators for the proliferation of smuggling and terrorism in the country. It also blamed the BTRC for allowing installations of cellular base stations within eight kilometres from the international demarcation or the zero line.

These base stations emit signals up to 3-15 kilometres on either side of the border. As a result, the smugglers and terrorists can instantaneously inform their accomplices of the law enforcers' movement, said the NSI letter.

The intelligence agency believes that such expansion of mobile phone network will help the criminals coordinate with their Indian counterparts.

Experts, however, contradicted

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

OFF-SHORE SEISMIC SURVEY

Cabinet's review decision upsets energy adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet's decision to scrutinise an energy ministry proposal on the third round block bidding will delay the exploration of oil and gas resources, Energy Ministry Adviser Mahmudur Rahman said.

The energy ministry on Monday sought the cabinet's approval for its proposal to hold a seismic survey to mark fresh oil and gas exploration blocks but the cabinet formed a committee headed by Health Minister Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and asked it to review the proposal.

Upon completing this survey, the country can float its third round block bidding through inviting international oil and gas companies by next July, sources said.

"This time-consuming act [of reviewing the proposal] will certainly delay the process of fresh gas

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

Law enforcers cordon off the city's Paltan Maidan yesterday to ensure foolproof security for today's Jamaat-Islami grand rally there.

AL forms all but 15 district bodies

HASANAH JAHD TUSHER

The main opposition Awami League (AL) is yet to form new committees of 15 organisational districts out of 72 due to persisting intra-party feuds.

In a move to resolve the feuds and expedite formation of new committees, AL President Sheikh

Hasina will call all the district and thana unit presidents and general secretaries at her Sudha Sadan residence in the city immediately after the Eid-ul-Azha, party sources said.

She will hear them and give instant solutions to their problems. She will also take the opinion of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

149-PIECED BODIES Court sends Firoz Rashid's nephew to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An absconding convict, sentenced to death for killing businessman Mohammad Shamsul Haque and his son Russel Sheikh and slicing their bodies into 149 pieces in last March, was sent to jail yesterday after he surrendered to court.

Kazi Nur Qaiyum, nephew of Jatiya Party leader Kazi Firoz

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing		
December 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-27	5-30
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation