

Biman tries for 10 more landing slots in Jeddah

Govt seeks time from Haab until noon today to solve hajj flight crisis

REAZ AHMAD

The government has sought time until noon today for resolving the hajj flight crisis and securing in a last ditch effort at least 10 more air landing slots in Jeddah so that no pilgrims miss the hajj.

Haji Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab) yesterday postponed its scheduled Biman office seizure programme as the assurance came at an overnight meeting of three ministries at Hotel Sheraton at 1:00 am yesterday.

However, Haab leaders said they will resume agitating if the government failed to arrange flights for all the 51,000 pilgrims by the 12noon

deadline.

Prime minister Khaleda Zia has earlier entrusted Jamaat Secretary General and Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid for the second time this year to play a negotiating role.

Mujahid joined State Minister for Religion Mosharrif Hossain Shahjahan and State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir at 10:00 Tuesday night at the meeting with Haab leaders that lasted for three hours.

Khaleda had earlier entrusted Mujahid with the task of resolving protracted hajj mismanagement after axing the immediate past civil

aviation state minister Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin on November 17.

The three ministers pledged to meet the deadline a day after the Haab, federating body of 363 hajj agencies, expressed fear of 5,000 pilgrims' missing hajj opportunity due to inadequate flight arrangements and announced programme.

Some 5,000 to 6,000 hajj pilgrims now face uncertainty as the Biman Bangladesh Airlines and chartered foreign aircraft cannot fly all the 51,000 pilgrims, who obtained Saudi visas.

The Haab blamed the national

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Rab rushes to N'ganj village in search of Bangla Bhai

BDNEWS, Narayanganj

A combined operation of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and the police yesterday failed to capture the second-in-command of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB).

Acting on information that Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai is staying at Mollabari Mosque in Rupshi village, over one thousand members of Rab and the police conducted a seven-hour-long combing operation in Rupshi and Tarabo villages.

Sources said Rab was informed by one of its informants that Bangla Bhai had prayed his morning prayers at the mosque. A huge contingent of Rab-3 members rushed to the mosque and kept the area cordoned off for hours.

Several hundred members of

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PHOTO: STAR

A bird's-eye view of ruling Jamaat-e-Islami rally in Paltan Maidan in the capital yesterday. The photo was taken from Jiban Bima Bhaban.

Fakhruddin's Biriani shop fined

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court fined the city's popular Fakhruddin's Biriani shop at Ramna Tk 50,000 for not maintaining required safety and hygiene standards.

The mobile court led by Magistrate Sarder Md Keramat Ali found bottled burhani without the seal of the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) at the shop.

Besides, kitchen utensils were being washed beside the toilet.

Later the court raided Yousuf Grand Sons in the same area and fined Selim Reza, owner of the shop, Tk 50,000 as a number of packaged foods including biscuit, chanchachur, and bread were found without BSTI seals.

Sixteen other mobile courts yesterday raided different parts of the city and realised over Tk five and a half lakh as fine from shops and factory owners. The courts also

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3 die in cop firing Magistrate, police among 30 hurt in clash over seizure of sugarcane crushing machines

BDNEWS, Kushtia

At least three people were killed and 30 others injured yesterday when police opened fire on a mob agitated against the seizure of illegal sugarcane-crushing machines at South Bhurkapara in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia.

The deceased are Ratan, 15, a school student, Azam, 32, a farmer,

and Mizanur Rahman, 25.

Police and eyewitnesses said the fierce clash between police and locals erupted around 1:00pm when a mobile court led by magistrate Abdul Aziz Mia seized two sugarcane-crushing machines.

Following the seizure, local sugarcane farmers and villagers attacked the magistrate and police

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Bimstec to form body to resolve trade disputes

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The December 21-27 meeting of the Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) of Bimstec countries has decided to form a high-level third-party mediation committee to resolve trade-related disputes that could arise between the member countries, official sources said.

While the recently concluded TNC meeting in Kathmandu failed to converge on the percentage of value addition for rules of origin, a

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JMB men back in business on lax law

Activists return to Satkhira mosques, madrasas; fishermen tell of bomb factory in Sundarbans

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

The outlawed Islamist outfit Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) has started to regroup its forces in the Satkhira region capitalising on lax law enforcement.

The JMB men are coming back

to mosques and madrasas in rural areas of the district and resuming their militant activities, different intelligence agencies told The Daily Star.

The top leaders and activists fled from mosques and madrasas

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20 inmates killed in Iraq jailbreak bid

AFP, Baghdad

Twenty Iraqi detainees and a prison officer were shot dead in a failed jail break in Baghdad Wednesday, as the country's dominant Shias and Kurds worked on the formation of a new government.

Prisoners stole a weapon from a guard at an Iraqi detention facility in the northern Shia pilgrimage district of Kadhamiyah, before

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Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A regional leader of the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) was killed during a shootout between his accomplices and members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Dumuria upazila of the district yesterday.

The dead was identified as Gazi Mohammad Shamim, 30.

He was arrested at Teligati area under Khanjahan Ali police station

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Police submit charge sheet in Ctg court blast case

UNB, Chittagong

Police yesterday submitted charge sheet against five people, including Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaekh Abdur Rahman and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) chief Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, in connection with the bomb blast in the port city on November 29.

The other accused are Abdur

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Prayer Timing		
December 29		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	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