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SHAH CEMENT

Uncertainty over hajj of 3,300 ends

Claim officials after confirmation of 8 extra Biman flights



PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

In tears, an aspirant pilgrim protesting at Ashkona Hajj Camp yesterday.

RASHIDUL HASAN

Although over 100 pilgrims yesterday staged demonstrations at the city's Hajj Camp for uncertainty over performing hajj, officials at the camp and Biman said all pilgrims will now be able to fly to Saudi Arabia as the national flight carrier got approval to operate eight additional hajj flights. "Alhamdulillah, we have finally gotten the permission to operate eight additional hajj flights. Now there is no uncertainty left over sending all the pilgrims to Saudi Arabia to perform hajj this year," Biman Bangladesh Airlines CEO and Managing Director AM Mosaddique Ahmed told The Daily Star.

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The spotlight will be on Mehedi Hasan (R) when the first Test between Bangladesh and Australia starts at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today. The young off-spinner mesmerised England on his debut last year, when he took 19 wickets including a match-winning 12 in the second Test.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

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The Test begins, finally

SPORTS REPORTER

The long wait is over. The first of the two-Test series between Bangladesh and Australia commences at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today, ending an impasse that saw the Aussies refusing to tour on security grounds two years ago followed by a lengthy pay dispute that cast doubt over the series.

Weather permitting, the match will start at 10am and the good news is that despite the rain threat, fans can expect more playing hours than weather intervention over the next five days of what could possibly be a stop-start Test match.

The game will also mark a few firsts -- a completely new generation of cricketers to renew a Test rivalry after 11 long years; a newly laid pitch and fresh green grass on the overhauled Mirpur turf and of course a new meaning of 'rivalry' after Bangladesh's recent home dominance against a visiting team.

Not serious but threat is there

'Neo JMB' weak for its dead leaders, strong for fugitive ones

SHARIFUL ISLAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Militant group "Neo JMB" is still posing a security threat as its members are making efforts to carry out suicide attacks individually, said counterterrorism officials.

Law enforcers are worried about possible militant attacks on public gatherings with the militant group shifting its target from non-Muslims, foreigners and law enforcers.

The "Neo JMB", an ultra-radical offshoot of Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), lost much of its organisational strength in the last one year following the killings of its chief coordinator Tamim Ahmed Chowdhury and many other key leaders in anti-militancy drives.

It had posed a major security threat under the leadership of Bangladeshi-Canadian Tamim. The charismatic militant leader managed to recruit many disgruntled leaders and activists of JMB and English-medium educated youths.

Top JMB leaders Sarwar Jahan Manik alias Abdur Rahman and Dr Nazrul Islam, who were not happy with the then JMB chief Saidur Rahman, formed a separate faction in 2014, with Sarwar taking the helm.

Tamim approached the two leaders at a time when the faction was facing a severe fund crunch. He set up "Neo JMB" on September 23, 2015, reportedly inspired by global terror outfit Islamic State.

He also managed sufficient fund for the organisation and played a key role in drawing up the plan and carrying out the terrorist attack at the Holey Artisan Bakery in the capital's Gulshan on July 1 last year. The attack left 20



Tamim Ahmed

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

RAPE OF 13-YR-OLD Culprits let off on settlement of Tk 3.5 lakh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Some local influentials yesterday "settled" the rape of a 13-year-old schoolgirl at Kotalipara upazila in Gopalganj by asking the alleged rapists to "compensate" the victim with Tk 3.5 lakh.

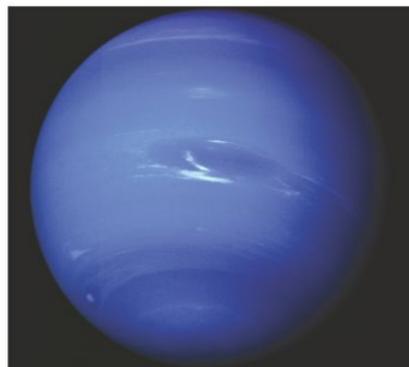
Kotalipara Upazila Parishad Vice-Chairman Motiur Rahman Hazra along with some others had reportedly asked the six alleged rapists to show up with the money at 10:00am today.

Of the six, Anik Baidya, 19, son of Khokon Baidya, and Diponkar Baidya, 25, son of Gobinda Baidya, have been asked to bring Tk 75,000 each.

The remaining ones -- Shimul Baidya, 19, son of Taran Baidya, Roni Baidya, 18, son of Nirmol Baidya, Tomal Boiragi, 19, son of

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Diamond rain in Uranus!



TECHTIMES.COM

Scientists have long theorised that the icy giant planet Uranus could have diamond rain showers due to the immense pressure in its atmosphere but none have actually come close to confirming the idea since mimicking the harsh conditions of the planet is necessary.

A team of researchers, however, has recreated the atmospheric conditions of Uranus at Stanford University's SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory and successfully observed a rain of tiny diamonds.

"Previously, researchers could only assume that

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

VIOLENCE OVER 'GODMAN' Indian forces on high alert

AFP, Panchkula

Hundreds of troops yesterday patrolled a northern Indian city hit by deadly clashes that killed at least 30 people after thousands protested a court's decision to convict a controversial spiritual leader of rape.

The army was deployed in Haryana state's Panchkula city after tens of thousands of followers of guru Ram Rahim Singh went on an angry rampage, attacking television vans and setting fire to dozens of private vehicles.

Security forces were put on high alert to ensure there was no repeat of the violence that erupted Friday afternoon, minutes after a special court pronounced the self-styled guru guilty of raping two of his followers.

Mobile phone services were disrupted in some parts of Haryana and neighbouring Punjab state, where authorities had earlier imposed a curfew following the clashes.

Although the curfew was lifted in Panchkula yesterday, restrictions on public assembly remained in place.

Haryana police chief BS Sandhu yesterday told AFP at least 30 people had died with the toll likely to rise as some of the wounded were being treated for serious head injuries.

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NOTICE

STAR WEEKEND

70 YEARS OF PARTITION
States of being divided

Dear readers, for technical reasons not all subscribers of The Daily Star received Star Weekend on Friday. Please grab the magazine you are entitled to today. We apologise for the

SIBL Foundation Hospital & Diagnostic Center

PRAYER TIMING AUGUST 27

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4-25 12-45 4-45 6-38 8-00

JAMAAT 5-00 1-15 5-00 6-41 8-30

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