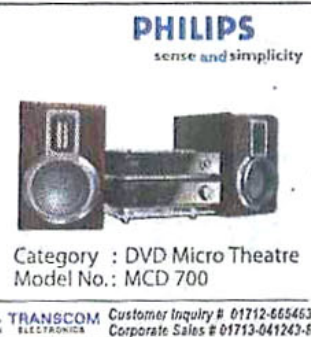




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People's Right to Know

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Mamun produced in court in arms case, remanded

Pistol found in his house

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

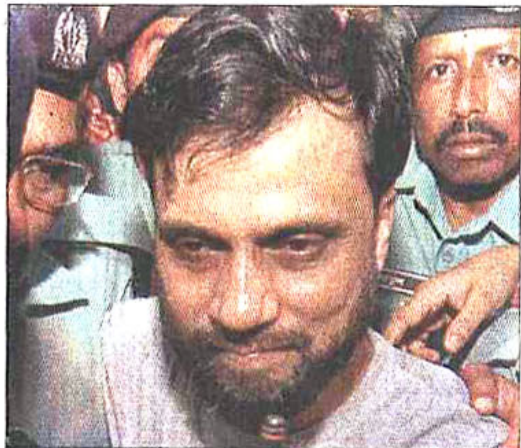
Giasuddin Al Mamun, controversial businessman and a close friend of Tarique Rahman who too is in detention now, was placed on a five-day remand in an arms case yesterday.

Police said they needed to have him remanded for at least seven days to "recover the huge cache of arms and ammunition that are in the possession of his cohorts".

In a first information report (FIR) to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka, they said they arrested him at 2:15am yesterday, raiding his house at Banani DOHS. During the raid carried out with the assistance of troops and other law enforcers, police seized a Spain-made .22 bore pistol and eight bullets.

Listed as a top graft suspect by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), Mamun was first taken to the Cantonment Police Station. Later in the afternoon, he was produced in the court.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Giasuddin Al Mamun being taken to a Dhaka court yesterday.

DUBAI ACCIDENT Biman aircraft beyond repair, officials say

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The aircraft of Biman Bangladesh Airlines that had an accident at Dubai International Airport on March 12 is beyond repair, said a source at Biman.

"The Airbus is beyond economic repair (BER) and therefore it is abandoned," the Biman official said while talking to The Daily Star. "Biman is yet to declare the Airbus abandoned officially as we are waiting for the report from the insurance company of the Airbus", said the official.

Biman would receive \$ 40 million from the insurance company as it is beyond BER, he said.

Meanwhile, the flight operations restrictions imposed on pilot and crew of the ill-fated Airbus have been withdrawn, said the source.

On March 12, the Dhaka-bound Bangladesh Biman aircraft suffered a wheel failure during takeoff and forced Dubai International Airport, the busiest in the Middle East, to suspend its operations for about eight hours.

Some 14 of its 236 passengers

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Members of Khelaghar, a children's organisation, pay tribute to the Liberation War martyrs at the National Memorial in Savar on the Independence Day yesterday.

Chicken, egg sales drop, prices fall

MD HASAN

Broiler chicken and egg sales dropped by half in the city's kitchen markets due to bird flu panic among the customers, retailers and wholesalers have said.

They said customers fear to buy broilers and eggs though prices have come down by more than 30 percent.

"Egg and fowl sales went down by over 50 percent though prices dipped 30 percent," Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association Vice-President Shah Habibul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday.

This correspondent found dull business related to chicken and eggs in different kitchen markets, fast food shops and alleyway restaurants in the city during a visit yesterday.

However, customers were found happy as prices of local chicken, mutton and beef remained steady.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

14TH SAARC SUMMIT

Observers to address for the first time

REZAUL KARIM

Representatives of the five observers of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) will deliver speeches at the 14th summit of the forum in New Delhi on April 3-4 when Bangladesh hands over the Saarc chairmanship to India.

Sources said China, Japan, South Korea, the United States and the European Union will attend all the meetings of the summit. This is for the first time in the history of Saarc that its observers are going to attend and address the summit.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed will lead the Bangladesh delegation at the summit.

Quoting Saarc Secretariat, the

sources said each of the observers will be allowed to deliver a four-minute speech in presence of the heads of state and government at the inaugural function of the summit on April 3.

All observers have already confirmed their participation in the Saarc summit.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing, Japanese Foreign Minister Tarō Aso, South Korean Foreign and Trade Minister Song Min-soon, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia Richard Boucher and the European Union's Deputy Director-General of External Affairs for Asia and Latin America Hervé Loeferer will attend as well as address the summit.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



ICC WORLD CUP 07

Tigers add to the joy

BISHWAJIT ROY

At about the same time that dawn broke to usher in Independence Day for Bangladesh, another dawn came up to beat the natural clock as Bangladesh confirmed their qualification for the Super 8 stage of the World Cup, sending a nation of 150 million into raptures.

The first-ever qualification for the second round in the showpiece event of cricket in the West Indies added a new dimension in the celebrations of this year's Independence Day as people from all walks of life joined hands to toast a magnificent achievement.

President Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, Chief Advisor Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed, Nobel laureate

Professor Muhammad Yunus, BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and Awami League president Sheikh Hasina congratulated the team on their glorious achievement and hoped that the cricketers would be able to continue their success in the mega event.

Nothing could have been better than the way the countrymen remembered the martyrs of the War of Liberation, expressed this time through the achievement of the cricket heroes who scripted a famous chapter in the country's sporting history on the eve of a very significant day.

And captain Habibul Bashar was understandably extremely delighted with the significance of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Hills under assault

INAM AHMED

At Teknaf, the hills burn at night.

From a distance the flames look like melted lava from volcano rolling down the hills -- an awe striking sight. The flames spread fast, claw like. The hissing of the burning tree branches is distinct. Sometimes bamboos burst with gunfiresound.

"The hills are burning," screams Assistant Conservator of Forest Nurul Karim into his mobile. "Flames are at least at 50 places. Rush, rush, rush. You must stop it."

Catch whoever did it."

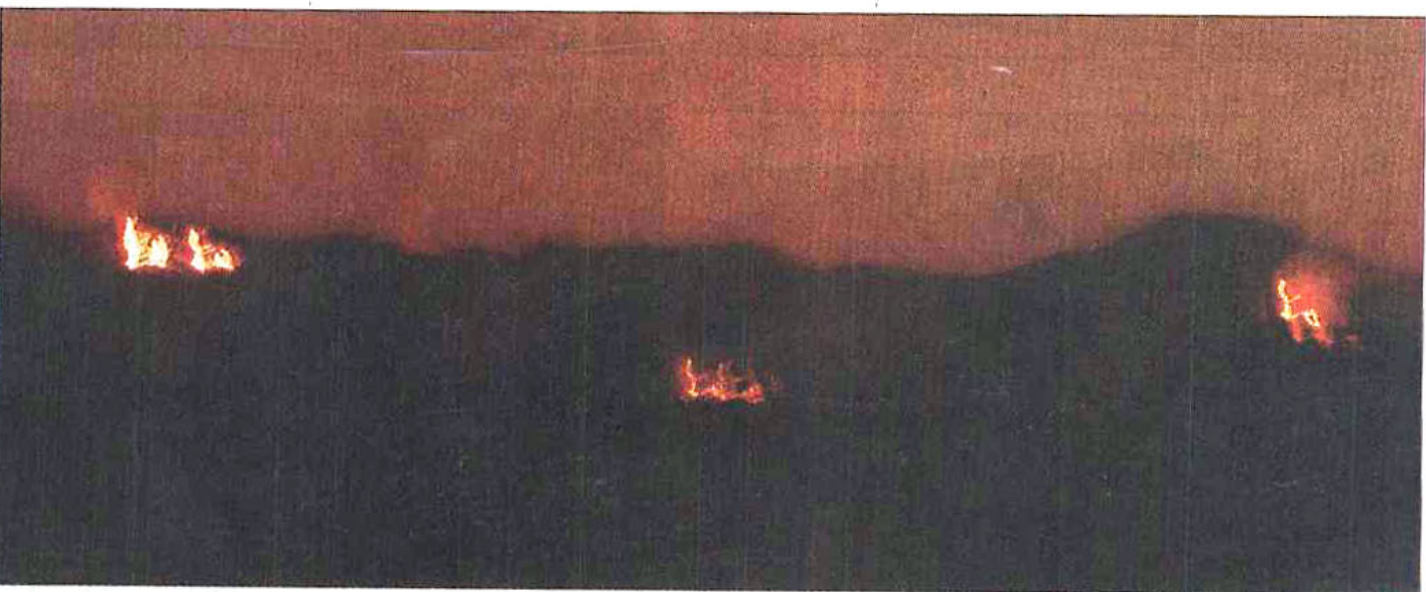
Then he shrugs in a dejected way. "What could we do? We don't even have a motorcycle to race to the spots. This is the way the thugs are destroying our hills every night."

The morning shows the destruction. A vast swath of the hills look torched; ashes crumble under feet. The trees look singed and lifeless, leaves and branches covered with soot. Every night soon after harvest of 'Chhan', a kind of long-leaved grass used as thatching

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN



BOTTOM ... Hills at Teknaf are burning as villagers set fire to Chhan stalks. TOP ... The Rohingyas lumped at camp by the Naf river, who mindlessly destroy forests for firewood.

Star Cruise from Mumbai to Goa

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LTTE bombs military base in first air raid

REUTERS, Colombo

A Tamil Tiger light aircraft bombed a Sri Lankan air force base next to Colombo international airport before dawn yesterday, killing three airmen and wounding 16 in the first such air strike by the rebel

group. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said more such attacks by its air wing would follow, threatening to deepen renewed conflict in the island state off the toe of India.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Our Pride

Heartiest congratulations to **BANGLADESH CRICKET TEAM** On their entering into The Elite Super Eights in **Cricket World Cup**

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