

40,000 Bangladeshis to perform Hajj this year

First Hajj flight on Nov 12 likely

UNB, Dhaka

Around 40,000 pilgrims from Bangladesh are likely to perform Hajj this year, an inter-ministerial meeting was told yesterday as the government continued advance planning for a smooth pilgrimage.

Religious Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Matur Rahman presided over the meeting at his ministry.

The meeting was also informed that the first Hajj flight is likely to take off for Jeddah on November 12.

Biman Managing Director Dr MA Momen said they have all necessary preparation for carrying pilgrims from Dhaka to Jeddah.

He told the meeting that they signed an agreement with a foreign airline to take the pilgrims since Biman does not have adequate aircraft. The foreign aircraft can ferry 17,919 of the pilgrims.

Momen said Biman will also sign an agreement with another foreign airline shortly for smoothly carrying the Bangladeshi pilgrims.

He said the Saudi Airlines will carry about 10,000 while the remaining pilgrims will be ferried by

Bimna's own aircraft.

"We hope there will be no crisis of aircraft this year... We're in charge of transporting the pilgrims," said the Biman boss, adding that the national airline has prepared to carry 42,500 Hajj pilgrims this year.

Earlier, Biman fixed two-way airfare at USD 1250 for each pilgrim. Secretary to the Religious Ministry Ataur Rahman, Secretary to Civil Aviation Ministry Altaf

Ali and Secretary of Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) Maulana Yakub Sharafati.

CA wishes Indian PM's early recovery

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in a message yesterday wished early recovery of Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh who underwent a surgery on Saturday.

ARMY CAR VANDALISM CASE

DU Chhatra Union leader Manabendra remanded

DU CORRESPONDENT

Detained leader of Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) Manabendra Dev was placed on a four-day remand yesterday, after joint forces pinned him up from his Tantibazar residence in old part of the city on Sunday.

Earlier Manabendra, president of Dhaka University (DU) unit of BCU, was shown arrested in an army car vandalism case (No 64) during the recent violent clashes in and around the campus, said Second Officer Akter Morshed of Shahbagh Police Station.

Shahbagh police produced him before the CMM Court with a prayer for remand.

The court granted a four-day remand.

Two other DU students Deen Islam and Rafiqul Islam Sujon, who were arrested in the same case and placed on a five-day remand on September 11, were also produced before the court with a prayer for fresh remand.

The court granted one-day remand for both of them.

According to confidential statement of Sujon, Manabendra was arrested for his alleged involvement in army car vandalism.

Meanwhile, BCU Central Unit President Samsul Alam Sazzan and General Secretary Khan Asaduzzaman Masum in a joint statement demanded immediate release of Manabendra.

They said the investigation officer did not press any charges against Manabendra in any of the cases filed for violent demonstration on the DU campus in August.

There is also no case against him in any police station, they added.

Different political and cultural organisations have also protested his arrest and demanded immediate release.

Communist Party of Bangladesh President Monjurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in a joint statement expressed grave concern over the arrest.

They said there was no case against Manabendra and he was not charged in any case related to recent violence on DU campus.

"The arrest of Manabendra after the speech of the chief adviser that 'no further arrest or harassment of any student will be made' has put it into question," the statement read.

Chhatra Sangram Parishad, Pragotishil Chhatra Jote, Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshthi, the BCU, Sangskritik Union and Raju Bitorko Angon also demanded the release of Manabendra.

Goods train derailed at Banani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A goods train was derailed at Banani in the city yesterday suspending partially the railway communications between Dhaka and other areas for more than one hour.

According to government railway police at Kamalapur Railway Station, four wheels of Dhaka Cantonment Railway Station-bound goods train from Tejgaon was derailed near Banani Staff Road at around 3:30pm.

After more than an hour, railway technicians reached the spot and placed the wheels on the track.

Locals said the train was stranded there as of 11am.

Publication ceremony of 'Rangeen Phul' held

The publication ceremony of 'Rangeen Phul' (colourful flower), a literary collection for the children, was held at National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday.

Oitijhya published the book on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr, says a press release.

In Bangladesh there has been no quality literary collection for the children for quite a long time, said National Professor Kabir Chowdhury at the publication ceremony, adding, "Rangeen Phul will help fill the void."

Eminent litterateur Bashir Al Helal appreciated the writings while noted literary figure Abdush Shakur appreciated its subject verification as a contributor to the book.

Oitijhya Chief Executive Arifur Rahman Naim hoped the book would also attract the adult as well.

The 480-page book includes the writings of a total of 107 writers on 47 subjects and the price is fixed at Tk 200.

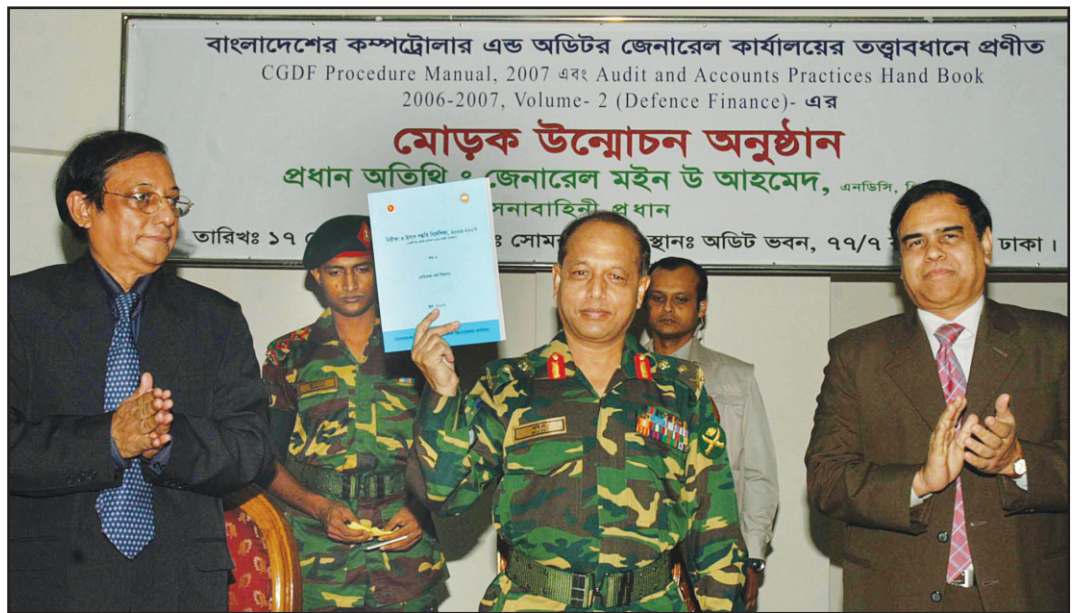


PHOTO: STAR

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed launches 'CGDF Procedure Manual, 2007' and 'Audit and Accounts Practices Hand Book 2006-2007, Volume-2 (Defence Finance)' at a publication ceremony at Audit Bhaban in the city yesterday while Comptroller and Auditor General Asif Ali, left, and Defence Secretary Kamrul Hasan, right, look on.

DU, Red Cross sign MoU

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) yesterday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a view to working together in the areas of education and advancement of research for mutual benefit, says a press release.

Under the MoU, the ICRC would provide financial supports yearly to the university's mass communication and journalism department (MCJ) to arrange three-month internships for 30 students of the department in various media houses.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz and Red Cross Bangladesh Mission Chief Sinn Ruda signed the accord at the VC office.

During the internship, the selected students would get Tk 3,000 monthly as remuneration.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, acting dean of Social Sciences Faculty, Prof Abdus Salam, MCJ department chairman and its teacher Prof Geeteara Nasrin and ICRC Communication Officer Surinder Singh Oberoi were present on the occasion.

Other programmes, including organising editors' conference and discussions, will also be under the MoU.

Housewife alleges torture by in-laws for dowry

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A newly married housewife, who fell victim to domestic violence, has demanded punishment to her in-laws, alleging that they tortured her brutally over dowry.

Jesmin Akter, 22, wife of Mohammad Rafiq, an employee of a shop at Mirpur in the city, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) on Thursday after being tortured by her mother-in-law Setara Begum, brother-in-law Khokon, sister-in-law Moni and sister-in-law's husband Ripon.

With a faint voice, Jesmin who is now recovering at DMCH, told The Daily Star that though 10 days have passed since her torture by in-laws she is yet to get justice.

Describing her agonising ordeals, Jesmin said her brother and sister-in-laws kicked her while the mother-in-law bit her right hand causing serious injuries on the night of September 7.

"After torturing severely they confined me to a house at Azambagh in Pallabi for six days and when my husband came to retrieve me they also beat him," said Jesmin, daughter of a staff of Mymensingh Agriculture University, while tears rolling down her cheek.

Getting the news from Rafiq, Jesmin's mother Aleya Begum rescued her daughter with the help of her husband.

She rushed Jesmin to one-stop crisis centre (OCC) at DMCH.

Gynae Consultant of OCC Bilkis Begum said the condition of the housewife was so bad that they referred her to emergency ward of DMCH.

They (OCC) will provide legal assistance along with other assistance after she recovers fully, Bilkis added.

Jesmin said she met Rafiq in a bridal party at Feni 10 months back and they became involved with each other.

Four months ago when she came to her grand father's house at Pallabi, she was married to Rafiq in presence of his family, she said.

After two months of their marriage, the in-laws started demanding a dowry of Tk 2 lakh for sending Rafiq abroad, she said, adding that her family could not meet the demand due to financial constraint.

"We gave furniture and other things worth around Tk 40,000 in different occasions, but it is not possible for us to give such a big amount of money," said Aleya.

She said they will file a case after Jesmin's recovery.

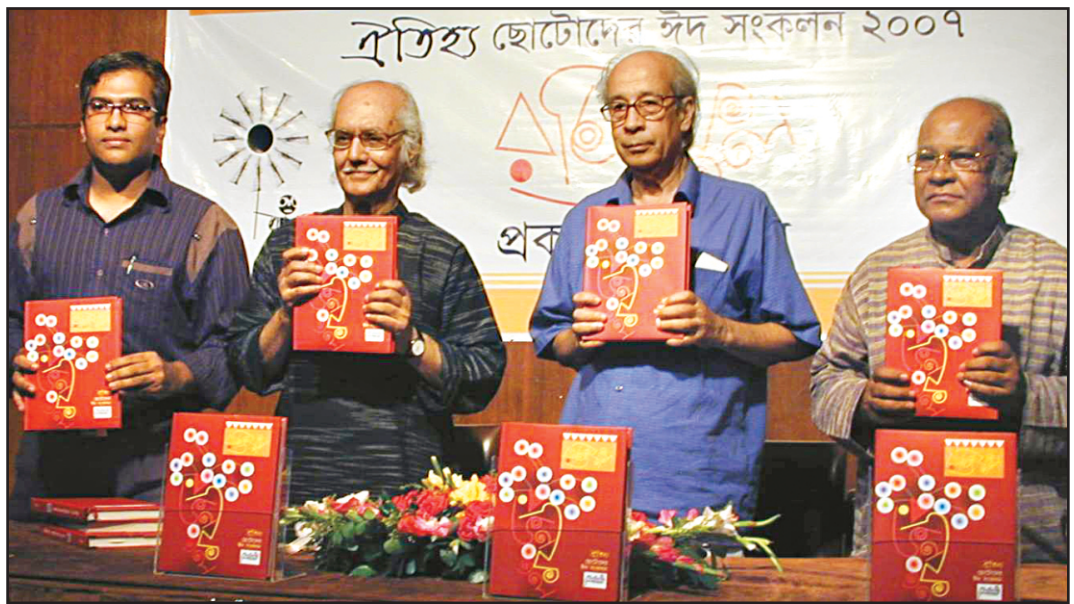


PHOTO: STAR

Prof Kabir Chowdhury, 2nd from left, Abdush Shakur, Bashir Al Helal and Arifur Rahman Naim hold copies of a book titled 'Rangeen Phul' at the publication ceremony at National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday.

NU first year exams from Oct 1

The 1st year honours examination-2006 under National University (NU) will begin on October 1 instead of September 20, says a press release.

The university has changed the exam schedule because of the deterioration of flood situation in the country.

The fresh schedule of the examinations will be available on NU website - www.nu.edu.bd.

Rail link with Sylhet restored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Rail communications from Sylhet to Dhaka and Chittagong resumed yesterday 32 hours after the suspension of train service.

The train service came to a halt after a train, Dhaka Mail, derailed at a hilly area between Satgaon and

Rashidpur railway stations at about 11:30 pm on Saturday as a huge quantity of mud covered the rail track due to a landslide triggered by a heavy rain.

With the resumption of communications, Dhaka-bound Joyontika Express left Sylhet at 8:50am, said the station manager.



PHOTO: STAR

Haphazard parking of vehicles near Gausia market in the city adds to traffic congestion yesterday.

Allocation of leased khas lands to be cancelled if not used for same purpose

Bss, Dhaka

The allocation of the government khas lands leased for various purposes should be cancelled if those are not utilised for the same use and stern actions should be taken against the persons involved.

This directive was passed at a meeting to review the ongoing activities of the Land Ministry and its agencies and departments held at the conference room of the Land Ministry in the city yesterday.

Adviser for Land, Law and Information Barrister Mainul Hossain presided over the meeting, said an official handout.

The meeting instructed the officials concerned for remaining alert so that law is not misused in implementing land administration and management.

The meeting also passed order to the officials for identifying the complicacies, if there is any, in implementation of the multi-storied building construction projects for housing of marginal poor and slum-dwellers in the Dhaka city.

Besides, the meeting recommended the officials concerned for nabbing the illegal occupants of the government lands and for taking steps in recovering those. It also instructed the officials for taking measures to remove the complicacies relating to vested properties.

Acting Land Secretary Mosleh Uddin, Chairman of Land Appeal Board Dewan Zakir Hossain, Chairman of Land Reforms Board Monirul Islam, Director General of Land Record and Survey Directorate Mahfuzur Rahman and senior officials of the ministry and its departments and organisations were present.

Govt takes steps to improve reproductive health

Health adviser tells workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country has made significant progress in the arena of reproductive health as the government has taken many steps in this regard, said Health and Family Welfare Adviser Maj Gen (Retd) Dr ASM Matur Rahman yesterday.

He said united efforts of the government, non-government and civil society organisations are needed for further development of reproductive healthcare service.

Dr Matur was speaking as chief guest at the opening ceremony of a national workshop titled 'Access to reproductive health for the achievement of ICPD and MDGs: The South-South Initiative' at the Cirdap auditorium in the city.

The workshop was organised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with Partners in Population and Development (PPD).

Dr Matur said the government is providing Tk 6000 to each expect-

ing mothers of ultrapoor families so that they can ensure healthcare service during pregnancy period.

These mothers will also get financial assistance after giving birth to their children, he added.

The adviser said girls married at an early age are the worst sufferers of pregnancy-related complications, and they should be encouraged to have nutritious food and postnatal check-ups.

He said Bangladesh is proud to host the secretariat of PPD, an inter-governmental alliance of 21 developing countries covering more than 54 per cent of world population, in Dhaka.

He also laid emphasis on South-South collaboration to achieve MDGs by sharing their knowledge and experiences.

Harry Sangeet Jooseery, executive director of PPD, said though Bangladesh has made impressive achievements in the field of population and development, the country will have to go a long way to ensure quality of life of its people.

AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, secre-

tary to health and family welfare ministry, and Pornchai Suchitta, UNFPA representative in Bangladesh, also spoke.

IJSG Secy General calls on foreign adviser

UNB, Dhaka

International Jute Study Group (IJSG) Secretary General Sudipta Roy called on Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury at his office in the city yesterday.

Speaking to the media afterwards, the foreign adviser said: "Jute is important component of our economy and an environment friendly product. All of us need to work together to attract international attention to this commodity."

The adviser assured Roy of his support in the activities of the IJSG, said a Foreign Ministry release.



A national workshop titled 'Access to reproductive health for the achievement of ICPD and MDGs: The South-South Initiative' was held at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. From left are Pornchai Suchitta, AKM Zafar Ullah Khan, Adviser Maj Gen (retd) ASM Matur Rahman and Harry S Jooseery.