

CTG ARMS HAUL CASE Hafizur on 3-day remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

A Chittagong court yesterday placed accused Hafizur Rahman on a three-day remand in connection with the sensational arms haul case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mahbubur Rahman granted the remand after Criminal Investigation Department placed Hafizur before the court and submitted a prayer for the same.

Earlier, Hafizur was arrested at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Company Limited on April 02, 2004, with ten truckloads of firearms and ammunition. He later surrendered before the High Court in Dhaka on October 26, 2005.

On March 2, 2009, Hafizur made a confessional statement under section 164 before Chittagong Metropolitan Magistrate Osman Gani, which made a remarkable development in the case.

In the statement, Hafizur revealed that the ministries for home and industries of the then four-party government, some high officials of intelligence agencies concerned and coast guards were well aware of the smuggling.

The arrangement for safe passage of the deadly weapons and ammunition was undertaken in late 2001, he said.

In January 4 this year, CID got a further extension of 78 days to reinvestigate the case.



Free Birds Club and Dhaka Youth Circle Welfare Organisation take out a colourful kite procession at Gandaria in the city yesterday to celebrate Poush Sangkranti.

Call to use cycle to cut air pollution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) took out a bicycle procession in front of Poura Park in the town yesterday to make cycle popular as an alternative to motorised vehicles.

The participants paraded through the isolated streets of the town.

Later, a rally was held where unit leaders of Bapa said death toll has been rising day by day due to diabetes, cardiac arrest, blood pressure and some other preventable diseases.

It is possible to reduce the chance of obesity to 50 percent, blood pressure 30 percent, heart disease 50 percent and diabetes 50 percent by

half an hour cycling daily or 2,100 km cycling a year, they added.

The Bapa leaders further said that cycling would also reduce air pollution, which is increasing due to motorised vehicles.

They demanded steps to reduce tax on cycle to make it easier to the students and low-income people and separate lane for cycling.

They called on the government to reduce taxes on bicycle to make it popular among people.

Tangail unit Bapa President Sekandar Hayat Khan presided over the rally where Sharif Jamil and Kamrul Ahsan of Bapa, sportsperson Kamrun Nahar Dana, Prof Sumsun Nahar and Nilufar Jahan spoke.



Obituary

METRO DESK

Hafizur Islam, former managing director of Uttara Bank and Arab Bangladesh Bank and general manager of Sonali Bank, passed away peacefully at Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 85, says a press release.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Juma prayers today.

Siddiqur Rahman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Siddiqur Rahman, a freedom fighter and vice president of Khulna district Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD), passed away at his own residence on Wednesday, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one daughter, one son and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

In a statement JSD President Hasanul Haque Inu MP and General Secretary Sharif Nurul Ambia expressed deep shock at his death.

They also conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Treaties with India harmful to country

Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the government has done irreparable harm to the country by signing agreements with India, terming the prime minister's visit to the neighbouring country 'a hundred percent failure'.

"The joint communiqué and all the agreements and memorandum of understandings (MoUs) go against the interests of the nation," he told reporters at the party's central office at Naya Paltan in the city.

He said India has gained a lot from the prime minister's visit, which the Indian newspapers also hailed as the achievement of the Indian government.

Condemning the signing of the agreements, Delwar said it is a matter of concern that the nation would incur a huge loss due to these treaties and it would not be possible to recoup the losses in the future.

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will explain everything in this regard on Saturday, he added.

Replying to a query whether BNP would join parliament to protest the treaties, Delwar said they would return to the House if the government creates a congenial atmosphere.

Meanwhile, pro-BNP intellectuals said at a discussion yesterday that the country could not gain anything from the prime minister's visit. Rather, the agreements have put the country's sovereignty and security at risk.

BNP organised the discussion to mark the 1/11 at the Jatiya Press Club.

Prof Emajuddin Ahmed said the joint communiqué does not have anything good for our country and some of its clauses go against the interests of the country.

The BNP should identify those clauses and explained them to the people, he added.

BNP Vice President Justice TH Khan said BNP with all its might should safeguard the country's sovereignty and security, which are now at risk.

He also said the military-backed caretaker government tried to split the BNP and tortured the leaders and workers of the party following the 1/11.

Press Club President Shawkat Mahmud said the conspiracy of 1/11 is still going on and it has a link with the prime minister's visit to India.

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir attended the discussion.

11TH DHAKA INT'L FILM FESTIVAL BEGINS

National film policy soon: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday announced that the government would set up a modern film institute and formulate a national film policy for development of the country's film arena.

"Appropriate steps will be taken for repealing the existing Film Society Control Act, if necessary," she said at the inaugural function of the nine-day 11th Dhaka International Film Festival 2010 at the National Museum in the city.

The prime minister requested filmmakers, cultural activists and people of all walks of life to remain alert so that in no way ill elements can intrude into the Bangalee culture.

Hasina said her government would provide all-out support in further developing the quality of films in Bangladesh.

"It is very unfortunate that the quality of our films is on a downturn. As a healthy culture can build a wise, modern and conscious nation, we must have to upgrade the standard of our films," Hasina

told the opening programme of the film festival, being staged with the slogan 'Better film, better audience, better society'.

Recalling the establishment of the Film Development Corporation (FDC) by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1957 as the then commerce and industry minister, the prime minister also stressed the need for setting a modern studio inside the FDC.

Hasina asked the authorities concerned to come up with project proposal for setting up film institute and studio. "We will take effective step to implement the project."

The prime minister said Awami League, during its previous tenure, had allocated a plot of land in Savar for setting up the much-expected film institute.

"I will try to know what happened to that land later. Was it grabbed or something else?"

Saying that the Bangalee nation is very rich in art and culture, the premier urged the filmmakers to make films on the real history of the coun-

try's liberation war.

Following a demand from the Film Festival authorities, the prime minister said she would look into the matter whether any cash donation can be given for smooth and timely arrangement of such film festivals in future.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, Festival Committee Chairman Syed Margub Morshed, Jury Board Chairman Saeed Akhtar Mirza of India, festival committee Vice-Chairman Badal Rahman, festival director Ahmed Mujtaba Kamal and Rainbow Film Society Vice Chairman Kishoar Kamal also spoke.

GMG Airlines Chairman Abdus Sattar Nini and First Secretary of Dutch Embassy in Dhaka Anja Roelofs also spoke at the function on behalf of the sponsors of the festival.

A total of 190 films of 66 countries will be screened at the film festival, which will continue till January 22 at Public Library and National Museum.

The price of each ticket is Tk 30 while children will have free entry.

ANNULAR SOLAR ECLIPSE TODAY

Tourists throng St Martin's

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An annular solar eclipse will occur today which will have better visibility from St Martin's island if the sky remains clear.

The solar cover-up will be visible at 12:44pm.

Hundreds of people have been coming to Cox's Bazar to view the rare eclipse.

Tourists in their big groups are going to St Martin's to have a glimpse of the first solar eclipse of the new year.

Bangladesh Anusandhitsu Chakra, a science organisation, has made arrangements for people to view the annular solar eclipse from the island and Cox's Bazar sea beach.

Anusandhitsu officials at a press conference at Cox's Bazar Press Club yesterday gave detailed information about the eclipse.

Shahjahan Mridha Benu, president of the organisation's astronomy branch, and astronomer Dr Reaz Khan and Dr Dipen Bhattacharya were present.

Benu said viewers would have to be cautious while looking at the sun during the eclipse. At that time, the moon will partially cover the sun, which will be visible as a ring around the moon.

Looking at the sun with naked eyes is seriously harmful, as ultra-violet ray would emit from the sun during the eclipse. The eclipse will be visible

Bangladesh for eight minutes. So, the risk is higher, he added.

He further said that all filters used for viewing the eclipse do not work properly.

The interested viewers have been advised to use 13- and 14-grade welding glasses and viewing the shadow of the sun through the water post mixed with turmeric during the eclipse is safe, he said.

Under no circumstances, one should look at the sun for more than 10 seconds at a stretch.

No other total solar eclipse would be visible in the Bangladesh sky before 2114. The total solar eclipse would be visible from the country after 105 years. The next one would be in 2435.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Qulkhwani of Quazi Borhan Uddin, a columnist and former executive vice-president of Premier Bank, will be held at his residence at Cherry Blossom, 18/2 Tollabagh, Sobhanbagh in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

He passed away on January 8 due to a cardiac arrest at LabAid Hospital in the city.

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8th Nat'l Scouts Jamboree begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 8th National Scouts Jamboree started at Mouchak in Gazipur yesterday.

A total of 13,000 scouts from home and abroad are participating in this year's Jamboree.

Chief National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts Abul Kalam Azad said this at a press conference at the National Scouts Bhavan in the city yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally inaugurate the function on Saturday, he added.

The scouts will participate in 14 challenging events during the jamboree.

National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts Mozammel Haque Khan, National Commissioner (programme) Mesbah Uddin Bhuyian and President of Bangladesh Scouts Momtazul Islam were present at the press conference.

The Jamboree will continue till January 22.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Prevailing mild cold wave over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions and the region of Srimongal may continue, met office said.

Moderate to thick fog may occur over the country during the period.

Night temperature may fall slightly over Rajshahi division and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Tangail and Mymensingh and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country, it said.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:33pm today and rises at 6:43am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 27.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 9.1 degrees Celsius at Sayedpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	24.8	10.0	87	65
Chittagong	24.6	15.0	81	65
Rajshahi	23.0	9.2	91	69
Khulna	23.2	14.1	82	71
Barisal	24.6	13.0	86	77
Sylhet	25.7	13.3	96	70
Cox's Bazar	27.0	15.6	74	67