

**EXTORTION CASE  
Nazmul Huda  
gets bail**

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**  
A Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to former communications minister Nazmul Huda and his wife Sigma Huda in connection with an extortion case filed against them in 2007. Judge (in charge) Munir Kamal of the Fifth Joint Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after the couple appeared before the court and sought bail. The same court earlier on January 18 cancelled their bail granted by the High Court as the couple did not turn up and no one represented in them in court. The court yesterday also fixed April 3 for hearing on charge framing against the accused in the case. Ok Kyung Oh, managing director of Taehung Packaging (BD) Ltd, on July 19 in 2007 filed the case against the couple and two others for demanding Tk 2 crore from her and threatening her.



**Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina with the finance ministers of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) member states at the inaugural ceremony of the Fifth Meeting of Saarc Finance Ministers at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 20)**

PHOTO: PID

**India to hold war games with Bangladesh**

**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**  
Top global powers, including US, Russia, France and some of the friendly neighbourhood countries such as Bangladesh, will engage in war games with the Indian Army to learn from India its experience of counter terrorism and urban warfare operations. Indian Army will hold around 15 exercises this year with friendly foreign countries, NDTV reported on Sunday quoting army officials. In its immediate neighbourhood, Indian Army will conduct these joint training exercises with Bangladesh and Singapore, it said. Earlier, India and Bangladesh had two limited scale war games in 2009 and 2001. "Bold Kurukshetra" with Singapore army will kick-off the war games in Babina near Jhansi in March. The two sides will field their mechanised forces in the training engagement. The schedule and nature of exercises with other countries are yet to be decided, but anti-terrorism drills and urban warfare is going to be an important part of all of these war games, said NDTV, quoting Press Trust of India. The army troopers will also engage the American mechanised forces in the deserts of Rajasthan in the exercise "Yudh Abhyas" which will see the US fielding its tanks there.

**Free Mirpur Day today**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The Free Mirpur Day will be observed in a festive mood through different kinds of cultural programmes in the capital today (January 31), says a press release. The capital's Mirpur, known as the last battlefield of the country, was liberated about one and half months after the victory of Bangladesh. Though Pakistan surrendered formally on December 16, 1971, thousands of people of Mirpur experienced domination of Pakistani army and armed non-bangalees over the period. After the home coming of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on January 10, 1972, the hidden army and non-bangalees were ordered to surrender. As a combined force of army, police, and freedom fighters approached to Mirpur-12 on January 30, 1972, the hidden force launched an attack, killing almost all of them. Later, the armed force again attacked the Pakistani army with more power and neutralised them, seizing huge amount of weapons and ammunition. Mirpur Sangskritik Oikya Forum has planned a four-day programme to celebrate the victory since January 28. The forum will place wreaths at the graveyard of the martyrs, bring out celebratory procession, and stage street play at different parts of Mirpur.

**WAR CRIMES TRIAL  
Counsels allowed to meet Ghulam Azam**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday allowed two of former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer Ghulam Azam's lawyers to meet him at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University's prison cell on February 4, 11 and 18. Any two of Ghulam's counsels will meet him between 10:00am and 1:00pm to discuss the case filed against him. The tribunal passed the order after hearing Ghulam Azam's petition filed in this regard on Sunday. The case documents should be handed over to the accused on February 4, it added. Ghulam Azam, 89, charged with 62 counts of crimes against humanity, is now in the prison cell. Meanwhile, yesterday, the 21st prosecution witness of the case against Jamaat leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee, Ejabuddin Miah, also Bangla Academy's assistant librarian, identified some newspapers published during 1970-1972, as seized by the IO from the academy last year as the evidence for the case against Sayedee. The tribunal yesterday recorded the name of Syed Masumul Kabir, a distributor of Bangla Academy, as the 22nd prosecution witness of the case.

**Decision on charges against Kamaruzzaman today**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The International Crimes Tribunal will pass an order today on whether it will accept crimes against humanity charges against Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh leader Mohammad Kamaruzzaman. On January 15, the prosecution pressed charges against the Jamaat-e-Islami assistant secretary general on nine counts of crime, including conspiracy of genocide and crimes against humanity. Kamaruzzaman's areas of operation were Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Tangail and Sherpur, during the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, according to the charges.

**Decision on transit likely by March**

**Says Muhith**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the government will try to take a final decision by March on providing transit facilities to India, Nepal, and Bhutan. "Based on the report of the government's committee on transit, discussions have started with the countries concerned", he said, adding that the report reached him about 8-10 days ago. The government formed the core committee led by Tariff Commission Chairman Mujibur Rahman for its recommendations on various issues including transit routes and fees. Last month the committee submitted its final report. The committee has also submitted a copy of draft framework agreement covering

overall issues relating to transit among the four countries including India. Muhith revealed the information while replying to journalists at a news conference at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel following a meeting of the finance ministers of Saarc countries. The minister said he does not think a general framework agreement is required for transit. Mentioning that the countries that took transit from Switzerland accepted the Swiss rules, he said the countries to enjoy transit will accept the rules formulated by Bangladesh. A commerce ministry official said the period of the trade and transit protocol with India will expire in March. Before that, the government will have to decide on the routes, amount of fees, and whether the tenure will be extended, he added.

**4 alleged muggers arrested**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
Four alleged muggers with a private car were arrested from the city's Mirpur on Sunday. Police arrested the three youths---Humayun Kabir, Anwar Hossain, Ershad, and Saiful Islam---from Technical intersection while they were taking preparations for mugging at around 11:00am. The law enforcers also seized one machete, one knife and two boxes of balm from their possession. In preliminary interrogation, they confessed that they had been involving in mugging since long time, said police.

**12 parties' comment derogatory: SCF**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The Sector Commanders' Forum (SCF) yesterday termed the recent comment by "twelve Islamic and like-minded parties" regarding the ongoing war crimes trial as derogatory. The parties on Saturday said if the ongoing war crimes trial is not stopped, they would try "India's agents" after the end of the Awami League rule in the country. The parties also demanded the immediate release of Jamaat-e-Islami and BNP leaders detained on charges of crimes against human-

ity committed during the War of Liberation in 1971. The accomplices of Pakistani army's collaborators are making the demand to create hindrance to the ongoing trial process, it said. Public opinion is not reflected in the demand made by the extremist quarters, it added. It is very sad that the extremist quarters gave a statement criticising the law of an independent country, said the SCF, urging all to be alert against the heinous bid of the vested quarters.

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**In this issue**

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And we peek into the nests of the **pygmy cotton goose** and bring you the story of how they survive in nest boxes.

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And we look up-close at a **spider** that many would think an ant.

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