

## Saudi riyal found in plane

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Customs intelligence at Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong recovered Saudi riyal worth Tk 39.25 lakh from a Dubai-bound aircraft in the early hours yesterday.

Sources said a flight of the UAE based carrier RAK Airways landed around 1:15am and was set to take off for Dubai at 2:05am when a team of customs officials, acting on a tip-off, raided the aircraft, Shahidul Islam, assistant commissioner of customs told The Daily Star.

The notes were found in a paper package lying on a seat of the aircraft, he said.

The officials, however, could not trace anyone behind the incident as the aircraft was raided prior to departure when the passengers were yet to board.

According to a customs official, the incident might be a failed attempt by hundi (illegal money transfer) agents.

The recovered money had been deposited in the government treasury, he added.

## 3 tragic deaths

FROM PAGE 20  
expatriate Shahid Miah of Manikarchar village in Meghna upazila, Comilla.

An uncle, Dulal Miah, quoted Akash as saying the two boys went out of the house soon after Fajr prayers in a spirit of adventure.

Protesting the killing, locals barricaded the highway at least for two hours in the morning.

Near Shahjalal International Airport, Sakhina and her son-in-law were killed and son Khorshed, 42, and granddaughter Shefali Begum, 24, suffered injuries in the hit-and-run accident while they were crossing the road around 5:30am.

The woman and her family were returning home after seeing off a daughter, who was flying to Oman.

"My sister left Dhaka by a flight at 5:00am and after her departure, we came out of the airport and tried to cross the road," Khorshed said.

"Before we could understand anything, a truck sped away hitting us."

He said they did not inform the sister, whose plane had taken off just minutes before the incident.

## Hitler

FROM PAGE 20  
Built by US sympathisers of the Nazi cause, Hilter's Murphy Ranch was tucked away in the idyllic Los Angeles hills between celebrity mansions and olive trees.

In fact, it was the heavily guarded home to a community of 50 Hollywood fascists who had planned to ride out the war there until the Third Reich was victorious, according to the historians.

The day after Pearl Harbour was bombed on December 7, 1941, police raided the place and took away its occupants.

Now ravaged by time, the property still stands a mile or so from the home of director Steven Spielberg; one of the most haunting landmarks in Los Angeles, it will soon be turned into a picnic area for hikers, the 'Sunday Express' reported.

Historian Randy Young said, "This was supposed to be the seat of American fascism from where Hitler would one day rule the US. They may've been Nazis but they're Nazis with taste."

In 1933, the 55-acre ranch was sold by screen cowboy Will Rogers to mining fortune heiress Jessie Murphy who later became enchanted by a charismatic German known only as Herr Schmidt who was secretly Hitler's special agent in California.

Hitler's man in Hollywood persuaded her to invest US dollars four million to equip the property with a diesel power plant, a 375,000 gallon concrete water tank, bomb shelter and 22 bedrooms.

The plan was to turn it into a fascist Utopia where they and their Nazi friends could farm the land and live self-sufficiently far from the world's gaze until their big moment came, say the historians.

## India completes

FROM PAGE 20  
violating all international laws and bilateral agreements and without considering ecological havoc it would cause to its lower riparian country, Bangladesh.

The Indian water resources ministry said a survey and investigation work on linking Joghopa (at Brahmaputra)-Teesta-Ganges (at Farakka) has also been taken up as an alternative to Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganges link project.

It said the survey and investigation of the Ganges (Farakka)-Sundarbans link project as also that of Ganges-Damodar-Subernarekha link have been completed.

The ministry had formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for water resources development as early as in 1980. The plan envisages inter-basin transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins which comprises two components -- Himalayan Rivers Development Component and Peninsular Rivers Development Component.

The National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was set up under the Ministry of Irrigation in 1982 for carrying out various technical studies to establish the

## Haji trip

FROM PAGE 1  
expenses will be included.

But the costs of each private package must not be less than the government-fixed rate, the secretary mentioned adding, it will ensure the service quality of the private agencies.

The cabinet also approved a foreign ministry proposal to issue a gazette notification on the newly demarcated maritime boundary with Myanmar.

The meeting also gave the nod to the draft of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (amendment) Act, 2012 with specific provisions for appointment of pro-vice chancellor, dean and academic council and Public University Teachers' (retirement) (special rules) Act, 2012 increasing the retirement age of all public university teachers to 65.

## Noab

FROM PAGE 1  
wage board award fully.

"We had requested the government to increase the volume of government advertisement and its rate, and to withdraw tax on imported newsprint. In the past, the newspaper industry enjoyed such facilities," the Noab said in the statement.

The Noab members had sit with the prime minister and the information minister more than once, but the government had fulfilled none of their demands.

Besides, prices of all raw materials meant for the newspaper industry went up, resulting in increased cost of newspaper publication.

Against this backdrop, if a new wage board is formed, the industry will fall into a big crisis, the statement says adding that this in turn will put journalists, employees and workers of this industry into uncertainties.

"Therefore, we request the government and all others concerned to refrain from taking any steps that will create new crisis in the newspaper industry," Noab said.

It said it supports the rational demands of the journalists-employees and welcomes any decision of the government under consideration of the situation. Noab also said it did not support that any government policy or decision should remain unimplemented by it.

"In this regard we can refer to the seventh wage board. We supported demands of the journalists and newspaper employees and workers. But, any additional financial expenses through the declaration of the eighth wage board will affect badly the newspaper industry as a whole."

The statement adds that the national pay commission and the seventh wage board award for journalists and newspaper employees were implemented at the same time.

"In this respect, we are requesting the government policymakers to consider how rational it is to declare the eighth wage board before declaring the new national pay commission," Noab said.

feasibility of the proposals of the NPP and to give it a concrete shape.

The NWDA has already identified 14 links under the Himalayan Component and 16 others under the Peninsular Component. Of these, feasibility reports of 14 links under Peninsular Component and 2 links under Himalayan Component (Indian portion) have been prepared.

## Freed UK journos leave Libya for home

REUTERS, Tripoli

Two British journalists detained by a Libyan militia a month ago and accused of spying left Tripoli for the United Kingdom yesterday after being cleared of all charges.

Nicholas Davies-Jones and Gareth Montgomery-Johnson, who were working for Iran's English-language Press TV, were detained on February 22 by the Swehli brigade, one of dozens of militias which last year helped force out Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi.

Earlier this month, the Swehli militia said the Britons, initially detained for entering Libya illegally, were suspected of spying. Both men were transferred to government custody last week and were released on Sunday after charges were dropped.

## Vulgar words

FROM PAGE 20  
Akhtar from the main opposition BNP -- almost got into a scuffle after BNP lawmaker Rehana Akhtar Ranu used some distasteful words to attack the PM, the home minister and others.

Following her party colleague Rehana's lead, Ashifa Ashrafi Papia yesterday let out a stream of abuse against her political rivals. She, in fact, went up a notch in her use of vile language.

The Daily Star here refrains from publishing those words. Described by the Speaker as "indecent" "ugly" and "abusive", the words have been expunged from the parliamentary proceedings.

Papia's vulgar tirade drew sharp protests from the treasury bench. Many MPs, on either side of the aisle, were on their feet yelling.

Amid the deafening noise, the Speaker had to bang the gavel on his table to bring back order in the House. He said, "Please be quiet. I can't hear anything. Please listen to me."

Urging MPs to maintain decency, Hamid said, "If all of you speak decently, it will uphold the image of the House. And the people of the country will appreciate you."

Participating in the thanksgiving motion on the president's speech, the opposition MPs blasted the government on different issues while the ruling MPs countered in equal measure.

## 'Semifinal'

FROM PAGE 1  
it simple, it is a semifinal for the Tigers; if they manage a win against Sri Lanka, they will qualify for the Asia Cup final for the first time in their history.

Their opponents were knocked out of the tournament when India beat Pakistan, who are already through to the final, on Sunday. That win, India's second, gives them eight points while Bangladesh have four from their solitary win over India. If they win today, Bangladesh will be tied with India on points -- unless they win with a bonus point -- but will go through on a head-to-head basis, having already beaten India in their league match.

Before this Asia Cup, Bangladesh only had two wins in the regional tournament -- against United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong.

The Tigers have only been in a tournament final once before, in the tri-nation tournament in 2009 at home involving Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. Then too it was Sri Lanka they beat to reach the final.

The match starts at 2:00 pm today.

## Spelling Bee

FROM PAGE 20  
seriousness with the usual nervousness of the contestants, especially in the presence of all the dazzling lights and cameras in the Chittagong Muslim Hall yesterday.

Take for example Arushi Aggarwal, an Indian descent growing up in Chittagong and a student of class-VI in Cider International School. Although she is not a Bangladeshi passport holder (yet), thus becoming ineligible to continue further in the competition, she was adamant in taking part in the Chittagong Divisional round.

"She (Arushi) played the online game with so much enthusiasm because she always wanted to compete in the Spelling Bee," says Arushi's slightly disappointed mother Vandana Aggarwal.

"But at least the organisers (champs21) have allowed her to take part in the written round of the contest and I am happy for that," she was quick to add.

Vandana Aggarwal's comments reflect the outreach that the Spelling Bee has had all over the country so far (especially in its infancy in Bangladesh) and highlights the determined spirit generally associated with the people of Chittagong.

The competition started extraordinarily with 57 spellers moving on to the oral part of the competition from the 250 that started off in the written section. Initially only the top 50 scorers from the written round were picked to go through but the spellers performed so well that the judges were forced to pick seven extra spellers.

It took three more rounds of oral spelling to get eight winners for the television round and four more rounds of tiebreakers to get three more winners, making it a total of 11 spellers that advanced to the TV round.

Once again, the spellers did so well in the tiebreakers that 11 spellers were chosen for the TV round instead of the initially planned 10.

The names of the winners will be revealed on Channel i when the episode for the Chittagong Divisional round airs on March 29 at 7:50pm.

## Heated talks

FROM PAGE 1  
Lt Gen SGMM Peerzada and Col Hasan.

The tenor of the talks was set off by Yahya, who was indignant over the fact that on the preceding day Bangalee civilians had blocked the movement of troops in Joydevpur, which had led to violence. He made it a point to let Mujib know that he was trying hard to find a way out of the crisis.

Bangabandhu's response was that at such a volatile time the army should stay in the barracks. It was important, he said, that while the political negotiations were going on, the army stayed off the streets. Yahya's answer was that the army needed to keep its supply lines open, to which Bangabandhu said it was precisely that kind of movement which provoked the public into fury. If the soldiers continued shooting innocent civilians, he argued, a time would soon be there when those civilians would fight back with their own arms.

Yahya calmed down and the talks went back to a discussion on the ways of resolving the crisis. Yahya told Mujib that he was a simple man and wanted a quick solution to the problem, but his advisers had warned him that without a legal basis for a withdrawal of martial law, there was no way out. He also made it known that he needed to consult politicians in West Pakistan before a solution could be arrived at.

The president wanted Bangabandhu to invite Bhutto to Dhaka, to which the Bangalee leader made it clear he was in little mood to negotiate with the People's Party leader. However, he told Yahya that it was his prerogative as Pakistan's president to invite whoever he felt should be in Dhaka.

## Price spike in a month

FROM PAGE 1  
At a public hearing yesterday, the evaluation committee of the commission recommended a tariff hike by 5.79 percent or Tk 0.22 per unit at bulk level to be implemented within a week.

Contacted by The Daily Star, Amjad Khan Chowdhury, president of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said, "Commodity prices and export costs will shoot up if the proposed hike takes effect."

He agrees that the government cannot avoid increasing power tariff due to the rise in petroleum prices, but says, "We need quality service from the government. We want power supply without disruption."

Yesterday's hearing was held following a letter by the Power Development Board (PDB) to the commission on March 12 for increasing the bulk level prices by Tk 0.41 per unit due to hike in petroleum prices.

But the evaluation committee proposed an increase of Tk 0.22 per unit. When finalised, the power tariff at

bulk level will be Tk 3.96 a unit, officials said.

The PDB in its letter to the energy regulatory commission said prices of diesel and furnace oil, two basic raw materials to generate electricity, rose by Tk 5 per litre each in December last year.

At present, diesel sells at Tk 61 per litre and furnace oil at Tk 60. Therefore, the cost of power generation has increased, the letter said.

According to the letter, the production cost of electricity has gone up by Tk 0.41 a unit from this month owing to hikes in petroleum prices.

From March, per unit production cost will reach Tk 6.68 from Tk 5.29, the letter said, asking the commission to increase power prices from this month.

Prof Shamsul Alam, energy adviser of the Consumers Association of Bangladesh, represented the consumers at the hearing, which was also attended by PDB Chairman Alamgir Kabir.

At the hearing, the commission chairman urged the PDB high-ups to strengthen the internal audit system of

the state-owned agency for enhancing management and maintenance efficiency.

"This recommendation is not final; it is the observation of the evaluation committee. The prices of electricity might be less or even more than the recommended rate, but it will surely go up," he said after the hearing.

Tariff hike is part of the government move to slash subsidies in the power sector.

In the current fiscal year, the government is set to allocate Tk 20,000 crore in subsidies for the sector, according to official estimates.

Ahsan H Mansur, executive director of Policy Research Institute (PRI), said increasing power prices is a very difficult decision for the government to make.

It hurts the public but the government has no other option when the prices of petroleum products shoot up, he said.

"The price hike is justified to some extent because the government wants to bring subsidy down to a tolerable level," he told The Daily Star over the phone.

## Kamaruzzaman

FROM PAGE 20  
The court will decide whether it would frame charges against the Jamaat leader after hearing the arguments.

Kamaruzzaman, 60, was present during yesterday's proceedings. Arrested on July 13 last year, the Jamaat leader is facing nine charges of crimes against humanity allegedly committed by him during the Liberation War.

The charges include planning and conspiracy against pro-liberation people, mass murder, extermination, deportation, torture and rape.

Kamaruzzaman was the chief organiser of Al Badr, an auxiliary group that collaborated with then Pakistani occupation forces, in Mymensingh, said the prosecutor, adding that he used to use a Pakistan army jeep and frequently visit the infamous Ahmednagar army camp in Jhinaigati upazila of Sherpur.

He was also involved in killing Bodiuazzaman on a street of Ahmednagar in Sherpur and Mojibar Rahman and several others who were abducted from a house in Dhaka's Chawkbazar, and torturing Sirajuddin, then headmaster of Anandamohan College in Mymensingh, the prosecutor said.

## Arbitration

FROM PAGE 1  
through discussions with India," she said replying to a question at a press conference at the foreign ministry yesterday.

Dhaka lodged the case against New Delhi with the UN's Permanent Court of Arbitration based in the Hague on October 8, 2009 after India unfairly cut off a significant portion of Bangladesh's maritime area in the Bay of Bengal.

The door for discussions is open if they (India) want that but the discussions are to be based on the ITLOS principles ensuring Bangladesh's legitimate rights alongside pursuing the case, Dipu Moni said.

Bangladesh always wants to resolve problems with its neighbours and others peacefully through discussion, she said. "We tried to settle the maritime dispute through discussion, but it did no work and thus we opted for an alternative path that is through arbitration."

The foreign minister mentioned that the ITLOS (Based in Hamburg, Germany) through its March 14 judgment in the case against Myanmar has set certain principles regarding delimitation of the maritime boundary in the Bay.

Dipu Moni addressed the press conference in the context of the ITLOS judgment on March 14, which upheld Bangladesh's claim to 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone and

In 1971, at a rally in M o m e n s h a h i o f M y m e n s i n g h , Kamaruzzaman called for "extermination of specific groups", which created grave panic among the people.

Been a superior leader of Al Badr, Kamaruzzaman must take the responsibilities of the crimes his subordinates had committed," said prosecutor Saiful Islam.

CHARGE-FRAMING HEARING AGAINST GHULAM AZAM DEFERRED

The tribunal yesterday deferred the hearing on charge framing against the former Jamaat-e-Islami ameer until March 25 due to the absence of one of the members of three-judge panel.

The court, however, mentioned nothing about the reason for the judge's absence.

Ghulam Azam's counsels were yesterday scheduled to place arguments on the charges. Arrested on January 11, the former Jamaat chief is facing 62 counts of crimes against humanity committed during the Liberation War.

After his counsels place their arguments on the charges brought, the tribunal will decide whether it will frame charges against the 89-year-old former Jamaat leader.

## TRIBUNAL'S URGE TO JOURNALISTS

After the International Crimes Tribunal began yesterday's proceedings at 10:41am, prosecutor Zead Al Mamun drew the court's attention to a report published in Daily Sangram that day.

He said the report headlined "Prosecution once again fails to produce witness against Maulana Sayedee" was totally one-sided and did not have any statement of the prosecution.

The report had referred to Sunday's proceedings when the prosecution produced the investigation officer, who probed the war crimes charges against Jamaat Naye-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayedee.

According to the prosecutor, the report mentioned the statement of the defence but did not carry anything the prosecution had said.

Justice Nizamul Huq then referred to an earlier order that stated that criticism of the court is welcome but it should be done in proper court language. He said must a report be one-sided, but it should contain the truth.

Justice Huq requested journalists to be careful while reporting on court procedures so that no news item needs to be presented in the court.

with Myanmar was finalised, he added.

ISI ISSUE  
Responding to a query, the foreign minister said Dhaka will seek a transcript of the testimony given by an ex-ISI chief in the Supreme Court of Pakistan that the intelligence agency provided fund to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia during the 1991 general elections.

"Certainly we will seek a transcript. We can give details after getting the transcript. This is necessary to be sure what actually happened. We need to know what is actually written in the transcript," she said.

Asked by this correspondent, Dipu Moni said, "What we know so far is from a report run by Khaleez Times." She hoped that the ministry would get a transcript of the testimony.

SAUDIVISIT  
The foreign minister left Dhaka for Riyadh last night on a five-day visit to Saudi Arabia.

Earlier at the press conference, she had said she would hold talks with her Saudi counterpart in Riyadh tomorrow (Wednesday).

Dipu Moni mentioned that she had planned to visit the kingdom following the March 6 killing of a Saudi Embassy official in Dhaka. She wanted to pay the visit on her way back from Germany, but the Saudi foreign minister was not in Riyadh at that time. So, the visit was deferred.

## W Bengal must be consulted before any talks with Dhaka

### Says Mamata

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee last night said her state has to be consulted on any negotiations with Bangladesh.

"On entering into any negotiations with Bangladesh, West Bengal has to be consulted because Bengal knows Bangladesh better than anyone else," Mamata told the NDTV channel.

She said if India wanted to do something for Sri Lanka, the federal government consulted "friends in the southern Indian states; similarly, when it comes to dealing with Pakistan, you have to consult Punjab because they love the state".

Mamata's last-minute objections led to scrapping of the proposed inking of a treaty with Bangladesh on sharing the Teesta river water during Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Dhaka last September.

The Indian government is now busy trying to work out a consensus with Mamata Banerjee government on the Teesta issue.

"Only Delhi can't run the country. I support the national party and also the federal front. You need so many flowers to make a garland. One flower can't make a garland. All parties have their own importance in their states," Mamata said.

## Tarique's

FROM PAGE 20  
chairperson's former political officer] or met Tarique Rahman," Fakhrul told a press briefing at the party's Nayapaltan office.

As part of the programme, the BNP will stage a protest rally in front of its office tomorrow.

A Dhaka court on Sunday framed charges against 30 accused including Tarique in the supplementary charge sheet of the killing case.

The BNP leader alleged that the present investigation officer Abdul Kahar Akand has named BNP's Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman only to satisfy the government. "He [Akand] aspired to win nomination from Awami League in the last general elections. He was brought back from retirement to carry out further investigation."

Fakhrul condemned the government initiative to try Tarique in the grenade attack case and demanded withdrawal of all the cases against him. "Tarique Rahman has emerged as a popular leader among the youth. He has started working to make Bangladesh a modern country."

He claimed that Tarique was not allowed the privilege of self-defence before framing of the charge in the case.

When he was told by a newsman that a notice was published in different newspapers asking Tarique to appear before the court, Fakhrul said "Everything should not be seen from a legal point of view. It's a political case. Tarique Rahman has been indicted in the case because of political reasons."

Even Tarique Rahman was not allowed to appoint a lawyer to organise his defence in the court, he argued.

Responding to a journalist's query about whether a fugitive accused can get this opportunity, he said, "We have nothing to say if you [journalists] talk in the tone of the ruling party... He [Tarique] is abroad with permission from a court for medical treatment. Despite knowing that, another court has shown him as a fugitive."

Several pro-BNP lawyers and party leaders were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, Jamaat-e-Islami acting chief Maqbul Ahmed yesterday in a statement demanded release of party's Secretary General Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mojaheed and asked the government to withdraw the allegations against him.

The government has indicted him (Mojaheed) in the August 21 grenade attack case only to exact political revenge, he alleged.

Twenty-four AL leaders and workers were killed and around 300 others were injured in the gruesome attack on an AL rally on August 21, 2004.