

**HALL-MARK LOAN SCAM
Sonali Bank
ex-DGM
denied bail**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petitions of former deputy general manager of Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch in connection with 11 graft cases filed for Hall-Mark Group loan scam.

AKM Azizur Rahman was earlier suspended from the post of deputy general manager for his alleged involvement in the Hall-Mark loan scam. Judge (in charge) Md Akhtaruzzaman of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court passed the order after Azizur's lawyer filed 11 separate petitions seeking bail against a lower court rejection order.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, on different dates, rejected bail petitions of Azizur for the cases filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.

On November 22 last year, Azizur made a confessional statement before a magistrate admitting his involvement in the loan scam.

According to a Bangladesh Bank investigation report, the controversial Hall-Mark Group and five other companies took Tk 3,547 crore in loans from the state-owned bank between 2010 and 2012 with forged documents.

**HC withdraws
suspended
Bhola judge's
bail order**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court bench yesterday withdrew its verbal order after granting a six-month ad-interim bail to Md Javed Imam, a suspended senior assistant judge, in a case filed against him for possession of Phensedyl.

The HC bench of Justice Quamrul Islam Siddiqui and Justice Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain also fixed today for further hearing on the bail petition filed by Javed, said Ruhul Quddus Kazal, Javed's lawyer. Police filed the case against Javed of Bhola District Judge's Court, on December 2 last year after they arrested him from New Market area the day before for allegedly carrying 342 bottles of Phensedyl.

Earlier yesterday, the HC bench had granted bail to Javed and also issued a rule upon the government to explain in four weeks why he (Javed) should not be granted regular bail in the case.



Traffic jam chokes Farmgate area in the capital around 5:00pm yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**10-TRUCK ARMS HAUL CASES
PW denies giving
false statement**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A prosecution witness (PW) in the 10-truck arms haul cases yesterday denied that he gave false statement against one of the accused, KM Enamul Haq, the then general manager (admin) of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd (CUFL).

The witness, Mobin Hossain Khan, former assistant security officer of CUFL, refuted the defence's claim during his cross examination before Metropolitan Special Tribunal-1 in Chittagong.

He also denied that he did not mention in his earlier confessional statement that he thought the then CUFL general manager Enamul Haq and then CUFL managing director Md Mohsin Uddin Talukdar, another accused in the case, were "involved in the arms haul".

Mobin said he told the investigation officers and the magistrates everything about what he saw, but he did not know whether they included all the facts as he neither did read his written statement nor see it.

The counsels of Enamul Haq and Mohsin Uddin Talukdar cross-examined Mobin for two hours and a half. The court adjourned its proceedings till today after completing the cross-examination.

On April 2, 2004, around 1,500 wooden boxes containing submachine guns, AK-47 assault rifles, submachine carbines, Chinese pistols, rocket shells and launchers, hand grenades and bullets were seized from two vessels at the jetty of CUFL.

Two cases were filed the next day with Karnaphuli Police Station. Trial in the cases got underway on November 29, 2011.

**SOUTH-WESTERN REGION
Transport strike
from Jan 13**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jessore

Transport owners and workers of the country's south-western region yesterday declared to go on an indefinite strike from January 13 demanding, among others, that the government withdraw the latest fuel price hike.

The strike's coverage includes districts of Khulna, Jessore, Bagerhat, Satkhira, Narail, Magura, Jhenidah, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Kushtia, Barisal, Patuakhali, Pirojpur, Jhalakathi, Faridpur, Rajbari, Bhola, Gopalganj, Madaripur, Barguna and Shariatpur.

The announcement came at a press conference organised by Sharak Paribahan Malik Sramik Oikya Parishad at its Khulna Bus Stand area office in Jessore town.

As an alternative, the government could adjust the fares of commercially-run vehicles like buses and trucks as per the fuel prices, they said.

Their other demands include cancellation of vat on tax, reduction of vehicular and income taxes and of prices of spare parts, tyres, tubes and lubricants, and a stop to plying of unauthorised vehicles.

The government on January 4 increased prices of diesel and kerosene by Tk 7 a litre, raising their prices to Tk 68 a litre, and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre.

**JU vacation
begins on
Jan 14**

BSS, JU, Savar

A week-long winter vacation of Jahangirnagar University (JU) will begin on January 14.

JU Registrar Abu Bakar Siddique said the decision was made at an emergency syndicate meeting chaired by JU Vice-Chancellor Anwar Hossain at the university senate hall yesterday.

All classes will remain closed until January 20 but final examination and administrative activities will continue during this period.

Classes of honours first year under academic session 2012-2013 will begin from January 26, said Deputy Registrar Mohammad Ali.

**PADMA BRIDGE GRAFT
Mashiur urges media to
speak of his 'innocence'**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime minister's Economic Affairs Adviser Mashiur Rahman yesterday urged the media to say that it is not fair to keep him away from discharging the government responsibilities as he is "innocent".

"If you know that no evidence of corruption has been found against Mashiur Rahman, I request you to write that the newspapers who accused him made mistake, and the World Bank also made mistake. Now it is not fair to keep him away from the government and serving the country, you write it in your papers," he told reporters when asked whether he was going to join work as no corruption evidence has been found against him.

"You have said the World Bank asked me not to work. You have said I am guilty. Now if I am not guilty and you know it, you also write it."

Rahman went on leave before the WB re-engaged in the Padma bridge project on condition that all officials allegedly involved in the corruption conspiracy must go on leave. He was not on the list of high officials whom the Anti-Corruption Commission sued on December 17.

Rahman talked to reporters emerging from a meeting on the proposed Ganges Barrage project in the capital's National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium.

He stressed the need for implementing the Ganges Barrage and advised all concerned not to spend time on secondary work leaving the main task.

He said the WB took 15-20 years to decide whether it would participate in the Bangabandhu bridge project as the construction of the bridge was supposedly to have reduced the number of migratory birds.

**CTG-12 BY-POLLS
HC asks EC
to allow Jalal
to contest**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the Election Commission (EC) to allow Jalal Uddin Ahmed, an independent candidate, to contest the Chittagong-12 (Anwara-Pashchim Patiya) by-election slated for January 17.

The returning officer of Chittagong on December 23 cancelled his candidature saying that Jalal had not showed at least one percent support of voters of his constituency in his nomination paper.

On December 26, the EC upheld the returning officer's decision after rejecting an appeal submitted by Jalal challenging the returning officer's decision.

Yesterday, the HC stayed for three months the EC's decision and issued a rule upon it to explain in three weeks why its decision should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of Justice Naima Haider and Justice Zafar Ahmed came up with the order and rule after holding hearing on a writ petition filed by Jalal on January 2 challenging the legality of EC's decision.

In his petition, Jalal said he had submitted documents to the EC about the support of more than one percent voters of his constituency along with his nomination paper, but the EC cancelled his candidature illegally.

**3 held with 7.5kg gold
at Shahjalal airport**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested three people and seized around 7.5 kilogrammes of smuggled gold, shaped into 40 bars, from their possession at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday.

Of the arrestees, Kabir Ahmed, 35, is a guard of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab); Morshed Alam, 35, is a driver of the Caab; and Belal Ahmed, 36, is a smuggler, said an AAPBn official.

Senior Assistant Superintendent of Police Atiqur Rahman of Airport Armed Police Battalion (AAPBn) added that an AAPBn team, on a tip off, arrested the trio from the immigration parking area around 10:30am.

During preliminary interrogation at

the AAPBn office, the trio confessed to their involvement with the gold smuggling, said the AAPBn official.

They also told police that one Abdus Sattar brought the gold from Bahrain. Disembarking from an Emirates flight around 10:00am, Sattar went to a toilet in the parking area, kept the gold, packed inside a bag, there and left the airport, the APBn official added.

Belal went to bring the gold bars from the toilet with Morshed while Kabir assisted them in the process, he said.

Police were looking for Sattar and his accomplices. They were also investigating whether any other Caab employee was involved with the smugglers.

A case was filed with Airport Police Station in this connection.



National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman talks to journalists at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday after visiting the 15-year-old schoolgirl who was gang raped in Madhupur of Tangail last December.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni presents a crest to UN Under-Secretary-General Ameerah Haq at the state guesthouse Padma in the capital yesterday congratulating her for being the first Bangladeshi woman to be appointed to the post.

PHOTO: STAR

**DU inks MoU
with Korean
university**

BSS, Dhaka

Dhaka University and University of Keimyung in Korea has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to foster academic collaboration between the two institutions.

DU Vice-Chancellor AAMS Arefin Siddique and Keimyung University President Prof Synn Ilhi recently signed the MoU for five years, on behalf of their respective institutions, at a function at Keimyung University in Korea.

According to the MoU, both the universities will exchange faculty members, students, academic materials and other information. Besides, the two institutions will also undertake joint research activities, special short-term academic programmes and staff development projects.

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