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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Gabid meets Mostafiz

The visiting Secretary General of OIC Dr Hamid Al Gabid called on Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman at the state guest house Padma here yesterday evening. Foreign Minister Rahman apprised the Secretary General of various steps, taken by the government in finding solution to the Myanmar refugee problems, reports BSS.

#### Japanese film festival

A week-long Japanese film festival begins here on Friday. The festival has been jointly sponsored by Embassy of Japan and Department of Films and Publications of the Ministry of Information. Information Minister Nazmul Huda is expected to inaugurate the festival on May 1 at Sonargaon Hotel. A total of 11 feature films will be shown during the festival, reports BSS.

#### Khaleda's public meeting

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will address a public meeting on May 1 (Friday) at 3 pm at Gazipur Chandana High School ground marking the May Day. The meeting will be organised by BNP and Sramik Dal, reports BSS.

#### AL for voter list correction

The Awami League Central Working Committee (ALWC) yesterday demanded preparation of correct voter lists and influence-free administration before the forthcoming pourashava election without which, it said, the polling will not be fair. A resolution of the ALWC called on the concerned authorities to correct faulty voter lists saying that the Ershad regime with the intention to rig voting, had prepared the voter lists leaving out the names of many genuine voters and incorporating fake ones, reports UNB.

## Diplomats doubt efficacy of refugee accord Myanmar must change policy for effective repatriation

By Toufique Imrose Khalidi

Reforms and corrective measures on the part of the rulers of Myanmar are seen as essential to the voluntary return of the Rohingya refugees and a permanent solution to the influx.

"Myanmar must change its attitude towards opponents and amend its policies as confidence building measures", says a Myanmar-based Asian diplomat.

"The changes that are taking place in Myanmar are all cosmetic ones", observed the diplomat referring to the recent retirement of Saw Maung

and subsequent release of senior political detainees and the offer for talks with the opposition.

On the accord that the Foreign Ministers of Myanmar and Bangladesh signed Tuesday, the diplomat said "It is a combination of both cosmetic and fundamental".

He insisted that "an international guarantee for example in the form of UN monitoring of the whole process of rehabilitation upto the resettlement of the refugees" would certainly give more credence to the accord and more confi-

dence to the refugees yet to recover from the haunting memories of persecution.

Another diplomat who had been to the region where the Rohingyas live said that the accord was unlikely to restore confidence among the Rohingyas.

The diplomat spoke of "multifarious and multidimensional persecution and suggested a change in the Myanmar citizenship laws.

The refugees were still crossing into Bangladesh even as the officials of the two countries were at the negotiating

table talking their repatriation, the diplomat who requested anonymity pointed out.

Meanwhile, the refugees have demanded that the Rohingyas be declared 'one of the indigenous ethnic groups of the Union of Burma entitled to all human rights and freedoms to be guaranteed by the constitution, at par with other nationalities of the country'.

"Merely repatriation of the refugees is not a solution to our problems" said a statement faxed to The Daily Star from Cox's Bazar by the Rohingya  
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Visiting Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference Dr Hamid Al Gabid inspecting Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar yesterday. —PID photo

### OIC pledges aid for Rohingyas

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 29: The visiting Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), Dr Hamid Al Gabid, said here Wednesday that his organisation would continue to provide humanitarian assistance at bilateral and multilateral levels for the Myanmar refugees, reports BSS.

Talking to BSS after his visit to the Dechuapalong and Dhuapalong refugee camps here, Dr Hamid, who arrived in Bangladesh on a three-day visit Tuesday heading a 12-member delegation, said, "we are deeply concerned with the humanitarian aspect of the refugee."

Expressing his optimism for the proper implementation  
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## BCI operations suspended

By Staff Correspondent

The government suspended all activities of the Bangladesh Commerce and Investment (BCI) Ltd on Wednesday with immediate effect, official sources said.

Bangladesh Bank issued the order under the directive of the Finance Ministry and asked the company authorities to suspend activities of all the 24 branches.

Earlier, Bangladesh Bank engaged an audit team to investigate the accounts of the banks.

BCI, a non-banking lending institution, was functioning as a commercial bank violating the banking rules, a Finance Ministry official said.  
Meanwhile, none of the

other 17 wanted directors of the company was arrested till late Wednesday night.

On Tuesday the government lodged a complaint with the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate against BCI for illegal banking transaction and the CMM issued warrants of arrest against all the 19 directors of the institution.

Two of the directors were arrested and detained in Dhaka Central Jail on Tuesday.

The collapsed BCI borrowed about Taka 200 crore from lenders and investors of which it made advance to the tune of Taka 180 crore without keeping statutory reserve and Bangladesh Bank security, the  
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## Production in Adamjee Jute Mills stops

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 29: The production in the Adamjee Jute Mills has stopped for last three days, sources said.

Non-availability of spare parts and want of raw jute were the reasons for the stoppage, sources added.

According to the Adamjee Mills authorities, the Mills consumes 8,000 tons of raw jute per day while the present stock of raw jute was only 146 maunds.

A high-ranking official of the Mill requesting anonymity told this correspondent that if the present situation continued they would be bound to lay-off the mills very soon.

The labour leaders especially those belonging to the opposition parties, however,  
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## Poverty alleviation plan handed over to Grant

By Sohel Manzur

The government plans to face the issue of poverty alleviation through supporting population control efforts, reducing the vulnerability of various groups in the society and increasing the coping capacities of the poor, according to its National Programme of Action (NPA).

The NPA prepared by the Joint Government-UNICEF Advisory Group (JGUAG) was handed over to the visiting Executive Director of the UNICEF James P Grant Wednesday by the ERD Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury.

The NPA, was prepared mainly to achieve the child and women related goals of the Fourth Five Year Plan (FFYP). But it focuses on a number of issues like education, health  
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## Shantibahini men selling arms

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Apr 29: Shantibahini insurgents have reportedly established links with mastans, terrorists and other activists here to sell them arms.

Sources said that severe fund constraints had forced the tribal rebels to sell their arms to cope with the burden of jungle life in the sanctuaries located in the scenic hilly region of the CHT.

According to reports from various sources, illegal arms and ammunition have already flooded the Chittagong city areas and northern parts of Chittagong particularly Raozan, Fatikchhari, Hathazari, Mirsarbar and Sitakundu upazilas where open brandishing of  
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illegal arms, trading of gunshots and all other criminal acts have become a regular feature posing hazards to normal life.

The terrorists and mastans have procured most of the illegal foreign-made arms and ammunition from the Shantibahini, sources informed.

Some of these illegal arms and ammunition are smuggled out secretly to other parts of the country, sources also reported.

A local political leader wanting anonymity told this correspondent that the Shantibahini men frequently visit the hillside villages of Raozan and Fatikchhari to contact the  
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## Khaleda visits coastal regions 'Some forces are creating anarchy to hinder development'

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 29: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Wednesday sought cooperation of all irrespective of party affiliations in implementing development programmes taken by the democratic government, reports UNB.

"We want cooperation, not opposition, in changing the lot of commonman through our various development programmes," she told a spontaneous gathering near Cox's Bazar airport this afternoon.

Begum Zia flew in here to

express sympathy to those who lost their near and dear ones in the April 29 cyclone last year.

Begum Zia said the nation should fight poverty with the spirit they had fought against natural calamities.

Forest, Environment, Livestock and Fisheries Minister Abdullah Al Noman, Shahjahan Chowdhury, MP, Rozi Kabir, MP, and Cox's Bazar district BNP President Ekramuddin Chowdhury also addressed the meeting.  
Some forces, the Prime

Minister said, are out to create anarchy and disturbance when the democratic government had undertaken development programmes for welfare of the people.

"They are creating anarchy in the name of democracy" she said, adding these forces who act at the dictate of their foreign masters do not want the country to be self-reliant.

Creating division and confusion will not benefit those forces, she said, rather they will be isolated from the people.  
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### AL supports trial body hartal

By Staff Correspondent

The Awami League Working Committee (ALWC) yesterday in an urgent meeting decided to back the National Coordination Committee for Realisation of the Spirit of the Liberation War and Resistance to the Killers and Collaborators of 1971 actively in its struggle for trial Golam Azam as a war criminal.

According to sources, the AL would provide support to all the Coordination Committee programmes in the coming days. The AL also announced its support to the hartal of the Coordination Committee on  
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## UNFPA report says Population will reach 23.5 cr by year 2025

By Staff Correspondent

The population of Bangladesh, if it continues to grow at a rate of 2.7 per cent annually, will reach 23 crore and 50 lakhs by the year 2025.

A report of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), globally released Wednesday, said that the population of the country was 11 crore and 56 lakhs in 1990.

In Bangladesh, the report, "State of the World Population 1992", was released at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club in which UNFPA country  
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representative SK Alok spoke.

Lauding the Bangladesh family planning programme, he said that the mother and child healthcare programme of the country could be a model for most of the developing nations.

The programme which he said was very comprehensive could be extremely successful for the countries in the Indian subcontinent and other south east Asian nations.

According to the report, 14  
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## Police raid two DU halls

By Staff Correspondent

Police raided two residential halls of Dhaka University early Wednesday and arrested four persons including a student and recovered ammunition.

Police raided the Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall and the Mohsin Hall following clashes between two rival student groups on the campus over the last few days.

A huge number of plain cloth and uniformed policemen searched the halls from 4.45 am to 6.30 am.

Of the arrested persons, M Shameem Ahmed was identified as a student of the university while another three M Anwar Hossain, Rafiqul Islam and Lutfor Rahman were said to be outsiders. All of them were arrested from Mohsin Hall.

During the raid, police recovered 16 bullets, four crackers and one toy pistol from Mohsin Hall.

According to police all the arrested persons were activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (N-S) and involved in the recent gun battle on the campus.

They were brought to the Detective Branch of police for questioning.

## Armed men loot Tk 80,000, stab one in city

By Staff Correspondent

A group of armed hijackers looted Taka 80,000 in cash and managed to escape exploding crackers and stabbing one person on the spot at Begum Bazar area in the city Wednesday evening.

The victim was identified a Sunil Babu, an assistant manager of Nurul Amin and Sons a wholesale flour shop a Maulovi Bazar market. He was admitted to the Sir Salmullah Medical College Hospital.

When Sunil Babu and the manager of the shop Tozafza Hossain were going back home after closing the shop, a group of armed youngsters halted them on the way and demanded money, as they refused, the hijackers stabbed Sunil and snatched away the money and fled away exploding crackers.

## US rejects Third World idea of environment fund

KUALA LUMPUR, Apr 29: The United States rejected today a proposal by Third World environment ministers for a new environmental project fund, saying it preferred to strengthen existing mechanisms, reports Reuters.

"The US is not in favour of a new fund," said Robert Ryan head of a US delegation observing the second Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development, which ended today.

"Existing mechanisms, including the global environmental facility (GEF) could instead be strengthened", Ryan

told reporters at the close of the three-day meeting held in advance of the Earth Summit scheduled next month in Brazil.

The World Bank's GEF, backed by industrialised countries, dispenses funds for sustainable development in the Third World.

The proposed new fund would be used to underwrite the Earth Summit's 'Agenda 21' action plan. The declaration adopted at the conference, without naming the GEF said it could be used to disburse money from the new fund if it provided access to

the Third World without conditions.

Agenda 21 aims to tackle issues including poverty, toxic waste, the atmosphere and desertification and is expected to be an important topic at the Earth Summit.

The declaration said the new fund should receive assessed contributions from rich nations in addition to their Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets.

Rich nations provide about 0.3 per cent of their gross national product, amounting to 50 billion dollar a year, as ODA to finance development in poor countries.

Some rich nations, were disappointed with the outcome of the conference, which reflected the true feelings of the south. Malaysian Environment Minister Law Heng Ding told reporters later.

"Some developed countries are not happy with our suggestion for a new fund for Agenda 21", he said.

He said the new fund could be managed by the GEF if it became democratic and beneficial to the Third World.

"We hope the current GEF meeting in Washington comes out with proposals on how the funds can be better managed

and used," Law said.

"If the funds are now properly utilised, the wealth disparity between the North and South would widen."

Xinhua adds: Delegates to today strongly advocated the sovereign rights of the developing countries to manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

In the Kuala Lumpur Declaration they also called on all nations to give full support to the finalisation of a non-legally-binding authoritative statement of principles on the management, conservation and development of all types of

forests and its adoption at the RIO Conference.

They also urged the developed countries to substantially increase their forest cover and to avoid unilateral measures in the name of environmental protection.

Such measures constitute arbitrary or discriminatory action such as bans and restrictions on international trade of forest and forest related products from the developing countries, they said.

The delegates called for an early conclusion of the framework convention on climate change and the convention on biological diversity.