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# The Daily Star

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## NEWS BRIEFS

### 'Prithivi' launched

BALASORE, May 5: 'Prithivi', India's sophisticated medium range surface-to-surface missile, was successfully launched from the interim test range (ITR) at Chandipur-on-sea, 15 km from here, at 1605 hours today, according to official sources. This is the first test firing of 'Prithivi' from its base at Chandipur, reports PTI.

### Ferry boycott postponed

The programme of boycott of ferries between northern and southern districts has been postponed till May 20. The decision was taken following a discussion between leaders of Bus-Truck Owners Association with State Minister for Communications Fazlur Rahman, reports BSS.

### Japanese denial

The embassy of Japan in Dhaka has described as groundless rumours that Bangladeshi nationals who once legally or illegally worked in Japan have been advised to submit their bio-data and photocopies of passports for future employment opportunities in Japan. Neither any agreement nor any arrangement has been made for the employment of foreign workers in Japan and there has been no change in the visa and immigration policy whatsoever, reports BSS.

### Train halted for six hrs

PABNA, May 5: Train communications via Ishurdi railway junction were halted for six hours today after a UNO had beaten an employee. The junction source said railway gate-man at a railcrossing locked the gate on signal of incoming train. At that time, the UNO of Ishurdi came in a jeep and ordered the guard to open gate. As he declined, the Upazila Nirbahi Officer allegedly beat him up, reports UNB.

# Moscow firm to sell rocket technology to Delhi

## US threatens sanctions on Russia, India

WASHINGTON, May 5: The United States today warned both India and Russia that the US will 'soon' impose penalties against them unless the proposed sale of a Russian rocket engine to India is promptly cancelled, reports PTI.

The warning came at the State Department's noon briefing by chief spokesperson Margaret Tutwiler, who said the penalties 'basically involve suspension of access to US technology which would require export licensing, and suspension of access to US contracts. These sanctions are imposed for a specific period of time and can be waived if the impending export is cancelled.'

According to Reuters, Tutwiler said the United

States had conducted detailed discussions with both Russia and India about the 250 million dollar deal. Washington believes that the sale would violate the Missile Technology Control Regime, an agreement among Western states to limit the spread of missile technology, particularly to the developing world.

Russia is not a signatory to the agreement, but has agreed to abide by its provisions.

'Both the United States and its partners have expressed the view that the transaction is inconsistent with the guidelines of the Missile Technology Control Regime,' Tutwiler said.

She said that US legislation provided for trade penalties in

such cases and that a decision on whether to apply them was expected soon.

The Bush administration is pushing Congress to approve a 4.5 billion dollar aid package for Russia and other former

WASHINGTON, May 5: The State Department officials have clarified to Indian officials that should the US decide to impose penalties for the transfer of Russian rocket technology to India, it will be not against the countries concerned but against organisations exporting and importing. This means that the penalties will be against the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in India and Glavkosmos in Russia, reports PTI.

Soviet republics as part of a global 24 billion dollar plan to help ease the painful transition to market economics.

It would be highly embarrassing for the administration to be imposing trade penalties

on Russia while at the same time providing massive amounts of aid.

A Russian youth magazine touched off a dispute in India's parliament when it reported two weeks ago that Russian

President Boris Yeltsin had ordered a 'pause' in the contract following objections from US Secretary of State James Baker.

Under the deal, Russia is to supply cryogenic rocket en-

gines to India, which is trying to develop satellite launching capability.

India was to start taking delivery of the engines by 1994 under the contract signed last year between the Russian space agency Glavkosmos and the Indian space research organisation.

PTI adds: Russia today said it 'remained firm' on its commitment to supply rocket technology to India but hinted at inviting neutral international experts apparently to allay the American fears about the military use of the technology.

Addressing a press conference at the conclusion of his three-day visit to India, the Russian Secretary of State, Gennady Burbulis, said the two

sides had finalised a friendship treaty to be signed during President Boris Yeltsin's visit to India later this year and also assured uninterrupted supplies of defence spares and oil to New Delhi.

Asked about the US warning to both India and Russia that it would impose penalties in case Moscow went ahead with the sale of rocket engine to India, Burbulis said the Russian approach was fully in line with the norms of international relations.

He described as attractive a proposal put forward by a journalist that experts from the US, Russia and India should work together to resolve the issue but felt that nothing would come out of it.

## 40 killed in intensified attack

# Hekmatyar men rain rockets on Kabul



KABUL, May 5: A barrage of rockets killed at least 40 people and wounded 200 in Kabul today as the new Islamic government and dissident guerrillas sat down to talks peace.

Afghan television said the rockets were fired by rebels - hardline guerrillas pushed out of the city last week after heavy fighting.

The boom of heavy government shelling rolled across the city after first light as tanks and artillery pounded the crests of the bare, rocky hills guarding Kabul's southern approaches.

Forces loyal to hardline guerrilla chief Gulbuddin Hekmatyar responded with barrages of rockets, many of them striking around the city's military headquarters.

Doctors at the city's hospital said they expected the casualty toll to rise further.

The exchanges were much more intense than on Monday when rockets fired by Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami forces killed at least 13 people and wounded 77, the official media reported.

Hekmatyar's representative Qader Karyab acknowledged reluctantly that the rockets came from Hezb-i-Islami positions but said they were only in response to attacks on them.

Emerging from talks in the Kabul office of the new head of state, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, Karyab said he hoped the

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## Farmers to get priority: PM

THAKURGAON, May 5: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today called for initiating a movement against hunger, poverty and illiteracy with the same spirit that fuelled the mass upsurge which ousted the autocracy, reports BSS.

Begum Zia was addressing a huge rally of farmers at the local Zila School ground.

The Prime Minister told the enthusiastic crowd that her government was trying tirelessly to rehabilitate the farmers in the society and improve their lot which had been destroyed by the nine years long autocracy.

The Prime Minister said her government wanted the agriculture sector to develop scientifically which would increase the production in the fields. She said farmers as the driving force of the economy needed priority consideration to help them improve their

present condition.

The Prime Minister said the associates of autocrats were out to frustrate the present development process when her government was trying to double the food production and increase the output in mills and factories. She called upon the nation to resist the forces hindering the uplift process.

Begum Khaleda Zia said her government would redeem all the election pledges. It was determined to change the condition of the country with the assistance and help of the people during its tenure in the government.

The Prime Minister then formally inaugurated the more than Taka 183 crore North-Bangladesh Tubewells Project by switching on the flow of water of a deep tubewell at Khochabari in Thakurgaon.

Speaking on the occasion

the Prime Minister said her government laid emphasis on the expansion of irrigation facilities to achieve faster self-reliance in food.

She said at present only one fourth of the cultivable land was under irrigation facilities but more than one crop could be cultivated easily if all cultivable lands could be brought under irrigation.

The government wanted to develop leadership at the local levels because it did not believe in the policy of imposing something on anyone.

Begum Zia said the projects which were shelved during the time of autocracy had been restarted and work of them were in full swing.

She mentioned that the Pabna Irrigation Project was nearing completion. Besides the work on Gomti Irrigation Project, Ganga-Kapatakkha Project was progressing.

## 400 Bangladeshi workers in jails

### KL won't extend registration deadline

From Chapal Bashar

KUALA LUMPUR, May 5: The Malaysian government has decided not to extend the June 30 deadline for registration of foreign workers staying in the country illegally.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Ghafar Baba said this here last week.

Over 300,000 illegal foreign workers, mostly Indonesians, are now staying in different states of Malaysia. In December last year, the government asked the illegal immigrants to register themselves with the concerned authorities by June 30 this year to avoid government action.

Till now, more than 100,000 foreign workers have been registered at various immigration offices nationwide.

According to reliable sources, about 15,000 Bangladeshi workers were engaged in jobs illegally in different private enterprises in Malaysia. Among these workers, 8000 have been registered so far. 400 Bangladeshi workers, earlier arrested for their illegal entry and employment in the country, were still in jails.

Malaysian Minister for Human Resources Dato Lim Ah Lek told newsmen that after the expiry of the registration deadline, action like arrest and deportation would be taken against the illegal workers.

The minister said that the government's policy was to allow legal importation of foreign workers to meet the

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## Saifur at ADB meet

# Ensure no cut in lower income members' share

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday urged the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to make sure that its current fund shortage would not hit lower-income member countries, reports UNB.

'I would urge the Bank to ensure that the share of lower-income developing member countries do not suffer reduction because of resource constraints combined with the increasing claims from new borrowers,' he said addressing the 25th annual meeting of ADB in Hong Kong.

Rahman, a Governor of the Manila-based bank, suggested that ADB devise a mechanism to ensure continuity of increased resource transfer to the poorer members, according to a message received here yesterday afternoon.

It is reported that ADB's ADF (Asian Development Fund), the soft-lending window, will allocate lesser funds to poorer members in the coming year than the previous year.

To raise ADB's direct investment in Bangladesh's private sector, Saifur Rahman suggested the 2 million-dollar floor limit be cut to half and the equity participation be raised to 50 per cent.

The Asian Bank usually provides soft development credits to Bangladesh, and its investment in the country's private sector has so far been very negligible.

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## Majid's Delhi visit may be delayed

### By Staff Correspondent

Agriculture and Water Development Minister Majidul-Haq's departure for New Delhi, scheduled today, may be delayed, according to sources.

Although officials decline to comment on the tip, the sources say that the minister is set to go with assignments to assuage India's pressures on water-sharing so that 'positive announcement' comes when the two Prime Ministers meet later this month.

Explaining country's development priority, he pointed out that the government had attached top priority to agriculture, rural development, education and family planning.

Saifur apprised the meeting, which began on Monday, of the economic reform measures taken by the government.

The major thrusts of these steps include: combating corruption and establishing accountability at all levels of the government, improving public resource management, restoration of discipline in the financial sector, deregulation of trade, elimination of rent-seeking activities and procedural improvement in public investment and foreign aid utilization.

The minister strongly advocated continued support from ADB and other donors for developing countries which are going through economic adjustments.

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## Paara polls schedule cancelled

The Election Commission Tuesday cancelled the schedule for paarasabha elections which was announced on April 25, reports BSS.

An Election Commission handout, explaining the reasons behind the cancellation of the polls, referred to the options of different quarters that election campaign and other polling activities would seriously hamper the study of the HSC examinees if the polls were held according to the announced schedule.

It also said since the financial matters of the government were finalised during the months of May and June, the financial transactions of the government may experience adverse impact if the elections were held.

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## Dholaikhal sewer project begins within 6 months

### By Staff Correspondent

A Taka 60 crore (US dollars 15 million) project to develop the sewer and flood prevention system in Dholaikhal area of the city will begin within six months.

A sluice gate type of barrier between the Dholaikhal canal and the Buriganga river will be constructed as a flood prevention measure in this World Bank-funded project, according to a source.

For a smooth drainage function a lift pumping station capable of pumping 80000 litres of water per hour will be set up in the Mill Barracks area, the source said.

At present the canal at Dholaikhal has dried up. A little rain usually inundates the whole area because of poor re-ventivity of the canal.

To solve this problem, a 2.25 hectare retention basin capable of holding excess wa-

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## Hajj camp opens on May 12

A temporary Hajj camp at the site of erstwhile Islamic University, Gazipur, will be inaugurated on May 12, said an official press release in Dhaka Tuesday.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Coordinating Committee with State Minister for Religious Affairs Prof M A Mannan in the chair.

The first flight of Biman with Hajj pilgrims will leave Dhaka for Saudi Arabia on May 15.

## Yangon silence makes Rohingya repatriation uncertain

CHITTAGONG, May 5: Repatriation of Myanmar refugees scheduled to begin May 15, may be delayed as no response has yet been received from Myanmar on the mode of repatriation.

According to official sources from Cox's Bazar, the officials assigned to start the repatriation were waiting for a response from their Myanmar counterparts to hold a meeting in a bid to ensure coordination and finalise the modalities for

a smooth repatriation of over two lakh refugees who took shelter in the southeastern tip of Bangladesh after fleeing their homeland in Arakan of Myanmar.

No intimation in this regard has been received though only 10 days are left if the repatriation is to begin on schedule as per the agreement signed between the two countries during the recent visit of Myanmar Foreign Minister to Bangladesh, officials said. They informed that the

transit camps could not be set up along the Bangladesh border at Teknaf until the finalisation of the modus operandi prior to starting the repatriation.

A total of 10 transit camps are planned to be set up inside Bangladesh while 5 reception camps inside Myanmar. But before that the concerned officials of both the countries are required to hold a ground level meeting.

Meanwhile, some refugees of a camp at Nalkkyangchari

From Nurul Alam  
upazila of Banderban district staged demonstrations Sunday expressing their reluctance to go back to their homeland in Myanmar without the provisions of a UN supervision in addition to guaranteeing their citizenship, sources said adding that leaflets were also distributed in the refugee camps asking for fulfillment of their demands before repatriation.

Cox's Bazar district administration sources said that additional security measures had

been taken in and around the refugee camps and a check-post was set up to prevent any attempt by refugees to escape the repatriation by merging with the people in the surrounding localities.

Adequate police forces have been deployed there, the sources said adding that most of the refugees lured by the socio-economic conditions here demonstrated their tendency to stay back.

Besides, influx of Rohingya refugees continued unabated and in larger numbers despite the agreement signed April 28. The breakdown of the influx is 1812 persons on April 29, 1310 on April 30, 1818 on May 1, 1943 on May 2, 2487 on May 3 and 2262 on May 4.

Reports received from across the border said that Myanmar had redeployed troops at different points of Arakan saying that it was poised to put down the insurgency by minority guerrillas.

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