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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**PLA air force chief in city**

Commander of the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army (PLA) Air Force Lt. General Cao Shuangming flew into the capital yesterday morning. Chief of Air Staff Air Vice-Marshal Alif Hossain Chowdhury and other senior BAF officers received Cao Shuangming and members of his delegation at the Zia International Airport. Later, General Cao Shuangming called on Chief of Army Staff Lt General Muhammad Noor Uddin Khan at Army Headquarters, reports UNB.

**Jessore Jubo League leader shot dead**

JESSORE, May 17: Unidentified gunmen shot and killed a local leader of Awami League-backed Jubo League in the town Sunday night. Witnesses and police said Mahbubur Rahman (30) was attacked by armed miscreants numbering 10 to 12 and shot at near Palbari bus stand at about 9 pm. He died on the spot, reports UNB.

**Shibir gherao Rajshahi DC office**

RAJSHAHI, May 17: Islami Chhatra Shibir gheraoed the Deputy Commissioner's office today (Monday) demanding immediate release of its six leaders arrested in connection with the February 6 killing on the campus. Addressing the demonstrators, Shibir leaders also demanded the authorities free the Rajshahi University campus from outsiders, reports UNB.

**Lightning kills one in Jhenidah**

JHENIDAH, May 17: A middle-aged man was killed and his wife was injured by lightning at Kadikhal village in Hari-nakundu thana of the district Saturday night. Witnesses said Abdul Mannan (35) died on the spot and his wife Nazira (25) was injured when the lightning struck them at 9 pm in their house, reports UNB.

## Pak Senate admits bill to curtail president's powers

ISLAMABAD, May 17: The caretaker government of Prime Minister Balkh Sher Mazari suffered an embarrassing defeat in the Senate overnight when the upper house admitted a private bill seeking to curtail the president's powers, reports AFP.

The bill moved by senator Hussain Ahmed late Sunday forbids the dissolution of the National Assembly (lower house) by the president without prior approval of the Senate, a permanent institution in the country.

It says that before acting a government must obtain an endorsement of its move by a two-thirds majority of the senators.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, 78, exercised his discretionary powers granted under the Eighth Constitutional

Amendment in firing Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government on April 18.

While sacking Sharif in the wake of a three-month standoff with the Prime Minister, Ishaq Khan also dissolved the lower house, setting July 14 for the new elections.

Sharif's plan to cut the presidency's sweeping powers by amending the controversial clause had become the bone of contention with Ishaq Khan.

Introduction of the bill Sunday was opposed by Minister for Law and Justice, Iqbal Ahmed Khan, who said some other changes were also required in the Constitution and at this stage the bill would create complications.

Hussain Ahmed refused to withdraw the bill, and when put to vote it was endorsed by 22 senators. Eight pro-gov-

ernment senators voted against its introduction while many treasury bench members were absent.

Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad admitted the bill and referred it to the house select committee for a report at an unspecified date.

The vote in the 87-member house was the first since the pro-president Balkh Sher Mazari, 65, replaced Sharif as caretaker Prime Minister last month.

It was seen as a symbolic victory for ousted Premier Sharif's group whose actual strength was still unclear as many supporters had deserted him during the power tussle.

Sharif has already challenged his dismissal in the Supreme Court which is expected to decide the matter later this week.

Meanwhile, political and economic life in Pakistan, is hanging on a Supreme Court verdict.

The court must decide in the next few days whether Ishaq Khan acted legally in dissolving the assembly and ousting Sharif.

One month after the April 18 dissolution, the government has taken no major decisions, and politics is at a virtual standstill.

Investors too are taking a wait and see attitude, and reserves of foreign exchange, already eroded in the past months by political uncertainties, are falling at a faster pace.

In the country's financial hub, Karachi, Stock Exchange President Arif Habib says the bourse had lost 934.8 million See Page 12 Col 8

## \$120m Unicef plan to reduce child, maternal mortality

By Staff Correspondent

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) has taken up a 120 million US dollar three-year programme in Bangladesh aimed at reducing child and maternal mortality.

The Unicef representative in Dhaka, Rolf C Carriere said this at a press briefing at a city hotel Monday.

The Unicef's "Country Programme of Co-operation 1993-95" in Bangladesh will be devoted to human development, Carriere told the press.

Carriere spoke highly about Bangladesh's achievements in child development and said, "Bangladesh has achieved what more countries with more resources have not been able to."

"It is time to say the world is now looking at Bangladesh

to see what solutions it can come up with to combat its problems," he said.

The Unicef representative said the new programme will work towards reducing the infant mortality rate from the current 110 to 80 per 1000 live births, the under-five mortality rate from 184 to 135, maternal mortality rate from 600 to 470 and will also try to eliminate iodine deficiency disorders and nutritional blindness.

"The new focus of the programme is on human development," Carriere said, and added that the health, nutrition, education and water supply situations will be improved.

The programme will also See Page 12 Col 1

## Cabinet decisions on garments, gas transmission

The cabinet yesterday approved the recommendations of the cabinet sub-committee to find solutions to various problems of the export-oriented garments industries, reports BSS.

The regular weekly cabinet meeting at Bangabhaban was chaired by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The committee had made some specific recommendations on increasing the value additions in the export of various categories of garments, timely availability of imported cloth for use by the garments industries and the permissibility, in certain cases, of imported cloth less than 20 yards in length.

The cabinet also approved, in principle, the proposal of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to form a gas transmission company under Petro-Bangla for improving the management of the natural gas sector.

The gas transmission company will initially be formed with the North-South Pipeline and the Ashuganj-Bakhrabad Pipeline now under construction.

## Killing, looting becoming daily feature: MCCI

Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry yesterday expressed concern at the deterioration of law and order situation in the country, reports UNB.

Deterioration of law and order situation has again reached a serious proportion, claimed MCCI in a statement signed by its President Latifur Rahman.

"Looting, hijacking, killing have again become almost daily incidents... the business community is deeply worried and has been suffering from serious insecurity," it said.

The statement followed the daylight hijacking of the

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See Page 12 Col 1

## Police yet to make headway

By Staff Correspondent

Police were yet to make any headway in their investigations into the daring daylight robbery Sunday involving a transport of a Pharmaceuticals company in the city.

Sutrapur Police, in whose jurisdiction the place of occurrence — Toynbee Circular Road falls — were yet to trace any of the armed gang who shot two persons and got away with Tk. 1.92 lakh in cash and Tk. 20.74 lakh worth of demand drafts by stopping a jeep of the Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd. which was going to the bank to make a deposit.

Police said an emergency task force had been organised to track down the gangsters but little progress had been made. The white stolen car used by the robbers was also untraced.

Abdur Rashid, a Square staff, and Ismail Hossain, a pedestrian who tried to chase the robbers, received bullet injuries. The condition of the latter, admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, was stated to be serious.

## Showcause on Abdul Hafiz MP

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court division of the Supreme Court Monday issued a show cause notice on Prof Abdul Hafiz, MP, asking him to clear his position in the Jattya Sangsad within the next seven days.

According to a press release, the notice was issued by a division bench comprising Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury and Justice K M Hasan on a writ petition filed by Mohammad Nasim, the Opposition chief whip in Parliament.

The writ challenged the authority under which Prof Hafiz is holding or claims to hold office of the Member of Parliament from the Nilphamari-4 constituency in violation of Article 70 of the Constitution.

The petitioner submitted that Prof Hafiz, after being nominated by the National Awami Party (NAP) and elected from the 15-party alliance with the boat as its symbol, joined the ruling BNP on March 30, 1993.

Barrister K S Nabi, on behalf of the petitioner, further submitted that the respondent See Page 12 Col 8



International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch (2nd from left) arrived in the city yesterday on a 24-hour visit to Bangladesh. State Minister for Youth and Sports Sadeq Hossain (L) and Bangladesh Olympic Association chief Gias Kamal Chowdhury, along with other officials, received him at the ZIA. On the right is Maria Samaranch de Graz, daughter of the IOC chief. More pictures on Page 10  
— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

### Flood Action Plan meet begins

## 'Build barrage to counter effects of Farakka'

By Staff Correspondent

The third conference on the Flood Action Plan (FAP) began in the capital Monday with proponents trying to dispel the skeptics' views that the plan would entail greater ecological and human disasters to the country than caused by perennial floods.

The sponsors of the multi-million dollar FAP assured that the programme would be implemented only after thorough and extensive assessments on the environmental, economic and cultural aspects of the country.

Most of the speakers at the opening function of the three-day conference, held at the International Conference Centre in Dhaka, were critical of the FAP critics while some of them were accommodative

to welcome diverse opinions. State Minister Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan advocated for the construction of a barrage inside Bangladesh to counter the adverse effects caused by the Farakka Barrage in India.

The Finance Minister, however, suggested negotiation with the neighbouring countries since the cross-border inflow of river waters created floods in the country.

Chaired by State Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Flood Control and Water Development Minister M Majid-ul Haq attended the function as chief guest and opened the conference. Besides, eminent water experts of the country, members of the parliament, diplomats, high government officials, representatives from the donor agencies and local and foreign consultants also attended the inaugural function.

Flood Action Plan is a study-cum-action programme initiated by the government with See Page 12 Col 4

uddinah, Chief of World Bank's Dhaka mission Christopher R Willoughby, Netherlands Ambassador Henrick Ganjatan and Chief Engineer of FAP M H Siddiqi, BU.

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Flood Action Plan is a study-cum-action programme initiated by the government with See Page 12 Col 4

## Samaranch meets PM, assures cooperation

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Juan Antonio Samaranch yesterday assured that his organisation would extend all cooperation for the development of sports in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The assurance came when he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office.

Samaranch, who arrived in the capital on a two-day visit, told the Prime Minister that the IOC would arrange, among other things, football coaching for Bangladeshi players to develop their skills.

He said the IOC takes keen interest in Bangladesh's games and sports and appreciated the government's initiatives in this regard.

The Prime Minister welcomed the IOC President's visit to Bangladesh, the first by any head of the International Olympic Committee.

Begum Zia told Samaranch See Page 12 Col 8

## AL-led parties plan 'more effective' movement

By Nazmul Ashraf

Fourteen opposition parties including the Awami League are heading for a 'more effective' anti-government agitation on the basis of some major current national issues, reliable sources said.

A recent meeting of the 14 so-called 'pro-Liberation' parties had initiated talks on gearing up their current agitation, based on a three-point 'charter of demands.'

The joint meeting with the AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina left the matter open extensive to discussions, both separately and collectively, by the parties, insiders said. They told this correspondent that the 14 parties will meet soon to spell out their respective positions and will try to reach consensus on the maximum possible number of burning issues, including the on-going labour movement, the Farakka problem and the problems affecting the country's

peasants and the citizens at large.

The three-point demands, the basis of the 14 parties' present unity, were unanimously agreed upon in the meeting chaired by Hasina, after police had obstructed a Bangla New Year celebration function at the Suhrawardy Uddyan in the capital on April 14. Moreover, the police actions against the Nirmul Samannaya Committee rallies in the city March 26 and 28 only helped these erstwhile allies to regroup once again.

The three-point demands include the trial of 'war criminals' including Jamaat chief Golam Azam, stopping repression on the 'pro-Liberation' forces and upholding the spirit of the Liberation War.

Speaking on the subject of fresh agitation, AL Presidium member and a Nirmul leader Abdur Razzak told this correspondent, "We want our com- See Page 12 Col 7

## Bandaranaike's alliance leading in four constituencies

COLOMBO, May 17: An opposition alliance took the early lead as counting opened here today in Sri Lanka's crucial provincial council elections, official sources said, reports AFP.

A five-party alliance led by former Premier Sirima Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party was leading in all four constituencies where postal ballots were counted, the sources said adding that it was too early to predict trends.

The joint opposition is clearly ahead in areas where counting has finished. Those entitled to postal votes are government servants and armed force personnel so they

may not be fully representative," an official said.

An estimated 70 to 75 per cent of 9.3 million electorate turned out to elect 366 members to seven out of the eight provincial councils that went to the polls today despite torrential rains in many parts of the country.

The election in the seven provinces is regarded as a three-cornered tussle between the traditionally dominant United National Party, a break-away faction of the UNP and the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party, which boycotted the same polls five years ago. The elections came within

weeks after the assassinations of President Ranasinghe Premadasa and opposition leader Lalith Athulathmudali, and the results could influence voting at a national level in 1994 when the next presidential election is due.

Some 9.3 million people are eligible to elect 366 members to seven provincial councils in today's ballot which is considered a crucial test for the ruling UNP.

It looks like a very close fight and it will be very difficult for a single party to get a clear majority. There will have to be alliances and pacts between parties to form provincial administrations, a political

analyst said.

The UNP has been in power since 1977 and has won virtually every national and local election since then. It controls all the seven provincial councils.

At least one polling booth collapsed under torrential rains in Panadura, a suburb of the Sri Lankan capital Colombo, injuring a voter and five polling officials, witnesses said.

Strong winds and rains caused slow balloting in many polling stations in Colombo, which comes under the key western provincial council, and along the entire southern coast.

However, as the rain ceased by noon in parts of the western province voters began to throng polling booths, which were guarded by heavily-armed policemen.

President Dingiri Banda Wijetunga, who was chosen by parliament to succeed Premadasa on May 7, was among the first to vote in his central Kandy electorate, while Athulathmudali's widow also cast her vote early at a polling station in Colombo.

With just four hours to go before voting ended, only 700 of 2,500 registered voters had cast their ballot by noon at a polling booth in Hulftsdorp, Premadasa's home.

But there was a large turnout of voters elsewhere in his Colombo central electorate.

Premadasa was killed in a bomb attack here eight days after a gunman shot dead Athulathmudali when he was addressing an election meeting on April 23.

Bright weather enabled voters to go to the polls early in the densely populated central regions of Kandy and Badulla and north central Anuradhapura, officials said.

Voting has been brisk in Kandy, Badulla and Anuradhapura. There is no rain in those areas. We expect heavy voting later, an election official here said.