

# Plea to halt ethnic cleansing in Bosnia

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka on the Bosnian crisis Wednesday urged the international community to take concrete measures towards halting ethnic cleansing against Bosnian Muslims by the Serbian aggression, reports UNB.

They termed the role of the West as duplicitous and said the West, always claiming to be the champions of human rights, remained callously indifferent to the atrocities in Bosnia with its sterile debates and half-hearted measures.

Unless this genocide is stopped, Bosnia will remain a threat to human civilisation, they told the seminar on "Bosnia: A Scar On Civilisation" organised by the International Relations Alumni Association (IRAA) of the Dhaka University.

Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, MP, Malaysian High Commissioner in Dhaka Ahmed Fuzi Haji Abdul Razak, French Ambassador Jean Michel Lacombe, Democratic Forum leader Barrister Amirul Islam and IRAA General Secretary Quazi AK Refaul Huq were among those who took part in the discussion.

IRAA president and Food Secretary ATN Shamsul Haque chaired the seminar at the ICMA auditorium sponsored by the Bengali daily Bhorer Kagaj. Chairman of the International Relations Department Ramzul Huq presented the keynote paper.

LRGD and Cooperatives Minister Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder, in a written statement, said Serbian persecution of the Bosnian Muslims equated with Hitler's holocaust, Stalin's mass slaughter and Yahya Khan's genocide.

Refuting the argument that the Bosnian tragedy was "strategically insignificant," he said it was challenging to global survival from ecological disaster, terrorism and other transnational scourges.

Barrister Salam Talukder, who was supposed to attend the seminar as chief guest, could not come on health grounds. His statement was read out at the seminar by the IRAA general secretary.

About Bangladesh's stand on the issue, Barrister Talukder who is also the Secretary General of the ruling BNP, said the government was abiding by the sanctions against Serbia, adopted in the multilateral forum.

"We have offered to send medicine and tea to Bosnia-

Herzegovina and offered scholarships to their students in our universities," he added.

Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon said Serbian atrocity against the unarmed Bosnian Muslims had already surpassed that of the Nazis against the Jew community during the Second World War.

Menon was critical of the Western inaction towards ending killings, rapings and concentration camps by the Serbs in Bosnia. He referred to the use of force against Iraq in the Gulf War and said the West is playing "double standard" with regard to the carnage in Bosnia.

"Although the West expresses concern at the violation of human rights in Bosnia, it is not willing to take decisive action there because they don't find narrow economic and military interests," the Workers Party MP said.

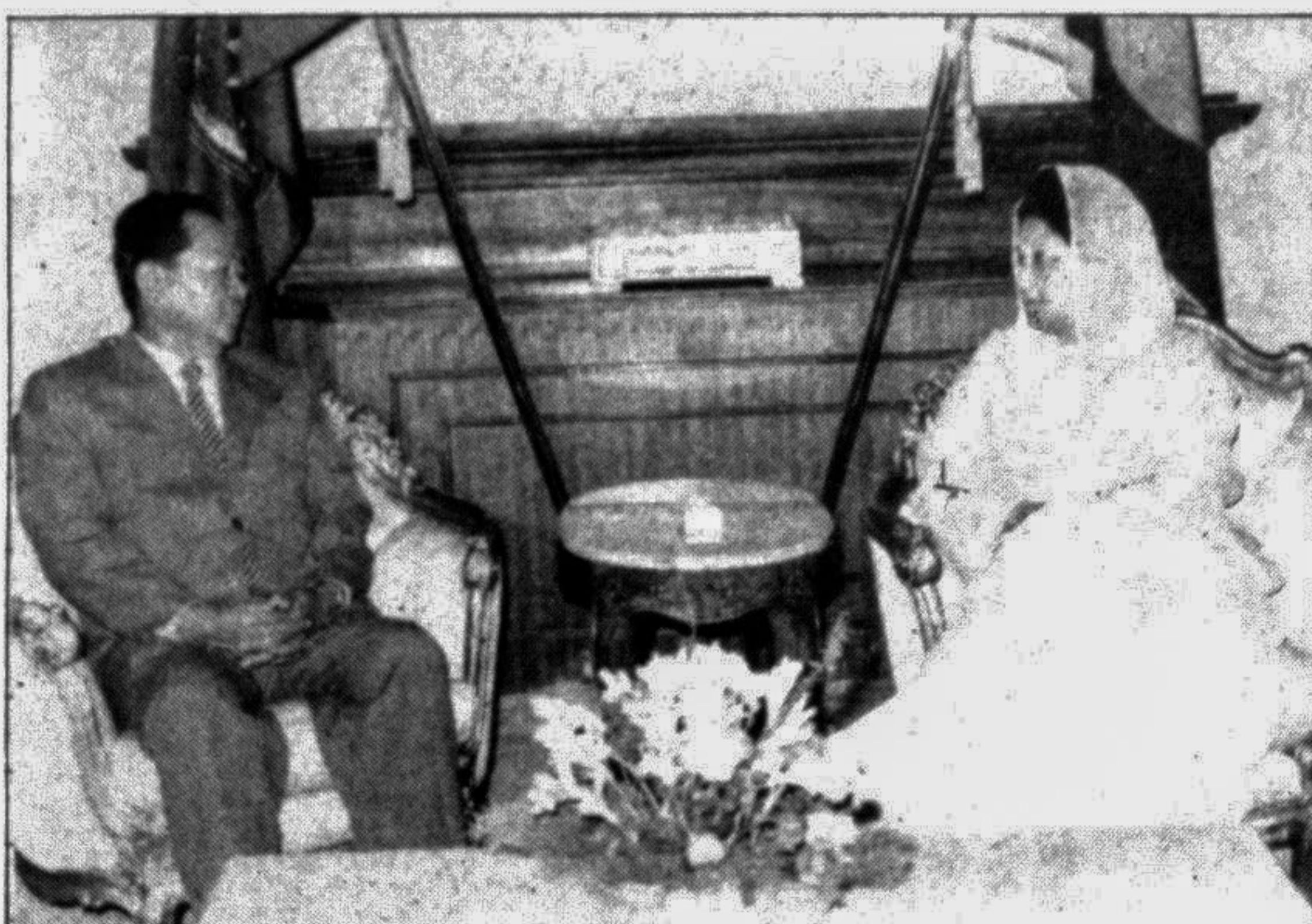
Food Secretary ATM Shamsul Haque observed that massacres of Bosnian Muslims was one of the blackest chapters in human history. "Hitler's spirit is haunting in Bosnia."

Malaysian High Commissioner Ahmed Fuzi Haji Abdul Razak said Serbs adopted the strategy of persecuting the Bosnian Muslims, simply because they are Muslims.

"It's not a matter of the Muslim community, but a question of entire humanity," he said, adding that the tragedy has endangered human civilization.

Additional Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed, Myanmar Ambassador to Bangladesh Soe Myint and Bangladesh Ambassador to Yangon Mustafa Faruque Mohammad were present.

General Mya Thin is due to leave Dhaka for home today.



Myanmar Home Minister Lt. General Mya Thin called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. — PID photo

## PM: Rohingya

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cussed other bilateral issues and expressed satisfaction over steady development of relations between the two neighbours. They agreed to promote border trade to the mutual benefit of the two peoples.

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## Corruption-free banking

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The function was also addressed by Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Khondoker Mosharrar Hossain, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Jahanara Begum, Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal President Iskander Ali, General Secretary Nazrul Islam Khan, Vice President Nazrul Islam, the Sonali Bank Employees' Association president BN Banker Hossain and Mahmudullah Chowdhury.

The employees' association handed over three sewing machines to the Prime Minister for distributing those among the destitutes.



Agitating nurses and police on guard scuffling over the possession of a banner in front of the Bangladesh Secretariat yesterday. — Star photo

## Nurses, lensmen

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Leaders of the nurses' association eventually submitted their memorandum to the authorities concerned after the situation was brought under control.

Meanwhile, the nurses, at a rally held in front of the Jatiya Press Club, protested the police action and set a June 5 deadline for meeting their demands. Otherwise they threatened to go for a greater agitation.

## Pak court restores NA

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confidence. "This is a historic day," he said.

"We will see how much strength Nawaz Sharif has in the house," opposition leader Benazir Bhutto said before flying to Islamabad from Karachi shortly after the decision.

Sharif held a late-night emergency cabinet meeting to discuss policy.

"My government will continue with the economic policies it was practising before the dissolution, as the caretaker government was committed to and as the international community has praised," Sharif said in an interview.

He filed a petition with the court after Ishaq Khan dismissed him on charges of nepotism, terrorising his political opponents, economic mismanagement and handing out business favours to friends.

It was the first time the Pak Supreme Court has upheld a petition against a presidential dissolution of parliament.

Sharif was the third Prime Minister to be dismissed since Zia gave himself the power as president to dissolve parliament under a 1985 constitutional amendment.

The court judgement said all decisions of the five-week caretaker government were valid and should be upheld. After sacking Sharif, the President installed an interim

## Permanent craft village in Sonargaon soon

The government has decided to set up a permanent craft village at the Bangladesh Folk Art and Crafts Foundation complex in Sonargaon near Dhaka, following the successful holding of a three-month temporary craft village programme at the complex from Nov '92 to Feb '93, reports BSS.

Some facilities including easy-term loans will also be provided to the artisans to encourage them.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the board of trustee yesterday at the conference room of the Cultural Ministry with State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum in the chair.

## Free Azam before Eid: Jamaat

Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday demanded release of party Chief Prof Golam Azam before the ensuing Eid-ul-Azha. In a joint statement, Jamaat leaders Shamsur Rahman, Moulana Abul Kamal Muhammad Yusuf and Moulana Motur Rahman Nizami, MP said the High Court declared Azam a citizen of Bangladesh by birth and it is the duty of the government to release him showing respect to the verdict, reports UNB.



Jubilant supporters of Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad after announcement of the Supreme Court verdict yesterday. — Star TV photo

## Pre-budget seminar

# Cut expenditure in unproductive sectors

Speakers at a seminar in Dhaka yesterday demanded drastic reduction of expenditure in unproductive sectors through formulating appropriate policy, reports BSS.

Economic policy should be formulated in such a way that would benefit the majority along with giving necessary support to the new entrepreneurs, participants at "pre-budget seminar" at the Jatiya Press Club observed. Organised under the auspices of the Bangladesh Economic Association, the seminar was divided into two-session — presentation by panel of speakers and open discussion.

Prof Ansur Rahman, president of BEA was in the chair. Government officials, academicians, university teachers, researchers and students took part in the discussion.

AMM Nasiruddin, joint commissioner of taxes, called for long-term policy formulation to lead the nation for actual growth, instead of half-hearted, temporary and adhoc measures to overcome instant problems. He suggested trimming the size of the government, imposition of tax on real estate and fresh investment in industry and protection to import substitute industry from the impact of free flow of goods under so-called trade liberalisation.

Dr Kazi Meshbauddin, joint chief, planning commission, asked better coordination of various branches of the government in budget preparing and noted that performances and objectives of different ministries should be criterion of revenue allocation. Incremental basis which is practised now leads to inflation, he added.

Dr Meshbauddin advocated higher allocation for manpower development in the revenue budget, where between 60 to 70 per cent are spent on salary and allowances.

Prof Matul Islam of the Chittagong University called for correcting the government policy so that indigenous industry do not suffer. He said because of faulty policy, smuggling is encouraged and national economy is ruined. He criticised continued extension of subsidy to non-productive sectors and demanded that

necessary support be provided to agriculture which still continues to be the major employer.

Prof Abdul Bayes of the Jahangirnagar University taking part in the open discussion said that law and order situation has to be improved to encourage investment. He said efforts have to be made to cut bureaucratic red tapism.

Birupakhyapa, a columnist, suggested preparation of alternate or parallel budget much ahead of budget presentation for fullscale discussion so as to contribute in budget formulation. He said discussion immediately before the budget presentation would serve no purpose.

Dr Atiur Rahman of Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies said bureaucracy and some other factors are the major hindrances to investment. Unless these were sorted out, the desired investment would never be achieved, he added.

## Bangla Academy

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Chowdhury had been involved in 'anti-Liberation activities' during the War of Liberation, the Jote leaders said, "and presently he is involved with all the reactionary elements of the country, including the Jamaat-Shibir."

"The government, before going to power, had promised us many things including upholding the spirit of the Liberation War. Instead, it has glorified the enemies of the war," he said.

"Our movement is not against the government," Faiz clarified, "but against the wrong-doings of the government. If the government is democratic, then it must respect what the people want or do not want."

The appointment of Chowdhury has insulted the Bangla Academy, an institution built with the blood of Salam, Barkat and other language martyrs, they said, and urged the government to immediately remove him.

## Dhaka-Tehran sign MOU on air service

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) on air services between Bangladesh and Iran was signed here yesterday facilitating the national airlines of the two countries to operate one flight each a week, reports UNB.

The frequency of flight will, however, be revised and increased depending on growth of traffic between the two countries.

Officials said the MOU was signed at the Biman Bhaban following a two-day meeting between a visiting Iranian delegation and officials of the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry.

## Time extended for renewal of route-permit

Government has extended the time for renewal of route-permit and fitness-certificate of vehicles including update of tax-taken without fine till June 30, reports UNB.

The decision was taken to ensure overall discipline in road and road transport sector besides earning revenue, said a PID handout yesterday.

Owners of motor-vehicles are advised to update their taxes, route-permit and fitness-certificate of their vehicles within the specified time.

The owners who could not update the above documents in time for different reasons will not be charged any fine provided they pay the principal tax and fees as specified in the rule on or before June 30.

## Chakma

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arrange speedy repatriation of all Chakma refugees to Bangladesh in full safety and security.

The Chakma refugees, from the Khagrachhari, district of Bangladesh, now in camps in bordering south Tripura district of Tripura state in south-east India since April 1988, are keen to return home.

The official-level meeting, originally set for May 19, to work out the details of the repatriation following the agreement during the Bangladesh Communications Minister's visit had to be rescheduled due to floods in Agartala, the capital of Tripura.

The Bangladesh team, which comprises the Special Affairs Division Secretary Nasrullah Khan, Joint Secretary of the Home Ministry M A Mannan, and Director, South Asia Desk, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Saiful Ameen Khan, is scheduled to return on Friday.

## CPB split

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both factions, the party assets include its central office on a big plot of land in the city's Purana Paltan area, a printing and computer processing centre along with the weekly Ekota, a major share in the Jatiya Sahitya Prakashani — a publishing house in the capital — and several acres of land in the district towns of Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal, Rangpur and Comilla.

Apart from these, the party owns a huge sum of money. According to a central leader, the party owns assets in cash and kind worth about Tk 18 crore.

The party earned Taka 50 lakh by selling a piece of land in the city's Motijheel Commercial Area in 1988.

The CPB came to own these assets over the years mainly through donations from dedicated party leaders, workers and sympathisers. It also received funds from the former East bloc countries led by the Soviet Union.

Earlier, the reformists planned to form a trustee board, representing both factions, to vest in it the authority for the assets of the 45-year-old party.

But the hardliners argued that the reformists could not lay any claim on the assets since dedicated partisans had donated these to the party to carry forward communist ideals.

Sources in the party said, the reformists had now departed from their previous stand to avoid any tussle over the party assets.

The fact that the hardliners had sent their representatives to the four-member body formed to assess and divide the party assets, suggests that they acknowledge the reformists' share.

The committee, however, is yet to meet.

On the question of holding two separate council sessions, the hardline faction was yet to decide its stance, sources said.

Sources close to the control commission of the party — a body that mediates in disputes within the organisation — felt that there was no option the party but to hold separate councils to avoid the risk of physical clashes between the supporters of the two factions.

# The Midnight File

## UN Council to endorse Cambodian poll results

PHNOM PENH, May 26: The five permanent members of the UN Security Council plan to convene a new international conference on Cambodia within two weeks to endorse the results of the election and to determine the course of international presence in Cambodia, diplomatic sources said today. The meeting would likely to be held in Phnom Penh and would "endorse the result of the election," a critical factor in getting aid flow quickly to the new government, an Asian diplomat said. The conference would likely to take place about 10 days after the result of the elections which are expected in the first days of June, they said, reports AFP.

## Russian communists call constitutional confce

MOSCOW, May 26: Leaders of Russian communist party today announced they will hold a constitutional conference on June 3 to rival the assembly called by President Boris Yeltsin. Hardline Deputy Gennady Sayenko told a news conference that communist party representatives would meet to "discuss the situation in Russia in connection with the upcoming June 5 constitutional conference to be held in the Kremlin," reports AFP.

## Bid to kidnap Kashmir Met office director : 7 killed

NEW DELHI, May 26: Seven people were killed in the strife-torn northern state of Kashmir as Indian troops foiled a kidnap attempt by Muslim rebels, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported today. A state official told the news agency in Srinagar, Kashmir's summer capital, that soldiers had prevented an attempt to abduct the director of the state weather office in a downtown Srinagar area on Tuesday, reports AFP.

## What next in Pak politics?

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Ishaq Khan — servant of the state, authoritarian, vindictive and little given to compromise — has never forgiven Sharif for his shows of independence or his efforts to curtail the powers the President used under the constitution to dissolve the assembly.

The fight between the two men took an irrevocable course when on the day after the dissolution Nawaz Sharif said the presidency had resorted to low blows and "conspiracies" against his government.

The unprecedented court decision was particularly galling for the President, and also, though less directly, affects ex-premier Benazir Bhutto who threw her support behind the chief of state.

Ishaq Khan in turn put five of Bhutto's people, including her husband Asif Zardari, in the interim government he installed illegally according to the court — after the April 18 dissolution.

Today's verdict was a stunning victory for Sharif, who has proved his popularity in bringing together tens of thousands of supporters and demonstrators in the country's main cities to protest the presidential decision.

But the premier must find a way to win over less friendly forces — he had ranged against him the governments and the assemblies of Pakistan's four provinces, including his home state of Punjab which holds 65 per cent of the country's population, where backroom manoeuvres tilted the majority in favour of the President.

The possible role to be played by the armed forces, often considered the invisible hand pulling the political strings in Pakistan, remains unclear even if it appears sure that the head of the army, General Abdul Waheed, a military father figure, will stick with the President who appointed him in January after rejecting names proposed by Sharif.

What does seem clear is that the first act must be played out in the National Assembly, whose President, a Sharif ally, has convoked it for

## Tiger

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pointed out that those who were alleged to have been killed by the tiger or tigers in the range were all poachers or intruders involved in unauthorised collection of wood, gollapatta leaves or prawn fry. Only one of the victims was a staff of the Forest Department.

Moreover, the Forest Department officials argued that the victims could have avoided the tigers if they had moved in large bands instead of small isolated groups of two or three persons.

The department also feels that there could be more than just one tiger responsible for the attacks on human beings in the area. It also fears that if the particular area where such incidents of man-eating has been concentrated, were to be cleared of the tigers, then it would invite the other no less dangerous evil of illegal encroachers.

Meanwhile, residents around the Chandpal range are reportedly passing sleepless nights as the prowling tigers often raid the villages in search of cattle and goats, sources said.

Khasru Chowdhury, an environmentalist working in the area on tiger behaviour, said the particular tiger responsible for most of the killings in the Chandpal region is a resident of Katakhal and is an over-sized, enfeebled male with a defective front paw.

He said three tigers had been killed previously at Joimoni, Baidyamari and Gilarkhal as a result of which these areas have become void of tigers. The Katakhal tiger, according to him, is now roaming the Chandpal region killing human beings at random.

## One shot dead in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, May 26: A young man, fatally injured when miscreants fired on villagers at village Nansa Tuesday night, died at Jhenidah Sadar Hospital this afternoon, reports UNB.

The victim was identified as Hafizur Rahman (18), a van driver.

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