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NEWS BRIEFS

DCC anti-mosquito
 drive opens today

By Staff Correspondent
 Dhaka City Corporation Mayor Mohammad Hanif launches a fortnight-long drive to eradicate mosquito and cleanse the spots where mosquito breeds in the capital today. The mayor will inaugurate the programme at the Majed Sardar Community Centre adjacent to the 'Bangladesh Math' (field) in the old part of the city at 10 in the morning.

BUPSA denies link
 with today's meet

The Bangladesh Union Parishad Secretaries' Association (BUPSA) president Golam Rasul, general secretary Kamar Uddin and chief advisor Mokaddam Hossain, in a joint statement last night, denied having any connection of the BUPSA with the meeting called by the Union Parishad Chairmen's Samity and the Union Gram Police Karmachari Union at the South Gate of the Baitul Mukarram Mosque today.

BCS (Edn) holds
 strike May 9

The BCS General Education Association has called for strike in all the government colleges on May 9 protesting the dilly-dallying in filling up the vacant posts of teachers in the nationalised colleges. reports UNB.

Storms lash Noakhali, Ctg : 12 killed

By Staff Correspondent

The power supply in the town remained suspended from 12 Noon. Some 150 electric poles collapsed. A large number of trees were uprooted and telephone lines went out of order in many parts of the town.

The local Met office recorded a rainfall of 78 mm from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday. Meanwhile, 10 people were injured in clashes between Noakhali jail police and local people. The clash took place when a person was taking away a branch of a tree from near the Noakhali prison.

The jail police made baton charges at random following an altercation with the local people. Our Staff Correspondent from Chittagong reports: One Towan Ali, 50, died on the spot as lightning struck him while he was on his way home at Charpharghata of Patiya thana yesterday.

Normal life was paralysed in the port city and its surrounding areas following intermittent rainfall during the last few days. According to Chittagong Met office, a nor'wester hit the

city with a wind speed of 75 kph at around 3.45 pm. The total rainfall in 24 hours till 6 pm yesterday was 127 mm.

Most of the low-lying areas in Chittagong were inundated due to flash flood triggered by the rainfall.

Traffic movement became thin on the roads and highways as the rainfall forced most of the people to stay home.

BSS adds: Five towers of a 33 kv power station were flattened, about 50 kutch houses damaged and many trees uprooted in a nor'wester that hit the Faridpur town and adjoining areas at a speed of around 70 kph.

One person was admitted to hospital with burn injuries received from lightning during the nor'wester.

The whole Faridpur town remained dark last night due to the damage to the power station. The disruption of power supply also disturbed water supply there.

The nor'wester also disrupted telephone lines in many areas of the town.

Our Correspondent from Narayanganj reports: The bodies

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Rain spell to
 continue

By Staff Correspondent

Different parts of the country experienced moderate to moderately heavy rain which paralysed normal life yesterday.

The Met Office said the rain spell would continue for another few days before the weather starts improving after a week.

The Met Office in Dhaka recorded 19 mm of rainfall in the capital from 6 am till 6 pm yesterday.

Rainfall recorded during the same period in other areas were: Chittagong 39 mm, Sathkhira 84 mm, Feni 35 mm, Tangail 13 mm, Rangpur 20 mm, Khulna and Chandpur 11 mm each, Ishwardi 13 mm, Comilla 7 mm, Barisal 4 mm, Bhola and Hatya 3 mm, Srimangal 2 mm.

According to the Flood Forecasting and Warning Division yesterday, the Ganges had risen at all the points and the rivers in the Meghna and south-eastern hill basins rose at most points during the last 24 hours ending at 6 pm yesterday.

The Ganges registered a rise by 3 cm at Rajshahi, 4 cm each at the Hardinge Bridge and Goalundo and 13 cm at Bhagyalakshmi of Vikrampur.

However, the rivers of the Ganges basin were flowing. See Page 12 Col 6

Pakistanis retain Australasia Cup

Sports Reporter

Sharjah and Pakistan, it

seems, are made for each other. The world champions of one-day cricket yesterday reaffirmed their status as the bosses of instant cricket by retaining the Australasia Cup for a third time at Sharjah with a 39-run win over neighbours India.

Powered by strokeful half-centuries from man-of-the-match, as well as man-of-the-series Aamir Sohail and Basit

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Detailed report on Page 10

All, Pakistan totalled 250 for six from their allotted 50 overs.

After a rollercoaster start given by the in-form Sohail and Saeed Anwar, Pakistan suffered a mini-collapse as India staged a comeback with off-spinner Rajesh Chauhan snaring three batsmen in quick succession, including captain Salim Malik.

But Basit, and later a resourceful Rashid Latif, duly got them in the vicinity of 250 with some scintillating strokeplay.

India, who returned to the desert after a three-year lay-off alleging pro-Pakistani bias among the organisers, got off to a shaky start in their quest for the victory target of 251 runs.



Aamir Sohail..... m-o-m

Oil exploration
 Final accord with

2 foreign cos
 next month

By Sharier Khan

The final agreement between the government and Holland Sea Search of the Netherlands and Cairn PLC of England to explore oil and gas in the Bay of Bengal is likely to be signed in the first week of next month.

Meanwhile, the National Board of Revenue (NBR) and the Ministry of Law have suggested amendments to some of the clauses of the Production Sharing Contract (PSC) of the two companies, sources said.

The proposed amendments are, however, minor in nature and the representatives of the two companies have accepted the changes.

The PSC was sent to the NBR and the Law Ministry in early March for checking if it conflicted with any laws of the land.

The government signed the preliminary accords with these foreign companies on August 5. The PSC was approved by the Cabinet Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs and the Cabinet in early February and early last month respectively.

The final agreement will be signed by Petrobangla and the directors of the two companies.

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Hasina urges West
 to expel Serbians
 from Gorazde

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has urged the western powers to take immediate action to expel Serbian troops from Gorazde and called for a peaceful, fair and just solution to the problems of the Bosnian Muslims, reports UNB.

"History will judge the western powers very harshly if they fail to deter the aggressors and save a small nation from the genocidal Serbian aggressions," she said in a statement signed by Petrobangla and the directors of the two companies.

"I think half-hearted measures will not do the job. We need a more determined, wider use of air power," he said.

Armed with a new UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate pullback of Bosnian Serb forces unless they ceased attacks immediately.

The conditions were that Bosnian Serb attacks immediately cease, that the Bosnian Serbs pull back three km from the centre of the town, and that UN forces and medical evacuations were unimpeded.

Sunday's 0001 GMT deadline applies to the last two conditions, but not to the call for an end to Bosnian Serb attacks which takes effect immediately.

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NATO deadline to Bosnian Serbs

BRUSSELS, Apr 22: NATO said today it had set a deadline of 0001 GMT on Sunday for Bosnian Serbs to withdraw from Gorazde, reports Reuter.

It also threatened air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces unless they ceased attacks immediately.

NATO said in a statement that air strikes could be conducted against Bosnian Serb heavy weapons and other military targets within a 20 km radius from the centre of Gorazde if three conditions were not met.

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During a visit to Japan, US Defence Secretary William Perry said the United States wants NATO warplanes to launch "vigorous raids" against Bosnian Serb targets if the

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Salam says Opposition is creating obstacles

By Staff Correspondent

A division bench of the High Court Thursday referred three petitions for quashment of charges against former president HM Ershad and two others to the Chief Justice for necessary instructions after a defence counsel expressed lack of confidence in the High Court bench.

The division bench comprising Justice AKM Sadek and Justice KM Hassan, who Thursday took up the three petitions seeking quashment of charges framed in the Special Judge's court against Ershad and two other accused — Abul Khair Litu, a businessman and Moudud Ahmed, former Vice President — expressed their embarrassment to hear the cases after co-accused Moudud Ahmed himself, appearing as the defence counsel for Ershad, expressed his client's apprehension that he would not get a fair trial before this bench.

In an order, their Lordships were pleased to observe that since all three petitions, though filed individually, related to the same case they ought to be heard together and therefore the same be placed

HC refers Ershad,
 2 others' quashment
 petitions to CJ

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Refuting the Opposition al-

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Returning home after attending his seventh Paris Club meeting, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman termed the meeting a "fully satisfying and respectable" one because of the success of the government's economic management.

There was a big difference between the previous meeting and this one where the donors talked with us with great respect," Saifur said Friday at a press briefing at the VIP lounge of the Zia Airport.

The donors had attached utmost importance to poverty alleviation, administrative reforms, human resources development and women's education to which the government is also totally committed, he said.

Emphasis was also laid on infrastructure development and crop diversification.

The Minister, wearing a dark suit and a red tie, looked happy about the outcome of the meeting that concluded on April 20 and said the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the UNDP had given excellent ratings to Bangladesh's performance in economic management.

By Staff Correspondent

Giving out the figures of the aid commitment at the meeting, Saifur said 1680 million US dollars will be given as project aid, 260 million as commodity aid and 160 million as food aid.

Slow implementation capability of the government.

Saifur said the Planning Commission is trying to make up for the slow implementation capability of some ministries by a flexible planning process.

"We have already reallocated Tk 1500 crore from the slow moving projects to the fast moving ones, mainly in the roads and highways, rural works and education programmes," he said to substantiate his earlier remarks.

"But to improve the implementation capability, we have to reform the country's administration into a market-oriented one," Saifur pointed out.

The donors have also asked us to do so and we told them that three committees had been formed on the issue and these had submitted their recommendations. This aside, a Cabinet committee has also been formed to take actions on these recommendations," he said.

The donors were satisfied at the progress of privatisation process in the last six months, the Finance Minister said.

Saifur Rahman

The briefing was also attended by the Secretary of the ERD Lutfullah Majid, and Member Planning Commission (now Chairman, BOI), Mokammel Huq.

The Minister, however, said the donors were critical of the

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