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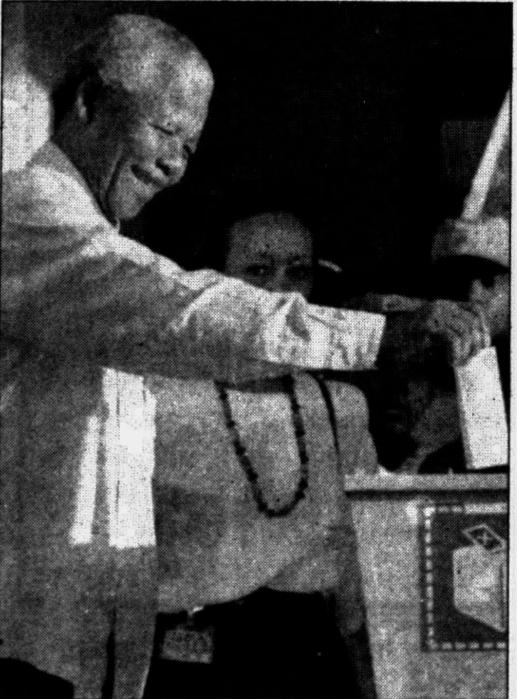
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31 white extremists held in S Africa

Heavy turnout of voters ignoring blasts



ANC chief Nelson Mandela casting the first vote of his life yesterday in a non-racial election expected to make him South Africa's first black president. — AFP photo

JOHANNESBURG, Apr 27: Nelson Mandela cast the first vote of his life Wednesday in an election expected to make him the country's first black president, and police announced the arrests of 31 white extremists in a string of fatal bombings intended to disrupt balloting, reports AP.

A bomb blasted the international airport minutes after Mandela voted, a reminder of the obstacles his African National Congress faces if—as expected—it wins the election. The blast outside the international departure hall at Johannesburg's Jan Smuts Airport injured 18 people, two seriously.

Hours later, police announced they had arrested 31 people, including members of a militant white group. Officers said weapons and explosives also were confiscated. A policeman said a bomb was seized Tuesday night from a car in a Johannesburg suburb and the driver was about to plant it.

Those arrested included a policeman, a reserve police officer, and several members of the 'Iron Guard' of the extreme right-wing Afrikaner Resistance Movement.

"The purpose was to derail the election process," police Gen Johan Van der Merwe told a news conference.

Despite fears of terrorist attacks, voters poured into polls. See Page 12 Col 1

Indian MIGs violate Bangladesh airspace

LALMONIRHAT, Apr 27: Indian airforce fighter planes today flew about 20 kilometres deep into Bangladesh airspace and hovered over Patgram and Burimari, heightening tension in the northern border and causing panic among the villagers, reports UNB.

Officials confirmed that two Mig-21 fighter planes from the Indian Airforce base in Shilliguri flew over the Burimari bazar area and Patgram thana headquarters on two occasions — at about 9:30 am and 11:20 am.

Witnesses said the MIGs, with deafening noise, flew low over the two areas, causing panic among the people there. Many of them fled homes in fear.

The airspace violation occurred. See Page 12 Col 8



Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, flanked by party leaders, laying a wreath at the mazar of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazul Huq on the occasion of his 32nd death anniversary in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Benazir's gesture to Sharif

ISLAMABAD, Apr 27: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has invited opposition leader Nawaz Sharif to join her on a trip to South Africa, in a gesture apparently aimed at defusing a domestic political row, officials said today, reports AFP.

Bhutto, who is to attend next month's inauguration of South Africa's new president, told Sharif in a letter that his presence in her entourage would be a 'befitting' tribute to the struggle of that country's black majority.

BNP won't ask opposition to join JS session

By Asiuzzaman

The ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) would not like to insist on the major opposition parties joining the coming session of Parliament beginning on May 4, party sources said.

"We have offered to have a dialogue with the Awami League which has apparently ignored the move," BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder told The Daily Star.

"Now we have a feeling they are determined to continue their boycott of the coming session until the budget session scheduled for June," he said.

He, however, said some smaller parties might attend the session which has been called to meet the constitutional obligation.

Salam Talukder said, although the opposition parties had so far failed to reach an agreement on the continued boycott, the two major parties were still trying to reach a consensus. See Page 12 Col 4

Sher-e-Bangla's anniversary of death observed

The 32nd death anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla A K Fazul Haque was observed yesterday with a call for all to uphold the ideals of the great leader for establishing an exploitation-free society for which he fought throughout his life, reports UNB.

Different socio-cultural organisations arranged elaborate programmes in the capital to mark the day, including placing wreaths and milad mahfil at the Mazar premises of the Sher-e-Bangla. See Page 12 Col 2

Govt firm to hold SSC exams despite teachers' strike

By Staff Correspondent

Time yesterday as the teachers refused to attend the meeting without formal invitation to the Liaison Committee.

Although the teachers were on strike for the tenth consecutive day yesterday, admit cards were distributed among the SSC examinees under special arrangement.

Coordinator of the Liaison Committee Kazi Faruq Ahmed, talking to The Daily Star yesterday, said the Committee would announce a more vigorous action programme on April 30 if no progress was made by that time to break the impasse.

He said the teachers are ready for a dialogue with the government to end the strike. But the government did not even recognise the liaison committee, which is represented by the leaders of six teachers' organisations.

He termed the observations. See Page 12 Col 6

Hata may take oath today

TOKYO, Apr 27: Japan's powerful bureaucracy stepped in to fill the political void today by announcing that newly-elected Prime Minister Tsutomu Hata would be sworn in by Emperor Akihito Thursday without a cabinet, reports AFP.

The announcement by Nobuo Ishihara, deputy chief Cabinet Secretary, followed the failure of coalition party leaders to reach agreement on a new cabinet for the third day in a row following Hata's election by Parliament on Monday.

Despite the Lower House's endorsement of Hata as coalition candidate, the Prime Minister-designate cannot assume his official duties until he is appointed by the Emperor.

Tofael refutes BNP charges against AL

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League (AL) leader Tofael Ahmed, MP, last night protested Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's criticisms made against the AL during her visit to Bhola Tuesday.

Referring to the Prime Minister's allegation that the AL was interested in strikes rather than in development activities, Tofael, in a statement issued to the press, said this was nothing but a travesty of the truth.

The AL leader said that during more than eleven hundred days of BNP rule, his party had not even called eleven hartals. "Only two dawn-to-dusk hartals were observed by the AL after the BNP came to power in 1991," the statement said.

Tofael said the government of Khaleda Zia was accusing the Opposition of observing "frequent strikes" to cover up "the corrupt practices of the ruling party." See Page 12 Col 1

UNHCR to extend more facilities

COX'S BAZAR, Apr 27: Repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar may resume soon as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees decides to extend more facilities to the returnees, official sources said here today, reports BSS.

There are now 196653 Rohingya refugees in 20 camps in Cox's Bazar and Naikongchhari and the repatriation was slowed down in recent time on the ground of reported unwillingness of the Rohingyas to go back to their homes in Arakan, Myanmar.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh National Board of Revenue
 Dhaka.

Quick Clearance of Imported Goods

Government is pleased to announce that importers who will undertake pre-shipment inspection of their cargoes by engaging any Pre-shipment Inspection Agency (PSIA) listed in the Speedy Clearance of Imported Goods Order 1992, issued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR), will be entitled to the following facilities:

- Information certified by the listed PSIA on the classification, quantity and quality of goods will be accepted for customs assessment purposes;
- In case where there is no prescribed tariff value for imported goods, duties and taxes will be assessed on the basis of declared values certified by the listed PSIA;
- Speedy clearance of goods inspected by the listed PSIA will be ensured.

2. The NBR has listed twenty-nine companies for pre-shipment inspection of imported goods. The names and addresses of these companies are available with the NBR and all customs stations. For additional information, the undermentioned official may be contacted in writing or over telephone.

Dr Md Zahid Hossain
 First Secretary (Customs)
 National Board of Revenue, Dhaka
 Phone: 402573

Income tax VIP cards for 4 cos, one individual

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called for further streamlining the tax administration for increased mobilisation of domestic resources for development, reports BSS.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a function at the National Economic Council (NEC) Bhaban at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city in connection with the distribution of income tax VIP cards to those who had contributed to the national exchequer outstandingly.

Four companies — Lever Brothers (Bangladesh) Limited, ANZ Grindlays Bank, American Express Bank Limited and Islami Bank (Bangladesh) Ltd — who had contributed more than Taka 5 crore each in the financial year 1992-93 and one individual, Sahadat Hossain of Rangpur who paid over Taka 10 lakh as income tax to the national exchequer were chosen for distribution of tax VIP cards.

The Finance Minister distributed the cards.

Rahman said the provision of according VIP cards to the outstanding income tax contributors was initiated by the present government since. See Page 12 Col 7

Ctg police seal godown of jt venture fishing co

CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: Police here today sealed a godown of Sea Resources Limited, the country's largest joint venture in deep sea fishing, for keeping illegal equipment worth crores of taka, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip-off police Tuesday night recovered three powerful VHF (Very High Frequency) sets and one SSB (Signal Sign Band) set from the residence of Thal National Chairman Pean Peaktr, a shareholder of the joint venture company. See Page 12 Col 7

Shantibahini agrees to May 5 talks

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 27: The leaders of the outlawed Shantibahini have agreed to attend the seventh round of peace talks on May 5 with the Special Parliamentary committee headed by the Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, official sources said.

The talks will be held at the Khagrachhari Circuit House.

Earlier, the government sent a proposal in this respect to the leaders of the tribal rebels through the Liaison Committee convenor Hongshadoz Chakma.

The sixth round of talks was held on November 22 last year. The negotiations are aimed at finding a political solution to the long-standing CHT issue.

Meanwhile, the ceasefire between the armed tribal rebels and government forces has been extended until May 15 to facilitate continued dialogue between the two sides.

Meanwhile, BSS from Khagrachhari adds: President of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Jumma Refugee Welfare Association Upendralal Chakma today said the constructive steps taken by the Bangladesh government for the rehabilitation of the tribal re-

turnees would inspire the other refugees, now in transit camps in the Tripura State of India, to return home.

Chakma made the observation after visiting some resettlement areas of tribal returnees here, according to an official handout.

The visiting 14-member delegation of tribal refugees headed by Upendra Chakma also included three government officials of Tripura State.

Chakma, who arrived here on April 25 from Tripura, openly exchanged views with the returnees during the visits. See Page 12 Col 3

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