Palestinian cops ready

All set for self-rule accord tomorrow

CAIRO May 2: Israeli and PLO delegates predicted today they would finish an agree ment on Palestinian self-rule in parts of the occupied lands in time for Wednesday's signing, reports AP.

PLO officials will go into the Gaza Strip and Jericho on Tuesday to arrange deployment of Palestinian police, according to Nabil Shaath, the PLO's top negotiator.

"Everything is geared up at top speed toward the implementation of this agreement immediately after the signing on Wednesday," he said.

The comments were meant to ease Israeli concern over whether the Palestinians were prepared to take over when Israeli troops end almost 27 years of occupation and withdraw from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Negotiators say it will take more than 100 pages to outline plans for Israel's pullout and the takeover of day-to-day affairs by a Palestinian author-

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are expected to decide two questions size of Jericho and whether Palestinians will guard the bridge from Jordan to the West Bank - before they sign the agreement Wednesday.

Warren Christopher and Russtan Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev are expected to speak at the signing ceremony.

on Tuesday, and some may

has been named to govern the self-rule zones.

Reuter says, Israel, the PLO, Norway, Denmark and Italy formally signed an agreement today to deploy a 160-member international group of unarmed observers in the West Bank town Hebron.

The Danish Foreign Ministry, which hosted the ceremony, said the 90 Norwegian, 35 Danish and 35 Italian observers will travel to Israel on Thursday and proceed to

Cyclone preparedness

approaching storm.

people.

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief yesterday sanctioned 600 metric tons of rice - 20 metric tons each for the 30 thanas of 10 coastal districts as gratuitous relief. The sanction was given to meet the immediate needs if those thanas were affected in the cyclone. Earlier, the government sanctioned Tk 50,000 and 23 metric tons of wheat for each of those ten districts on April 27 to meet

US Secretary of State

Shaath, the Palestinian negotiator, said those coordinating the police deployment would go to Gaza and Jericho

have already entered Gaza. The PLO on Sunday said a 25-member national council

From Page 1 Col 3

Since Monday morning state radio and television broadcast non-stop weather bulletins every 15 minutes about the latest position of the The BDRCS, at an emer-

gency meeting yesterday, discussed the details of preparedness and directed its volunteers to take necessary steps for the safety of the

any disaster situation.

Different government organisations including the Power Development Board (PDB) and the T&T also took various emergency measures in the areas under threat The PDB has formed task

forces to keep round-the-clock vigil to face any accident or emergency.

*. The control rooms of both the PDB and T&T would remain open until the situation become normal.

The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources also opened a central control room at the Secretariat to monitor the supply situation of power, gas and petroleum products in the cyclone-affected areas.

All units of the Fire Service Department under Chittagong and Khulna divisions have been kept stand-by.

Officials of the Prime Minister's Secretariat late Monday night held a meeting with representatives from 40 NGOs who assured full cooperation in disaster manage-

BSS adds: A task force has been set up at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to monitor the cyclonic storm and related matters, a press communique of the ministry said yesterday.

The task force will function under the guidance of the Foreign . Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman.

Inadequate shelters

From Page 1 Col 4 can possibly accommodate only

28,403

The shelters in Bhola Sadar thana can house 14,762 people while the total population of the area is 3,51,674, according to Disaster Management Bureau statistics

There are 132 two-storeved coastal community centres which were constructed during the 1960s. A good number of these buildings became dilapidated due to lack of main-

Two hundred and thirtyeight three -storey PWD-type cyclone shelters were constructed during the 1970s, out of which 12 have been washed away, according to a recent report by the Multipurpose Cyclone Shelter Programme of the government.

The Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) constructed 62 shelters during the 80s. Some NGOs built 24 centres and another 37

school-cum-cyclone shelters. Currently, the BDRCS and the NGOs are constructing 40 more shelters and the construction of another 58 are under study, the report said.

At a recent public meeting, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said her government had constructed nearly 800 multipurpose cyclone shelters in the coastal areas since the devas-

tating storm of April 29, 1991 In addition to these shelters, essentially designed to protect people and their domestic animals from the high tidal surges which wreak the most havoc during cyclones, a Coastal Embankment Project covering an area of about 14,100 square kilometers was taken up way back in 1961. An 830-kilometer portion of the proposed 4800-km long embankment was seriously dam-

aged during the 1991 cyclone. According to reports, a good part of the embankment

has still not been repaired. A massive afforestation programme taken up by the government since the '91 storm to create a green belt along a 100-kilometer stretch of the coastline is yet to be completed.

However, the overall situation in terms of human resources available for disaster management is not that dismal

as it may appear. The BDRCS is well organised in 257 unions of 30 coastal thanas; its officials and volunteers are equipped with radio communication facilities with the Society's headquarters in Dhaka.

The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) of the BDRCS operates with its 27,070 grass-roots level volunteers who mobilise the people for prompt evacuation during

emergencies. As soon as a depression is formed in the Bay, special weather bulletins containing cyclone warning signals are transmitted to the volunteers who advise and help people to evacuate from their residences to the safety of the cyclone

The small and big NGOs, having programmes in the coastal areas, also join the CPP volunteers in the evacuation.

The government machinery, particularly the Relief Ministry — recently renamed Ministry for Disester Management — and the armed forces have also devised their own strategies for disaster management.

"We are now better prepared in disaster management and have developed a greater level of efficiency," said M Saidur Rahman of Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness Centre recently at a meeting in the

capital. A seminar on disaster management in Dhaka Thursday observed that the voluntary development organisations of the country have earned good credibility in the management of natural disasters.

The seminar on "Are you prepared for the cyclone next time?" suggested that simplified cyclone warning messages, preferably in local dialects, should be broadcast so that the people living in the coastal region could take timely flight to safety.

Organised by the Disaster Forum, a network of 33 NGOs and agencies involved in disaster management programmes, the seminar also suggested cyclone-tolerant housing instead of only shelters for temporary

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Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina speaking at the extended meeting of her party's central working committee at the Institution of Engineers in the city yesterday. - Star photo

Monitoring a cyclone

Star Report

"Charlie Four, Charlie Four Control. Give your situation report," crackled the high frequency radio at the Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP) in Dhaka last night.

"Control, Charlie Four, Wind gaining speed, water rising and trees being uprooted," the muffled voice of the CPP volunteer in Teknaf drowned in the cacophony of radio waves as the cyclone struck Cox's Bazar district packing hurricane force winds.

Tango-Six, the volunteer from Teknaf, reported that darkness had descended at 4:30 pm all over and wind was battering the area with speeds between 200 and 220 kilome ters per our.

The CPP volunteers, under the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, were giving a veritable running commentary, often punctuated by pauses due to radio interference.

The mood of the CPP's headquarters at Bara Maghbazar, during the first few ours of the storm was tense, as reports started pouring in from the 15-odd stations having VHF radio communication facilities, stretching from Teknaf in Cox's Bazar to

A volunteer from Kutubdia reported that the cyclone with winds of 100 to 150 kmph was ravaging the island off the Cox's Bazar coast.

The Teknaf CPP-man said that the severe gales had blown off the windowpanes of the station

The volunteers informed that those who had arrived at the cyclone shelters were safe. but they feared for those who had failed to make it to the safer places in time.

From Page 1 Col 5

noon. But Cox's Bazar itself

could be reached from the

capital over telephone even

The Space Research and

Remote Sensing Organisation

(SPARRSO) office in the capital

said the wind speed reached

as high as 210 kms per hour in

gust and might have been even

Bangladesh reported that the

wind speed had reached as

much as 250 kph in gusts over

Teknaf along the border with

Myanmar which would make it

one of the severest cyclones

age can only be known today

as largescale rescue opera-

tions are mounted by the gov-

The full extent of the dam-

Radio

late last night.

higher at places.

The official

Hasina rejects PM's call

The Baily Star

From Page 1 Col 7 dinances by the head of the state. Preferring ordinances to moving fresh bills under the rules of procedure of the JS essentially amounted to sidetracking Parliament by the government, Hasina added.

She also observed that the treasury bench often rejected the Opposition-sponsored bills and resolutions by the sheer force of its majority in the

Claiming that the BNP is not committed to parliamentary democracy. Hasina observed that the party had only accepted the system for fear of losing power in 1991.

Apart from this, the Prime Minister's boycott' Parliament proceedings on a regular basis had made Parliament ineffective. Hasina said and added that the Opposition had made all possible effort to make the JS meaningful.

Turning to her demand for holding the next general elections under a caretaker government. Hasina said that the Prime Minister's recent interview with the state-run news agency rather strengthened the AL position on the issue. "When the Prime Minister proposes measures for ensuring free and fair polling, she eventually admits that the present system of conducting the elections is not leak proof,"" Hasina argued.

Rebutting the Prime Minister's contention that a nominated interim government cannot be an alternative to an elected one. Sheikh Hasina said, the Opposition did not propose the interim administration as an alternative to the elected government.

"The caretaker government will be constituted on a temporary basis only to conduct the general elections in a free and fair atmosphere so that the people could exercise

Tidal surges that accompa-

dal surges could not be im-

absence of a full moon, much

more serious damage may have

been averted, according to

hitting a part of the country.

there was a general sense of

relief at the fact that other

parts were spared the brunt of

post-cyclone disaster man-

agement and relief efforts was

held late last night at the

An emergency meeting on

However, despite the storm

Due to a low tide and the

mediately ascertained.

storm experts.

the storm.

crack of dawn.

their franchise independently," Hasina explained.

Hasina also questioned whether the Khaleda Zia government had got a mandate to rule the nation at will. While explaining the 'free-style rule' of the government, the Leader of the Opposition referred to alleged killing of people - by ruling party activists - for voting in favour of the Opposition candidate during the mayoral

Refuting suggestions that the Opposition should look for methods other than hartals for pressing home various demands, Hasina said alternative programmes include armed struggle, coups or civil war.

"Committed to constitutional politics, the Awami League did not believe in extremism." Hasina said and added that her party was left with no option but to resort to hartals to protest against the government's undemocratic at

The AL chief was also critical of the Chief Election Commissioner Justice Abdur Rauf for declaring the official results of 'rigged' Magura-2 JS by-election without hearing the complaints filed by her

Meanwhile, UNB adds: An eight-member committee of the Awami League comprising members of its central working committee has almost finalised the modality of the proposed caretaker government to hold future parliamen-

tary elections. Awami League joint secretary Abdul Jalil told the agency that the committee was now exchanging views with the country's renowned constitutional experts on the outline of the caretaker government.

Party chief and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina is expected to announce the modality at a public meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue on May 4.

Cyclone hits Cox's Bazar coast with D R Kamal Siddiqui. Secretary to the Prime

nied the gales washed away Minister, in the chair. dykes and embankments and The meeting was attended levelled trees and crops in by representatives of various most of the affected regions. NGOs. However, the height of the ti-

It was decided at the meeting that a round-theclock cell would be opened at the NGO Affairs Bureau to coordinate relief efforts. An official of the storm

warning centre at the Met Office, Dhaka told The Daily Star that a cyclone of this nature was not unnatural at this time of the year.

"Since the cyclone has hit the high Cox's Bazar-Teknaf region, the damage would be relatively lower. It could have been far worse had it hit the low-lying coastal areas of greater Noakhali and Barisal division."

ernment and the NGOs at the Prime Minister's Secretariat 449 expelled on first day of exams

From Page 1 Col 5 For the first time this year, the

SSC exams are being conducted under a computerised

As the non-government secondary school teachers were on strike, the authorities had deployed the teachers of government primary schools and colleges and the education department officials to assist the secondary government school teachers in conducting the SSC examinations.

The alternative arrangements at places had caused troubles to the primary school teachers and the government officials who were given a brief training on the new system of

Besides, the number of teachers, acting as invigilators, were also inadequate at many exam centres, mainly outside the capital, according to reports received at the Star of-The Controller of

Examinations of Dhaka Board told The Daily Star last night that the strike by a section of the non-government teachers did not at all affect the smooth. holding of the exams under the board. Following the adoption of

adequate measures, "The sit-

uation was even better than

normal," he commented.

Replying to a question, he said the alternative arrangements taken due to the private teachers' strike did not also hamper peace and normalcy until vesterday. No untoward occurrence or casualty was reported from anywhere, he added.

This correspondent visited some city exam centres and found adequate number of police and ansars deployed to prevent any intrusion of outsiders. Exams at those centres also began at 10:00 am.

Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, accompanied by the secretary Irshadul Haq, the Dhaka Education Board Chairman Prof Latifur Rahman and the DC of Dhaka Abu Solaiman Choudhury, visited different centres in the capital and expressed satisfaction over participation of the teachers in conducting the exams peacefully. State Minister for Education Eunus Khan also visited some other centres.

Our Comilla Correspondent said 136 students were expelled for adopting unfair means on the first day of the SSC examinations under the Comilla Board. The expulsions were reported from 11 out of 15 districts under the board. Teachers of 371 out of 385

high schools under the Comilla

Board were boycotting the ex-

ams causing troubles to the

primary school teachers and government officials, who were substituted for the striking teachers, in holding the examinations under a new method.

Sources said answer scripts of a good number of students might be disqualified due to faulty filling of computerised forms which the makeshift invigilators were supposed to supervise. Due to lack of knowledge about computerised forms, these invigilators reportedly failed to properly examine the answer scripts. sources added. Our Rajshahi Correspondent

reported the SSC exams on the first day were held peacefully. Two hundred and eleven students were expelled in 13 of 16 districts under the board. UNB adds: About a dozen people were injured in a clash

with police near an SSC examination centre in Lalmonirhat yesterday. Officials said the clash ensued just before the end of the examination when a group of youngsters wanted to enter the

lathicharge. Three of the injured including a cop. Abdur Rahim, and two student activists Abu Sayeed and Jahangir Alam, were taken to hospital.

Model School Centre in the

town. Police resorted to

Azad, Tofael's statements incorrect: Salam Talukder

BNP Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder yesterday took exception to certain remarks of the Awami League leaders Abdus Samad Azad and Tofael Ahmed which appeared in the Sunday's issue of the Dainik Inquilab, reports

In a press statement. Barrister Talukder said veteran politician and parliamentarian like Azad should know very well that no democratic country is governed by the likes and dislikes of a particular individual Barrister Talukder de

scribed as incorrect the statements of Abdus Samad Azad and Tofael Ahmed that he (Salam Talukder) held no discussions with the opposition parties in connection with their participation in the Parliament session. He said he had held discussions with some concerned and important leaders of the opposition parties either over phone or personally. "Because our sincerity is beyond question for keeping the Jatiya Sangsad effective. I proposed to them to sit in the discussion," he added.

Barrister Talukder said be fore criticising any person by name the opposition leaders would do well if they held consultations with the colleagues of the person before

250 houses gutted in Khulna

KHULNA, May 2: About 250 houses including 205 thatched quarters, 25 semi-pueca quar ters and 20 pueca buildings at the Sonali Jute Mills workers colony were completely gutted in a devastating fire which broke out around 11:30 am today, reports BSS.

Damages were estimated at about one crore taka

Fire services from Khulna. Khalishpur and Daulatpur rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control in about one and a half hours fight About 1200 people were af-

Indian national arrested from Burimari

LALMONIRHAT, May 2: An Indian national suspected to have engaged in spying was arrested from Burimari today, reports UNB.

Police said Monoj Shaha aged about 30 intruded into Burimari and was moving suspiciously. Shaha said he hailed from Daishi village in Shiliguri.

India had last week massed additional troops along the Burimari border and its airforce fighter planes violated Bangladesh airspace causing tension in the border areas. They had been illegally opposing a loop cutting in Dharala river by the Bangladesh Water Development Board.

Shaha was taken into custody from near the Burimari customs office. After producing to the court, he was taken to police remand for three days for interrogation.

Mandela From Page 1 Col 7

Inkatha Freedom Party was distant third at 6.2 per cent, followed by the white, proapartheid Freedom Front at 2.9 per cent.

Mandela was expected to make a victory statement later today formalising what has been expected for months. since the ANC and government set the dates for the country's first multiracial elec-

The ANC was certain to win a majority in the new 400-seat Parliament, based on Mandela's overwhelming popularity among the black major-

The new Parliament is to elect a president Friday; setting the stage for Mandela to replace de Klerk as head of state. De Klerk is expected to be vice president and made clear he expected to maintain a powerful presence in government.

"During the past four years we have proved that we can work together," de Klerk said, referring to the relationship he has nurtured with Mandela since freeing him from prison in February 1990. "Despite our differences, our relationship has become a symbol of the ability of South Africans from widely different backgrounds to cooperate in the national interest. This spirit will be essential to the success of the government of national unity." About 300 people, many of

speech that marked the end of a remarkable term. Voting was held last Tuesday-Friday, and final results were expected sometime

tomorrow.

them weeping, watched the

JOHANNESBURG, May 2: African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela claimed victory Monday in South Africa's national election. "This is indeed a joyous night," he said, eight days before he was due to be inaugurated as the country's first black president. Two and a half hours after President F W de Klerk conceded defeat, Mandela stood before an ecstatic crowd in a ballroom draped in ANC colours to accept the reward of a life spent fighting apartheid, reports AP.

Israeli chief negotiator leaves Cairo

CAIRO, May 2: Israeli chief negotiator General Amnon Shahak left Cairo today for Israel, but the rest of the delegation remained in the Egyptian capital for final talks with the PLO ahead of the launch of Palestinian self rule. An Arab diplomat close to the negotiations said Shahak would return to Cairo Tuesday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who is due to sign an overall agreement with PLO leader Yasser Arafat Wednesday to launch self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho, reports AFP.

Calcutta chamber keen to invest in Bangladesh

The visiting 14-member trade delegation of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BNCCI) of West Bengal (India) held a meeting with Industries Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan in the conference room of the Ministry of Industries vesterday, reports BSS.

President of the BNCCI Samir Kumar Ghosh led the delegation.

During the meeting, the Industries' Minister stressed the need for exchanging views among the SAARC business community and discussed the possibilities of setting up of a pulp industry involving SAARC members.

The meeting took decision

to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Industries and the BNCCI and form a working group with representatives from both the sides to accelerate the joint venture and commercial transactions.

The delegation showed keen interest to invest in the fertiliser, ceramic industry, rubber plantation, jwellery industry and software sector.

Samir Kumar Ghosh urged the Bangladesh government to set up a stall on different industrial products in the "Industrial India trade fair." this year and informed him that there will be no cost involvement of the Bangladesh government in this regard.

·UNB adds: Samir Ghosh yesterday sought the cooperation of Bangladeshi business community for promotion of

Nirmul to observe Jahanara Imam's birthday

By Staff Correspondent

Nirmul Jatiya Samannaya Committee will celebrate the 68th birthday of its convener Jahanara Imam today (Sunday).

An extended meeting of the central body of the Jatiya Samannaya Committee yesterday decided to hold a milad mahfil after the Magreb prayers today at the Taher Auditorium for her early re-

covery from illness. Greetings will also be sent to her in the USA where she is undergoing medical treatment.

The meeting presided over by Kazi Aref Ahmed was addressed, among others, by Syed Hasan Iman, Prof Abdu Mannan Chowdhury, Sahriyar Kabir, Mirza Sultan Raza, Sawkat Ali MP, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya and Abdul

Matin Chowdhury. CNN confce begins

ATLANTA (Georgia), May 2: A two-member official team headed by Minister for Information Barrister Nazmul Huda arrived here on Saturday to attend the five-day "5th CNN World Report Contributors Conference" which began

yesterday, reports BSS. The other member of the team is Gaziul Hasan Khan, Press Minister of Bangladesh embassy in Washington DC.

Barrister Huda has been invited by the CNN headquarters to attend the world conference and particularly to particularly in a live panel discussion of "Telecommunications in Asia" scheduled for May 4 at 2 pm.

Arrangement has been made for Bangladesh Television (BTV) to take part in CNN's various programmes and benefit from its vast experience in the field of electronic journalism and modern mass communication.

World Press Freedom Day today

World Press Freedom Day will be observed today worldwide for the first time to promote a growing movement for an independent and pluralistic press, reports UNB.

In a message on the occasion of the Day, declared by the General Assembly on December 20 in 1993, United Nations Secretary-General **Boutros Ghali said World Press** Freedom Day concerns every-

Ghosh was speaking at a meeting with the executives of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) at the DCCI auditorium.

cludes DS Bose, H. Chakravarty. BN Bhattacharjee, Indranil Biswas, S R Shaha, S K Roy and S N Nundy. DCC1 President A Rob

The 14-member team in-

Chowdhury and leaders M H Rahman, Md. Yunus, Alhaj M A Salam and Syed Toufig Ali spoke on behalf of the Dhaka Chamber. The Calcutta chamber eader said time is now very

favourable for further streng-

thening the Indo-Bangla trade

relation and industrial cooperation The BNCCI team leader said, there is a great prospect of joint venture in industries including jute and tea and stressed the need for frequent interaction between the businessmen of the two countries to increase access to each

other's market. Rob Chowdhury pointed out that the Bangladeshi importers of Indian machineries in the past had experienced certain

difficulties In order to reduce the existing huge trade imbalance between Bangladesh and India, the DCCI president requested the members of the Indian business community to import

more items from Bangladesh. Students flee from Sylhet Cadet College

By Staff Correspondent Forty students of the Sylhet Cadet College escaped en masse protesting what they described as "physical and

mental torture" and humilia-Sylhet Cadet College sources said that the students of Class XII escaped from the campus in the early hours of

Sunday and arrived in Dhaka Monday evening. They charged the principal of the college with harassing and humiliating senior stu-

dents in front of their juniors. May Day

From Page 1 Col 8 discussion at the Pioneer auditorium in the evening. The Institution of Engineers also

held a discussion. The World Astrological Society (WAS) held a discussion at the Hawlader chamber at Gausia Market in the after-

The Rishij Shilpi Goshti

held a mass workers' rally in

front of the Press Club. It was followed by a session of patriotic songs. The Bangladesh Federation of Public Workers and Employees Union and the Mahila Samity held a joint meeting

this afternoon in observance of the day. The Bangladesh Garments Sramik Workers and Employees Federation, the Garments Sramik Kalyan Samity, Kranti Shilpi Goshti, Bangladesh Trade Union Sangstha, Voluntary Assistance for the Needy. Arannyak Natya Dal, the Nationalist Democratic Alliance and the Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSD) Women's Committee held separate pro-

grammes on the day. Cabinet From Page 1 Col 5

Force had taken allout preparations to combat the impending disaster. Steps have already been

taken to protect the state

property from the cyclonic The acting chief of the Bangladesh Meteorological Department Mir Fakrul Quayum

apprised the meeting of the latest position of the cyclonic storm along with relevant information about it. Besides the cabinet members, the chiefs of Naval Staff and Air Staff, Chairman of the

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society. Cabinet Secretary, secretaries concerned, Chief of General Staff, Principal Staff Officer to the Prime Minister and officials concerned of the Meteorological Department and the SPARSO were present.

The Midnight File Mandela claims victory