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## NEWS BRIEFS

Salary for May on May 19

The government has decided to pay the salary for the month of May on May 19 to all non-gazetted employees of government, semi-government and autonomous bodies, according to an official handout yesterday.

The decision was taken as there is a possibility of observing the holy Eid-ul-Azha on May 22 (subject to sighting of the moon) this year as per the government calendar, reports BSS.

Two Thai ships arrive today

From Staff Correspondent CHITTAGONG, May 9: Two Thai ships will arrive here tomorrow to take back the Thai nationals who were rescued in the Teknaf coast after the May 2 cyclone.

The ships — a patrol ship and a frigate — are scheduled to anchor at jetty No. 1.

Shibir calls hartal in Ctg today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 9: The Islami Chhatra Shibir here has given a call for a half-day hartal in Chittagong tomorrow in protest against the recent killing of its activist, S M Kawser.

5 dacoits held, arms recovered

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 9: Raozan police arrested five alleged dacoits in separate raids last night and recovered from their possession arms, ammunition and other goods.

The arrested are Idris Meah, Ful Meah, Abdus Sattar, Mohammad Touhid and Altaf Meah.

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46 years of apartheid end: Mandela takes oath today

## Triumph of human values



South African President-elect Nelson Mandela pledges the oath of allegiance in Parliament in Cape Town yesterday.

— AFP photo

CAPE TOWN, May 9: Nelson Mandela was today elected the first black president of South Africa after more than 300 years of white domination and 46 years of apartheid rule, reported AFP, AP.

In a day that completed the country's remarkable transition to democracy, the nation's first multiracial parliament took its seats in the stately headquarters of a bygone era and named Mandela to the presidency unopposed.

"Today we are entering a new era for our country," Mandela told tens of thousands of cheering supporters from the balcony of Cape Town's City Hall moments later.

With the majestic Table Mountain in the background, Mandela addressed the country from the same balcony as on Feb 11, 1990, the day he was released from 27 years in prison.

"The people of South Africa have spoken in these elections," he said. "They want change — and change is what they will get."

The former political prisoner was the only nominee to succeed F W de Klerk, with whom he shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the end of apartheid. Mandela will be inaugurated tomorrow in a massive celebration in the capital of Pretoria.

"I accordingly declare Nelson Rholihlala Mandela duly elected as the president of the

Republic of South Africa," announced Chief Justice Michael Corbett. With that, the members of the new 400-seat National Assembly dominated by Mandela's African National Congress leaped to their feet, applauding and shouting with joy.

Immediately afterward, Mandela stood on the parliament steps with de Klerk and ANC national chairman Thabo Mbeki, his two deputy presidents, to hear the nation's two national anthems. He held his right hand over his heart for both the one used by the white government and the newly added ANC anthem.

From among the onlookers came choruses of "We have overcome." Military members gave Mandela his first salute as head of state.

Earlier, Mandela and de Klerk strode in together on a red carpet to a standing ovation from the gathered lawmakers, many of them former exiles and prisoners in the ANC struggle against apartheid.

Mandela sat in de Klerk's old seat, while the outgoing president sat on the opposition benches for the first time in his 22 years in parliament.

In a show of reconciliation, Mandela gestured to his chief rival, Zulu nationalist leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, and the two men embraced and shook hands in front of the Speaker's podium.

Tight security enveloped central Cape Town in prepara-

Mandela used his first address as president-elect to recount the country's often tortured history.

"It was here at this Cape, over three centuries ago, that there began the fateful convergence of the peoples of Africa, Europe and Asia on these shores," he said. "Perhaps it was history that ordained it to be here, at the Cape of Good Hope that we should lay the foundation stone of our new nation."

De Klerk said today his National Party will hold six Cabinet posts. Mandela's African National Congress will have 18 of the 27 seats, and the Inkatha Freedom Party, headed by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, is expected to receive the three remaining posts.

The ANC won more than 62 per cent of the vote in April's national elections, giving it 252 seats in the parliament.

De Klerk's National Party, which had ruled since 1948 and implemented apartheid's laws, won 82 seats, followed by Inkatha with 43.

Mandela and other top ANC officials, including his estranged wife Winnie, were the first members sworn into the new National Assembly.

The assembly chose Frene Ginwala, a women's rights activist and head of the ANC's research department, as the new Parliament Speaker.

Tight security enveloped central Cape Town in prepara-

tion for Mandela's speech in the Grand Parade in front of City Hall.

Meanwhile, world leaders from five continents began pouring into Jan Smuts airport in Johannesburg today for tomorrow's inauguration of Mandela.

One of the first to touch down, soon after dawn, was Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

"This is a wonderful moment," she told journalists, "not just for South Africa, but for the whole world".

Bhutto was followed soon afterwards by presidents Mario Soares of Portugal, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland, Mary Robinson of Ireland and Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Representatives from Italy, Malta, Syria, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Korea, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Austria, Bangladesh, Japan, El Salvador, Tanzania, Guatemala, Lebanon, the Ukraine and the European Union also arrived in quick succession.

More than 150,000 members of the public and scores of foreign dignitaries are expected at the inauguration. US Vice President Al Gore, US first lady Hillary Clinton, Britain's Prince Philip and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, and Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasser Arafat, are also expected to join the ceremony.

Hasina seeks int'l help for cyclone victims

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina has drawn world attention to the plight of the victims of last week's cyclone which wrought havoc in coastal areas of Bangladesh and sought urgent international help for them, reports UNB.

The Awami League president made the appeal while taking part on deliberations on the draft resolution of a two-day meeting of the Council of Socialist International in Tokyo yesterday, according to a message received in Dhaka from the Japanese capital.

The council meeting begins in Tokyo today.

Hasina referred to the dev-

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Cyclone damages 16580 acres of shrimp bed

By Staff Correspondent

The cyclone on May 2 that mauled the entire coastline south of Cox's Bazar town to Teknaf destroyed shrimp culture on more than 16,000 acres of land, according to the leaders of Cox's Bazar District Shrimp Farmers Group.

The cyclone had damaged shrimp beds on 16,580 acres in seven thanas of the district causing a loss of about Taka 104.20 crore, said Abdullah Khan, Secretary of the Farmers Group.

A government estimate of the damage to shrimp farming, however, put the figure at

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Prokrichi urges donors to press for reforms

By Staff Correspondent

Doctors, engineers, agriculturists and non-administrative BCS cadre members abstained from their duties yesterday to press home their demand for administrative reforms.

However, officials working in the cyclone-affected areas in Cox's Bazar district remained out of the purview of the work stoppage programme called by the Prokrichi-BCS Central Action Council.

At a rally at the Engineering Institution auditorium at 11 am, Prokrichi leaders called upon the donor countries and agencies to take a strong position on the administrative re-

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## JS probe body fails to fix terms of ref: Final report

By Staff Correspondent

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali yesterday presented in the Jatiya Sangsad (JS) the final report of the special parliamentary committee formed to probe into the alleged corruption in the Irrigation Ministry and by the minister concerned.

According to the report, the 15-member committee, comprising seven members each from the treasury and the opposition benches and headed by the Speaker, failed to reach an agreement on its terms of reference.

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The committee had met 15

times since its formation on July 13 last year and submitted a primary report on the issue during the last session of Parliament. The primary report also contained differing views on the terms of reference.

However, at the last meeting of the committee on March 2, its members unanimously decided to produce the proceedings of all the 15 meetings in the

According to the report, the probe body Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali placed the 323-page printed proceedings of all the 15 meetings in the

## Boycotting MPs also to get allowance

By Nurul Kabir

The opposition MPs, despite their boycott of the current session of Parliament, will get their usual daily allowance for attending it, Parliament Secretariat sources said.

The boycotting MPs, however, have to sign the attendance register usually kept on the tables at the lobby adjacent to the main Parliament chamber.

Twenty-five opposition MPs have so far signed the register. Ten of the 91 Awami League MPs, 12 of the 20 Jamaat members, two of the 35 Jatiya Party MPs and the lone Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) MP have

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## To offset bad debts of SOEs

## Tk 15b repaid to banks thru' resource transfer

By Inam Ahmed

The government has been retiring its debt to the banks during the past two years by transferring resources from the private sector to the banking sector.

This resource transfer is mainly aimed at offsetting the debts of the perennially loss-making state owned enterprises (SOE). But for this, the government had to pay a high price by paying between 12 and 18 per cent as interest to the public for borrowing their money through different savings instruments.

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## Teachers' liaison body coordinator granted bail

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM), Shaheeduddin Ahmed, yesterday granted bail to Kazi Faruk Ahmed, Coordinator of the Central Teachers' Action Liaison Committee.

A central leader of the striking non-government school and college teachers, Faruk surrendered to the CMM court and prayed for bail in a case filed against him in connection with the April 30 agitation.

A minibus driver, Mofizur Rahman filed the case with Kotwali police accusing Kazi Faruk Ahmed and Qamruzzaman of leading some 220 to 300 teachers who damaged his bus during the agitation. On

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## Half-day hartal in Gazipur today

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, May 9: The All Party Action Committee for protecting the Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory has called a half-day hartal here tomorrow protesting the reported move to close down the factory.

The committee has also decided to barricade the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway on May 15 from 11 am to 1 pm and gherao the local DCs office on May 17 to press home its demand for withdrawal of what it said government decision to bring the mill area under the proposed Export Processing Zone to be set up in the district.

The committee has demanded payment of all arrear wages and salaries of workers and employees of the factory.

It brought out a torch procession this evening in the area in support of its hartal programme.

Philips WorldCupUSA 94 Quiz Competition

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