

## The Daily Star

## PUBLIC DEBATE



Today, on Page 4, **Barister Rafiqul Islam Mia, Member, Standing Committee, BNP, and Minister for Housing and Works argues why there is no need for a caretaker government to hold the next general elections.**

## Inside Today

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UN hopeful of implementing new peace plan for Bosnia

India develops instant fire fighting system  
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Myanmar seeks closer trade link with Bangladesh

Two top US legislators for economic ban on DPRK  
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## Metropolitan

## Dhaka Day by Day



Developing Trading Tricks to Magical Perfection  
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# Diplomats see havoc wrought by Farakka

BHERAMARA (Kushia), May 16: Heads of several diplomatic missions based in Dhaka flew to Bheramara this morning to see the adverse effect on Bangladesh of the unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka by India, report agencies.

The diplomats visited the Ganges-Kobadak Irrigation Project, covering a command area of 3.5 lakh acres, and got an on-the-spot idea of how the withdrawal of water at Farakka Barrage had seriously affected the life patterns of the people and agriculture, forestry, livestock, industry, navigation and ecology.

"It's awful and unfortunate," observed a diplomat from an Asian country.

Briefing the diplomats who included a number of ambassadors, Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Maj Gen (retd) Majidul Huq said 15 pumps of the two pump houses in the Ganges-Kobadak Project with a total capacity of 5400 cusecs have been rendered inoperative due to decreased water flow.

The minister said one third of Bangladesh is now faced with desertification as a result of unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges water at Farakka.

The barrage over the Ganges, 11 miles upstream from the Bangladesh border, has been obstructing normal flow of the international river since its commissioning in

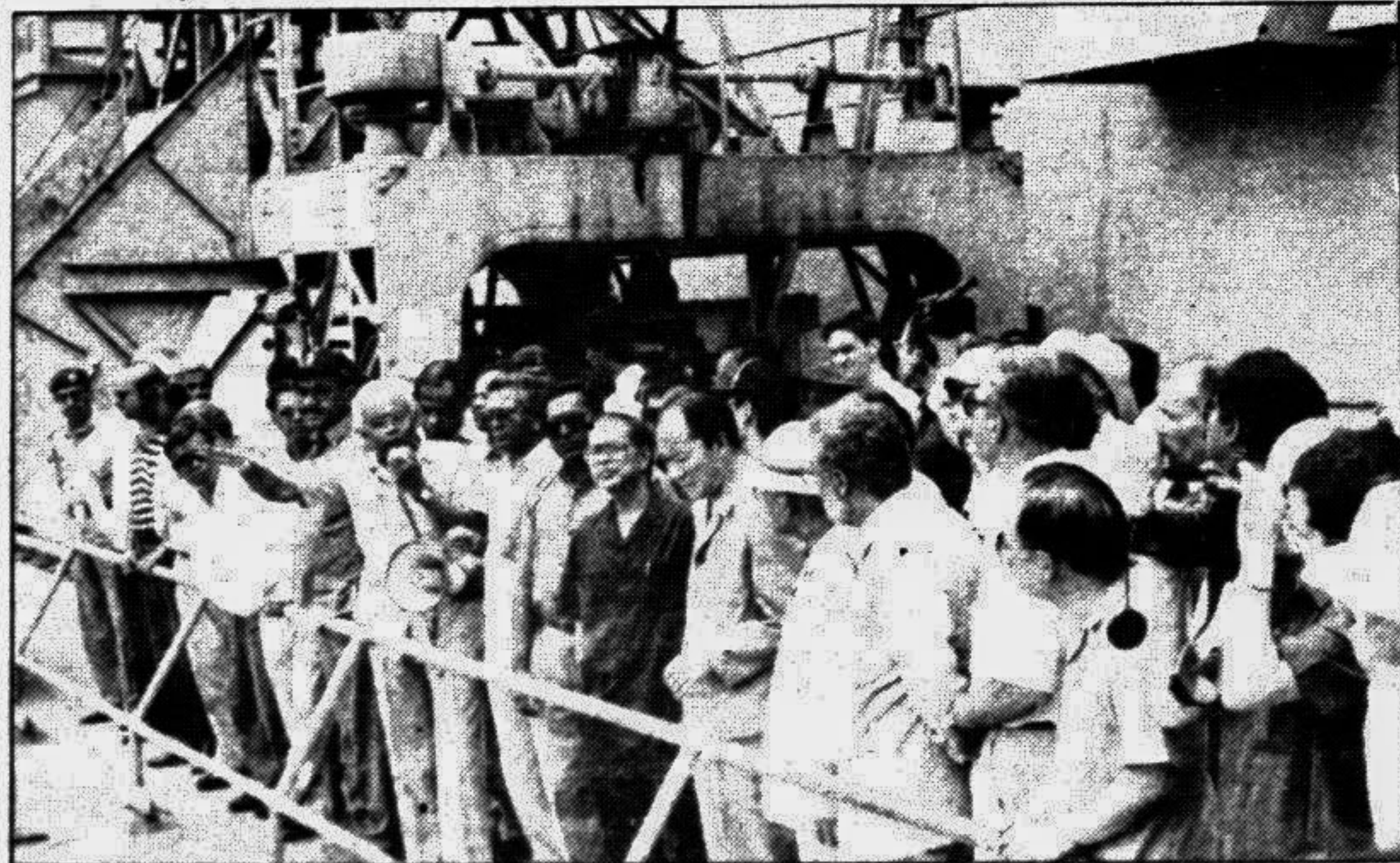
early 1974.

"You may get water but not without many sacrifices," whispered a diplomat from a European country, who preferred anonymity.

The lowest dry season flow of the Ganges at her entry into Bangladesh near Rajshahi was 73,500 cusecs in 1974. But it dropped to 9,200 cusecs last year. This year, the lowest flow recorded in late April was, however, a little higher — 9,500 cusecs — mainly due to some rainfall, said an official of the Water Development Board.

The flow of the Ganges at upstream during the lean period is estimated at 2 lakh cusecs, and almost all of it is withdrawn at various points

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Heads of different diplomatic missions and representatives of international organisations in Dhaka, accompanied by Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Minister M Majid Ul Huq, visited the G-K Project in Bheramara yesterday to see the impact of India's Farakka Barrage on the north-western region of Bangladesh. — PID photo

## Dhaka, Yangon for border trade from next month

Bangladesh and Myanmar yesterday agreed that the border trade accord, due to be signed tomorrow, would come into effect from June, 1994, reports BSS.

The decision came up at an official talks between the two countries at the state guest house Padma in the city.

Bangladesh Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam and the Minister for Trade of Myanmar Lt General Tun Kyi led the delegations in the discussion on behalf of their respective countries.

Commerce Minister M Shamsul Islam remarked that the border trade agreement would be beneficial to Bangladesh and Myanmar and provide an impetus to economic activity in the region.

Tun Kyi expressed the same views and stressed the need

for encouraging the private sector in order to strengthen the bilateral trade and economic relationship between the two countries.

The meeting also discussed elaborately on possibilities of setting up industries in joint collaboration in two friendly countries.

Myanmar side expressed their interest to use the sea port of Bangladesh as a part of bilateral economic cooperation.

The Commerce Secretary A H Mofazzal Karim, Home Secretary Azimuddin Ahmed, Shipping Secretary Waliul Islam and high officials concerned attended the meeting as members of Bangladesh delegation.

On the other hand, Director General of Trade Lt Colonel Kyaw Myint attended the meeting as a member of Myanmar delegation.

## Two held with 160 passports at ZIA

Police held two outgoing passengers with 160 passports at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) yesterday.

The two passengers — Farhad Hossain and Mizanur Rahman — were due to fly to Malaysia by a Bangladesh Biman flight in the morning. A source in the immigration wing said the two persons were held on suspicion while crossing the immigration check-point at the airport before departure around 8:30 am. The passports were found hidden in their handbags.

They admitted to the immigration police that they were only the carriers of the passports. One Bangladesh national in Malaysia, Mizanur Rahman, was carrying the passports, according to the source. The arrested persons were detained in the Cantonment police station.

## PM arrives in Jeddah

JEDDAH, May 16: Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia arrived here tonight to perform the holy Hajj as a royal guest, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister was received at the royal pavilion of the King Abdul Aziz Airport by Governor Prince Majed bin Abdul Aziz.

Religious Affairs Minister M Keramat Ali, who is already in Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj, and Bangladesh Ambassador Shafi Sami were at the airport to receive the Prime Minister.

King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques, invited the prime minister to perform Hajj.

This is Begum Zia's second visit to Saudi Arabia after becoming prime minister in March, 1991.

Begum Zia leaves here for Medina tomorrow

## Export earning falls short of target

By Staff Correspondent

The target of export earning of the country was not achieved during the first seven months of the current fiscal year.

The target was 1691.67 million dollars for the period July '93 to January '94 but the earning stood at 1579.53 million dollars which is 112.14 million dollars or 6.63 per cent less than the target, according to sources.

In January this year export earning was 195.86 million dollars as against 209.80 million dollars in January '93.

The earning during the July '93 to January '94 period, however, was higher by 164.01 million dollars or 11.59 per cent than that of the corresponding period of fiscal '92-'93.

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## BSP to raise newspaper price

By Staff Correspondent

The Members of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) yesterday agreed on enhancing the price of daily newspapers to Tk 5 as price of inputs has increased.

The members at a meeting at the Dainik Janakantha office agreed on keeping the agency commission at a rate between 25 to 35 per cent.

The meeting chaired by BSP president Kazi Shahed Ahmed was attended by Anwar Hossain of the Ittefaq, Md Atiq Ullah Khan Masud of the Janakantha, Selim Shamsul Huda Chowdhury of the Sangbad, Md Zakaria Khan of the Bangladesh Patrika, Motiur Rahman of the Bhorer Kagoj, Motiur Rahman Chowdhury of the Bangladesh Patrika, Kazi Nabil Ahmed of the Khaboror Kagoj, Anil Islam of

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Israeli soldiers taking down the Israeli flag before withdrawing early yesterday from the central prison in Gaza City. Following the departure of the Israeli troops, 150 Palestinian policemen from Egypt took control of the prison. — AFP photo

## Palestinians take control of Gaza

GAZA, May 16: Israeli soldiers slipped out of their headquarters in Gaza city under cover of darkness on Monday handing a potent symbol of their 27-year-long occupation to Palestinian police, reports Reuters.

The army said the handover took place without incident but witnesses said several dozen Palestinian youths threw rocks at the departing Israeli troops. "Get out," they shouted.

There were no reports of injuries.

This morning at about 3 am (2400 GMT) the Israel defence forces evacuated two buildings in Gaza City-IDF headquarters and the civil administration complex," an army spokeswoman said.

"The facilities were transferred to representatives of the Palestinian police without any unusual incident," she added.

Witnesses said 250 Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) police of the Egyptian based in Jalut brigade moved into Al-Saraya complex, which housed the military command, Gaza central prison and Shabak security service interrogation cells.

About 300 Palestinians greeted them, dancing and singing. "Is it real? Are those people Palestinians?" One of them said, not believing that Israeli troops had been replaced overnight by Palestinian policemen.

Gaza-born policeman Halil

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## EC extends textiles accord with Dhaka

By Staff Correspondent

The European Community (EC) has extended its bilateral textiles agreement with Bangladesh till December 31 this year.

The application of all the provisions of this agreement will then be extended automatically for another year unless either party notifies the other about cancelling the extension.

Bangladesh textile products will continue to enjoy duty free access to the European market and there will be no quantitative restrictions, according to an agreement signed recently.

In the European Community, three categories of textile products — 4, 6 and 8 — are subject to double checking while imports of other categories are subject to quantitative restrictions at much lower levels.

This situation has allowed Bangladesh to increase its exports to the European Union at a spectacular rate compared to other countries, sources said.

Bangladesh is now the number one exporter in categories 4 — T-shirts — and 8 — shirts.

Under the new agreement, Bangladesh will supply to the EC precise statistical information on all export licences issued by the Bangladesh authorities for all categories of textile products subject to quantitative limits or to a double checking system of surveillance without quantitative limits.

The quantitative limits established under this agreement on import into the community of textile products

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## Hasina for tough action against racketeering in manpower export

Awami League president and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina who is now in Singapore called for tough action against racketeering in manpower recruitment and export, reports UNB.

"It's unfortunate that Bangladeshis seeking jobs abroad are being harassed and exploited and the manpower export sector which is contributing much to the national economy remains neglected," she told a gathering of Bangladeshis workers, businessmen and professionals in Singapore yesterday afternoon.

The opposition leader arrived in Singapore Saturday morning on conclusion of her five-day visit to Tokyo where she attended a two-day council

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## Cargo vessels continue strike

By Staff Correspondent

The cargo vessels including fuel tankers, trawlers and barges have continued their strike while the strike programme in the motor launch sector has been partially withdrawn.

The leaders of the Bangladesh Motor Launch Workers Union suspended their programme after a tripartite meeting between the launch owners, the workers and the government ended without any decision late Sunday.

Pratapuddin Ahmed, president of the union, said they called off their strike temporarily until June 7 in view of the inconveniences being caused to the passengers returning home for the Eid holidays.

The passenger launches where the wage board award was yet to be implemented would continue the strike.

## NEWS BRIEFS

## Khaleda greets Brundtland

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland on the occasion of the Constitution Day of the Kingdom of Norway today. In a message Begum Zia said: Bangladesh is looking forward to the development of relations between the two countries, reports BSS.

## 15 missing as boat capsizes in Padma

PABNA, May 16: Fifteen people were reported missing after a passenger boat capsized in the river Padma in Shujana-gar thana of the district today, reports UNB.

## 5-day work week in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, May 16: Pakistan will move to a five-day work week starting on June 3, the government announced today. Friday will continue to be a holiday in overwhelmingly Muslim Pakistan, but now Saturday will also be a weekend day. Information Minister Khalid Ahmed Kharral said. During the five-day work week, all federal and provincial government offices will function eight hours a day, increasing the workweek from the current 36 hours to 40 hours, reports AFP.

## Police recover vast tract of land held by Sharif

LAHORE, May 16: Local authorities, with the help of police, recovered a large tract of land today allegedly held by Pakistan opposition leader Nawaz Sharif illegally, reports AFP.

Accompanied by hundreds of armed policemen, the Punjab government officials reclaimed 29,160 square metres of public land, Sharif, a former premier, allegedly fenced in around his residence.

Sharif was Chief Minister of Punjab province from 1985 until he became Prime Minister in 1990. He resigned in July last year.

Witnesses said workers tore down the iron fence with which the land, including two parks, had been hemmed in.

They also used bulldozers to demolish three small structures used by staff employed on the palatial housing estate owned by Sharif's wealthy industrialist family, they said.

Officials said the land would be handed over to a housing society which was its legal owner.

The operation, ordered by Punjab Chief Minister Manzoor Watto, a political ally of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, came after previous warnings to the Sharif's to vacate the land voluntarily went unheeded, officials said.

There was no immediate comment from the opposition, but Sharif's aides said a statement would be issued later.

Another report says, a judicial commission will investigate a multi-million dollar banking scandal allegedly involving Pakistani politicians



Nawaz Sharif

and generals, a minister said in a statement published today.

Interior Minister Naseerullah Babar told the Senate the probe would be conducted by a panel of three judges.

Officials said the government decided to order a judicial probe into the scam related to private Mehran Bank

after a planned parliamentary committee inquiry failed to take off because of a controversy with the opposition.

The row centered on the opposition demand that its member be head of the committee. The government said this was unacceptable.

The judicial commission is expected to be set up during the month, official sources said.

Mehran Bank was established in 1991 under the economic liberalisation policy of former premier Nawaz Sharif.

The bank's chief operating officer, Yunus Habib, was arrested in March on charges that he embezzled millions of dollars. The bank is now under the supervision of Pakistan's Central State Bank.

According to a federal investigation agency report, huge sums were siphoned off from Mehran Bank by politicians and generals with the help of Habib.

Meanwhile, at least 11 protesters were killed and 29 injured Monday as police battled Muslim activists demanding the implementation of Islamic law in a remote corner of northwest Pakistan.

Some 30,000 Muslims have been demonstrating and blocking traffic for five days in and

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## Blast flattens Russian arms depot

VLADIVOSTOK, Russia, May 16: At least 26 people were injured in the weekend explosions that flattened a munitions depot in Russia's Far East and ripped the roofs off houses 3 kilometers away, officials said Monday, reports AP.

Nearly 2,000 residents of Novozhelezino, an air base 60 kilometers east of Vladivostok, had to be evacuated Saturday, said Rytir Kuznetsov, a duty officer at the regional Commission for Emergency Situations.

Most returned to the town of Sunday to find their houses badly damaged by the series of blasts, which lasted several hours. Kuznetsov told the news agency.

The homes of at least 200 people were totally destroyed, he said. Some houses had their roofs torn off or walls cracked.

Igor Lebedinets, deputy governor of the Maritime Territory, said that 26 people injured in the blasts, five remained hospitalized Monday, including a young girl with a serious shoulder injury.

The explosion of an estimated 1,600 airborne missiles, bombs and artillery shells turned the land, around the arms depot into a scorched desert. Lebedinets told a news conference.

## Contraband worth Tk 2cr recovered: 9 arrested

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, May 16: Borguna police recovered contraband worth about Tk two crore and arrested nine people from a trawler in the river Bishkhali today.

The recovered goods include spareparts, electronics, sarees, lungies and generators. It is believed the seized items were smuggled into the country from India.

The arrested people are Kamrul, Idris, Jabbar, Sobhan, Abul Hossain, Kalam, Abdul Wahab, Mokhes and M Ali.

## Iran cancels rally during Hajj

NICOSIA, May 16: Iran has cancelled a political rally planned for Tuesday in the holy city of Makkah after Saudi riot police deployed in force around the Iranian pilgrimage headquarters, Iranian television reported today, says Reuters.

It read a letter by Iran's top Hajj official Ayatollah Mohammad Mohammadi Reyshahri in Makkah to supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei saying that the rally was cancelled to pre-empt any Saudi 'provocation'. Khamenei approved the cancellation.

## STAR QUIZ 4 LUCKY DRAW & PRIZE-GIVING OF STAR QUIZ 3 TODAY

The Lucky Draw to find the winners of STAR QUIZ 4 and prize-giving ceremony of STAR QUIZ 3 will be held today, 17 May, 1994 at the Jatiya Press Club Auditorium at 5:30 PM.

ALL ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

The Daily Star .....

we choose to lead.