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NEWS BRIEFS

Movement of ships at Ctg Port resumes

From Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, May 19: Movement of ships at Chittagong port channel resumed today after a suspension for three days due to rough sea. Port officials said with the improvement of situation movement of ships was allowed from today at the channel. Three ships took berth at port jetties from outer anchorage today.

Fakhrul Munshi joins AL today

By Staff Correspondent
 Former minister of the Jatiya Party government, Fakhrul Islam Munshi and his supporters will join the Awami League today, party sources said. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina is expected to welcome the new comers at 5 pm at the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue.

Promotion

Arun Kumar Adhikary, Member, Land Appeal Board, Ministry of Land, has been promoted to the post of Additional Secretary. However, he has been temporarily posted as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the Ministry of Establishment until a suitable post is available, reports UNB.

Chirac meets Kohl

STRAZBOURG (France), May 19: French President Jacques Chirac met German Chancellor Helmut Kohl today, a day after taking office, to reaffirm commitment to the Franco-German partnership at the heart of the European Union. Chirac, who greeted Kohl at the ornate 19th century government prefect's office in Strasbourg, was also expected to reassert France's attachment to currency stability in Europe, aides said.

Cong-I splits: Tiwari heads new faction

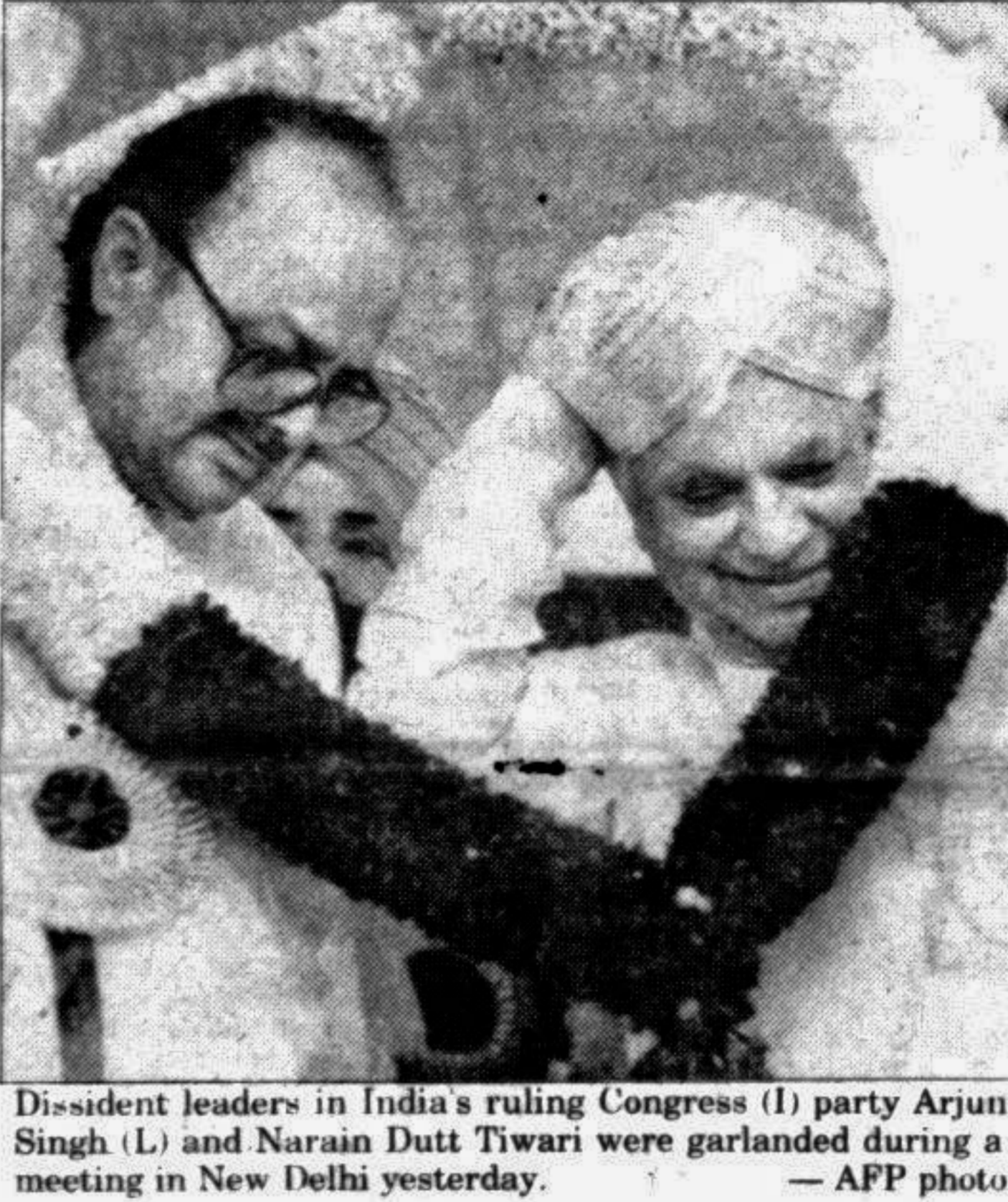
NEW DELHI, May 19: India's ruling Congress (I) Party split today as dissidents named a rival of beleaguered Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to head the country's oldest political party, reports AFP. Narain Dutt Tiwari, 71, a former chief minister of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, was appointed President of the Indian National Congress (I) by a show of hands at a rally of nearly 50,000 party dissidents here. Tiwari's appointment as leader of the rebel Congress was greeted with thunderous applause and frenzied well-wishers stormed the rostrum, lifting him in the air and draping him with garlands. "We are the real Congress, we are the real Congress," jubilant Tiwari supporters gathered from all over India screamed, waving the party's tri-colour flag. "Narasimha Rao is out," others shouted. The announcement, at the end of 10 hours of deliberations near a sports stadium, marked the climax of a pro-

tracted campaign against the leadership of Rao, who became Prime Minister and party chief in 1991. There was no immediate reaction from the 109-year-old Congress Party headed by Rao to the appointment of a rival party chief. A Rao spokesman said the independence in 1947, on both previous occasions in 1969 and 1978, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was its leader. "The Congress was always a divided house," said spokeswoman Sushma Swaraj of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian people's party). "It is only a formal declaration today." The split came despite last minute bids by both sides to bring about a reconciliation, with more than 100 Congress MPs appealing to the widow of Rajiv Gandhi to take over the leadership as a consensus nominee. The Italian-born Sonia Gandhi declined the appeals. Tiwari, who was a senior leader of the ruling party, said in a brief acceptance speech: "I will discharge my responsibilities (as president of the Indian National Congress) with devotion and patience." "We will together build the Congress once again," he said. "Let us march forward to- See Page 12 Col 1

NEW DELHI, May 19: In a swift action, the Cong-I President, P V Narasimha Rao, tonight expelled N D Tiwari from the primary membership of the party for six years for anti-party activities, reports PTL. 73-year-old premier, who took over as Congress president after the May 1991 assassination of former premier Rajiv Gandhi has refused demands to step down. Although most MPs and provincial lawmakers of the Congress still support Rao, the rebels claim to have the backing of scores of party leaders and thousands of activists across the country. It is the third time the Congress has split since India's



Abahani's Russian midfielder Sergei (L) looks on as the Brothers Union defender Bishu (C) successfully thwarting an attack during their semifinal engagement of the Nirma DMFA Cup at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday. Brothers won the match 4-3 in the tie-breaker. (Story on Page 11) — Star photo by A K M Mohsin



Dissident leaders in India's ruling Congress (I) party Arjun Singh (L) and Narain Dutt Tiwari were garlanded during a meeting in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP photo

Rao seeks OIC help for peace in Kashmir

NEW DELHI, May 18: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao has appealed to the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to support efforts to restore peace in Kashmir following the gutting of a Muslim shrine, reports Reuter. The 51-member OIC was established in 1971 to generate solidarity and cooperation among all Islamic countries. Rao wrote to Morocco's King Hassan, current OIC Chairman, saying Pakistan had launched a unilateral, uncooperative campaign against India over Kashmir. He said ministers from OIC member states meeting in New York this week issued a statement apparently based on Pakistan's version of the May 11 destruction of the shrine in Charar-e-Sharif. "The incident in Charar-e-Sharif is part of a concerted See Page 12 Col 8

Judiciary functions independently, PM tells Bar members

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said her government has ensured the rule of law and dispensation of justice in the country, reports UNB. "Judiciary has been working independently," she said when a delegation of the newly elected office-bearers of the Supreme Court Bar Association called on her at 30 Hare Road last night. Begum Zia said the democratic institutions will be strengthened and get institutional shape if democracy functions smoothly. The delegation, led by President of the association Justice T H Khan, appreciated the government's development efforts and its attempt to set a trend of healthy politics in the country. The delegation members pointed out that the judicial system had been destroyed See Page 12 Col 6

Opposition can place caretaker govt issue at talks: BNP

By Staff Correspondent
 Ruling party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar yesterday indicated that the issue of a caretaker government and even the question of constitutional amendment could be discussed at the negotiation table. "Let the proposal come. Let them propose it at the negotiation table," Talukdar said in reply to a question whether the BNP is now ready to discuss the issue of constitutional amendment to resolve the present political impasse. "Everything can be discussed during the dialogue. We have to sit first with the agenda of present political impasse," the ruling party Secretary General told The Daily Star yesterday at the party's central office. Reporters of a Bengali daily and a news agency were also present. Until recently, the BNP policy makers ruled out the possibility of any constitutional amendment and said that a solution should be worked out within the framework of the Constitution. Talukdar said that he would again contact his Awami League counterpart Zillur Rahman if he failed to reply within a day or two to his (Talukdar's) formal proposal for dialogue. The ruling party leader said that the atmosphere for a dialogue was not vitiated by the press statement he had made See Page 12 Col 2

Two ships with banned fertiliser arrive at Mongla

KHULNA, May 19: Two foreign ships with 12,500 metric tons of banned SSP fertiliser anchored at Mongla port on Wednesday but the importers cannot unload the consignments due to government restriction, reports UNB. The SSP (single super phosphate) fertiliser worth about six crore taka have been imported by two firms — one from Dhaka and another from Jessore. Vietnamese flag carrier MV Long High has on board 7,200 metric tons of SSP while Egyptian flag carrier Al-Kantara has another 5,300 tons, port sources said today. They said the government has imposed a ban on import and sale of SSP fertiliser from April 30 this year due to its harmful effects on agricultural crops. As per the government restriction, the local Customs authorities have not allowed the importers to unload the vessels, the sources said. BNP has no right to stay in power, says Mizan

Massive task for EC Final voters' list to be published on Aug 31

By Nazmul Ashraf
 Massive preparations are afoot for registration of the country's 60 million eligible voters and issue them identity (ID) cards ahead of the next general elections. Election Commission (EC) sources said yesterday. The EC has engaged 4,06,750 persons to complete the gigantic task of voters' registration in a little over three months' time, they said. The registration begins across the country on May 25 and is scheduled to end on August 31 with the publication of a final voters' list. Then the process of issuing ID cards to the voters will start on the basis of the voters' list. The commission has, meanwhile, established a voters' registration administration comprising coordination bodies at the divisional, district and thana levels to carry out registration of each and every eligible voters through prescribed forms. Officials engaged in the job told The Daily Star that 3,20,934 enumerators, 80,690 supervisors, 5,047 assistant registration officers and 83 registration officers would be directly involved in the registration process. These persons, chosen from among government officials and local educated youths, would be responsible to their respective coordination committees. The thana coordination committee is headed by the TNO, the district committee by the DC and the divisional committee by the Divisional Commissioner. On May 25, each enumeration See Page 12 Col 7

AL to gherao CEC office today

By Staff Correspondent
 The Awami League will gherao the Chief Election Commissioner's (CEC) office and stage a sit-in there today to protest the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner without consulting with the Opposition. The party leaders and workers will assemble near the Islamia Eye Hospital at 10 am from where they will march towards the EC Secretariat. Meanwhile, the Dhaka city unit of the Awami League held special extended meeting yesterday to make today's gherao programme a success. Party chief Sheikh Hasina attended the meeting as chief guest, while Mayor of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and city Awami League president Mohammad Hanif presided. UNB adds: Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government sometimes talks about dialogue See Page 12 Col 6

Diarrhoea, water crisis in storm-hit areas Relief yet to reach thousands

From Our Correspondent
 COXS BAZAR, May 19: The sufferings of the storm-hit people of Kutubdia and Maheshkhali islands were mounting as relief goods were yet to reach there. Some 10,000 people of Ali Akbar Dail, Haiarbil, north and south Dhuram unions of Kutubdia were rendered homeless by the storms that hit the coastal belt of the country later Monday and Tuesday. The homeless people are staying in cyclone shelter and flood protection embankment waiting for relief. Tidal waters are yet to recede from the low-lying areas of Matarbari and Dhalghata unions of Maheshkhali. Many people are still marooned. Acute crisis of drinking water is prevailing in the areas since most of the tubewells went out of order and saline water entered the ponds. Our Chittagong Correspondent adds: Diarrhoeal diseases broke out in many of the affected areas of Sandwip, Anwara, Banshkhali and Patiya, according to sources. District administration already ordered the respective thana officials to take emergency measures to provide dry food and ensure drinking water by repairing tubewells, officials said. When contracted, the Civil Surgeon of Chittagong, however, denied reports of the outbreak of diarrhoea. "I have not yet received any such reports," he said. Road communication between Chittagong and Cox's Bazar still remained snapped as some culverts were damaged at Satkania point of the highway. Meanwhile, the 40 people, who were missing in Urrir char of Sandwip island after the high tide, returned home, police said in Chittagong today. Indonesian flag carrier MV Khatulis Piwa could not be removed till today from the Hatia channel where it had got stranded during the storms. BSS add: The overall situation in the affected areas of the coastal regions of Chittagong and Cox's Bazar has further improved as water is receding gradually. According to Chittagong district control room, about 25,000 people who took shelter in different cyclone-shelters and other places in the district are going back to their homesteads. Chittagong did not experience any rains today, local Met Office said.

BNP has no right to stay in power, says Mizan

From Staff Correspondent
 BARISAL, May 19: Jatiya Party acting chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury today said BNP government has no right to stay in power as it did not keep any of its election pledges. He was addressing a public meeting at the Shaheed Zia ur-Rahman in Bhandaria in the afternoon. In its election pledges, the BNP said one crore youths would get jobs and Special Powers Act would be repealed, but it has failed to fulfil the commitments. Mizan told the meeting. He said this Parliament is "illegal" as opposition MPs have resigned en masse. JP secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju demanded immediate resignation of the BNP government and elections under a neutral caretaker administration. Presided over by Manirul Huq Manir, the meeting was also addressed by Shah Moazzem Hossain, Ruhul Amin Hawlader, Kazi Peroz Rashid, Mostafa Jamal Haider and Maudul Islam.

Rabin gives green light for confiscation of WB land

JERUSALEM, May 19: The Israeli army is to confiscate large tracts of Palestinian land on the occupied West Bank to build 130 kilometres of roads to improve security for Jewish settlers, a newspaper reported today. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has given the project the green light, the Haaretz said, reports AFP. An adviser of PLO chairman Yasser Arafat termed the Israeli move a 'new violation' which had been 'encouraged by America's use of its veto power.' Washington used a veto Wednesday for the first time in five years to block a resolution backed by the 14 other members of the UN Security Council calling on Israel to cancel land expropriation in annexed East Jerusalem. Arafat adviser Nabil Abu

Rudeina said the West Bank project was a new challenge to the peace process. "The Israeli army should not confiscate land or set up roads without Palestinian approval, according to the autonomy agreement." Meanwhile, a Montreux report says Palestinian negotiators were rebuffed by the USA and Israel today when they called for the inclusion of the Jerusalem question in multilateral talks on the Middle East peace process, participants in a meeting said. Palestinian head delegate to a meeting of the talks steering committee being held in Switzerland, Faysal Hussein, expressed regret over the US attitude. Arab delegates attending the three-day conference,

which opened Tuesday, have called for setting up a sixth working group to cover the Jerusalem issue. But the US delegation rejected this, saying a framework was already in place for the question to be discussed between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators next year. Reuter says, European Union officials in Brussels, dismayed by a US veto, warned today the move could delay the signing of a key trade pact between the EU and Israel. Angry officials said Washington's use of its veto was a fresh blow to the battered Middle East Peace Process. "I think this is outrageous, it puts us completely at loggerheads with them (the US). We are furious with both the Israelis and the Americans," a See Page 12 Col 8

3 charged with maid murder at Concord Tower

By Staff Correspondent
 Detective police yesterday filed a case with Ramna thana against three persons on charge of murdering maid Monowara alias Anwara at a Concord Tower apartment in the city and subsequent attempt to hide her body. The accused are Anwara's mistress Rokshana Chowdhury, her daughter Sharmin Chowdhury alias Farah and a man who stayed at the house on the night before the murder on May 5. The maid was found dead after falling from the fourth floor of the multi-storied building in Bangla Motor area. Ramna police arrested Rokshana and Sharmin on the day of the incident and detective police later took them in four days remand in two See Page 12 Col 3

18 murdered in city in first 19 days of May

By Masud Arif
 At least 18 persons were murdered in the capital during the first 19 days of this month. According to available statistics, 43 murders took place in the city in the last four months — 12 in April, nine each in February and March and 13 in January. Those killed this month included young men, maids, political activists, businessmen, a minor boy and a Chinese national, who was murdered in a hotel at Nawabpur road in the old part of the city. Many of the murders were due to disputes over money, according to reports. These murders took place in Sutrapur, Mirpur, Pallabi, Dhanmandi, Gulshan, Ramna and Cantonment thana areas. At least 13 persons were arrested and a number of people were picked up for interro-

gation in connection with the killings. In the first week of this month, a group of local youths kidnapped and killed a 4-year old boy — Miraj — by drowning him in a ditch near the Botanical Garden at Mirpur. Police investigation revealed that Miraj was killed as his father Abdul Aziz Bepari of Buxnagar, Mirpur, failed to pay the ransom of Taka two lakh for Miraj's release. On May 5, two maids were killed in Green Road and Bangla Motor areas. Of the two, one was found dead after falling from a fourth floor apartment at the Concord Tower, Bangla Motor area. Initially it was thought to be an accident but investigation by detective police revealed it as a murder. See Page 12 Col 7

Telecom tower opens in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, May 19: Deputy Manager of Saudi Grant for Development and Chairman of Saudi Committee on cyclone grant Dr Abdul Aziz M-Alturki today formally inaugurated the 119-metre high telecommunication tower at Agrabad here, reports BSS. Two telecommunication towers, one each at Agrabad and Nandankanan here were installed under 13 million riyal Saudi cyclone grant, according to an official handout. The inaugural function was attended by Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mir Muhammad Nasir Uddin, divisional commissioner of Chittagong Sohilul Islam and other high officials of the government. See Page 12 Col 7