# DOWN TO EARTH

# Deplorable aspects of medicare

By ASM Nurunnabi

Hospital services have so testing etc. long been exclusively a government enterprise. The government hospitals, which form almost the whole of the nation's medicare system, seem to be suffering from an appalling condition. These hospitals are a chronic patient to three maladies: the ineptitude and apathy of the authorities, overflooding by patients and pervasive corruption. The situation prevailing in most of the government hospitals, according to observers, is little short of a national shame. The national health authorities have seemingly abandoned all thoughts of ever salvaging these hospitals from their present chaotic condition.

It may not be far from the truth to say that people often come out of these hospitals more ill than when they went

What appears to be galling is a scandalous connection between the private nursing homes, the government hospitals and some sections of practising medical men. It is an open secret that the government hospitals are used by some of their government appointed doctors as a patient observer to comment that this utter lack of professionalism has, more than any other drawback, including the absence of even basic medical equipment, been contributing to the undoing of the main body of our collective medical enterprise.

evidence in another sphere. Many patients in the city are victims of physician's self-refferal: Sending patients to facilities in which the doctor has a bilitation, X-rays, laboratory by them. One explanation that

From Page 1

union activities in Bangladesh

he described it as smooth and

sought cooperation to help

The WFTU Secretary Gen-

eral Dev Kumar Ganguly urged

the governments of SAARC

countries to extend their co-

operation towards the trade

trade union leaders to close

their ranks in respective

countries saying that struggle

for improving the lot of work-

nate our activities among our

selves to carry forward our

mission towards the cherished

goal," he said and asked the

trade unions to work hand in

hand in line with the govern-

ment to government coopera-

Ganguly said the World

Federation of Trade Unions

wants to see ratification as well

as improvement of the interna-

standard had become impor-

tant in many countries in view

of market economy. "Due re-

spect is now shown to the

No seat-sharing

with any party

tuation, Golam Azam said a

congenial political environ-

ment is absent to express

one's free political opinion.

Parliament was dissolved in

1986 after the resignation of

10 Jamaat MPs, but this time

one-party parliament is kept

running despite resignation by

The country is witnessing one-

party autocratic rule," he

be possible with the like-

minded parties but the Jamaat

will not give up its ideology

and election symbol in any

case," he told an exclusive

meeting of ex-leaders of the

Islami Chhatra Shibir at the

Chawkbazar Haji Mohammad

reportedly entered into an un-

derstanding with the BNP in

last parliamentary elections

The Jamaat-e-Islami had

Mohsin Govt College ground.

"This is a unique situation.

"The sharing of seat could

147 MPs.

He said international labour

tional labour standard.

tion of the SAARC countries.

ing class would not be possible

"We must unite and coordi-

He also called upon the

production in industries.

unions of the region.

in divided platform.

SAARC trade unions

Self-refferal operates on a simple principle: the more patients doctors refer, the more money they make. Although most doctors do not participate in self-refferal deals, no one knows for sure exactly

how many do. It is a fair guess that many of our independent clinical labs and physiological labs in the city are owned wholly or partly by referring physicians. Many doctors justify self-refferal by saying it helps assure quality care. In the opinion of independent observers, that is just not true.

Self-refferal mostly preys on patients stricken with a serious illness, people who trust their doctors to make decisions. Money, of course, is the obvious reason. The money is not earned from any service performed by these doctors. It is just a kick-back for referring patients.

In many cases, self-refferers run up profits by another method ordering expensive tests and procures for questionable medical reasons.

The practice of self-refferal potentially brings about erosion of patient-doctor trust. recruiting centre for the pri- This may be avoided if conscivate clinics. This has led one entious doctors are careful not to allow commercialism to encroach on the practice of

Since public health sector may seem to have collapsed, the private sector is taking over. Here also the picture is not so bright. It is alleged that these private hospitals, with a According to observers, an few exceptions, tend to fleece unethical practice is much in their patients and yet do not have their own surgeons and doctors or even the necessary equipment. Since most of the private hospitals run a good business, one may wonder how financial interests. Lately self- their patients who, by and refferal has spread quietly in large, appear not to be ecomany areas of medicare includ- nomically well of, can afford ing physical therapy and reha- the exorbitant charges made

working class in some coun-

The WFTU Secretary Gen-

eral also said that it was the

duty of respective govern-

ments to ensure jobs and cre-

ate employments to remove

countries like Bangladesh, he

said poverty was the main rea-

son for child labour. "We must

fight poverty first to fight child

Dhaka Paul J. Baily said that

ILO was now looking forward

to sitting with world financial

organisations like World Bank

in the decision-making table

ticipation in social action

progress to see jobs are en-

sured and new scopes for em-

ployment, is created, he also

He laid stress on the need

for closer links among trade

unions of the region and de-

veloping fellow in the greater

All Scandinavian

interest of the working class.

"ILO seeks to have its par-

within the year 2000.

mutual cooperation.

The director of ILO office in

Referring to child labour in

tries," he said.

labour," he said.

poverty.

emerges is that, since government hospitals fail to provide appropriate treatment in most cases, patients suffering from serious illnesses, have no choice other than the private hospitals, even though to arrange the wherewithal to pay for their charges, they have to sell the property. This provides a sad picture of the desperate alternative that most poor patients are faced with.

Another deplorable aspect of the medicare system relates to the poor standard odd diets supplied to patients in government hospitals. During the current financial year, the allotment of expenditure for patients in cabin, paying bed and general bed has been fixed at Tk 30/- Tk 26/- and Tk 22/per day respectively. Even though these provisions are not adequate, the general complaint is that food is not supplied within the prescribed quota of prices. The indoor patients get for their breakfast four thin slices of bread. finger-sized banana and a few spoonfuls of sugar - all much below the prescribed quantity. For their mid-day and evening meals, they are supplied with bad-smelling coarse rice with watery lentils and nominal measure of meat/fish and vegetables. The cabin and paying bed patients are particularly aggrieved because they feel that they do not get their money's worth. From a random survey, it appears that sixty per cent of the patients do not take the hospital diets supplied for mid-day and evening meals: they are dependent on outside supplies.

For these drawbacks in diet supply, the hospital authorities take the plea that on account of the upward trend of prices and insufficient budget allotments, it is not possible for them to supply the patients the prescribed quota of food with proper quality.

## BNP has failed to run country,

KHULNA, June 9: Jatiya Party acting Chairman Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday charged the ruling BNP with politicising the administration and plundering the public money by misusing power, reports UNB.

say Mizan

"The BNP has totally failed in running the country," he told a public meeting at Dak Bungalow premises here this afternoon.

He said the government rather fulfilling its election pledges, resorted to repression by killing the workers and

farmers across the country. Referring to the Farakka and push back issues. Mizan Chowdhury said the government has totally failed to protect the country's interest for

its subservient foreign policy. Nurul Islam in his opening He said the BNP is now remark said SAARC had beplotting a new conspiracy come an important platform against their leader Ershad by in the changing world in terms reviving the Manzoor murder of better understanding and

case after 14 years. "To err is human being," Mizan Chowdhury said adding that there were some mistakes during their rule. He regret

ted for their past misdeeds. Presided over by JP Khulna City President SMA Rab, the meeting was addressed by Shah Moazzem Hossain, Mia Musa Hossain, Gaffar Biswas, Mominuddin Ahmed and Suvas Banergy.

## Gheor AL

From Page 1 leaders at about 7.30 am. They repeatedly chopped

Sikim Ali. 40. President of Baliakhora union Krishak League and Vice President of Baliakhora AL, with ramdao and exploded home-made bombs to keep the public away from the spot.

The miscreants later abducted JP leader Gazi Khan, 50. He still remains untraced. police said.

A large number of people who gathered in the hat saw the gruesome killing but could not resist the miscreants because of bomb explosions, police said.

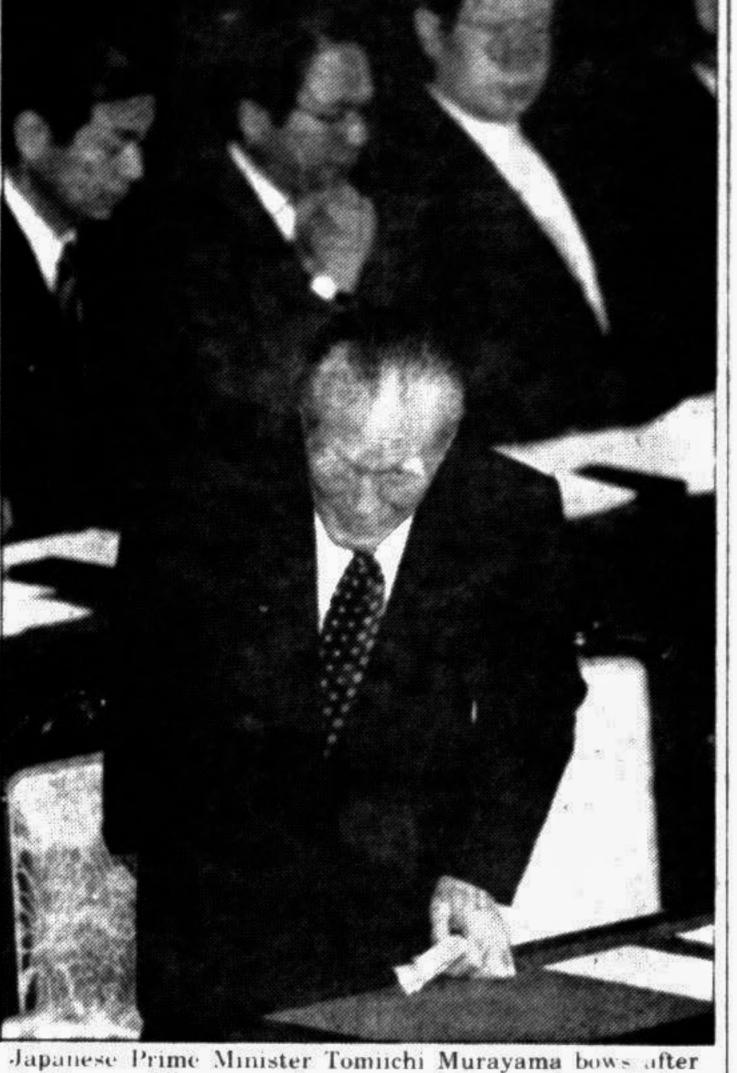
#### Manzur murder From Page 1

chargesheet by the end of this month," one CID official said on condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, CID investigators also interrogated deposed president H M Ershad, who is now in jail, in connection with the murder of Manzur.

Ershad reportedly told CID officials that the then acting president handled the situation following the May 30, 1981, abortive coup in which President Ziaur Rahman was assassinated.

Ershad was Army chief at that time and Gen Manzur was commander of Chittagong garrison



Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama bows after the House of Representatives yesterday passed a resolution expressing deep remorse for Japan's wartime atroci-- AFP photo

## Japan expresses remorse for atrocities in WWII

TOKYO, June 9: Japan's rul ing coalition rammed a resolution of remorse for World War II through Parliament tonight but an opposition boycott and Asian criticism shattered hopes for a harmonious commemoration of the war's end reports AP.

Japan's biggest opposition group, the New Frontier Party boycotted the vote in Parlia ment's more powerful lower house when the ruling coali tion rejected its demand for several minor alterations to the resolution.

The New Frontier action appeared to be motivated by political rivalry and was sepa rate from Asian demands that the resolution include an apology for Japanese atrocities in World War II. Still, the scene of a half-

empty chamber voting on the resolution erased any possibility of a quiet end to what has turned into a raging dispute about history. "The world is watching

This is an outrage," fumed a New Frontier leader, former trade minister Kozo Watanabe. after the vote.

In addition to New Frontier members, 55 legislators from the coalition's dominant Lib eral Democratic Party and 14 from Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama's Socialist Party failed to attend the vote, according to a tally by the public Japan Broadcasting Corp.

Though many of those missed the vote for scheduling

### Biennale Int'l Art's 100th birthday today

VENICE, Italy, June 9: The Biennale International Art exhibit celebrates its 100th birthday Saturday with provocative works on the hu man body and a much admired visitor from abroad — Diana Princess of Wales, reports AP.

More than 70 countries have brought hundreds of artists to show the cutting edge of contemporary art in 27 pavilions and in locations around the shimmering lagoon and St. Mark's Square.

From Page 1

pact did the reforms have on

the performance of the overal

economy? Do you have any al-

agenda was conceived exoge

nously and forced on by foster

fathers in connivance with the

lumpen bourgeoisie. Such re-

form programme has not been

able to create the much publi-

cised growth before equity nor

has there been any visible vi-

brant private investor class not

having the stigma of violating

the banking rules in the coun-

try. It has neglected the rural

area. Eccentric benefits in a

few hands in a few areas has

resulted in sacrifice of the

common man's welfare. We

need 'an indigenous reform

agenda in order to get the

right direction. The dishonest

businessmen, the money hun-

gry consulting class of intellec-

tuals as well as the bureaucrats

are obstructing the identifica-

tion of the right agenda. As a

result, the WB-IMF conceived

export of capitalist ideology, in

a semi-feudal society, and pol-

icy has not gained the desired

The alternative is having

MA: The economic reform

ternative suggestions?

reasons, at least some of the LDP legislators skipped it to protest the resolution's ex pression of "deep remorse" over Japan's "acts of aggression" in the war.

The resolution was proposed by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama as the center piece of Japan's commemora tion of the 50th anniversary since World War II.

But a debate within his coalition over wording grew heated when hawks insisted that any expression of regret would insult the families of Japan's war dead.

The Socialists called for a clear apology and mention of some specific Japanese atroci ties in the war, such as the coercion of thousands of Asian women to serve as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers.

### BBC apologises for showing wrong footage

NEW DELHI, June 9: The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) apologised Friday for showing footage of the Chechnya war in a story about the Muslim insurrection in the northern Indian state o Jammu-Kashmir, reports AP.

"The mistake was the result of confusion over incoming picture feeds, said a state ment by BBC World Service Television's London-based editor Johan Ramsland.

On May 12, clips of troops in Chechnya were mixed with those of fighting between Indian troops and Kashmir rebels near the town of Charer-e-Sharif. The fighting destroyed the town and a shrine of Kashmir's patron saint Nooruddin Wali.

On Wednesday, the Indian Defence Ministry asked the government's chief spokesman to take action against the television company. But it was not immediately known whether the government has sent a formal protest to BBC.

Muslim rebels in Kashmir have been fighting a separatist war since 1989. More than 11.600 people have been killed in the war.

confidence in the common-

man, going to villages and not

to Paris-Washington; enable

the marginal man to make

meaningful investment in self

and productive activity: reach-

ing quality primary health care

and quality primary education

to all; reducing unproductive

public sector expenditure; de-

vising public expenditures to

stake-holders at an agreed

minimum price and placing

the common man at the centre

opinion, are the specific prob-

lems in the agriculture, indus-

not been able to provide ap-

propriate incentives to the

majority of the farmers for

adopting available sustainable

technology. In industry, we

have not provided appropriate

technological assistance to

small and medium scale indus-

tries to help them generate an

endogenous movement to-

wards higher productivity. In

the financial sector, we have

allowed a few to control and

misuse assets of many, leading

to default, disparity and social

trial and financial sectors?

DS: In brief, what, in your

MA: In agriculture, we have

of policy.

distance.

## CPA refutes press report

CHITTAGONG, June 9: The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) tonight refuted the content of the report published in some dailies that all shipping lines have suspended indefinitely the carrying of containers bound for Bangladesh due to heavy congestion in Chittagong Port, reports BSS.

the report based on a press release of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) was not factual and no shipping companies has given any notice or any report on the suspension of carrying conainers to CPA. When contacted by the PA, the representatives of a

In a press release, CPA said

AAPL, PIL, Menhong and Sea Consortium and BSC in Chittagong expressed astonishment on the press report and said they had not received any information from their respective companies in this regard, the press release added.

Four ships were being oaded and unloaded in the Chittagong port today and four more ships are scheduled to arrive in the port'by June 15. Even no ships carrying container awaiting at the outer anchorage, for having berth to-

It is a fact that the ships carrying container have to wait at the outer anchorage for four to five days due to little congestion caused by huge import of goods, strike of C and F labour and inclement weather during the last two months. the press release said.

During the last few months. import through Chittagong port has increased to a great extent and the port authority has taken all possible measures for quick handling of goods. A meeting on the issue was held between the port users and CPA on May 7 and on the recommendation of the meeting the CPA informed the port users that tariff will be exempted if the containers are handled with the equipment of shipping companies.

The CPA was endeavouring to make all container handling equipment operative in time with the recommendation of the BGMEA. Measures have also been taken to bring the spare parts through Biman. At present the position of container handling equipment is satisfactory, the press release

Meanwhile, one straddle carrier and one top lifter have been brought from the Mongla port. There is no necessary equipment is available at Mongla port to be brought to Chittagong port. An agreement has already been signed to provide 20 more equipment to Chittagong port and it is expected that the equipment will reach the port by the end of this year. Tender has also been floated to procure on rent four straddle carriers for Chittagong port and some top lifters for LCD, Dhaka.

The CPA has repeatedly requested the container owners to shift empty containers from port. A decision has also been taken in a meeting with commerce minister held on May 31 to unload the containers at 'X-shed' of Chittagong port. The CPA urged all not to

publish fabricated and unfounded news items which could give a faulty picture of the country.

### CSE body

From Page 1 The CSE sources said that

the outcome of the recent visit by a CSE delegation to Thailand, Colombo and Bombay would also be reviewed.

The CSE delegation led by its chairman Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury, MP visited those places to see the automated process used in the stock exchange operations

#### Investments remain low DS: What is the short-term

economic outlook? MA: Not good. We do not see any possibility of breaking the chains or the barriers. There is no prospect of lessening dependence (on foreign aid) and increasing the efficiency in public private or NGO sectors.

DS: What is your opinion about the current political scenario? What impact did it have on the economy? Any suggestions to improve the political climate?

MA: The current political scenario reflects the lack of vision of the people in the cor ridors of power. When one cannot manage his own work, his own organisation, his ministry, these certainly have adverse impact on the economy. Political climate cari improve if we have a mechanism for regular elections by-elections, municipal elections, thana level local government elections, union level local government elections and village level committee elections. These elections will give the common man a sense of identification and, if free and fair, will establish accountability for the work done.

# The Midnight Kile

### Indian troops kill Pak bank official

MUZAFARABAD. Pakistan, June 9: A Pakistani bank official has been killed by Indian troops firing across the ceasefire line in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, family members said today. They said Abdul Gayyum, who worked for the state-run Agricultural Development Bank of Pakistan (ADBP) was shot on Thursday afternoon in the remote Neelam Valley of Pakistan-ruled Kashmir while travelling on foot, reports Reuter.

#### People's Daily blasts US

BEIJING. June 9: The United States permitted a visit from Taiwan's president to encourage the island to declare independence and curb China's growing power, the Communist Party newspaper said. The People's Daily editorial, to be published in Saturday's editions and carried by the Xinhua news agency Friday night, was the latest broadside inspired by Lee's US visit, reports AP.

# Instrument of genocide

From Page 1

UN officials in Sarajevo however, said they had no knowledge of any such meetings or discussions early in the week and wondered if the minister referred to a UN delegation which travelled to Pale on Thursday.

In Paris. European Union leaders held their first summit with newly elected French President Jacques Chirac, who along with the British is pressing for a tougher stance in Bosnia.

The leaders were to an nounce a new EU negotiator on Bosnia. Swedish former Prime Minister Carl Bildt. known for his military exper tise as well as his art of diplomacy. French and British government sources said on anonymity

Heads of state from the 15 EU nations arrived at Elysee Palace for what was billed as a working dinner, all refusing comment. While most drove in, British Prime Minister John Major walked over from the British Embassy next door. greeted by Chirac. "Hi John."

Chirac, who took office May 20, set the gathering as a getacquainted even. But urgency over how to respond to Bosnian Serb aggression and to protect the embattled UN peacekeepers in Bosnia overshadowed the agenda.

The dinner follows last weekend's agreement among EU and NATO defense ministers to form a rapid reaction force of up to 10,000 troops to back up the 22,000 peacekeepers in Bosnia.

But a meeting Thursday of

#### Child labour

From Page 1

representative in Bangladesh Ralph C Carrier when they called on him at his residence in the city yesterday afternoon.

The problem of child labour in Bangladesh was discussed in details and it was informed by the US Ambassador that they were actively working on this issue to explore all possible options for a suitable solution.

#### Cairo summit From Page 1

news conference. Mubarak said: I have no problem to go to Israel ... but why you make a big fuss about this every now and then?

US and Israeli officials both said they thought good relations between Israel and Egypt improved the chance of a Middle East peace embracing all Israel's neighbours. "Today Egypt and Israel

stand as the bastions of peace. the regional pillars of peace." said Christopher. "When the two countries come together in a partnership they can achieve an enormous amount of progress in the pursuit of peace."

The summit broke no obviously new ground on Syria and the Palestinians but the three leaders sustained the mood of optimism generated by unusually successful talks between Israel and the Palestinians this week and by preparations for a meeting of Israeli and Syrian military officials later this month.

#### Nepal From Page

liament

The NDP is yet to take a decision on the Congress offer, party leaders said.

The Congress withdrew support to the minority government last month, accusing it of 'running a totalitarian regime.

Today, the Congress held a huge protest rally in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, demanding the dismissal of the government. Thousands of people attended the rally braving a drizzle.

The Nepali Congress came to power in 1991 after prodemocracy demonstrations ended an absolute monarchy in the country. But infighting in the party brought its downfall last year and it couldn't complete a five-year term.

The Nepali Congress wants to avoid mid-term elections as it feels that they would strengthen the Communists, party leaders said on condition of anonymity.

NATO defense ministers failed to resolve questions over the new force's command struc-

The leaders today were to again pledge their support for the rapid reaction force. though no new troops, the sources said. They were also to discuss diplomatic efforts, including trying to persuade Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to recognize Bosnia.

Bildt replaces Lord David Owen, who met earlier Friday with French Prime Minister Alain Juppe. Owen denied he was pressured out of the job he held for more than two years. He said he wanted "to leave no later than the end of June. So it's come to a natural end."

#### EC convention From Page 1

leaders and different political parties' suggestions made during their recent discussions with the CEC.

In the planned meeting, the

CEC is expected to seek suggestions and cooperation from the political leaders in guaranteeing a flawless voters' list and conducting the coming elections in a free, fair and peaceful manner According to sources, the

EC is unlikely to cancel the current voter registration, rather, it may accommodate political parties' suggestions to make the fresh voters' list error-free.

The EC is learnt to havebeen monitoring charges of malpractice and dropping of eligible voters in the ongoing registration process and would take necessary steps in this

About the ID card plan, the sources said the EC would soon suggest amendments to the law that made the use of ID card in any election compulsory since issuance of ID card to all the voters before the .coming polls was not considered possible. However, ID cards might be issued to voters in selected areas, they added.

Meanwhile, delegations of the AL, the JP and the Jamaat separately called on the CEC recently to lodge complaints of irregularities in the voters' registration process and to demand the preparation of er-

ror-free voters list.

When contacted last night, Barrister KS Nabi, a member of the AL election affairs subcommittee, told The Daily Star they would participate in the planned meeting with the CEC to reiterate their demands.

A JP source also confirmed the party's participation in the proposed convention.

Jamaat leader Maulana Abdus Sobhan told this correspondent that his party would consider joining the planned meeting.

#### Ashura today From Page 1

country have drawn up programmes to mark the day. The programmes include milad mahfil, Qurankhwani, feeding of destitutes, special pravers. discussions, seminars and tazia processions.

Bangladesh Television and Radio Bangladesh will air special programmes while the national dailies will publish special articles highlighting the significance of the day.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas in a message on the occasion said the Muslim world recalls the tragic events of the day, every year and express their determination to establish a society based on truth and justice.

Karbala teaches us to remain vigilant against untruth and injustice, to achieve peace and progress in society. This teaching should be reflected in all our efforts.

Prime Minister Begum

Khaleda Zia in her message on Ashura said: "Not only a day of sorrow, the tenth of Muharram is also luminous with glory of supreme sacrifice and all out struggle against untruth and injustice," she said. The Prime Minister re-

called that Hazrat Imam Hossain (RA) had sacrificed his life at Karbala for upholding the ideals of Islam in social and state life. Awami League chief Sheikh

Hasina in her message said the tragic event of Karbala would remain a beacon for us to fight oppression and injustice.

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#### flights grounded COPENHAGEN, June 9: All Scandinavian Airlines System (SAS) domestic and interna-

in polls: Jamaat CHITTAGONG, June 9: Jamaat Ameer Golam Azam yestional flights were grounded terday said his party will not today, stranding some 56,000 go for any understanding with passengers as pilots staged a one-day pay strike and manany party on mere seat-sharing in the coming parliamentary agement retaliated with a elections, reports UNB. lockout, reports Reuter. On the present political si-

## Indian subs

From Page 1 every year and equal number being inducted. A fleet of 200

ships was desirable, he said. Visiting US Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Fleet Admiral Ronald J. Zlatoper is discussing with his counterpart to expand strategic ties between India and the US. Since 1992, the two navies have held two joint exercises off the Indian water territory. Two US nuclear powered submarines participated in the recently

concluded naval exercises. The two countries are expected to hold their third navy exercise next year, "We have now reached a fair coordination in exchange of communication and tactical information ... we hope to expand such exercises to include carriers.

submarines and naval attack

aircraft." Zlatoper said.

#### **Editor**: Mahfuz Anam