

## Arafat seeks Saudi help to end closure of WB, Gaza

RIYADH, Apr 7: Yasser Arafat asked Saudi Arabia for help today in ending Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, reports AFP.

"We need the support of our brothers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to lift this Israeli siege," he said upon arrival at Riyadh, the Saudi capital.

He did not say what kind of help he needed from the Saudis, who have for decades been Arafat's main financial backers. Saudi Arabia has no formal relations with Israel but supports what it terms as a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peaceful settlement.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip for security reasons following a series of suicide bomb attacks in a nine-day period starting February 25.

A total of 62 people, including four bombers, were killed.

Arafat's visit to Saudi Arabia underlines the recent rapprochement in his relations with Gulf Arab states which had ostracized him and his Palestine Liberation Organisation because of his sympathy

### 63 held in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 7: Chittagong metropolitan police arrested 63 persons and recovered two lightguns, one pipe gun, one single barrel gun and 35 cartridges during raids in different parts of the city today, reports BSS.

### SSC exams

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Jessore board and 1.30,000 under Comilla and Chittagong boards.

The SSC examinations are being held at 750 centers at home and five centers abroad.

In the capital, there are 60 centers for SSC examinations and two for Dakhil examination.

According to Dhaka board control room sources, 113 SSC examinees were expelled from different centres in 13 districts under the board.

Jessore board control room sources said 33 SSC examinees were expelled from different centres in 16 districts.

Expulsion of 49 examinees was reported from different districts under Comilla board.

Three hundred twenty-three examinees were expelled in eight districts under Rajshahi board.

When contacted, the Madrasa Education Board control room sources said that they had received information from only three districts.

The SSC examinations were scheduled to begin on March 27 but later was shifted to April 7 due to political unrest in the country.

UNB adds: Adviser in charge of the ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Sports and Youths Prof M Shamsul Hoq visited some SSC and Dakhil examination centres in the capital yesterday.

The centres included Government Laboratory High School, West Dhanmondi Yousuf High School, Kaderiya Talyabia Aliya Madrasa and Mohammadpur Government High School.

During the visit, the Adviser talked to the officials and others concerned and enquired about the law and order at the centres.

He expressed satisfaction at the preparations for holding the examinations in a peaceful atmosphere, said an official handout.

### Business leaders

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week to look into problems of trade and industry and decide immediate remedies.

The Adviser suggested that a core committee should simultaneously be set up at the FBCCI for "effective coordination" between the proposed government committee and the private sector.

At the meeting, members of the business community urged the caretaker government to urgently restore law and order to allow the trade and industry to resume normal activities.

Clearance of port congestions and some interim fiscal benefits were also demanded, particularly by representatives of the export sector.

FBCCI President Salman F Rahman said law and order is the foremost issue affecting the business community. "Rule of law is a must for confidence building in the trade and industry."

The caretaker government is enjoying a "tremendous amount of goodwill" from all in the society, he said, and it should exploit the "advantage" to the fullest in restoring law and order. The government should go in a bigger way for the recovery of illegal arms, Rahman added.

### ADP funds

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"positive implementation of projects rather than increasing the number or size of the ADP," he stressed.

The adviser called for serious consideration of the issues like poverty alleviation, socio-economic development of rural areas and income generation while making revision of the ADP. He also called for ensuring necessary allocation for the implementation of the approved projects.

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A 'citizens' rally' in Narayanganj against terrorism yesterday

— Star photo

### 'Citizens' rally' in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Apr 7: A number of professional organisations organised a 'citizens' rally' demanding action for curbing terrorism here yesterday.

This was disclosed at a high-level meeting of the Energy Ministry here yesterday with Adviser of the Ministry Dr Jamilur Reza Chowdhury in the chair.

The meeting was informed that the shortfall is running as some power plants have gone under rehabilitation and repairing work.

Shortage of electricity will disappear to a great extent when the power plants under rehabilitation and repairing work will return to production.

The meeting reviewed the progress of some ongoing and proposed power projects and plants under PDB and some new transmission lines, said an official handout.

### Fire at Mirpur

By Staff Correspondent

A fire broke out in a pharmaceutical company at Mirpur-7 in the city early morning yesterday.

According to fire service sources, the cause of the fire and the extent of damage could not be known immediately.

Two units of the fire fighting vehicles from the Mirpur station rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze within an hour, after it started a laboratory room of company at around 4:15 am.

### JCD, BCL clash in Patuakhali

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 7: At least 15 people were injured, 3 seriously, in clashes between Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Chhatra League (BCL) activists at the Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute today, according to reports received here.

The clashes, which started around 1:30 pm and continued till 3pm, erupted over the assault of a BCL worker, allegedly by JCD activists.

Of the seriously injured, Jasim, 21 and Mian, 20, have been admitted to the Patuakhali Sadar Hospital and another, Habib, 22 was transferred to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital here.

Meanwhile, a leader of the outlawed Sarbajala Party was arrested by Uzirpur police last night.

Alam Rabi, 25 was picked up from his residence at Mirakathi Village under Uzirpur around midnight last night. Police recovered three country-made pipe guns, two bullets and a toy revolver from his house.

### Indian polls

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"Show me one politician who is honest and I will vote for him," said Sadarshan Chawla, a shopkeeper here.

"Everyone is out to make money ... who has the moral right to even talk about it?"

George Fernandes, a veteran socialist, wholeheartedly agrees. "In India anyone who has the opportunity to make money makes it with both hands," he said in an interview. "From the Prime Minister to the bus conductor, everyone is engaged in making money."

"Yes, few politicians will be able to talk about it," he added. All Indian general elections in the past 25 years have been dominated by one key theme which has overshadowed all others.

The Bofors scandal, involving alleged kickbacks by the Swedish arms company to politicians, was the highlight of the campaign in the 1989 polls which unseated then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

### SAIC meet begins tomorrow

The 10th meeting of the SAARC Agricultural Information Centre (SAIC) Governing Board begins here tomorrow. The three-day meeting will be held at the SAIC conference room at Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, reports UNB.

### 7 senior LTTE cadres killed in fresh violence

COLOMBO, Apr 7: Tamil Tiger guerrillas today admitted losing seven of senior cadres in ferocious battles with security forces across Sri Lanka's embattled northern and eastern regions in a fresh wave of violence, reports AFP.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said over its clandestine radio that the group lost four men, including a self-styled major during a confrontation with the police Special Task Force (STF) commandos on Friday.

The LTTE's Voice of Tigers Radio did not say how many security personnel were killed in the confrontation in the eastern district of Ampara but an earlier Tiger statement from its London office said 16 STF men were killed.

However, the defence ministry said 18 STF commandos were killed and claimed killing 84 Tigers in two days of fighting in the north of the country on Thursday and Friday alone.

The Voice of Tigers Radio also said that the LTTE lost three lieutenants at Elephant Pass, located at the entrance of the northern Peninsula of

Jaffna which once served as a de facto state of the separatists.

In another statement from its London office, the group said that the military kept up an artillery barrage against three villages in the Vadamarachchi sector of the Jaffna peninsula and claimed that a Tamil civilian was injured.

Military officials denied shelling civilian targets and said even helicopter gunships were being deployed to take on identified LTTE targets in the peninsula.

Defence sources said that 95 automatic assault rifles were recovered from nearly 150 LTTE men and women killed in the Walkamam sector in the past eight days by infantry troops.

The crew members will visit some of naval training establishments here and at Kaptai and will take part in a friendly basketball match with BN team.

The aircraft will leave the country on April 12, said an ISPR press release today.

The aircraft will arrive in Ctg on April 12, said an ISPR press release today.

### US Navy aircraft arrives in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 7: A maritime patrol aircraft of the US Navy arrived here this morning on a six-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

There are 21 crew members in the aircraft, p-3 Orion.

Officials of the US Embassy in Dhaka and local Naval Officers received the visiting team.

During its stay, the aircraft will take part in a joint exercise with some of the Bangladesh Navy (BN) ships in the Bay of Bengal on maritime surveillance.

The speakers pointed out that rapid urban growth was at the root of most problems of the country.

### FF's memo to Chief Adviser

The Bangladesh Jatiya Mukti Joddha Sangsada yesterday submitted a memorandum to the Chief Adviser demanding immediate release of former President H M Ershad and his proper treatment in an open atmosphere, reports BSS.

President of CCHRB and Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh, and Akram Hosain Chowdhury, Secretary General of CCHRB, will act as Convenor and Member Secretary of the Council respectively.

The Election Monitoring Council was formed at a CCHRB executive committee meeting here Wednesday, said a press release.

Other members of the Council are Barrister Rabia Bhuiyan, AHM Noman, Mohammad Khurshid Alam, Abu Nayeen, Anisur Rahman, Adv Nazrul Islam and ANM Aminul Islam.

### Rivals clash near Fulbaria bus terminal: 3 hurt

By Staff Correspondent

At least three persons were injured in a clash between two rival groups near Fulbaria bus terminal in the city yesterday evening.

Three cocktails were hurled near the terminal during chase and counter-chase creating panic in the area at around 7:30 pm, locals said. Police lobbed tear gas shells to bring the situation under control, police sources said.

The injured two persons, taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) were identified as Murtaza and Mustafa.

### Financial powers

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able manpower, rapid transfer for PDs, ministries' failure in holding regular evaluation meeting, delay in reimbursement etc.

Dr Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad said, "the basic malice lies elsewhere. It is the weakness of macro management of the economy, which has always been corruption-ridden."

"If that basic malice can be adequately treated, the circumstances are bound to improve leading to satisfactory ADP performance. The basic things and public accountability, rule of law and national interest above self or party interests," the eminent economist added.

The land acquisition process of the government is very cumbersome," said a high official of a line ministry. "There is a shortage of land acquisition officers which delay the process. If the contractors of the projects are given the responsibility to manage land, it may quicken the process and at the same time the land-sellers will get just prices. This will also bring down the cost of land as it will eliminate bribes and manipulation of land prices."

The reimbursement problem is related with the PDs' lack of interest or incompetency in claiming money from the central bank," said a high official of the Planning Commission. "The PDs should be held responsible for smooth fund inflow in case of reimbursable projects."

A number of ministries do not hold regular evaluation meetings which also should be seriously addressed to," said another official. "Those ministries which regularly holds such meetings show quite good performance in project implementation. For example, the energy ministry, which holds these meetings has implemented 71 per cent of its projects till now which is quite good."

Pele

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He is appealing a court decision that he is also the father of a 31-year-old woman with whose mother Pele had an affair during his playing days.

Pele is now Brazil's minister for sport. One of his sons from first marriage is goalkeeper for the Santos Club.

## The Midnight File

### 30 killed in Zairean train accident

KINSHASA, Apr 7: Thirty people were killed in a railway accident at Mweka, 160 kilometers (100 miles) southwest of the Zairean capital Kinshasa, voice of Zaire radio said today. The disaster occurred Saturday and left about 30 other people injured, reports AFP.

## World Health Day observed

World Health Day was observed in the country yesterday.

Different organisations brought out colourful processions and held seminars and symposia to mark the day.

In observance of the day, the United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) organised a symposium at UNAB office in the city.

Noted physician Dr Md Khademul Nargis Ratna was the main speaker on this year's health day theme, healthy cities for better life.

Alex Redekopp, chief of the WHO healthy city/town projects in Dhaka spoke on the occasion. Senior journalists Santosh Gupta and Fazul Kacim, National Commissioner of Bangladesh Scouts, Afzal Hossain, Professor Raisuddin and Dr Syed Mohammad Shahed took part in the discussion.

Senior scientist Professor Md Abu Bakr presided over the meeting, a UNAB press release said.

The speakers pointed out that rapid urban growth was at the root of most problems of the country.

Jeffrey S Pereira, Vice President of CCHRB and Executive Director of Caritas Bangladesh, and Akram Hosain Chowdhury, Secretary General of CCHRB, will act as Convenor and Member Secretary of the Council respectively.

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Other members of the Council are Barrister Rabia Bhuiyan, AHM Noman, Mohammad Khurshid Alam, Abu Nayeen, Anisur Rahman, Adv Nazrul Islam and ANM Aminul Islam.

According to a press release of the organisation, a procession of the Sangsada which was marching towards the Chief Adviser's office yesterday was obstructed by police near the office. Later the processionists held a brief rally there.

After the rally, chairman of the Sangsada Dewan Sultan Mahmud and secretary general Shamsul Alam went to the Chief Adviser's office and handed over the memorandum to the concerned officials.

Former President Ershad is the chief patron of the organisation, the press release said.