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## Defence body

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ple to attend the committee meeting on her behalf.

The committee has, however referred the issue to the Speaker. The speaker would take up the issue with the PM as soon as possible, committee sources said.

Earlier, Shafiuah had received another letter from the PM a few days before the eighth meeting that said that A K Khandaker, a ruling party MP, would be representing her at the JS body meetings.

But Khandaker, having read the rules concerned, made a written communication to General Shafiuah that the JS Rules of Procedure did not permit him to represent the PM at the committee meetings. He therefore abstained from attending committee meeting.

The Prime Minister has so far attended none of the nine meetings of the committee held so far. Besides, she remained absent in the meetings without prior permission of the parliamentary body. Although no opposition MP has so far raised any objection to the PM's absence, yesterday's meeting witnessed discussion on the issue.

The Rule 193 of the JS Rules of Procedure says: "If a member is absent for two or more consecutive meetings of a committee without permission of the committee, a motion may be moved in the House for discharge of such member from the committee."

However, during the meeting the standing committee formed a three member sub-committee headed by Col (retd) Showkat Ali to probe into 11 specific allegations regarding various grievances of some members of the country's armed forces.

The committee also kept the controversial issue of "purchasing of MiG-29 fighters" as an agenda for its May 31 meeting and asked the Defence Secretary to give his opinion over the purchase after discussion with the Air Chief.

## Fuel tanker

From Page 1  
condition, doctors said. The death toll is likely to rise, they said.

The fire rapidly spread throughout the dusty town engulfing shops and homes.

My son was burnt alive in front of my eyes... I couldn't do anything," said Sakina Bibi beating her head with her hands. "I have lost everything."

Mohammed Asif, a farmer, said his two brothers died in the fire.

## From the Gully

From Page 1  
belongs to India and the rest are there to provide company.

Well, every participating nation has a right to boost interest of the people in the competition in their own way. But the participation of the players in the commercials has rocketed their images in the public minds as demi gods that can not fail. In such a situation the players are captive in their own cage and have to perform under tremendous pressure unlike their opponents. They have not only modelled for products but have acted also in an attempt to boost the sales as well as lift their own images.

Zarhuddin should have realised that India were facing an opponent who had very few to boast about but everybody to be confident of. The South Africans, billed as the favourites for winning the trophy outwitted their opponents right from the start. The turning point came early in the innings when Pollock passed through the defences of the master batsman Tendulkar. He shamed himself up immediately and went about his business slowly. Ganguly, who normally takes time to score, was also slow. Between these too they accounted for a lot of dot balls. Azhar should have shown some imagination when Dravid got out. Instead of coming on himself Jadeja or Robin Singh should have been preferred. The Indian total was the result of South Africa's strategy of containment when they found that wickets were hard to get.

The early successes of Srinath and Kumble kindled hopes in the Indian hearts and though wickets fell at regular intervals the Proteas were always ahead of the Indian score and the required run rate never went out of their grip. There were too many experiments with bowling as Srinath lost his way after only four overs. Rhodes and Kallis were no rabbits and relished the long hops of Agarkar. To ask him to bowl at that stage of the game was to invite him to commit suicide. While India could manage only 63 runs from their last ten overs the South Africans hammered 26 runs from only nine deliveries. The fine efforts of Ganguly and Kallis ended sadly as both tried for the runs which were not there; but they had enough deliveries left to get those seven runs between them.

Hansie Cronje may not be as experienced as his counterpart, but he is more composed and intelligent and leads a team that has more players than ours.

## 2 businessmen

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Gulzar's brother Amir Hossein has filed a case with Double Mooring thana today accusing 12 persons.

Police arrested two persons for their alleged involvement in the killing.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina embracing a Cambodian girl at the Hague Peace Conference on Saturday. The girl lost one of her legs in a land mine blast at the age of six.

— PID photo

## PM: Mid-term polls

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all. We don't do politics on ego. We apply our intellect."

In reply to a question about "inaction" against police for stripping off a woman activist of BNP during the last hartal, Hasina said the Home Minister regretted it immediately, a probe committee was formed and action was taken.

She, however, deplored the way the photo of the woman was published in national newspapers with "commercial" attitude.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and State Minister for Information Prof Abu Sayeed were present at the press conference.

the same."

Bangladesh's defence budget is very insignificant compared to others, she said. "Our army is the symbol of national sovereignty. They are also working for peace and earned fame in the UN peacekeeping mission."

Hasina further said, there would be need of money to build a modern army and the question of fund crunch did not arise.

The rule nist, issued by the LGED chief engineer Quamrul Islam Siddique takes over as Power Development Board (PDB) chairman today.

Siddique replaces former chairman Nuruddin M Kamal.

Kamal's contract was terminated Friday last as per a government decision taken last month. Kamal had been serving as the PDB chairman since middle of 1996.

Sources said that the government was dissatisfied with the performance of Nuruddin Kamal and blamed him for the on-going severe loadshedding across the country.

The government had selected Siddique for the job early last month on the basis of his performance in the LGED during the last two decades, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Siddique met with his colleagues at the LGED office yesterday, said a press LGED press release yesterday.

The outgoing chief engineer said the key to LGED's glory and goodwill lies in local people's participation in development activities.

## Young man shot dead in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot dead allegedly by a gang of local hoodlums at Laxmi Bazar in the city yesterday morning.

The victim was identified as Kabir Hossain alias Dano, 21, son of Nasiruddin, a resident of Shyampur Bazar, police said.

Shutrapur police suspected that, Kabir was murdered as a sequel to previous enmity with the assailants.

Kabir had an altercation with the gang of local hoodlums, including Bachchu and Shumon, near a laundry shop at Laxmi Bazar at about 11:30 am, police said.

At one stage of altercation Bachchu shot Kabir in his abdomen, police added. Fatally wounded Kabir was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Police arrested Shumon in connection with the murder soon after the incident. The body was sent to DMCH morgue for autopsy.

Fultara, mother of the dead, filed a murder case with Shutrapur thana yesterday.

## Quamrul takes over as PDB chief today

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court has issued another rule nisi on the Chairman of Rajuk for conversion of a public car park at Gulshan in the city into a commercial plot and given directives not to auction the plot for sale till hearing of a writ petition filed in this regard.

The rule nisi, issued by a Division Bench comprising Justice Md Fazul Karim and Justice Md Ali Asghar, is returnable in six weeks, said a press release of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) yesterday.

The writ petition, filed by Dr Shahidul Malik of the BLAST and five other residents of Gulshan, said the car park along Roads No 45 and 35 at Gulshan Circle 2 has been converted into a commercial plot by Rajuk for sale in violation of the Town Improvement Act, 1953 and the Dhaka City Master Plan.

The auction bid is scheduled to be opened on May 24.

## Sonia faces

From Page 1

"It is not possible that a country of 980 million people, with a wealth of education, competence and ability, can have anyone other than an Indian, born of Indian soil, to head its government," party leaders Sharad Pawar, Purno Sangma and Tariq Anwar said in the confidential letter. A copy of the letter was made available to The Associated Press.

The three leaders said they had tried to garner support within the party for the issue which "hits at the core pride of every Indian," but their attempts had been thwarted.

The letter contained the most stinging attack Mrs Gandhi has faced in her monolithic party since joining politics last year. It did not question her position as Congress president, but marked an unprecedented rebellion in the party that discourages voices of dissent.

Amritul also revealed that Bangladesh would bat first if he wins the toss.

New Zealand captain Stephen Fleming said they were not going to take Bangladesh lightly.

Bangladesh is coming up, so we cannot underestimate them. They are doing well in England," said Fleming.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Cricket Board president Saber Hossain Chowdhury arrived in London to cheer up the team.

State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader also talked to the Bangladesh captain over telephone yesterday and wished them luck.

Bangladesh, in Group B for the first round, will play against West Indies on May 21 in Dublin, Scotland on May 24 in Edinburgh, Australia on May 27 in Chester-le-Street and Pakistan on May 31 in Northampton.

From CU Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 16: Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, has called for a day-long hartal in greater Chittagong tomorrow protesting the killing of one of its activists on the Chittagong University campus yesterday.

Shibir observed a day-long strike at the Chittagong University yesterday protesting the killing.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong University Authorities suspended all classes and examinations for five days from today.

The judge adjourned the proceedings till June 3 after hearing both sides.

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## 10 killed as bus, truck collide in Rajbari

RAJBARI, May 16: At least 10 people were killed and 20 injured in a road accident on the Daulatdia-Faridpur highway today, reports UNB.

Police said 10 of the passengers of a Faridpur-bound bus from Daulatdia ghat died on the spot as it fell into a ditch colliding with a truck at Khanthapur bridge at about 4 pm.

The critically injured were identified as Sadhan Sarkar, Khairi Sentu, Ismail, Matiur Rahman, Abdur Rahman, Harun, Momin, Rahima, Masud and Touhidur Rahman.

Rajbari Deputy Commissioner Amirul Islam and SP Sohrab Hossain addressed the spot.

Twenty other passengers of the bus were injured in the collision with the goods-laden truck coming from opposite direction.

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## JP march

From Page 1

Police and paramilitary BDR kept vigil on the convoy all along the 17-km approach road to the bridge's eastern end.

Khaleda Zia led from the front, stopped at the toll gate and waited until each and every car in her convoy crossed the gate.

She got off from her jeep and sat in a chair near the toll gate at the Bhauapur end as the vehicles moved slowly towards the bridge.

The 328 vehicles, mostly micro-buses, passed the toll gate in phases, in 37 minutes from 4:28 pm.

There were a few big buses carrying slogan-shouting party workers some of whom jeered at the security men and officials.

Khaleda's jeep was in the last batch of vehicles that crossed the eastern toll gate at 6:05pm. A smiling BNP chief waved at the security personnel and other officials present there.

However, toll was not paid for any of the vehicles although BNP had promised to do so in advance when the ban withdrawing deal with the government had been reached Saturday afternoon.

Officials at the bridge site listed the vehicles with their registration numbers. They also quoted the DC and the SP directing them to allow the motorcade to go with or without payment of the tolls.

Reaching the toll gate first, BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan also asked the road marchers to let the road marchers go.

On the other side of the river, the road marchers appeared more enthusiastic seeing bigger gatherings at different places in Sirajganj and Bogra districts where the Opposition leader spoke, said our senior reporter

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