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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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at 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.

The Prime Minister said whenever any incident happen, her government is always prompt to take action. But while BNP was in power, Begum Zia had ignored the rape and killing of Yasmin in Dinajpur as "normal."

Replying to a question about the "unwritten" parts of the CHT accord, Hasina said there was nothing off the record. But there were some understandings for which Kalpa Ranjan Chakma was made Minister and Santu Larma Chairman of the Interim Regional Council.

About the opposition to the peace accord, she said harshly, "those who are linked with arms smuggling may not be happy with the peace pact that stalled their illegal trade."

Hasina refuted a complaint that the opposition was not given a chance to discuss the CHT accord in Parliament. She said elaborate discussion was held in the House and the Leader of the Opposition spoke on the issue for more than an hour.

When a correspondent quoted from the prime minister's speech at the Hague Peace Conference for cutting down war budget and wanted to know if her government would cut military expenditure in the new budget, Hasina said, "War budget and defence budget are not

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.

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

Gulshan car park

Rajuk asked not to auction plots

By Staff Correspondent

The High Court has issued another *re nunciatio* 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 *re nunciatio*, issued by a Division Bench comprising Justice Md Fajlul 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 Shahdeen 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 for Rajuk for sale in violation of the Town Improvement Act, 1953 and the Dhaka City Master Plan.

The action bid in scheduled to be opened on May 24.

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 Khankhanapur bridge at about 4 pm.

Of the dead, one was identified as Sanu Rani, 30. The identity of others could not be known immediately.

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

Of the injured, seven were admitted to the Faridpur Medical College Hospital, two to Faridpur Sadar Hospital and four to Rajbari Sadar Hospital.

The critically injured were identified as Sadhan Sarkar, Khair, Sentu, Ismail, Matlur Rahman, Abdur Rahman, Harun, Momin, Rahima, Masud and Touhinur Rahman.

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

Police seized the bus of Bikash Paribahan and the truck. Both the drivers fled the scene.

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 Shyamapur 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

LOED 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.

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

Sonia faces

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"It is 1980 million people, with 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.

The letter also demanded that India's prime minister have some 'track record in public life.' Sonia, a political novice till a year ago, has none.

Shibir calls hartal in Ctg

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 today protesting the killing.

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

JP march

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Dhaka at 9:45 am for Haluaghat in Mymensingh, stopped just after entering the district town as activists of the ruling party's student front blasted crackers and torched an arch near the Polytechnic Institute, erected to welcome the marchers.

The convoy of over 150 vehicles were parked hurriedly at the Maskanda Bus Terminal and a group of JP activists chased the Chhatra League activists with sticks. The clash continued for half an hour when the black jeep carrying the JP Chairman passed through. Later, other vehicles also passed smoothly.

Police came in only after the troublemakers returned to their dormitories at the Polytechnic Institute.

The Chhatra League activists later said they were protesting the killing of a student of the Institute during the anti-autocracy movement when Ershad was in power. But JP leaders and workers claimed that it was designed to foil the 'road march'.

Earlier, Ershad was welcomed by people in their hundreds in Mymensingh with thunderous slogans -- "Welcome, welcome, brother-in-law, welcome". They addressed him as "brother-in-law" as his wife, Rausha Ershad, hails from Mymensingh.

JP's programme was part of the opposition's 'road march'.

During the 11-hour journey from Dhaka to Haluaghat, Ershad addressed over a dozen roadside gatherings.

Bangladesh most corrupt among 13 Asian nations?

CALCUTTA, May 16: Singapore is the least corrupt among eleven Asian countries according to the Asia competitiveness report 1999 published by World Economic Forum (WEF), reports PTI.

The most corrupt among the selected countries is Indonesia followed by Philippines and India, the study published recently said.

The corruption ratings for the countries on an one-to-ten scale were Singapore 1.84, Hong Kong 2.31, Japan 2.5, Taiwan 3.43, Malaysia 5.01, South Korea 5.5, Thailand 6.13 and China 7.3. The ratings for three most corrupt nations of eleven are Indonesia 8.4, Philippines 7.98 and India 7.32.

While the ratings for Bangladesh and Pakistan were not available, the international NGO suggested that Bangladesh with a rating of 9.2 was the most corrupt among 13 Asian nations followed by Pakistan (8.47).

The WEF report, which had been designed by Harvard Institute for International Development (HID), was prepared after interviewing business executives of firms who were asked to rate the level of corruption, according to the extent of irregular, additional payments connected with import and export permits, business licenses, exchange controls, tax assessments, police protection or loan applications.

Shezneen

From Page 1

Shahid, contractor Hasan, supervisor Badal, carpenter Shani Ram, guard Humayun Kabir and maids Parveen and Minu. Of the accused, guard Humayun Kabir died of a cardiac arrest on January 11.

All the six accused were produced before the court yesterday.

Mosaraf Hossain Kajal, lawyer for the maid, yesterday filed a 'time prayer' before the court of judge AK Roy as hearing of a petition, filed by the same lawyer in the High Court earlier, is likely to be held today.

Earlier on April 13, Kajal filed an appeal in the High Court seeking to set aside the order of the Special Court for Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, that framed charges against his clients in the Shazneen rape case.

The prosecution lawyers yesterday opposed the prayer of Kajal saying that the murder case should continue as usual as the petition filed with the High Court was regarding framing charges in the Shazneen rape case, not against the Shazneen murder case.

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



BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing a rally at Tongi yesterday. — Star photo

BNP convoy crosses

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power, she said.
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 Bhuapur 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 4:28pm.

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 waived 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 officials to let the road marchers to go.

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

Rezaul Karim, covering the road march.

People had been waiting for hours at Bhuiyangati, Nalka, Panchshia, Doulatpur, Kadda, Shahedganj and Hatikumrun of Sirajganj district and Sherpur in Bogra district, he said.

Speaking at the Bhuiyangati rally, the Opposition leader spelt out her next course of action to 'topple' the three-year-old AL government. "Our next march will go to Tamabil in Sylhet and then to Satkhira. Later, we will invite people from across the country to come to the capital raising a slogan -- cholo, cholo, Dhaka cholo, shoirachar gherao karo (let's all go to Dhaka, besiege the autocrat), she said, hoping such an action would bring about the government's downfall.

On way Bhuapur from Dhaka, people waited at places to see Khaleda Zia. Big arches were erected and banners hung wishing the success of the road march.

Police and BDR were on guard along the way and also at places where she addressed rallies.

The convoy drove past the Prime Minister's Office at Tejgaon in the city, where police and BDR lined up in riot gear.

Jamaat demands early polls

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Prof Ghulam Azam yesterday demanded early general election under caretaker government, saying the people don't want to see Awami League in power any longer, reports UNB.

"Islamic values, independence and sovereignty of the country are not safe with this government in power," he told a gathering before embarking on a 3-day Long March from the Engineers Institute at 9 am.

Pakistan beat WI

From Page 1

when he nudged Razzaq to give Inzamam-ul-Haq his second close catch, while Ricardo Powell holed out in the deep against Saqlain Mushtaq.

Left-hander Shivnarine Chanderpaul, the last man out, top-scored for the West Indies with 77.

There was at least some consolation for Walsh, returning to Bristol where he played for Gloucestershire for 14 years. Both he and Dillon took three wickets each.

Pakistan's top order, however, had not helped their own cause. Openers Saeed Anwar drove wildly for Lara to take a catch while running back at mid-on and Inzamam-ul-Haq casually top-edged a pull off his first ball to short fine leg.

The worst culprit was Yousuf Youhana who, after making 34, swung wildly and skied a return catch to Phil Simmons.

Lara's plans, however, were thrown into disarray when Keith Arthurton, his side's fifth bowler, went off with a sprained ankle while tripping over the ball in the outfield. He was not able to bowl but returned to bat lower in the order.

SCOREBOARD

WEST INDIES
St. Campbell b Shoaib Akhtar 9

*RD Jacobs c Inzamam-ul-Haq b Azhar Razaq 25
JC Adams c Inzamam-ul-Haq b Azhar Mahmood 23

*BC Lara c sub (Mushtaq Ahmed) b Abdur Razaq 11
S Chanderpaul c Yousuf Youhana b Saqlain Mushtaq 77

*Yousuf Youhana b Saqlain Mushtaq 4
PV Simmons c Moin Khan b Azhar Mahmood 5

CEL Ambrose c Moin Khan b Azhar Razaq 1
KLT Arthurton c Saeed Anwar b Abdur Mahmood 6

M Dillon run out (Shoaib Akhtar) 6
CA Walsh not out 0
Extras: (b-1, lb-8, w-20, nb-6) 35

Total: (All out in 48.5 overs) 202
FOW: 1-14; 2-72; 3-84; 4-101; 5-121; 6-141; 7-142; 8-161; 9-195; 10-202.

Bowler: O M R W
Wasim Akram 10 3 37 0
Shoaib Akhtar 9.5 1 54 2
Saqlain Mushtaq 9 0 22 1
Azhar Mahmood 10 0 48 3
Abdur Razaq 10 3 32 3

Result: Pakistan won by 27 runs.

BNP didn't pay JMB toll

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The convoy of 305 vehicles led by BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia didn't pay toll while crossing the Bangabandhu Bridge during their road march, officials said, reports UNB.

During Saturday's meeting the BNP leadership had agreed to pay the toll in advance. BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan told the reporters that they would pay the toll.

"But, the BNP Chairperson let other vehicles of the convoy to pass through the bridge, herself becoming the last to cross it," said an official concerned in Dhaka.

The BNP men told the toll collectors to send the bill to the BNP Chairperson's office and crossed the bridge after 6 pm, he said.

After the inauguration of the 4.8km-long bridge on June 23 last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was the first to cross the bridge in a jeep paying the toll, the official recalled.

Scots go down

From Page 1

insults while Hamilton, who hopes to play for England after the World Cup, even dared to reverse sweep leg spinner Shane Warne.

Warne had the last laugh as he removed both men to end with figures of three for 39. But Australia put down three catches, missed a string of run-out chances and gave away 39 extras. Hamilton, Scotland's top scorer, made 34 off 42 balls.

Things did not improve when Gilchrist, touted as one of the tournament's most exciting batsmen, was back in the pavilion with just six to his name.

Ricky Ponting then took 20 balls to get off the mark before making a scratchy 33 and Darren Lehmann followed him back to the pavilion for a second ball duck after chopping the ball into his stumps to make it 101 for three.

Mark Waugh, however, kept his cool, compiling 67 before he spooned a return catch to off spinner Nicholas Dyer. Steve Waugh ended on 59 not out.

Scottish opener Bruce Patterson will never forget the first ball of the game -- Scotland's first ball in an official one-day international. He cracked the delivery from Damien Fleming for four.

Immediately and went about his business slowly. Ganguly, who normally takes time to score, was also slow. Between these two they accounted for a lot of dot balls. Azhar should have showed 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 Sri-nath 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 Sri-nath lost his way after only four overs. Rhodes and Klusener were no rabbits and relished the long hops of Agarwal. 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 'stars'.

SCOREBOARD
AUSTRALIA
Gilchrist c Dyer b Asim Butt 6
M Waugh c & b Dyer 67
Ponting c Allingham b Blain 33
Lehmann b Dyer 40
S Waugh not out 11
Bevan not out 16
Extras: (lb-3, w-4, nb-9) 16
Total: (for 4 wickets in 44.5 overs) 182

DNB: S Lee, SK Warne, DW Fleming, AC Dale, GD McGrath.
FOW: 1-17; 2-101; 3-101; 4-141.

Bowler O M R W
Blain 8 0 35 1
Asim Butt 10 3 21 1
Brinkley 8 0 43 0
Hamilton 8.5 0 37 0
Dyer 10 1 43 2

Result: Australia won by six wickets.

Defence body

From Page 1

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, Shafiqullah had received another letter from the PM a few days before the eighth meeting that said that 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 Shafiqullah 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 (ret'd) 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 commercial has ruined 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.

Azharuddin 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 shut himself up