

## War cry pitches high, India sails warships

AGENCIES, New Delhi  
The Indian Navy yesterday said it had moved five warships from the country's eastern fleet based in Andhra Pradesh to the Arabian Sea, closer to arch-rival Pakistan.

"The warships have been moved to increase the level of preparedness on the western sector, keeping in view the nations security concerns and the operational situation," a navy spokesman told Reuters.

The movements follow rising tensions between India and Pakistan after Muslim rebels battling Indian rule in Kashmir raided an army camp in the south of Jammu and

Kashmir state, killing at least 35 people, many of them family members of Indian soldiers.

The spokesman said the ships -- a destroyer, a frigate and three missile corvettes -- would reach the Arabian Sea from their eastern base within a week.

The western fleet is based in Bombay and its operational area covers the Arabian Sea and Indian ocean. The navy has a total of 140 ships.

The nuclear rivals have massed almost a million men along their border in a stand-off over the disputed Kashmir.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, in a

speech to soldiers massed on the border in Kashmir, said yesterday the time had come for a 'decisive fight'.

Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf following a meeting with his cabinet and security chiefs yesterday said his country was ready to defend itself against any Indian attack but called for negotiations.

Meanwhile India and Pakistan traded sporadic fire across the

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## Gunmen kill another ward commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A ruling BNP-backed ward commissioner of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) having criminal records was gunned down at Tanti Bazar Shama Patti in the old part of the city yesterday evening.

Witnesses said three unidentified gunmen shot Commissioner Binoy Krishna Sarkar Bina of ward No. 72 in the chest while he was passing Nawab Bhaban at about 7:30pm by a rickshaw.

Bina is the second elected ward commissioner to have been shot and killed since the April 25 DCC election. He is one of the 32 listed criminals to win the just-held civic polls.

Earlier on May 10, Saidur Rahman Newton, another BNP-backed ward commissioner of ward No. 8, was gunned down at Dhanmondi in the city. Newton, who was also the vice-president of the BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), was killed following a rift with notorious gangster Kala Jahangir.

Sources said the gunmen intercepted the rickshaw Bina was riding with a friend, Pradip. They fired on the duo from a close range leaving both critically injured. Bina was rushed to the Mitford Medical College Hospital and declared dead on arrival.

Hit in the abdomen, Pradip was admitted to the Dhaka Medical

College Hospital. Later, his relatives took him to a city clinic to dodge the police.

Locals said Bina was killed following a feud over some divine property in the old part of the city. He had allegedly captured some of the property, angering some local influential people, they added.

Police suspect involvement of the goons of Dakat Shahid in the incident. A 'block raid' aided by the paramilitary BDR was going on in the area at the time of filing of this report at 10:40 last night.

The office in charge of Kotwali Police Station told The Daily Star last night that the raid would continue through the night. He also said that 'several' arrests were made. However, no case was filed.

## Vajpayee vows 'decisive fight', Musharraf on the back foot

AGENCIES, New Delhi/Islamabad

India's prime minister told troops on the front line with Pakistan yesterday that the time had come for a decisive fight.

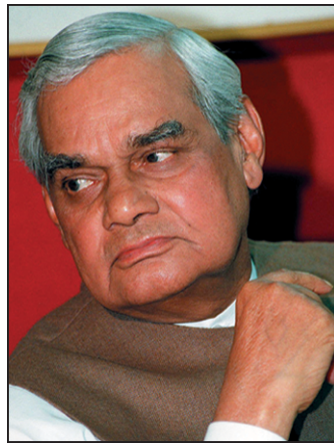
Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf told his cabinet and security chiefs that his country wants negotiations but was ready to fight if attacked.

Although Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee did not spell out the nature of the fight, he said his talk to soldiers in northern Kashmir, at a time of high tension between

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Pervez Musharraf



Atal Behari Vajpayee

the nuclear-capable foes, should be seen as a signal.

"Whether our neighbour understands this signal or not, whether the world takes account of it or not, history will be witness to this. We shall write a new chapter of victory," he told soldiers in Kupwara, northern Kashmir.

"Be prepared for sacrifices. But our aim should be victory. Because it's now time for a decisive fight," he said in a speech which was broadcast live nationwide on state television.

Vajpayee said that India has

been forced to fight a "proxy war" with Pakistan, which New Delhi accuses of training and arming the Islamic militants.

"The challenge has been thrown at India and we accept it," he said. "The world understands that there is injustice against us but has not openly come out in our favour. Nevertheless, we will protect ourselves."

Vajpayee's visit to Kashmir was overshadowed by the killing on Tuesday of separatist leader Abdul Gani Lone in Srinagar, summer

capital of Indian Kashmir.

Thousands of mourners shouting "Freedom for Kashmir", took part yesterday in an emotional funeral procession for Lone, a moderate whom India had hoped to convince to take part in state elections planned for later this year.

Pakistan said yesterday it would not allow the part of disputed Kashmir it controls to be used for terrorist activity.

But a government statement, after a joint meeting of Musharraf's

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## Manavzamin editor files petition for stay on verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Editor of Dainik Manavzamin Matur Rahman Chowdhury yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court for a stay on the verdict given by the High Court division in the cassette scam case.

However, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Ruhul Amin said a full bench of the Appellate Division would hear the petition on June 9.

The High Court sentenced the editor of the tabloid to one month in jail on May 20 for contempt of court. Former President HM Ershad also was given a six-month jail term in the same case.

Barristers Ishtiaque Ahmed and Amir-ul-Islam moved the petition on behalf of the defendant.

Meanwhile, different organisations have expressed disappointment at jail terms and fines handed down to the editor and the publisher of the daily Manavzamin.

In statements issued yesterday, the organisations termed the verdict a barrier to the freedom of the press, free flow of information and democ

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## Tk 5.5 cr gold haul at ZIA

790 pieces of gold bars found hidden inside motor parts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Customs Intelligence and Investigation (CII) yesterday seized 790 pieces of gold bars weighing 7.9 kg and worth over Tk 5.5 crore kept hidden inside motor parts in the cargo complex at the Zia International Airport (ZIA).

Yesterday's was the second biggest gold haul by customs officials at ZIA after an earlier haul of gold bars weighing 4.5 maunds or about 168 kg.

The gold bars were kept inside a consignment of eight pinions bound for Siam Motors, 73/B Central Road, Dhaka. The contact phone number on the consignment numbered 2285500 was phony.

Alauddin Chowdhury, Director General of CII told The Daily Star that a CII team had been investigating the matter for the last five days following a tip-off.

"After scanning the consignment, we became sure of the gold bars inside," the DG said.

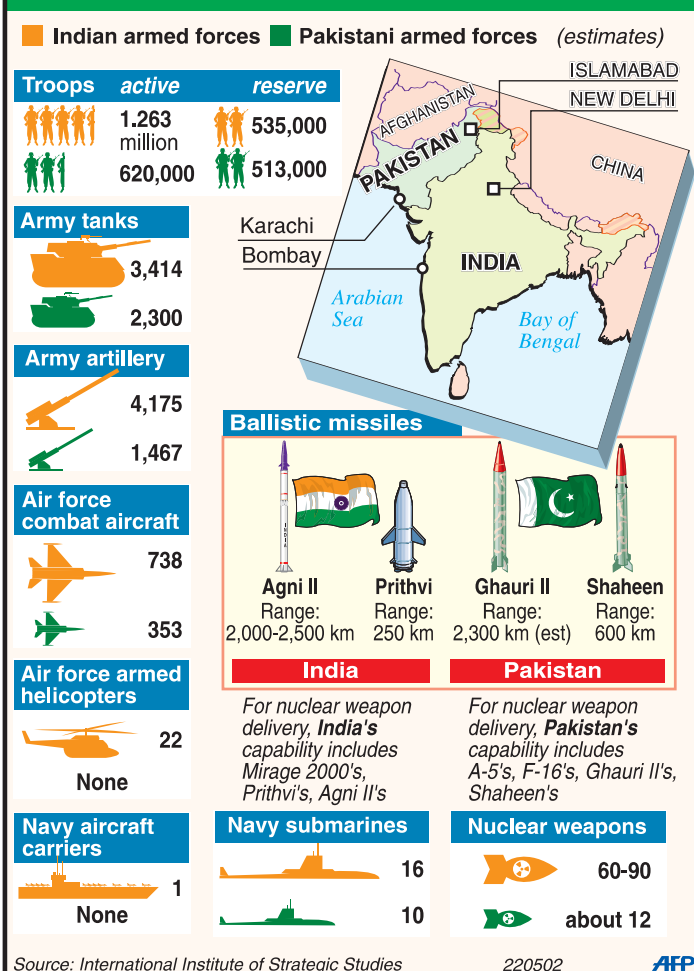
Customs officials in presence of other agencies broke open the consignment at about 1pm yesterday. Three of the pinions had been sealed with zinc and the rest five with iron to evade inspection by security.

Neither the importer nor the local clearing agent could be arrested. "Two representatives of the importer present during the inspection managed to flee as we started opening the consignment," another customs official present at the spot said.

The consignment was shipped in an Emirates flight from Dubai by Original Auto Spare Parts LLC and reached Dhaka at about 9:40 am Tuesday.

The seized gold bars were kept in the customs warehouse. A departmental case was filed in this regard. Customs officials said they would file a case with the police for investigation into the matter.

### India-Pakistan military balance



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## Bigger budget on the cards!

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite resource constraints, the size of the budget for the next fiscal is likely to cross the current fiscal's as indicated at a pre-budget meeting yesterday.

"The budget for the next fiscal will be between Tk 44,000 crore and Tk 45,500 crore. I can assure you that it will not go below Tk 43,000 crore and will not touch Tk 46,000 crore," Finance and Planning Minister Saifur Rahman told lawmakers during a consultation at the NEC conference room in the city yesterday.

However, he reminded the lawmakers that deficit financing cannot cross 5.1 per cent of GDP due to donor pressure.

The current fiscal's budget is

Tk44,765 crore.

No opposition lawmakers apart from Rawshan Ershad of the Jatiya Party (Ershad group) attended the programme. BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Information Minister Tariqul Islam and around 40 lawmakers belonging to the ruling four-party alliance participated in the discussion.

Saifur informed the lawmakers that only around Tk 6,000 crore will be available from the donors for the next budget.

Law and order featured high at the meeting as many lawmakers commented that if the situation did not improve, it would have a negative impact on the development process.

Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan report-

edly told the meeting that business would be severely affected unless collection of tolls could be checked.

The lawmakers urged the finance minister to allocate more funds for the modernisation of the law enforcement agencies, meeting sources said.

Some lawmakers criticised reform programmes of the government. When MA Hashem, MP, raised the issue of expediting the privatisation process, a BNP lawmaker from Khulna objected to the idea.

"Don't talk so ruthlessly. You are not only a businessman, but also a people's representative and you have to respect their sentiment," the BNP lawmaker told Hashem.

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## Virtual separation of judiciary Govt may seek more time

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is likely to seek a four-month extension of its deadline since it is failing to implement the Supreme Court's 12-point directives for virtual separation of the judiciary by May 30.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed told newsmen yesterday that the petition would be submitted to before a vacation bench of the Supreme Court on May 27, three days before the expiry of the deadline.

The government received a fresh deadline of May 30 to implement the 12-point instructions given by the full bench of the Supreme Court Appellate Division on March 19. In case of failure to meet the deadline, the petitioner should inform the court who are the persons responsible for non-implementation of the

directives with their name, designation and address.

However, the government would not submit any names responsible for the failure to meet the deadline, said the sources. Instead, it would say that a significant progress has been made in this regard and the implementation process is underway.

The government could not finalise two rules, one of which is the Bangladesh Judicial Service (determining workplace, promotion, grant of leave, control, discipline and job rules). The other is the rules and regulations for establishing the Judicial Service, dealing with appointment in the service, and removal and termination from the service.

Moreover, the government is scrutinising the CrPC (Code of

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## Badal's mother withdraws case under 'threat'

NARAYANGANJ, from Our Correspondent

The sensational 'murder' case of Badal took a dramatic turn yesterday when his mother Sanowara Begum withdrew the case.

According to sources, Sanowara Begum along with her husband went to the First Class Magistrate's Court yesterday and submitted a case withdrawal prayer.

Earlier, she had accused seven Detective Branch (DB) personnel including Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Narayanganj DB Fazlul Kabir and SI Azharul Islam for the murder of her son.

A butcher by profession, Badal, 19, was allegedly picked up without any arrest warrant by the Narayanganj DB police from his house at Baraipara on May 7 and

afterwards severely tortured as his family members failed to pay the ransom demanded for his release. He later died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

But yesterday his mother said she was 'provoked' by some people to lodge the case against the seven DB men right after the death of her son. Now, she is not 'interested' to pursue the case, she said in her written prayer.

Replying to a question of Magistrate Mohammad Ali, Sanowara said no one had threatened her to withdraw the case and she is doing it voluntarily.

The court had fixed the date for hearing on the case on June 26. But because of the prayer, the case would be withdrawn on the same date.

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## Darkness no more

Five congenitally blind children of a family get eyesight after surgery

NAIMUL HAQ

Five children of a family have been blessed with eyesight after surgery for childhood cataract, a common congenital viral infection.

The children, aged between two and 13, left the city's Islamia Eye Hospital on Monday in delight with their father, also visually impaired.

Such an operation for five of the same family is first ever in the hospital, possibly in the country. Earlier, three children of a family were operated on for cataract, doctors said.

Eight to ten children with congenital cataract are admitted to the hospital a week, said the doctor.

On May 15 were operated on three children and the rest the following day at the paediatric ophthalmology department of the hospital.

Imam Hossain, the eldest child,

said, "I can see my fingers. I can see things. It is my happiest moment."

Harun-ur-Rashid, father of the children, said, "I took my sons and only daughter to many traditional healers and doctors in the village, but nothing worked. Early this year, I came to know about the hospital. A doctor told me that my children would be able to see."

The children from the Kewra village of Faridganj in Chandpur were treated free. All costs were borne by the Childhood Blindness Project, Bangladesh, a UK-based organisation.

Dr Quazi Sabbir Anwar who operated on the children said, "I have done childhood cataract surgery before, but their case was different because all were from the same family."

"The children will get intra-ocular lenses within a month which

will help them see clearly," said the young doctor who specialised in paediatric ophthalmology in Canada.

The children's grandfather had advised Harun-ur-Rashid not to have children after his marriage fearing that his next generation might also be born with defects, so was the case in their grandmother's family. Their grandfather, her sisters and two brothers were all born visually impaired.

The rubella viral infection is potentially serious because of its ability to produce defects in a developing embryo, if the mother is infected in her early pregnancy, say experts.

In the developing countries, as many as ten to 15 per cent women in their childbearing years are

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Nearing the end of agony...an eye specialist examines five visually-impaired children of a family before their surgery at the Islamia Eye Hospital in the city recently. The operation removed congenital cataract they were suffering from and gave them eyesight.

STAR FILE PHOTO

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