

# Occupying powers set to take control of Iraq's oil wealth

**AFP, United Nations**

The United States and Britain introduced a resolution yesterday that would end 12 years of UN sanctions against Iraq and give them control of the country's oil revenues for at least a year.

The tough resolution that in effect relegates the United Nations and other international institutions to an advisory role with little power, would phase out over four

months the existing UN oil-for-food humanitarian programme.

The United States and Britain, who sponsored the measure along with Spain, want a vote by June 3, when that programme, which gives the United Nations control over the oil revenues, needs to be renewed.

Without adoption of the resolution, no Iraqi, US or UN entity in Baghdad has the legal authority to export oil.

The Bush administration is counting on approval from Russia, France, China and Germany, who had the strongest anti-war position in the 15-member body, with officials saying there was little enthusiasm for another bruising fight.

Nevertheless, the text, which two senior council diplomats called "hard" and "in your face," will probably face amendments from France and Russia, who have

favoured suspending the sanctions but leaving some control with the United Nations until an Iraqi government is established.

And nearly every council member, including Britain, had wanted to send UN weapons inspectors back to Iraq, as called for in at least 16 resolutions as a condition for lifting the sanctions, imposed when

Iraq

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## PM to visit Natore today

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi**

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will visit Natore today.

She will inaugurate the Bonpara-Hatikumrul-Nalka Highway linking Rajshahi region with Bangabandhu Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge in the morning.

Construction of the 55-kilometre highway was completed in last month at a cost of nearly Tk 362 crore.

Former prime minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the construction work of the highway in December 1998.

A toll plaza was erected in Kachhikata area on the highway.

The prime minister will also address a public meeting at Nawab Shiraj-ud-Doula College ground in the afternoon.

# SARS virus genome is a 'double-edged sword'

**AFP, Paris**

The most complete genetic study to date of the SARS virus has revealed an agent that appears to undergo almost negligible mutation, a phenomenon that is described as "a double-edged sword" for the doctors battling to eradicate it.

Scientists in Singapore compared the genetic ID of samples of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) virus, taken in throat swabs from local patients, with the genome of samples found in other countries.

The most important areas of the genomes were identical, something that is remarkable in so-called RNA viruses, which includes SARS and other mem

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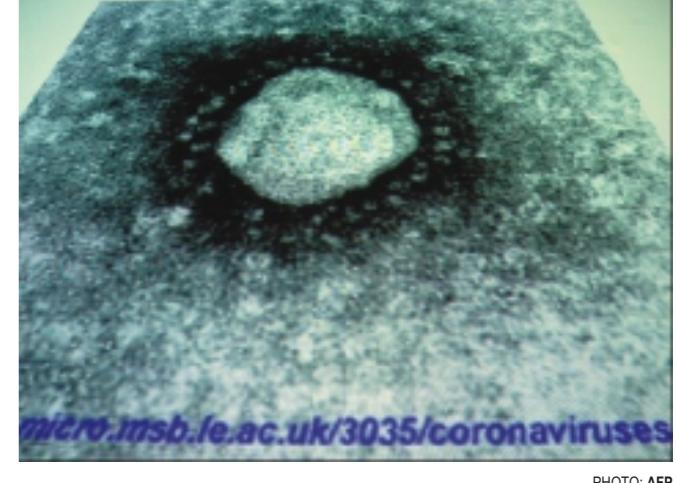


PHOTO: AFP

A microscopic view of the coronavirus projected on a screen during a press conference on the new findings of the SARS virus yesterday.

## Many feared dead as plane door opens in mid-flight

**AFP, Kinshasa**

Many of an estimated 200 passengers on an internal flight in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were feared dead after a door on an Ilyushin airplane burst open in mid-flight, military officials at Kinshasa airport said yesterday.

The accident occurred Thursday night when the Soviet-era cargo plane, which had been chartered by the Congolese army, was flying at an altitude of 7,000 feet (2,200 meters), en route from Kinshasa in the west to the southeastern city of Lubumbashi.

The Russian crew was able to turn the Ilyushin 76 around and land at Kinshasa airport following the accident. The Ilyushin 76 has a large rear cargo door that runs for roughly the length of the tail along the belly of the fuselage. Members of DRC's rapid intervention police force and their families were among the flight's passengers.

The accident was only reported Friday morning after the victims' relatives were informed of the tragedy, the officials said. An investigation has been launched to determine the causes of the accident.



PHOTO: STAR

The building for a seismic observatory in Sylhet, constructed by the public works department about a year ago, is not ready for use yet.

## Customs officials at Bhomra, Benapole threaten strike

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Standstill of trade through Bhomra and Benapole land-ports is likely to continue as customs officials threatened to go on full strike from today following BDR's refusal to withdraw cases against 19 people arrested Monday in connection with smuggling of Indian jute seeds.

The decision to go on indefinite strike by Khulna and Jessor Customs and VAT Executive Officers' Association (KJCEA) was announced by its general secretary SM Matiur Rahman following Thursday's two-hour token strike.

From June 7, Bhomra land-port would be sealed if the current impasse continues, customs sources said quoting NBR's official letter.

The NBR letter signed by its joint secretary AFM Abdullah Khan said the government has been compelled to take such stern measures to halt smuggling through different border points having no warehouse facility for storing legally imported goods. NBR has however allowed traders who

land-port on charge of smuggling 104 metric tons of jute seeds from India has already cost the government Tk four crore.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) on Thursday issued an official order to suspend the import-export trade through Bhomra land-port of Sathkhira until further order, with a provision to open new LCs till May 15.

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Sources said over a thousand Indian trucks loaded with perishable and non-perishable items including onion and fruits are stranded at the Petrapole border. No Bangladeshi truck entered Indian borders through Bhomra a

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## Govt patronises Bangabandhu's killers: Hasina

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Opposition leader and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has accused Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and her government of patronising the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"We must know how a person sentenced to death for killing the father of the nation can get back his job," Hasina said yesterday while addressing the newly elected office bearers of the Rajshahi Bar Association at the party's central office.

The government has become a government of "killing and plundering", she said.

Hasina blamed the BNP-Jamaat alliance government for taking

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## Interns at Barisal medical college hospital continue strike

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal**

Strike by interns at the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) entered its seventh day yesterday as all attempts to break the deadlock failed so far, hospital sources said.

Patients have already started to leave the hospital, which is heavily dependent on the services of interns, as an emergency medical team comprising 30 interns proved too small to cope with the hundreds of patients needing urgent medical attention.

The strikers, who are demanding payment of arrears of three month's salary to the hospital's 280 interns, have threatened a complete shutdown unless their demand is met by today.

Sources said SBMCH director Dr Moazzem Hossain has been in Dhaka for the last five days trying to get the higher authorities to resolve the crisis.

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

British lawyers fighting for Bangladeshi arsenic patients won a judgement on Thursday, which paves the way for running a lawsuit against the British Geological Survey (BGS).

"The judgement removes all obstruction to the next steps of the case we are seeking on behalf of Bangladeshi arsenic patients," said Sharmin Mursid, chairperson of Brotee, an NGO that took the issue to the Bangladesh Arsenic Action Network (BIAN) in London about two years ago.

Clamants of the lawsuit say the BGS neglected tests for arsenic when it carried out water tests in Bangladesh in 1992.

BIAN that pursued the fight for the last six months has won the judgement in favour of running the case in the British High Court, said

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**RAFIQ HASAN**

Inconsistencies have been found in the government's stand over 40 passenger launches labelled as 'unfit' for carrying passengers.

Three high-powered government committees conducted a random survey on 200 passenger vessels and classified them in four categories -- A, B, C and D. They identified 40 D-category vessels as unseaworthy.

The vessels in A category are fully fit while those in B and C categories need some modifications, they observed.

The committees were formed after 400 people drowned when MV Salahuddin-2 sank in May last year. The probe report was submit-

ted to the government just before another launch mishap -- MV Mitali sinking with 130 people on board on April 20 this year.

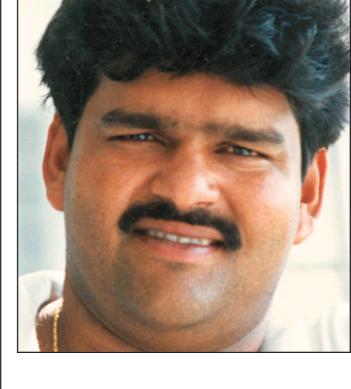
After receiving the report, the government imposed a ban on plying of

D-category vessels. But the ban was withdrawn after two days.

The government withdrew the ban through a handout on April 27 without showing any reason.

It appears that the government bowed to the pressure of the launch owners' association which called a strike demanding withdrawal of the restriction on plying of passenger launches from 3.00pm to 8.00pm of Baishakh.

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## Akram quitting international cricket

**SPORTS REPORTER**

Former Bangladesh skipper and prolific batsman Akram Khan finally plans to put an end to his illustrious international cricket career. He was expected to formally announce his retirement in Dhaka on Monday.

Akram captained Bangladesh from 1995-98. His greatest achievement was leading Bangladesh to winning the 1997 ICC Championship which opened the door for the country to play in the 1999 World Cup and eventual Test status a year later.

He played in 44 one-day internationals and scored 976 runs with an average of 23.24 with a top score of 65 against Kenya. In Tests, he played 16 innings in 8 matches, finishing with 259 runs at an average of 16.19. His best was 44 against Zimbabwe in April, 2001.

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## DOWN TO EARTH

# Caught in a crazy cycle

**ASM NURUNNABI**

periphery seems to be whether the present trend in this respect really provides any meaningful relief by way of meeting the housing needs of a significant section of the city population, besides the affluent classes and high-income groups in society. Some knowledgeable persons feel that the present emphasis on high-rise buildings may be shifted to comparatively low-cost lands available outside the city to ease the pressure of a growing population.

A simultaneous phenomenon is the growing interest being shown by real estate business companies to attract prospective customers to invest in the lands in city suburbs like Savar, Joydevpur, Ashulia, Nabinagar, etc. This may work, in some way, to give effect to the indicated shift from the emphasis on high-rise buildings within city areas, but obviously such a shift will take time to materialise. The pace of development of the housing plots by private owners in the suburban areas of the city slow for obvious reasons, particularly on account of inadequate transport and communication facilities and uncertainty about prospects of monetary return.

Lately, we have been observing a high tide of advertisements in the print media, inviting bookings for allotments in a good number of

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high-rise buildings within the city. The basic question relating to high-rise buildings within the city

## Steps on 40 unfit launches in fog

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Source: Islamic Foundation

Prayer Timings

| May 10 | Sun Rises | Sun Sets |
|--------|-----------|----------|
| May 11 | 5-18 am   |          |

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Aussies 87-2 at lunch

**AFP, St Johns**

Australia were 87 for two in their first innings after winning the toss at lunch on the first day of the fourth and final cricket Test against the West Indies at the Recreatonal Ground in Antigua on Friday.

Martin Love, who came into the side for Rick Ponting (virus), was on 26 with Darren Lehmann not out

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