

NEWS IN brief

Maoists to free abducted MLA

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

Maoists have agreed to free today an Indian legislator, held hostage for over a month, a lawyer who fights court cases for the rebels said yesterday. Nihar Ranjan Patnaik, based in eastern state of Orissa's Koraput district, told a TV channel that the rebels would set Hikaka free by 10:00am today. The rebels will hand him over to Patnaik and Kaushalya, the wife of the abducted legislator of Orissa's ruling party Biju Janata Dal, the lawyer said quoting a Maoist leader. The left-wing extremists, who had kidnapped 37-year-old Hikaka from Laxmipur in Koraput on March 24, had announced they will hold a 'people's

Canada lifts Myanmar sanctions

AFP, Ottawa

Canada on Tuesday lifted most sanctions against Myanmar, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird announced, saying the long-isolated nation has "changed course in a major way." The move by Canada came one day after the suspension by the European Union of most sanctions against the country formerly known as Burma. "Effective immediately, Canada is suspending our sanctions on Burma," Baird said. "Prohibitions on imports, exports and investment have for the most part been removed," as well as individual sanc-

Mad cow disease reported in US

AFP, Washington

The United States yesterday scrambled to contain the fallout from the discovery of mad cow disease in California as the top beef exporter insisted the outbreak posed no threat to consumers. The US Department of Agriculture on Tuesday reported the country's fourth-ever case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), but stressed the outbreak was contained and no contaminated meat had entered the food chain. The admission of even a limited outbreak is highly sensitive. Previous cases of mad cow in the United States, Canada, Israel, Europe and Japan have caused disruptions to the global food trade

Beijing warns Manila on sea row

AFP, Beijing

China warned the Philippines yesterday not to "internationalise" the two countries' simmering territorial dispute in the South China Sea, as US and Philippine forces staged war games in the area. China has been locked in a maritime dispute with the Philippines over the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, a body of water considered a potential Asian flashpoint due to the overlapping claims of several nations. He spoke as US and Filipino soldiers staged a war exercise not far from the real-life maritime standoff.

N Korea accuses US, South of plotting war

AFP, Seoul

North Korea's military chief of staff accused the United States and South Korea yesterday of plotting war but said his country's own weaponry could destroy their armaments in "a single blow". Vice-Marshal Ri Yong-Ho also repeated threats of war against South Korea, vowing to "cut the throats" of those seen as defaming Pyongyang's leadership. The North has made a series of increasingly strongly worded threats against the South in recent weeks. On Monday its military threatened "special actions" soon to turn parts of Seoul to ashes. Some analysts believe the new young leader Kim Jong-Un is trying to bolster his military credentials and divert attention from a failed rocket launch this month. Ri, in a speech marking army day, credited Jong-Un's late father Kim Jong-Il with strengthening the 1.2 million-strong military in the nuclear-armed state. The launch, which attracted UN condemnation, was to have been the centerpiece of

celebrations in mid-April marking the 100th anniversary of the birth of founding leader Kim Il-Sung. The North bridled at comments by the South's President Lee Myung-Bak and conservative media, who said the money spent on the launch could have bought food for the perennially hungry nation. "Our military and people are full of rage against the Lee Myung-Bak's traitor groups, who dared to commit such an extreme criminal act as defaming our system and the top leadership," Ri told a national meeting in the April 25 House of Culture. "Our military and people will launch a retaliatory war in our own way... to cut the throats of the reckless provocateurs and crush the source of provocations without a trace." The US and its ally the South were making "ever-intensifying plots for war", he said. The ceremony attended by Kim Jong-Un and other top leaders marked what the North calls the 80th anniversary of the military's founding, during the guerrilla struggle against Japanese colonial forces.

New cabinet approved in Maldives

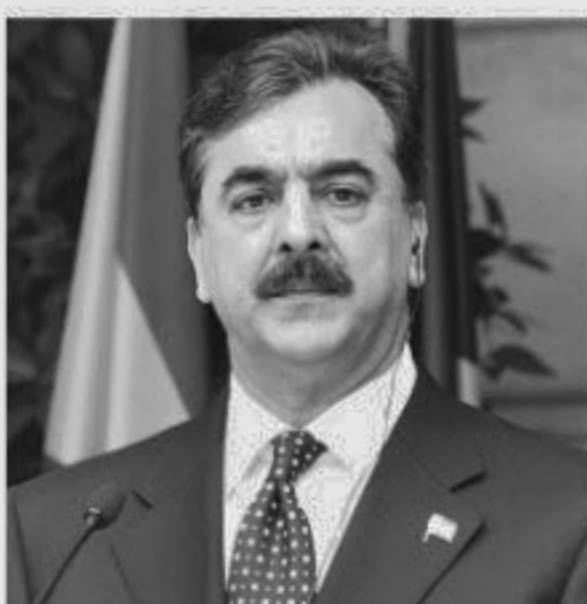
AFP, Colombo

The Maldivian parliament yesterday approved the 14-member cabinet appointed by President Mohamed Waheed who is accused of seizing power in a military and police-backed coup. A vote in the 77-member assembly ratified Waheed's cabinet, which was named after he took office following the resignation of his predecessor Mohamed Nasheed who claimed he was forced to step down. Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party boycotted the vote. Waheed has denied allegations that he was involved in any coup and has ordered an investigation into Nasheed's exit from office, but Waheed has rejected international calls for early presidential elections.

CONTEMPT OF COURT Gilani faces crucial verdict today

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's embattled Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani yesterday vowed to appear in person to face the verdict in a contempt of court case that could see him jailed and thrown out of office. The Supreme Court will rule today whether Gilani is guilty of contempt for refusing to write to the authorities in Switzerland to ask them to re-open corruption cases against President Asif Ali Zardari. The charges carry a maximum jail sentence of six months and conviction could lead to Gilani being disqualified from office. "I will appear before the court tomorrow," the PM told a cabinet meeting in Islamabad. "We are satisfied with the input given by our lawyers and we are also satisfied with the input by the Attorney General." He did not say whether he would quit if he is convicted. The Swiss shelved the cases against Zardari in 2008 when he became president and a prosecutor in Switzerland has said it will be impossible to re-open them as long as he remains head of state and is immune from prosecution.



5 Destiny directors

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The banks will have to send information about the accounts of Destiny Group President Lt Gen (ret) M Harun-Ar-Rashid, Chairman Mohammad Rafiqul Amin, Destiny-2000 Ltd Chairman Mohammad Hossain, Destiny vice chairmen Gofranul Haque, Mohammed Sayeed-ur-Rahman, Mesbahuddin Swapan, Sheikh Tayebur Rahman and Nepal Chandra Biswas, directors Sayed Sajjad Hossain, Irfan Ahmed Sunny, Jamshed Ara Choudhury and Farha Diba, Director and CEO of Destiny Air Systems Mohammad Farid Akhter and Destiny Agro Industries Director and Destiny Builders CEO Lt Col (ret) Didarul Alam. THE HC ORDER A High Court bench of justices AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury and Jahangir Hossain asked the company to stop construction work in Cox's Bazar in response to a writ petition yesterday. Advocate Manzill Murshid filed the writ peti-

tion on behalf of the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh following a Prothom Alo report published on April 22. The report said Destiny 2000 Ltd has been constructing a five-star hotel and a nine-storey structure on the Cox's Bazaar beach without approval of plans and environmental clearance. The HC asked the Cox's Bazar deputy commissioner, the police super, the local mayor and the officer-in-charge of Cox's Bazar Police Station to carry out the court order and submit a compliance report by May 6. It also directed Majharul Islam, project engineer of the Best Western Destiny

Beach Hotel and Resort, to appear before the court on May 5 to give explanations, said Murshid. The court also asked eight government officials to explain in three weeks why the administration's failure to protect the environment should not be declared illegal, and why orders would not be given to remove and

destroy all construction materials from the site, he added. They are environment secretary, director general of the Department of Environment, deputy commissioner of Cox's Bazar, the police super, local mayor and the OC of Cox's Bazar Police Station.

Inevitability or a tragedy

FROM PAGE 1

Another student, Kadar, was made near crippled in police torture and efforts were made to frame him as a robber. Once again, the government showed its most nonchalant mien to the event. Both of them were later found innocent. These and many other actions of the law enforcing agencies produced no hope in the people. Extrajudicial killings were by then taken as something for granted. And people also took it up to themselves to solve problems. They could beat six students to death. They could barricade roads, smash cars, burn tyres, and pelt stones until a government with both vision and hearing impairment would wake up to what was happening, and cancel an airport project or an army housing scheme. Then the roads crumbled. The media was awash with pictures of potholed roads. Only the then communications minister, Syed

Abul Hossain, found no fault. And then the judgment was passed abolishing the caretaker government, to the surprise of many, with an option to continue the system for two more terms. The judgment created a deep confusion as the caretaker government was declared illegal, and at the same time it was suggested that the system continue for up to two more elections. But then the prime minister chose a sudden death for the process tested to yield trustworthy elections. The demise of the system came as a shocker for all, as it was the Awami League which actually had fought tooth and nail for it with non-stop agitation, and finally succeeded to push it down the gullet of the nation. Now the country is still in an uncertainty as to how will the BNP be coaxed into the next election without a caretaker government and under the AL government. Things also kept happen-

ing on the economic front, and much of the blame for the mess-up must fall on the government's shoulder. The capital market scam for one. Repeated warnings of a market heat-up fell on deaf ears, and the inevitable crash followed. The probe into the scam was sent into oblivion. The economy came under strain from other sides as well. Excessive borrowing, intense pressure on reserves, high expenditure, and high inflation -- all recipe for public discontent. The Padma Bridge saga left the people confused and frustrated. Fingers were pointed at the communications minister for an alleged corruption, and yet the issue remained unresolved. The World Bank repeatedly said it had provided information on corruption, which the government denied. All this put the government on a rickety platform. Then the recent spate of events started happening. The Suranjit Sengupta story rocked the country. Never in the history of the country, such a blatant example of corruption had been revealed in such a dramatic way. The government's action of keeping Suranjit as a minister against the people's popular perception looked like committing harakiri. And then the Ilias Ali disappearance riddle appeared as a great Houdini show. Rising from the bottom of the pile, the BNP immediately swept up a popular support to wage a violent movement that is now causing great concern, both political and economic. The conclusion of this tapestry of events now looks unappetising. Everyone is waiting to see how the Houdini riddle is solved and at what cost. Cost is all this country has been counting with a fast depleting political account.

Series agitation from Sunday

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that the movement should finally turn into a one-point movement to oust the government. Last night's meeting was convened to discuss the alliance's next course of action regarding mounting pressure on the government to find Ilias. There the alliance leaders urged BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia to continue with hartal, or else, what they opined, the agitation would lose momentum. Khaleda, also the leader of the opposition, may announce hartal for an indefinite period on Saturday. "I had a plan to wait for at least six months before going for a series of hartals, but the government has forced us to do that now," alliance leaders quoted Khaleda as saying in the meeting. As per the decision of the meeting, the upcoming hartals would be enforced during the day so that people can do their urgents in the evening. However, no programme will be observed on May Day [Tuesday] and weekends,

said a number of alliance leaders after the meeting. Khaleda presided over the meeting that continued until 10:10pm from 8:40pm at her Gulshan office. She asked her alliance partners to be prepared for a tough time and to take to the streets ignoring all obstructions by the government, said meeting sources. "I am serious. The government must return Ilias, otherwise we won't remain silent. They [govt] will have to pay if they fail to understand my words. The ongoing movement will turn into a one-point movement to oust the government," she said. Since the disappearance, Khaleda have been accusing the government of abduction while Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina termed it a planned drama by Khaleda. BNP organising secretary and former lawmaker Ilias Ali along with his driver Ansar Ali went missing around midnight of April 17 from the capital's Banani area. To mount pressure on the government to find the two, BNP observed dawn-to-dusk

hartal for three consecutive days from April 22. On Tuesday, Khaleda issued the government a four-day ultimatum to find Ilias and his driver and threatened of tougher movement otherwise. Meanwhile, nine days into the disappearance, law enforcement agencies are still in the dark about Ilias and his driver's whereabouts. All this time police and Rab have conducted several search operations in and around Dhaka in vain. "The entire country will burn if the government fails to return Ilias and his driver by Saturday. The government will not be able to douse the fire," BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir told a programme at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. Contacted, police and Rab yesterday said they were doing everything to find the two. "We've interrogated several suspects in this connection but to no avail. However, we're trying our best," Mahbubur Rahman, deputy commissioner of detective police, told The

Daily Star. He added they had examined the call list of Ilias Ali's mobile phone but found no clue. Asked about Khaleda's allegation that Rab was behind Ilias' disappearance, Rab chief Mokhlesur Rahman said, "She has the liberty to make any comments but we're not involved in it. We're rather trying our best to rescue him." Talking to The Daily Star, Rab's legal and media wing Director Commander M Sohail said they had made several raids in and outside the capital but saw no success. "Our efforts are on," he said. On Tuesday, however, State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku claimed to have made some "progress" in the search. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the cabinet meeting yesterday directed Home Minister Shahara Khatun to rescue Ilias Ali at any cost. "We don't want the opposition to make an issue out of this," Hasina was quoted by a meeting source.

Vacancy Re-Advertisement

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh re-advertises a vacancy for the post of **Security Sector Reform Expert under Service Contract** for the 'Police Reform Programme' Project -Phase II. The project duration is until 30 September 2014.

The duration of the Service Contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than 17:00, 11 May 2012.

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

PROCUREMENT NOTICE FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT (IC) PROMOTION OF DEVELOPMENT AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (CHT)

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility (CHTDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangladesh, seeks proposals from interested and well qualified Individuals in response to the following procurement notice in the CHT.

- 1. National Consultant – Senior Advisor on Policy and Advocacy**
Download the IC Notice here: http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_detail.php?id=347
- 2. National Consultant – CHT Expert to Conduct Mid Term Review of BECHT**
Download the IC Notice here: http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_detail.php?id=344
- 3. National Consultant – Education Expert to Conduct Mid Term Review of BECHT**
Download the IC Notice here: http://www.undp.org.bd/proc_detail.php?id=345

Three (3) separate IC Procurement Notices along with the instructions and deadline for proposal submission can be downloaded from the links mentioned with the respective positions.

Vacancy Announcement
Promotion of Development and Confidence Building in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

United Nations Development Programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the following position for "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility" under "Service Contract" modality. The duration of the contract is one year initially and subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of Funds.

Program Associate - Senior Management Support - 1 position

For details of the Terms of Reference and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Hard copy of the TOR can be collected from UNDP-CHTDF Offices of Dhaka, Rangamati, Khagrachari and Bandarban. Applications should be submitted no later than **May 13, 2012**

"Only short-listed candidates will be contacted. Submitted documents will not be returned to the applicants"

"Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply"