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Blair greeted Ties to grow further, hopes Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday congratulated Anthony Blair MP, the new British Prime Minister, on his historic victory in the general election, reports UNB.

"This success is indeed a glowing tribute to your able leadership and reflects the confidence of the people of Britain in you to lead them into the next century," she said in a message and wished Blair all success in the discharge of your heavy responsibilities.

Bangladesh and Britain have a long historical and traditional ties, she said and recalled the support given by the people of Britain, in particular the Labour Party, in the country's liberation struggle as well as in consolidating democracy in Bangladesh.

"I have no doubt that these ties will be even further strengthened during your tenure," Hasina said in her message to Blair.

Khaleda Zia
BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia congratulated Blair and his party for a landslide victory in the general election.

Labour's biggest landslide in 50 years



Labour Party leader and new British Prime Minister Tony Blair and his wife Cherie wave at party workers and supporters after their arrival at the Royal Festival Hall for a post-election celebration early yesterday-AFP photo

LONDON, May 2: Tony Blair became Britain's youngest prime minister in 185 years today after his Labour Party crushed the Conservative Party which had been in power for 18 years, reports AP.

The Tories had been expected to lose but the scale of their defeat surprised both politicians and the public: It was the worst Conservative trouncing since 1832 and Labour's biggest election triumph ever.

Prime Minister John Major went to Buckingham Palace to

side the gates.

In a scene resembling a political festival and contrasting with Major's solemn departure just one and a half hours earlier, hundreds of flag-waving Labour supporters packed the normally tightly guarded street shouting, "Tony, Tony, Tony" and "Labour, Labour, Labour".

The Blairs leaned over the barriers on both sides of the street, hugging supporters. Blair kissed one white-haired lady and was kissed by several others.

Editorial on page 4

tender his resignation to Queen Elizabeth II after announcing that he would step down as Conservative Party leader.

After Major left the palace, Blair arrived in the official prime ministerial car to "kiss hands" — he doesn't really, but the language of court ceremonial hasn't caught up with contemporary practice.

That custom confirmed him as prime minister.

After his brief audience with the Queen, Blair left the palace shortly before 1 pm (1200 GMT). Instead of driving to the door of the prime minister's official Downing Street residence, Blair and his wife, Cherie, got out of the car on Whitehall, just out-

Final standings

LONDON, May 2: Following is a final breakdown of the number of parliamentary seats each party won in Britain's election and the share of votes each polled, according to Reuters.

Conservatives 165 (165 held, 178 lost)
Labour 419 (273 held, 146 gained)
Liberal Democrats 46 (18 held, 30 gained, 2 lost)
Others 29 (19 held, 8 gained, 4 lost)

Average swing to Labour from Conservatives — 10.2 per cent majority for Labour — 179.

Share of the vote — Labour 45 per cent, Conservatives 31 per cent, Liberal Democrats 17 per cent.



British Prime Minister John Major and his wife Norma (L) leaves the counting center yesterday in Saint Ives in his constituency after the announcement of the general election results. —AFP/UNB photo

ALCWC approves 22 dist bodies, draft GS report

By Staff Correspondent

A meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) held here on Thursday gave approval to party committees in 22 districts and the general secretary's report to be presented at the triennial council session of the party, scheduled for May 6-7.

AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting that began at the Gonobhaban at 8 PM. AL general secretary Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star last night that Thursday's meeting adjourned at 11:30 pm, will resume again on Sunday night at the same venue.

According to a party press release, meeting of the 65-member ALCWC will continue till holding of the AL council. The meeting also reviewed the preparations for the two-day council.

Situation tense
RU application forms couldn't be distributed

From RU Correspondent
RAJSHAHI, May 2: The situation at Rajshahi University remained tense as the Islamic Chhatra Shibir (ICS) continued its strike on the campus protesting the new admission system.

Most of the offices at the university remained closed and the Agrani Bank branch on the campus could not distribute a single application form for admission test as the ICS continued its strike since Saturday, according to sources at the university.

Heavy contingents of police have been patrolling the campus and a police camp has been set up at the Zoha Hall after vacating the resident students.

The ICS today extended its strike for more six days beginning from tomorrow, protesting the new admission system and what it called harassment of their leaders and workers, by police.

On Saturday last, the first day of the strike, at least 20 people were injured in clashes.

Insurgency won't be allowed, Dhaka assures Delhi

NEW DELHI, May 2: Bangladesh has assured India that it would not allow insurgent groups to operate from its territory, a report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs presented before the Lok Sabha said today, reports BSS.

Efforts are underway to improve relations with the neighbouring countries and to persuade them not to allow insurgent groups to operate from their land, the report said, adding that significant progress in this regard has been made with Bangladesh.

Commenting on the general law and order situation in the country, the report said the home secretary stated before the committee that the situation in the north-eastern region of India has been somewhat volatile because of "persistent external support by Pakistan."

The area of concern, the report said.

Separate courts, 'civil prison' for loan defaulters proposed

By Mizan Ali

Setting up of separate money loan courts and enactment of tougher laws providing for 'civil prison' for loan defaulters and stringent conditions for appeal to higher court have been proposed, according to official sources.

The courts which will deal exclusively with loan default cases will have the authority to put a loan defaulter in 'civil prison' after the decree.

The proposals have been made in a bill titled 'Money Loan Court Act, 1997', prepared by the secretary of the Law Commission on request from the Law Ministry, the sources said.

Sources in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and the Ministry of Finance said that copies of the bill were already received by the

Participation of 'outsiders' at oil companies' meet criticised

Star Report

A confidential report submitted to the government on the recently-held international round tables on hydrocarbon exploration in Bangladesh criticised participation of some 15 out-of-the-list "private visitors" in the conferences and said they were viewed as "irritants" by oil and gas companies, according to official sources.

The round tables held by the government in London and Houston of US from March 24 to April 3, were otherwise appreciated, the report said. Some 60 companies participated in those round tables.

Gustavson — the organiser of the two international round tables in a confidential report to the government conveyed the dissatisfaction of different for-

PM addresses rally at Tongi Govt firm to protect interest of workers

By Staff Correspondent

TONGI, May 2: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government is pledged to protect the interest of workers through reforms, reports agencies.

"We have formed a wages commission and a full-fledged committee will be announced soon in the interest of the labour force," she told a huge workers' rally at Telephone Shilpa Sangstha ground here in the afternoon.

Jatiya Sramik League, labour front of ruling Awami League, organised the rally on the occasion of historic May Day. People from all walks of life, including women and children, joined the rally with festoons and banners.

The Prime Minister said the government has attached high

Four terrorists Rewards for information announced

By Staff Correspondent

The Home Minister announced rewards of Tk 1.25 lakh for information leading to arrest of four terrorists wanted in number of case, filed with different thanas in the city, according to a DMP press release yesterday.

Tk 50,000 will be given for helping the arrest of Aslam alias Sweden Aslam, son of late Zinat Ali of West Raza Bazar under Teighon thana.

Besides, rewards of Tk 25,000 each will be given to those who will help arrest of three other absconding accused — Joseph, son of late Abdul Wadud of Noor Jahan Road under Mohammadpur thana; Bikash and Prokash, sons of Bimal Chandra Biswas of South



Singer Kangali Sufia rendering songs at a May Day rally organised by floating women labourers in the city. — Star photo

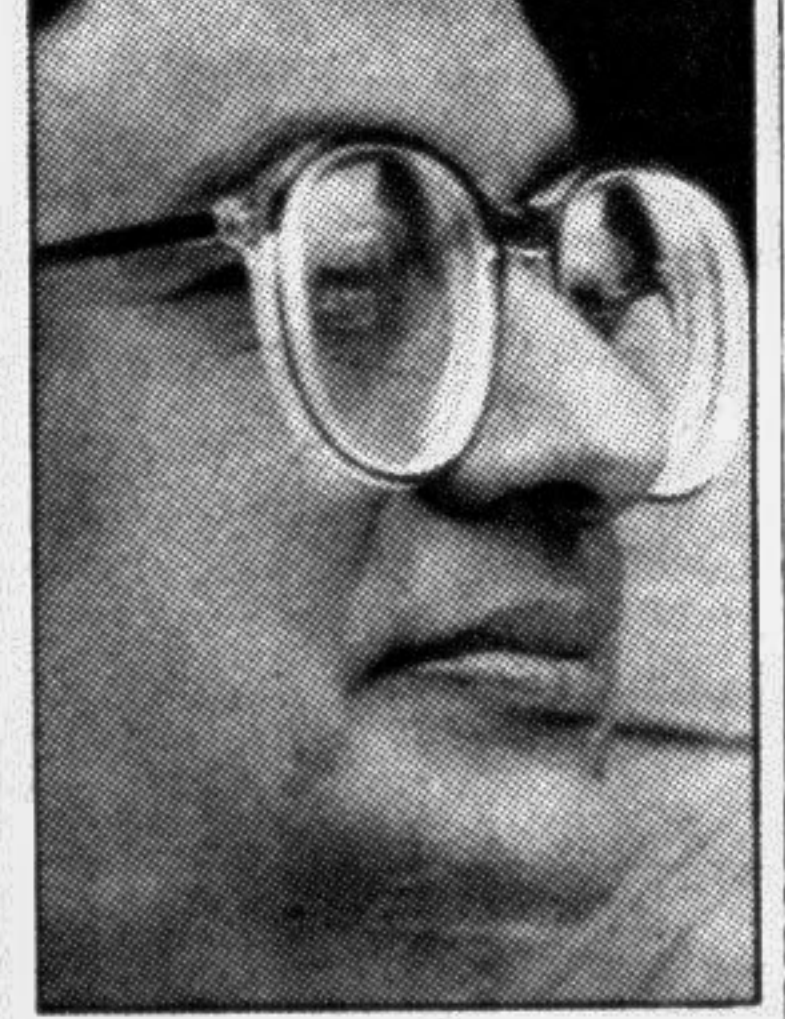
Mizan made first vice-chairman of JP again

By Staff Correspondent

The three 'rebel leaders' of Jatiya Party met the party chief H M Ershad on Wednesday night at the residence of Nazim Rahman Manju, according to party sources.

"We paid a courtesy visit on the chairman," Shah Moazzem Hossain, the spokesman of the rebel leaders said while talking to The Daily Star last night.

"A date will be fixed later for discussing the political issues for which we stand now," he said adding that they had a



Chidambaram rejoins UF cabinet

NEW DELHI, May 2: Highly-acclaimed former finance minister Palaniappan Chidambaram yesterday joined India's fragile ruling coalition and said his pro-reform budget would not face problems in parliament, reports AFP.

The Harvard-educated Chidambaram was sworn in along with five others at a ceremony at the presidential palace.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral hinted that Chidambaram, who was the finance minister in the previous coalition government that collapsed April 11, would retain the same portfolio, the United News of India said.

Tight security for BNP meet at Ctg today

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, May 2: The authorities have planned to deploy extra police force at the venue of the public meeting of BNP chairperson and former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia scheduled to be held here tomorrow at the outer stadium to maintain tight security and foil any attempt to create violence, official sources said.

Commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police Motabber Hossain told this correspondent, "We are aware of intra-party rivalry in Chittagong unit of BNP and for that reason we have decided to deploy extra force at the venue of BNP meeting to ensure peaceful holding of meeting."

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'SAARC parliament' can boost cooperation in GBM region

Experts suggest
By Staff Correspondent

The conference on 'Harnessing the Eastern Himalayan Rivers and Regional Cooperation' has recommended creation of "an assembly of politicians or a SAARC Parliament" to facilitate the process of increased "interaction and cooperation" in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) region.

The conference participated by members of parliament, water experts, economists, politicians, research scholars and policy planners of Bangladesh, India and Nepal also recommended reduction of tariff for regional trade.

Speakers at the two-day conference which concluded in the city Thursday also recommended introduction of "efficient and easy trans-boundary movement of people and goods

Cricket stadium to be built in two phases

By Morshed Ali Khan

Despite administrative tangles, the initial work on the proposed National Cricket Stadium at Maghbazar is now underway.

Officials of the Public Works Department (PWD), which was recently "handed over" the responsibility of construction, said the stadium would be completed in two phases. In the first phase, expected to be completed within a year, acquisition of land, earth filling, development of the field and some temporary facilities would be ensured, a PWD official said.

"After making the field with three natural pitches, we will fence it off and construct temporary sheds and washrooms for the players so that they can immediately start practising," the official said.

In the second phase, PWD would actually go ahead with the construction of a modern cricket stadium. "If necessary, we will seek foreign assistance to make the pitches and the outfield."

In a letter dated April 15, the Prime Minister's Secretariat asked the Youth and Sports Ministry to hand over responsibility of construction of the stadium to the Public Works Department (PWD). A copy of the letter was also sent to several departments, including the PWD.

In turn, the Sports Ministry asked the National Council (NSC), which had prepared an initial stadium project concept

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- যদিও শেয়ার বাজার কখনও বৃদ্ধিমুখক নয় তথাপি নিম্নমুখী বাজারে সচেতন হয়ে শেয়ার ক্রয় কবলে ব্যক্তিগতভাবে লাভবান হওয়া যায় ও বাজারে স্থিতিশীলতা বজায় থাকে। তাছাড়া বাজারে যখন মূল্য কম থাকে সাধারণতঃ তখন কোম্পানীর সম্পদ বা আয়ের সাথে মূল্যের অধিকতর সামঞ্জস্যতা থাকে।
- যেহেতু শেয়ার বাজারে কম বেশী বৃদ্ধি সব সময়ই থাকে তাই সঞ্চয়ের সবটুকু শেয়ার বাজারে বিনিয়োগ করা উচিত নয়। কোন একটি নির্দিষ্ট কোম্পানীতে বিনিয়োগ না করে কয়েকটি কোম্পানীতে বিনিয়োগ করলে শুধু বৃদ্ধিই কমে না, লাভের সম্ভাবনাতঃ বাড়ে।
- মিউচুয়াল ফান্ডের বিনিয়োগ সাধারণতঃ কম বৃদ্ধিপূর্ণ। তালিকাভুক্ত কোম্পানীর প্রাথমিক ও রাইট শেয়ার বিনিয়োগের উপর আয়কর রেয়াত পাওয়া যায়। তাছাড়া শেয়ারের উপর অর্জিত মূলধনী লাভ সম্পূর্ণ আয়কর মুক্ত।
- তালিকাভুক্ত কোম্পানীর শেয়ার ঝুঁকি-মুক্ত বিনিয়োগ বিধায় এর তারল্যতা (লিকুইডিটি) রয়েছে।
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