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PM thanks Khaleda

BANDAR (Narayanganj), May 25: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina today thanked opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia for accepting the reality that election is the only way to change a government in a democratic society, reports BSS.

"I sincerely thank her (Khaleda) for her realisation although she had long been threatening to oust the present government through movement", Sheikh Hasina said.

The prime minister was addressing a huge public meeting at the Haji Ibrahim Alamganj High School ground here.

The Prime Minister said the BNP leader has realised that people do not extend support to destructive artificialities. "People do not support artificial issues created to befool them," she said.

Sheikh Hasina asked the opposition leader to have patience and wait for the next elections to change the government. She reiterated that her government would resign to pave the way for the caretaker government to hold free and

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Kader Siddiqui on top of agenda

By Reaz Ahmad

Awami League leadership is in a dilemma over taking disciplinary action against party 'rebel' Kader Siddiqui MP.

The issue is likely to be on top of the agenda at the next meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC).

AL sources told The Daily Star that a scheduled discussion on the party's 'golden jubilee' celebration may be sidelined and possible action against Kader Siddiqui is likely to come up as a 'more pressing issue'.

Kader Siddiqui is also a member of the 67-member ALCWC.

The party leadership is feeling 'uneasy' following some recent remarks and moves by Siddiqui. It is now under 'growth'.

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Jail Killing Case

Charges against 21 accused to be framed June 13

The Trial Court yesterday fixed June 13 for framing charges against 21 accused in the Jail Killing Case, reports BSS.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Sheikh Rezwana Ali fixed the date after a brief hearing of the views of both the Prosecution and the Defence Counsels.

Former acting President Syed Nazrul Islam, former prime ministers Tajuddin Ahmed and M Mansur Ali and former minister A H M Quamruzzaman were brutally killed in the Dhaka Central Jail on November 3, 1975.

The date for framing charges against the accused was finally announced yesterday after deferring the same earlier twice in the wake of a series of petitions moved by the defence counsels for some of the accused.

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High Stakes Politics in India

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Prayer Timings

May 26

Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
4-15	4-20	
Zohr	12-45	1-30
Asr	4-45	4-55
Magrib	6-40	6-43
Esha	7-40	8-10

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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RANGS GROUP

A view from the Gully

Tawfiq Aziz Khan

Bangladesh achieved its primary objective in their one-match World Cup campaign as they defeated Scotland in the latter's own courtyard. The Bravehearts' succumbed to the Bengal tigers' rather weakly at Edinburgh, the beautiful Scottish capital.

It was a historic day for Bangladesh cricket not because they defeated a team that is long on seniority in age and short on experience in ODIs, but because it was Bangladesh's first victory in a cricket World Cup debut appearance. There may be teams that will go back home without a success from this World Cup.

There are lots of stories about the spendthrift nature of the Scots but at the same time there are many stories that speaks of the love for freedom and independence of a valiant people. The recent elections to the Scottish Parliament after 300 years towards self-rule is a test.

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SKOP strike today

Star Report

A nationwide 24-hour 'general strike' at the call of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), a conglomerate of 16 federations of workers and employees unions, is scheduled to begin at 6:00 this morning.

According to the SKOP announcement, workers and employees both in the public and private sectors would observe the work-stoppage across the country.

The strike was called to press for implementation of a 12-point agreement between the government and the SKOP signed more than a year ago.

Meantime, a meeting between the government and the SKOP ended in failure yesterday afternoon. Labour Minister Abdul Mannan represented the government side and

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Unocal set to take over Occidental's operations

By Sharier Khan

Unocal will take over the operations of Occidental in Bangladesh, under a deal struck between the two American companies.

As per the deal, which surprised all in the energy sector, Occidental will wind up from Bangladesh and Unocal will become the operator in blocks 12, 13 and 14 since 1997.

These blocks considered the best in terms of possibilities of striking oil or gas, cover the Jalalabad field which is already producing gas and the most prospective Bibiyana gasfield. Besides, these blocks also cover Magurjhara where there was a blow out during drilling by Occidental. The company is liable to pay environmental compensation of about Tk 600 crore over the next 50 years.

"Unlike other foreign oil companies working in Bangladesh, Occidental does

not have widespread presence in South Asia. Other companies have their activities in India or in the ASEAN countries. Unocal enjoys a good position in this regard," he said. "Under such considerations, Occidental agreed to Unocal's proposal."

The Unocal representative added, "There are other reasons which I do not know. The headquarters of Occidental and Unocal have been negotiating this deal."

An authoritative source in Petrobangla admitted that he knew about the deal but said, "Officially we do not know anything as yet."

Unocal, which globally focuses more on Asia than its homeland, has taken particular interest in Bangladesh after it succeeded in setting up a big pipeline system in Myanmar. The US company which empha-

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England bury Zimbabwe jinx

NOTTINGHAM (England), May 25: England all but booked their place in the last six of the World Cup after overwhelming their one-day jinx team Zimbabwe in the group A match here at Trent Bridge today, reports AFP.

Chasing Zimbabwe's total of 167 for eight, England swept past their target with seven wickets and 11.3 overs to spare following an excellent third wicket partnership of 123 between Nasser Hussain and Graeme Thorpe.

Hussain's unbeaten 57 from 93 balls was his second half-century of the tournament, following his 88 not out against Kenya.

Hussain, who struck seven fours, only made the World Cup squad after the withdrawal of Mike Atherton with a back injury.

Left-hander Thorpe also struck seven boundaries in 62 from 80 balls, his first major score of the tournament.

The pair were rarely troubled by the Zimbabwean bowlers as they accelerated the scoring rate with a string of dazzling boundaries all around the ground.

But England's third victory



from four matches – against a side they had beaten just once in six previous attempts – was set up by their increasingly impressive frontline bowlers, Darren Gough and Allan Mullally.

Left-arm Mullally, who had to pass a fitness test on a

neck injury shortly before the match, finished with figures of two for 16 off 10 overs while all-rounder Mark Ealham also

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For Long Lasting Fresh Breath and Sparkling White Teeth



—AFP photo

Future needs negate gas export option'

By Staff Correspondent

Two Petrobangla officials yesterday said that Bangladesh should not go for short-term options like export of gas, but rather try to preserve the resource considering the future needs of the economy.

Presenting a paper on the country's gas demand and consumption at a technical symposium on gas sector yesterday, Petrobangla Deputy General Managers Aziz Khan and Imaduddin said that gas consumption in recent years was growing much faster than anticipated.

The concluding ceremony was addressed by Prof. Rehman Sobhan of Centre for Policy Dialogue, former Petrobangla chairman SKM Abdullah, BUET professor Nurul Islam, Cairn chief Richard Heaton, US Ambassador John Holz-

man told the seminar that Bangladesh should consider export of gas while developing other gas consuming sectors.

The symposium was organised by the Petroleum and Mineral Resources Engineering Department (PMRED) of BUET.

The two-day symposium, which brought together all the leading oil and gas experts from Petrobangla and its subsidiary companies, BUET, Cairn, Occidental, Unocal, Shell and Baker and Hughes and other oil companies, concluded yesterday.

On behalf of the foreign oil companies, Cairn's Heaton said that the main challenges lying ahead of the oil companies now

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—Star photo

Family members of national poet Kazi Nazrul Islam placing wreaths at his mazar on the Dhaka University Campus yesterday.

Nazrul's birth centenary observed

By DU Correspondent

The birth centenary of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was observed in the country yesterday in a befitting manner.

Different socio-cultural and political organisations took up various programmes in the city and elsewhere in the country on the occasion.

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Begum Khaleda Zia in separate messages paid glowing tributes to the National Poet.

In the city, the day's programmes began with placing of floral wreaths at the mazar of the poet on Dhaka University campus in the morning.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina placed wreaths and offered *fatiha* at the mazar. She was accompanied by Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail

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Beyond the boundary Boredom at its best

Shakil Kasem

I had a very clear cut choice. Was it to be chewing the fat with Wahidul Haq and company, or watching the England top order going through the tedious motions of getting a paltry 160 odd? TV or not TV, that was the quintessential question. A conversation on the cellphone with the one and only Col. Rashid settled everything. With no regrets whatsoever, at least not on my part.

The architects of the game took their time to put the colonials in their place. Ihsrat Mahmud, not to be outdone, but certainly not the greatest expert

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ALAN MULLALLY

(England)

Man of the Match

England vs Zimbabwe

Dweep Kanya plied for Upadwip

Owner cheated authorities, probe report says

By Shehab Ahmed

The motor launch Dweep Kanya which sank in the Meghna with more than 200 passengers on May 8 on way to Laximpur from Barisal had no permit to ply in the route, an official inquiry has found.

The owner of the launch also cheated the authorities by placing the Dweep Kanya instead of ML Upadwip, which had the permit to ply to the mighty Meghna. The launch was allegedly being commanded by the sareng's deputy who was not authorised to do it, the inquiry report said.

The route was opened to the launches about six months ago. The inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA) officials at

Barisal also did not take any note that the small boat had no permit to ply in the route, the report said.

The inquiry was conducted by Principal Officer of Mercantile Marine Safety, Abdul Huq, based in Chittagong. The report was submitted to the authorities on May 18.

The launch was not designed to face the rolling waves of mighty Meghna, sources claimed. It was originally built as an oil tanker. It was converted into a launch and named ML Mala which had plied in the Dhaka-Kalakopra route in the Buriganga before it was taken to the southern routes, the report said.

Survivors told the committee

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Officials of the IWTA and the Directorate of Shipping however, denied the allegations.

Three IWTA officials have been put under suspension for negligence, an IWTA source said.

Officials of the Directorate of Shipping were not available for comment on the report.

A commotion was created in JP as BDIP did not consult it before going for a negotiation with the government over the May 16 road march through the Bangabandhu Bridge. As a result, JP had postponed