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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 Alanchan High School ground here.

The Prime Minister said the BNP leader has realised that people do not extend support to destructive activities. "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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ALCWC meeting 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 'grow-

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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 Rezaul Ali fixed the date after a brief hearing of the views of both the Prosecution and the Defence Counsel.

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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Prayer Timings

May 26		
Fajr	4:15	4:20
Zohr	12:45	1:30
Asr	4:45	4:55
Maghrib	6:40	6:43
Esha	7:40	8:10

Source: Islamic Foundation

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. Details of the deal was not available till yesterday.

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 Magurchara 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.

A rumour about the deal spread since Monday.

Only a few months ago, oil

giant Shell and British company Cairn had agreed to make a similar deal. Shell is now in the process of taking over Cairn's operatorship in blocks 15 and 16.

Globally, Occidental is a big company. Unocal, however, has been a 50 per cent partner of Occidental in blocks 12, 13 and 14 since 1997.

A highly placed Occidental official, when asked whether the deal really took place said yesterday that he was not authorised to answer that question. However he added, "wait and see".

An Unocal representative however admitted that the deal was underway and it would be signed soon.

The Unocal President was scheduled to arrive the city late yesterday.

"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 has 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 emphas-

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'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 Imamuddin said that gas consumption in recent years was growing much faster than anticipated.

After 2001, they maintained, there would be a constant demand-supply shortfall if new gas exploration did not take place.

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 (PMRE) 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 Hughes and other oil companies, concluded yesterday.

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.

Ahmed Tamim of PMRE and many others.

Prof. Rehman Sobhan stressed the need for making a macro-economic projection to outline how the country's energy should be utilised.

He said energy should be exported after adding value to it or after converting gas to fertiliser or power. "We must take decision on the basis of accurate long term demand scenario," the economist said. "We must also see the implications of PSC in the balance of payment and the government's budgetary obligations."

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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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 Graham 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-armers 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 - the tightest analysis in the World Cup so far.

Gough finished with figures of two for 24 off 10 overs while all-rounder Mark Ealham also

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WITH LONG LASTING MOUTHWASH & FLUORIDE

CLOSE-UP

SHINY WHITE TEETH - FRESHER BREATH

For Long Lasting Fresh Breath and Sparkling White Teeth



GOUGH IN HIS ELEMENTS: England's Darren Gough unsettles the stumps of Zimbabwean opener Neil Johnson at Trent Bridge yesterday.

—AFP photo

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 meekly 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 lot 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 testament.

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SKOP strike today

Star Report

A countrywide 24-hour 'general strike' at the call of Samik 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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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 *fateha* 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 colonial in their place. Ishrat Mahmud, not to be outdone, but certainly not the greatest expert

on cricket, had it right for a change. This game which could well have changed the fortunes of this group, petered out to a tame end, leaving India and the Sri Lankans a chance to reach the rarefied atmosphere of the next stage of this competition.

For the second day in a row low scores were the order of the day. Zimbabwe were forced on the back foot from the very beginning. No matter what Dave Houghton was wont to espouse, Zimbabwe was not destined to repeat history. Since Duncan Fletcher's time Zimbabwe made

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we score... while others watch

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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 Laxmipur 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 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-Kalakopla route in the Bangladesh before it was taken to the southern routes, the sources said.

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.

The boat was salvaged three days after the tragedy. Twenty-nine bodies were recovered. Some of the passengers were missing while most of them swam ashore.

The boat was authorised to carry 143 passengers in rough waters and 216 in calm waters in small rivers, the report said. Survivors told the committee

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Foreign experts threaten to leave gasfield site

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, May 25: The engineers, technicians and other professionals including some foreigners engaged in the drilling of Rashidpur-7 well in Bahubal thana are passing their days amid fear as no action has yet been taken against the miscreants who attacked the general manager in charge of the drilling Thursday afternoon.

The panic-stricken foreign nationals working in the well site have demanded adequate safety measures immediately.

Miscreants attack general manager of SGL in Sylhet

Otherwise, they would leave the site soon, said the foreigners this afternoon while talking to this correspondent.

Some officials on condition of anonymity said, a group of about 20 people entered the well site located at a hilltop, about 20 kilometres off the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway at around 1 pm on Thursday. They met project manager Dr Humayun Ashraf who is also the general manager of Sylhet Gasfields Limited and asked him to immediately ar-

range jobs for some of their people.

When the general manager expressed his inability to do so, they tried to attack him. Ashraf took refuge at the drilling rig. But they chased him and assaulted him. The miscreants claimed to be office bearers of the local unit of 'Ganadabi Parishad'. Before leaving, the attackers also asked him to suspend the drilling, they added.

The Gasfield authorities

Decision to observe 'black day' JP withdraws hartal call, vows 'unity'

By Staff Correspondent

The relation between BNP and Jatiya Party, two major partners of the four-party opposition alliance, is having frequent ups and downs over various programmes.

A commotion was created in JP as BNP 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 its programme of party MPs' demonstration.

However, the discord was removed through hectic negotiations between top leaders of

the liaison committee of the combine on Sunday night.

But again a rift surfaced when JP Secretary General Nazim Rahman Monju unilaterally announced a dawn-to-dusk hartal programme in Chittagong Division on May 27, the day Shantu Larma formally takes over as chairman of the CHT Regional Council.

According to previous understanding, components of the alliance were not supposed to call any hartal like this. Alliance leaders were to announce an identical programme —

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Issued for General Information

The Institute of Parliamentary Studies

of the

Bangladesh Parliament

is convening a Conference on

COMPARATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW
"PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SYSTEMS"

27 - 28 May 1999

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