



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia addresses a workers' rally at Postagola in the city on May Day.

PM to bear all expenses for treatment of Probir Shikder

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will bear all expenses for treatment of journalist Probir Shikder severely wounded in an attack by gunmen in Faridpur recently.

The prime minister's secretariat announced it yesterday.

Some unidentified gunmen fired several shots on Probir, Janakantha's Faridpur correspondent on April 20.

Now he is undergoing treatment at the Cardiovascular Diseases Hospital in Dhaka. His right leg was amputated.

Security of journalists demanded

UNB, Dhaka

Committee to protect journalists, Bangladesh has sought people's cooperation in ensuring security of newspaper workers, including the journalists.

In a statement marking the World Press Freedom Day, the president and general secretary of CPJB said yesterday that journalists are being oppressed by political leaders and activists, terrorists, police and influential people.

They demanded immediate arrest and trial of those involved in the attacks on journalists.

They also demanded immediate steps to ensure security of the newspaper offices and the journalists.

They requested the political parties to refrain from creating violence and harbouring the terrorists.

BDR files GD against BSF intrusion

BSS, Kurigram

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) has lodged a general diary with Roumari police against the "intrusion" of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) into Bangladesh territory two weeks ago, police said here yesterday.

"We have recorded the general diary on Tuesday and sought directions from higher authorities for legal actions in this regard," police superintendent of Kurigram told the news agency.

Roumari witnessed the worst ever border skirmish between the two border forces on April 18 that left 16 BSF and three BDR men killed.

Students body enforces strike in Assam

AFP, Guwahati

India's northeastern state of Assam was paralysed by a dawn-to-dusk strike yesterday after the central government ignored demands for troops to be deployed on the state border with Bangladesh.

The strike, called by the powerful All Assam Students Union (AASU), closed all shops, schools and businesses and cut off major rail and road links connecting the northeast region with the rest of the country.

The AASU had delivered an ultimatum to the federal government on Saturday, insisting that it replace paramilitary guards on the

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Khaleda tells May Day rally Dislodge govt to salvage country

UNB, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the people to dislodge the "traitor, failed and oppressive" government to salvage the country from a "perilous" situation.

She made the call from a huge May Day rally in the city's industrial belt Postagola, painting a grim scenario in all domestic fronts and border troubles following incursion by Indian BSF troops.

Saluting the BDR for their heroic role in protecting the country's frontier, Khaleda blasted the government for what she said keeping mum on the border incidents. People want to know why such situation is prevailing now at the border of Bangladesh with India, she said.

The former prime minister demanded that the government declare the three BDR personnel killed by intruding BSF men as "best heroes", the highest national award,

as they laid down their lives for protecting the country's integrity and its people.

She also asked the government to reward as national heroes the BDR personnel who fought at the border and make necessary arrangements for the family members of deceased BDR men for their better livelihood.

"Why this situation is prevailing now in border areas and why they (government) are not doing anything is what the people want to know," Khaleda said describing the Indian border guards' recent actions, including attack, grabbing Bangladeshi land, looting wealth, arson attacks, raping women and killing Bangladeshi citizens.

The rally in front of the Alam Supermarket was held to mark the May Day under the auspices of Jatiyatabadi Samik Dal, the labour front of BNP.

The BNP chairperson said

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Diarrhoea: 7 more die, 2280 hospitalised in 2 days since Monday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Seven more people died from diarrhoea and at least 2280 were hospitalised in the country in the last 48 hours till yesterday evening.

Of the seven, six died at the ICDDR,B in the city, four of them on Monday and two on Tuesday. The rest one died in Jhalakathi, the control room at the Directorate of Health here said yesterday evening.

With the death of seven, the toll from diarrhoea rose to 93 since January. About 37500 diarrhoea patients were admitted to different hospitals in the country during the period.

ICDDR,B sources said 496 diarrhoea patients were admitted to the hospital on Tuesday and 335 till 6:30 pm yesterday.

The control room said 195 diarrhoea patients were admitted to different hospitals in Noakhali, 73 in Patuakhali, 71 in Bagerhat, 63 in Pirojpur, 54 in Barisal, 35 in Feni, 31 in Magura and seven in Comilla yesterday.

On Tuesday, a total of at least 1476 patients were admitted to hospitals in Dhaka, Patuakhali, Cox's Bazar, Barisal, Barguna, Pirozpur, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi and Bhola, it said.

According to officials of Dhaka City Corporation's Health Department,

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'US not a safe haven for criminals'

US envoy tells OCAB in city

UNB, Dhaka

US Ambassador Mary Ann Peters yesterday welcomed the signing of a draft extradition treaty between Dhaka and Washington and said the United States is not a safe haven for criminals.

"Indeed we are happy that a draft was initiated recently. Now this is a first step ... It takes time to conclude a treaty between the two sovereign nations, but the negotiation was successful," she told a briefing session with the members of OCAB at National Press Club.

Asked about chances of deporting some condemned killers now staying in America, Mary Ann said she could not comment on it because their cases are pending with the court of the United States. However, she said: "The United States does not believe that any country, especially the United States, should be a safe haven for

criminals."

Replying to recent border skirmishes between Bangladesh and India, the Ambassador said: "We're quite concerned by the clashes, but we are happy over the efforts of the two capitals to resolve the problem without further violence."

The US envoy hoped that the two countries would start negotiations to resolve the remaining issues, including adverse possession of enclaves along some 4000-kilometre stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh frontier.

About next general elections in Bangladesh, she said she believes that Bangladesh would succeed in holding the third free and fair election under a caretaker government, a system well adapted to the political realities here, which are marked by mistrust among the political parties.

To a question she said there is no

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Nor' wester kills 3 in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

At least three people were killed and 50 others injured as a nor'wester lashed the Sirajganj district Monday night.

The dead were identified as Abbas Ali, 50, in Sirajganj Sadar upazila, Abu Bakker Sha, 40, of Dulauri village and Amina Khatun, 46, of Khudrason village under Tarash upazila. Lightning and collapse of houses during the storms killed them.

Of the injured, ten including Selim, Nazrul and Lutfar were admitted to the local hospital in a critical condition.

Strong squalls swept over Shahjampur, Chowwah, Tarash and Sirajganj Sadar upazilas, razing to the ground one hundred dwellings, schools, madrassahs, mosques and shops. Moreover, huge trees were uprooted and crops and tube-wells were damaged.

The nor'wester was accompanied by huge rainfall.

Mamun's men distribute leaflets at PM's rally?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

After Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Tuesday warned against attacks on journalists and promised action against terrorists newsmen in Chittagong now hope that ward commissioner Mamunur Rashid Mamun would be brought to book without further delay.

At the public meeting at Outer Stadium, the PM condemned attacks on newsmen in different parts of the country. She made it clear that exemplary punishment would be given to those involved in attacks on journalists and newspaper offices.

"No one will be spared", she said without mentioning any name or group in this regard.

Some senior journalists here

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a rally at the Chittagong Outer Stadium. The rally was organised on May Day.

US vows to deploy missile defences violating treaty

AP, Washington

President George W. Bush vowed to deploy a shield against ballistic missile attacks by so-called "rogue states" like Iraq and North Korea and to "replace" the 1972 Cold War treaty that bars such defences.

"We will deploy missile defences to strengthen global security and stability," Bush said on Tuesday in a speech at the National Defence University that focused on meeting security challenges that have arisen since the Soviet Union collapsed.

Bush's comments came as he waged a stepped-up diplomatic campaign to convert US allies and Russia which worry that the plan could spark a new arms race into missile defence believers by personally calling world leaders and dispatching high-level officials to their capitals.

China on Wednesday branded US plans to push ahead with a missile defence system a threat to world peace, while initial reactions from Russia and other major countries were mixed.

NATO was non-committal but said Bush was right to focus on the threat of ballistic missile attacks by so-called "rogue states" like Iraq and North Korea.

In an apparent bid to mollify Moscow, Bush said he favored unilateral cuts in the US arsenal to "the lowest possible number of nuclear weapons consistent with our national security needs, including our obligations to our allies."

"My goal is to move quickly to reduce nuclear forces. The United States will lead by example to achieve our interests and the interests for peace in the world," said Bush, who outlined his plan in a telephone call to Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier in the day.

"Today's most urgent threat stems not from thousands of ballistic missiles in the Soviet hands, but from a small number of missiles in the hands of ... states for whom terror and blackmail are a way of life," he said.

As a result, "Cold War deterrence is no longer enough to maintain peace." Bush said, and the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty with Moscow "does not recognize the present or point us to the future. It enshrines the past."

Bush did not provide specifics like cost or timetable and left open what final form the system which critics say is costly and impotent will take. He did say, however, that officials were looking at air-land- and sea-based technology.

In an interview later on CNN, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld justified Bush's announcement, in part, by citing China's build-up of missiles.

"The truth is that the Chinese have been building more, they are building more, they are going to build more quite apart from any ABM treaty," Rumsfeld said. "They are not a party to the treaty," he said.

Rumsfeld also supported the anti-ballistic shield as a

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Will journalist Tipu remain disabled?

The Daily Star- প্রথম আলো

Tipu Treatment Fund

Donate generously to this Fund

Save Tipu from Disability

Send donations to: Savings Account No. 25002111

Dhaka Bank Ltd, Karwan Bazar Branch, Dhaka

EC likely to discuss security measures today for polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) may sit today to discuss security measures to be taken during the ensuing general elections amidst fears of widespread violence during the polls.

"The upcoming general election would be marked by some incidents of violence," a senior EC official, preferring anonymity, told the Daily Star yesterday. He added that today's meeting would be the first in a series.

The meeting would take a look into the previous practices and the existing law and order situation to determine the security requirement for elections in 300 parliamentary constituencies.

The EC had earlier proposed a security budget to the tune of Tk 36 crore, to be set aside from the Tk 80 crore allocation for the election

Pir of Atrashi dead

BSS, Dhaka

Maulana Hasmatullah, Pir Saheb of Bishwa Zaker Manzil at Atrashi, Faridpur died at the Banani residence of his son here in the early hours of Tuesday. His disciples said, he was 95.

He was buried in the afternoon on the premises of Darbar Sharif Complex 20 km off Faridpur town.

He left behind two sons, three daughters and innumerable disciples to mourn his death.

purposes considering all aspects, including the rise in the number of voters.

Meanwhile, the EC held a meeting yesterday to know about the experiences of its field-level officials. It also discussed proposals for reforms of the electoral law. The officials noted that the proposal to limit election expenses of candidates may not be absorbed as most political parties apparently cold-shouldered the idea.

The officials also found it difficult to set up polling centre in every ward as the EC do not have the necessary strength to support such a huge number of polling centres at a time.

Chaired by Chief Election Commissioner M A Syed, the meeting was attended, among others, by Election Commissioners Shafur Rahman, M M Munsef Ali and M A Mohammad Ali, and divisional election officers, district election officers and officials from the EC Secretariat.

Earlier, the EC had proposed registration of political parties with the commission, fast appeal procedure on election dispute, election expenses and lowering the number of constituencies a person can contest in at a time.

Later, it proposed for changes in the Representation of People's Order (RPO) and sought ceiling on the election expenses by political parties.

Batamul blast: One arrested for interrogation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of police has arrested one of the injured in the Ramna Batamul carnage for interrogation into the bomb blast incident on April 14.

Abdullah Al Mamun, 27, was shown arrested on Monday and produced before the CMM's court on Tuesday. The court granted a five-day police remand for interrogation in connection with the Batamul blast.

Ten people were killed and more than twenty were injured when a powerful bomb went off near the stage where a cultural function of Chhayanaut on Pahela Baishak was in progress at the Batamul in the Ramna Park.

Investigation officer said last night that they were interrogating the arrested person but were yet to make any breakthrough.

Police so far arrested four people in connection with the Batamul blast. Three others were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail after interrogation.

Ctg fire: One burnt alive, 50 families homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

One person was burnt alive and about 50 families were rendered homeless in a fire at Bandar thana area in the city in the early morning yesterday.

Fire Service and witnesses said, the fire originated at a slum known as Nazruler Colony in Nimtola area from an earthen oven at around 2 am yesterday. The fire engulfed the slum where on Md Yusuf, 40, got trapped in the fire and was roasted alive in his sleep.

About 50 families were rendered homeless in the fire before it could be extinguished at around 5 am.

The loss of property was estimated to be Tk 5 lakh, sources said.