



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.

The BNP chairperson said

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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 Sramik Dal, the labour front of BNP.

The BNP chairperson said

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## HC order goes unheeded

Roads, footpaths in city still occupied

RAZIUR RAHMAN

A High Court order to keep the city roads and pavements free from construction materials has fallen on the deaf ears of DMP and DCC authorities.

Indiscriminate piling-up of construction materials on roads and pavements has been creating trouble to the city dwellers even in posh areas like Dhanmondi, Eskaton and Uttara model town.

Some sprawling thoroughfares like the Manik Mia Avenue have virtually become sites for keeping construction materials.

Besides the High Court order issued on February 11, the DCC (Dhaka City Corporation) and the DMP (Dhaka Metropolitan Police), as per their own laws, are supposed to keep the city roads free of construction materials.

Under the Municipality Act, the DCC is supposed to keep roads and pavements free of illegal occupation. As per law, the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is to see that nothing creates obstacle to movement of vehicles and pedestrians.

On February 11, the High Court ordered the DCC and the DMP to keep all the roads and pavements free of construction materials and illegal occupation by hawkers. The order followed a petition filed by Barrister Omar Sadat on December 14 last year.

The High Court also directed the Inspector General of Police, Mayor of DCC and the ministries of public works and home affairs to take necessary steps to implement

the order. But the situation remains as it was.

It is worst at Manik Mia Avenue where construction materials have kept occupied almost half of its south lane for more than four months now. Three construction firms have been constructing six 10-storey buildings at the NAM Green Project nearby.

Construction materials of two of the firms have occupied almost half of one lane of Manik Mia Avenue on the west of Rajdhani High School and Sech Bhaban and almost the entire road connecting the avenue with the Jute Research Institute.

When asked, Executive Engineer Abu Taher Chowdhury at the nearby PWD site office said, "We asked the contractors several times to remove the construction materials from the road. We are going to issue letters to them soon".

Engineers of the two firms which are constructing buildings No: one to four at the NAM project said they have no option other than keeping construction materials on portions of Manik Mia Avenue as there is no sufficient space at the construction site.

They, however, said they have already started removing construction materials and the rest will be removed soon.

But DMP has taken no initiative to take any legal step against the firms.

Concrete slabs have been piled up at portions of two

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Piles of bricks and heaps of sands for the under-construction apartment buildings to house delegates to the NAM Summit occupy a sizeable portion of the Manik Mia Avenue just opposite the Sangsab Bhaban in the city.

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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 Naokhali, 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, Pirojpur, Bagerhat, Jhalakathi and Bhola, it said.

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

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

## '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.

Replies 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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## 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.

Rumsfeld also supported the anti-ballistic shield as a

## 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 in connection with the Batamul blast.

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 Nazrul Colony in Nimgola 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.

## 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 newsmen.

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

Some senior journalists here

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## 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 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.</