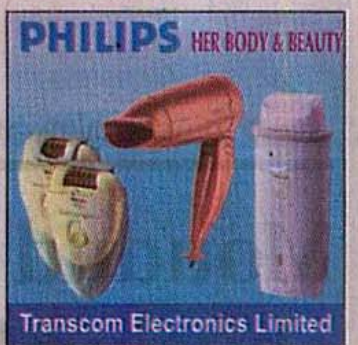




# The Daily Star



COMMITTED TO People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIV No. 118

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 20, 2004

www.thedailystar.net

JAISTHA 6, 1411 BS

RABI-UL-AWAL 29, 1425 HUIRI

16 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

## Manmohan Singh to be Indian prime minister



Sonia Gandhi with Manmohan Singh outside parliament yesterday.

Congressmen resign to protest Sonia's decision; distraught workers protest; regional group to join government

AGENCIES, New Delhi

India's president yesterday asked the Congress party's Manmohan Singh to form a government, ending days of crisis that paralysed the nation and spooked financial markets.

Hindu prime minister of the world's largest democracy, said he had showed the president proof of support for his Congress party-led coalition.

"I am happy to inform the nation that the president has invited me to Singh, who will be the first non-

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## Deal signed with Washington to trace groups hostile to US

### Software to be installed at ports to track down terrorists

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday signed a Memorandum of Intent (MoI) with the United States to protect American interests in the country and extend full cooperation to the US in identifying individuals or groups suspected of working against US interests.

Sources declining to disclose details of the memo said the agreement makes it binding on the government to take care of every single US interest including protection of US citizens and installations.

Visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca and Home Secretary Omar

Farooq yesterday signed the MoI that provides for installation of the PISCES (Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System), a sophisticated computer software to document passengers travelling into and out of the country and check movement of suspected terrorists.

In exchange, the US will help Bangladesh to develop a computer database for use at airports and seaports for immigration purposes.

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, US Ambassador in Dhaka Harry K Thomas and home ministry

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## PM briefs Rocca on dev steps

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday apprised the visiting US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca of her government's efforts to consolidate democracy and improve the lot of the common man.

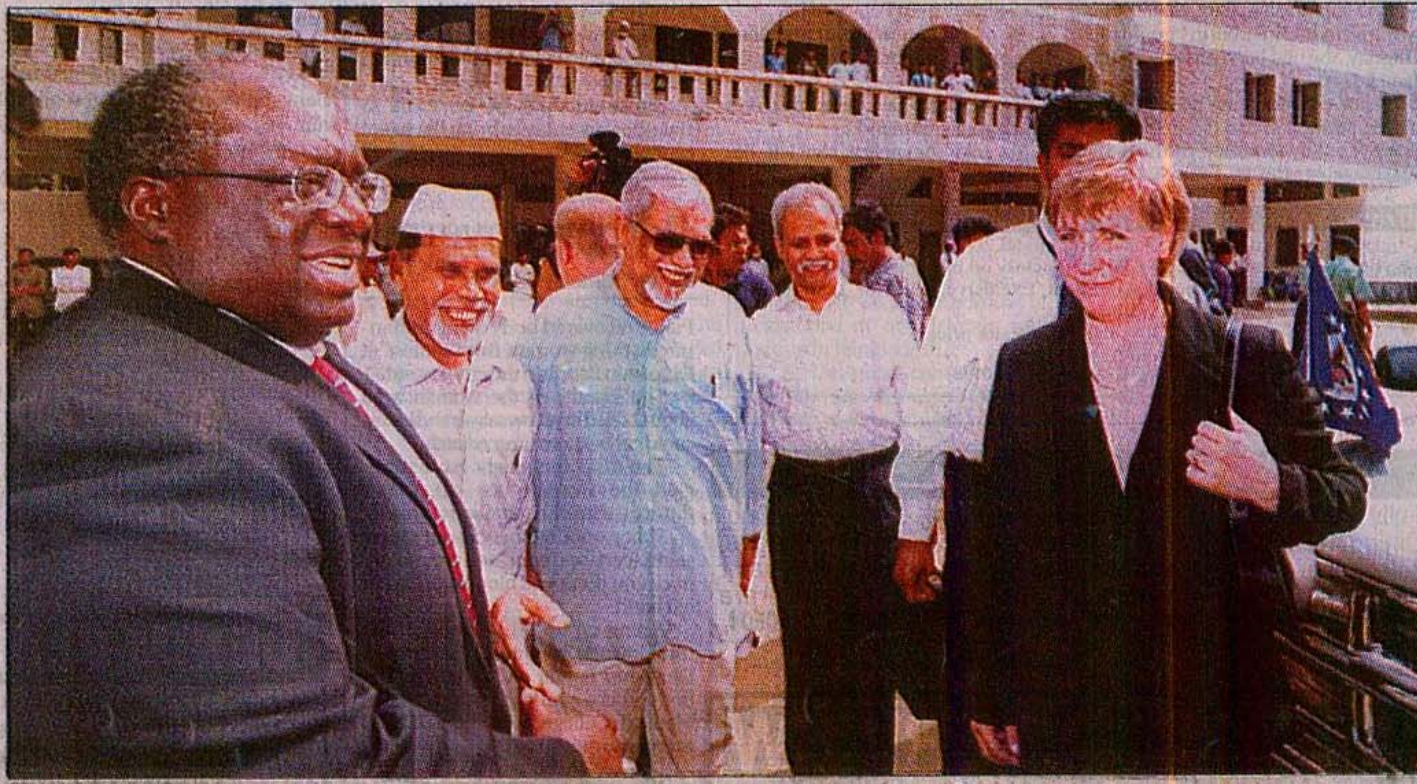
She mentioned the steps in the economic and social sectors as well as reform measures taken to ensure socioeconomic uplift and sought continued support of the friendly countries.

Rocca made a courtesy call on the prime minister at her office in the afternoon.

The US official appreciated the role of the prime minister and her government in consolidating and further strengthening democracy in the country.

She lauded Bangladesh's role for global peace and its stance against terrorism.

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US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca accompanied by US Ambassador Harry K Thomas yesterday visits the Ahmadiyya Complex at Bakshibazar.

## BAN ON AHMADIYYA BOOKS

### Dhaka's tradition as moderate Muslim state going off-track

Rocca also tells Bangladesh may seek US help in arms haul probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca yesterday said she conveyed the US concern to the government that Bangladesh's tradition as a moderate Muslim society is going off track because of the ban on the Ahmadiyya publications and attacks on their mosques.

"Bangladesh has a long tradition as a moderate and tolerant society," Rocca said, adding "The problems that the Ahmadiyyas are facing cause us concern, because it looks as if things might be getting off track a little." Rocca told journalists at a press conference at the American Centre when asked about her impression of the treatment of the Ahmadiyya sect.

"I conveyed the message all across the board that we are worried about it."

The visiting US assistant secretary

also revealed that Dhaka has expressed interest in receiving US assistance in the ongoing investigation into the Chittagong arms haul. Foreign Secretary Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury had told journalists on Tuesday that Bangladesh will ask US for investigation assistance "only if it is needed".

She told reporters that she expressed her concern to the government about the source and destination of the arms and that the US would continue to help probe the matter.

The development coincides with the agreement Bangladesh signed early yesterday on allowing the US to set up border controls when Rocca visited State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar.

On the government ban on Ahmadiyya publications, Rocca said, "We have to see how it plays out, we hope it will be reversed. We

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Left parties blast MOI with US

Term it anti-sovereignty

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The left-leaning political parties yesterday strongly protested the memorandum of intent (MOI) that Dhaka signed with Washington, terming it a US intervention in Bangladesh's internal affairs.

Leaders of the major opposition Awami League however declined to comment on the memorandum.

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## 'BNP men' attack Proshika office in Pallabi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Alleged adherents of ruling BNP yesterday beat up staff of the Pallabi area development centre (ADC) of non-governmental organisation Proshika, looted cash and valuables said to be worth over Tk 2.5 lakh and locked the office.

The raiders also threatened 'tough action' against the staff if they went to the office again.

"Locals identified them as activists of the BNP and (Jatiyatabadi) Jubo Dal (the party's youth front)," a top official of the NGO's Pallabi ADC

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## Cyclonic surge floods coast, 500 fishermen missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cyclonic storm brewing over the Bay of Bengal crossed over to Akiyab coast of Myanmar yesterday afternoon, whipping up a tidal surge that affected parts of the coastal districts and left some 500 fishermen missing in deep sea.

Vast areas in the coastal region were inundated due to the six to eight feet high tidal surge, which coupled with gusty wind drove hundreds of people out of their homes to take shelter elsewhere.

Crops and houses in many areas were damaged. According to reports received in

Dhaka, leaders of Patharghata Trawler Owners Association in Barguna, Alipur Trawler Owners Association in Patuakhali and sources in the off shore areas said about 50 trawlers with around 500 fishermen were missing in deep sea due to the cyclone.

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## Unapproved projects, relentless spending

R&H spends Tk 3,329cr on 2 projects for years under pressure

STAR REPORT

The roads and highways (R&H) department has spent as much as Tk 3,329 crore until 2003 under two unapproved projects.

The planning ministry in a report to the National Economic Council headed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday urged the government to end both the projects within the current fiscal year. If there were any components of national importance in the projects the government

might incorporate those separately in the next ADP, the ministry advised the council.

Of the two projects, the one titled Thana Connectivity Road Construction Project has been running since 1986 and the other named Publicly Important Road and Bridge Construction Project (Second Phase) since 1994. The pair, though were never approved, somehow made their way into the Annual Development Programme (ADP)

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## ADP cut by 6pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Economic Council (NEC) yesterday approved a Tk 19,000 crore revised annual development programme (ADP), 6 percent less than the original one.

Chaired by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, the meeting also decided to increase the costs of construction projects in the light of price hike of road.

A minister mentioned the spike in road prices and said many projects remain stalled even after tendering because of the situation.

The planning ministry told the NEC that the cut in the ADP was necessary due to slow project aid utilisation.

Project aid has been slashed by 17 percent from the original ADP to Tk 7,000 crore.

But foreign aid given in local currency increased 41 percent. The World Bank and the Asian Development Bank gave Tk 2,065 crore in local currency as programme support.

The revised ADP contains an internal resource allocation of

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## 10 kids die as missile fired on Gaza crowd

World condemns Israeli raid, death toll rises to 50 in two days

AGENCIES, Rafah, Gaza Strip

Israeli forces fired a missile and a tank shell yesterday into a large crowd of Palestinians demonstrating against the invasion of a neighbouring refugee camp, witnesses said. At least 10 Palestinians were killed, all children and teenagers, a Palestinian health official said.

Witnesses saw a missile land in the middle of the crowd of 3,000 demonstrators, and Associated Press Television Network footage

showed smoke and debris flying as a large explosion rocked the area. The footage then showed Palestinians carrying the wounded, including children, from the smoky scene.

At least 50 people were wounded, 36 critically, Palestinian hospital officials said. The death toll rose to 33 in two days, which is one of the highest in three and a half years of conflict.

Israeli media said at least 22 bodies, most of them school

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## Rain delays 3rd ODI

RABEED IMAM, from Grenada

Overnight rain held up the start of the third and final one-day international between Bangladesh and the West Indies at the Queen's Park Stadium yesterday.

Although the showers cleared off in the morning, the ground was still soggy in patches. The umpires had

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### HSBC WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2004 photography competition

HSBC Bangladesh invites Customers, HSBC staff and the General Public to submit entries for the WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY 2004 photography competition. The photographs submitted will be sold in an exhibition, with proceeds going to charity. This initiative is a part of the global "HSBC in the community" programme, which reflects the Bank's ongoing contribution to the local community.

**Illustration theme**  
The illustrative theme for the photograph is "Wanted - Seas and Oceans dead or alive" - pictures that shows our need for this vital natural resources in Bangladesh.

**Prizes**  
A panel of judges will select 3 winning pictures (1st prize BDT25,000, 2nd prize BDT15,000 and 3rd prize BDT10,000). The judges' decision is final.

**Rules**

- The competition is open to all.
- You may send your entry at any time between now and the closing date of Tuesday 1 June 2004.
- We will accept only one entry per person, with a maximum of three photographs per entry.
- Pictures should preferably be in landscape format, in color or black and white prints, of 8x size (8" x 10").
- Your name, address and phone number must accompany all photographs. A brief factual description of the subject in English (maximum 20 words), including the name and location of the subject must also be included. Entries without this factual description will not be eligible.
- Receipt of entries will not be acknowledged.
- We cannot return any photographs. You must send duplicates, not originals, of any photographs you wish to keep.
- All pictures must be taken in Bangladesh, and be your own original and unpublished work. Photographs entered in the competitions will be sold and all proceeds given to charity by HSBC Bangladesh.
- HSBC will have the right to cancel any entry without showing any reason thereon.

ENTRIES TO BE MARKED 'WED PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION' AND SUBMITTED BY Tuesday 1 June 2004 to any of the following address.

**Dhaka Main Office**  
Anchor Tower, 1/1-B Sonargaon Road, Dhaka 1205

<b>Colehan</b> House No. SWG-2, Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka 1212	<b>Motihel</b> 1/C Rajak Avenue, Motihel C/A, Dhaka 1000
<b>Dhanmondi</b> House 352 (Old), Road 27 (Old), Dhanmondi, Dhaka 1205	<b>Chittagong</b> Osman Court, 70 Agrabad C/A, Chittagong 4100

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