

London mayor ousted as Brown suffers polls 'bloodbath'

AFP, London

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown suffered a crushing election "bloodbath" yesterday, as his party lost control of London's City Hall on top of its worst poll results for 40 years across the country.

London Mayor Ken Livingstone was ousted by maverick conservative Boris Johnson, compounding a day of devastating local ballot results for Brown's Labour Party which augur badly for a general election due within two years.

Some commentators called the poll Brown's "John Major moment" - likening his fate since succeeding Tony Blair last year to that of Major's collapse at the ballot box after succeeding Margaret Thatcher in the 1990s.

Brown admitted that the losses, in local elections in England and Wales as well as the London City Hall race, sent a sobering message. "This has been a disappointing night, indeed a bad night for

Labour," Brown said, linking the effects of the global credit crunch to the centre-left party's defeat.

"We have lessons to learn from that and then we will move forward."

Labour finished third behind the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, the BBC's results showed, 11 years to the day since Brown's predecessor Blair swept into office on a landslide of popularity.

Conservative leader David Cameron said the results were "a very big moment" for his party, while some commentators suggest its strong showing could be a springboard to victory in a general election which must be held by mid-2010.

The front page of London's Evening Standard newspaper read "Bloodbath for Brown," while the Daily Mail called it "Black Friday."

Saturday's newspaper headlines summed it up: "Meltdown for Brown," said the Telegraph; "Brown's long, bloody Friday" from the Guardian; the Independent had

"The May Day Massacre," while the Express simply said "Brown and Out"

The London defeat was the most high profile blow.

Livingstone, famous as "Red Ken" from his far-left days in the Thatcher era, had won international plaudits for his management of the city over the last eight years, including introduction of the pioneering congestion charge.

Six months ago he seemed set for a smooth re-election for a third term -- but the surprise candidature of Johnson, an eccentric former journalist and television game show star, electrified the London contest.

A cronyism scandal this spring hit his poll ratings badly, and Johnson's rise was fueled by the growing wave of unpopularity directed at the Labour Party nationally.

The colourful Tory, whose victory was confirmed early Saturday, said in his victory speech that he

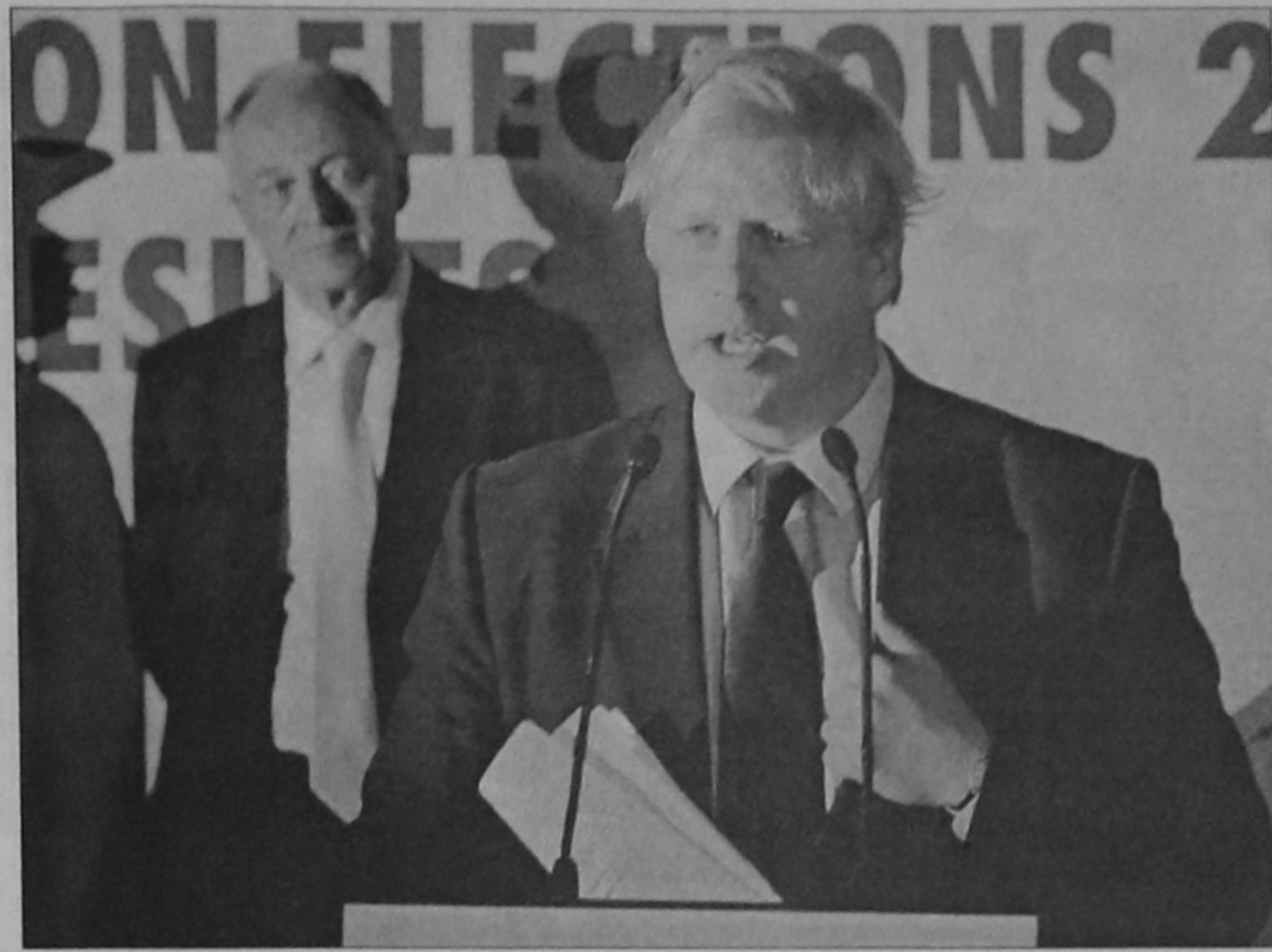
hoped the result "does show that the conservatives have change as a party that can again be trusted."

In the wider local polls, held only in England and Wales, the other parts of the United Kingdom operating separate political systems, the Conservatives had a 44 percent projected share of the vote, the Liberal Democrats 25 percent and Labour 24 percent, the BBC said.

With results from all 159 local councils counted, the Conservatives controlled 12 more at 65, Labour lost control of nine to leave 18, and the Liberal Democrats were up one at 12.

Worryingly for Brown, Labour lost seats in key heartlands such as south Wales, while the Conservatives made gains beyond their southern England powerbase.

Senior government ministers insisted Brown was still the best man for the job, in number 10 Downing Street. However, disgruntled backbenchers were more outspoken.



Successful mayoral candidate, Boris Johnson (R) speaks as former mayor Ken Livingstone (L) listens at City Hall in London on Friday. The Conservative Party's Boris Johnson on Friday ousted Labour incumbent Ken Livingstone to become London's new mayor in a strategic blow for Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

UN calls for Myanmar referendum to be inclusive

AP, United Nations

The UN Security Council on Friday called on Myanmar's military government to ensure that "fundamental political freedoms" are respected in this month's referendum on a new constitution.

The statement by all 15 council members noted the military junta's commitment that the "process will be free and fair" for the May 10 referendum, which is to be followed by elections in 2010.

"The Security Council underlines the need for the government of Myanmar to establish the conditions and create an atmosphere conducive to an inclusive and credible process, including the full participation of all political actors and respect for fundamental political freedoms," the statement said.

China, which has close ties with Myanmar, objected to the first two drafts of the council statement but agreed to the text after it dropped all references to detained pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

The statement also dropped language saying Myanmar should guarantee free expression, association and assembly "in the political process leading to the referendum, as well as independent monitoring of the referendum" and it eliminated all references to Myanmar's transition to democracy.

Pakistan stays execution of Sarabjit Singh, says official

AFP, Lahore

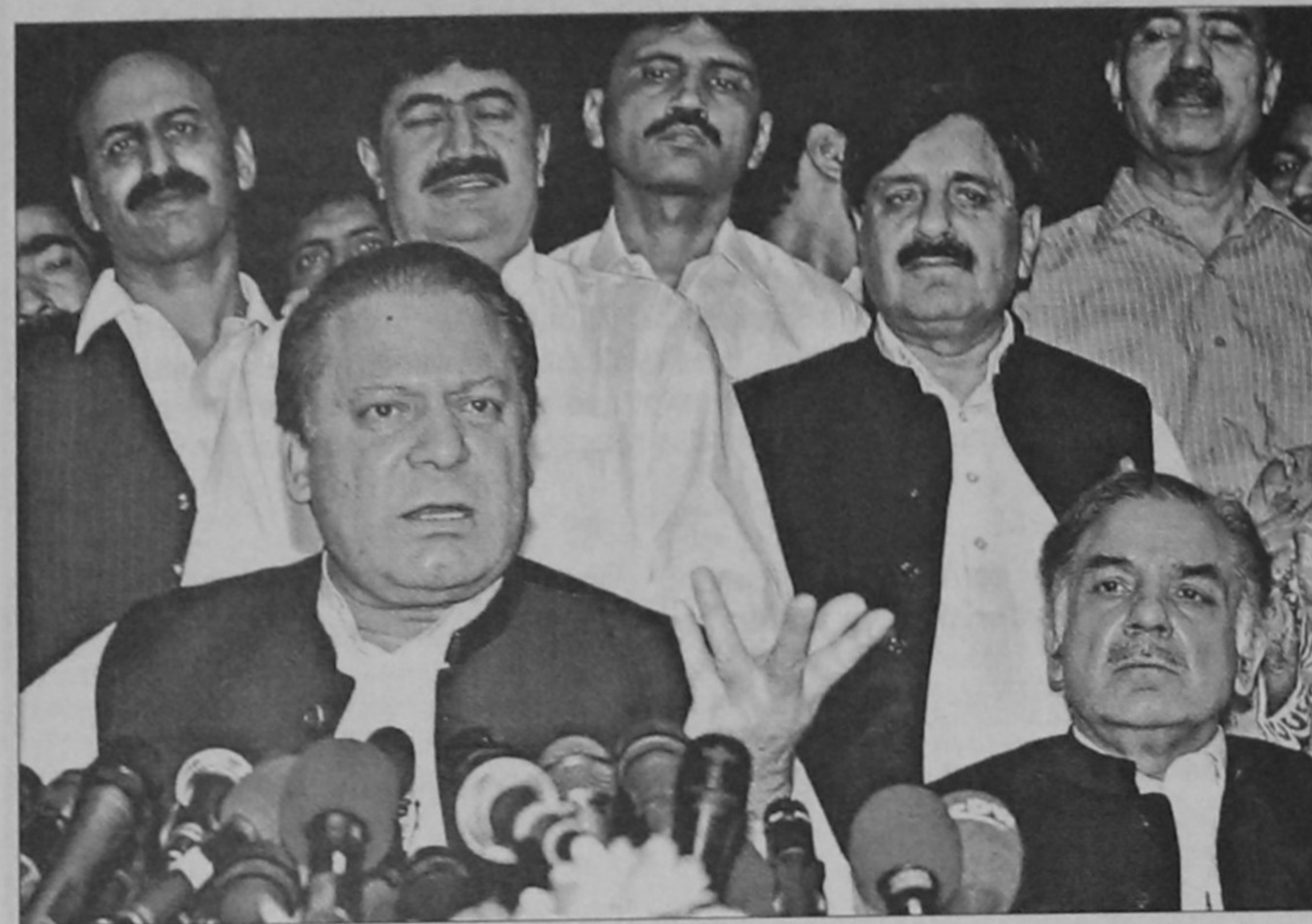
Pakistan's government has delayed until further order the execution of an Indian man on death row over terrorism charges, a jail official said Friday.

Sarabjit Singh, whose family say he is the victim of mistaken identity, was to be hanged on April 1 after being convicted of involvement in 1990 blasts that killed four people in the Pakistani city of Lahore.

But President Pervez Musharraf, who had earlier rejected a mercy petition, delayed execution until April 30.

Speaking to AFP on Friday, Malik Mubashir Ahmad Khan, superintendent of Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail, read out an interior ministry order, which said: "The execution of Indian national, Sarabjit Singh is stayed till further order."

The stay of execution, which jail authorities received on Friday, came days after Singh's wife, daughters and sister visited Lahore to meet him in prison.



Former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif (L) addresses a press conference as his brother Shahbaz Sharif (R) looks on in Lahore on Friday. Sharif said that the ruling coalition will reinstate judges sacked by Pervez Musharraf on May 12, posing a fresh threat to the president's grip on power.

Bush too blames India for rising food prices

PTI, Washington

US President George W Bush joined US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in blaming the rising prosperity of India's huge middle class for the spiralling global food prices.

Prosperity in countries like India is "good" but it triggers increased demand for "better nutrition" which in turn leads to higher food prices, Bush said.

At an interactive session on economy in Missouri, Bush argued that there are many factors for the present crisis, only one of which was investment on biofuels like ethanol.

"Worldwide there is increasing demand. There turns out to be prosperity in developing world, which is good. It's going to be good for you because you'll be selling products in the countries, you know, big countries perhaps, and it's hard to sell products into countries that aren't prosperous. In other words, the more prosperous the world is, the more opportunity there is," the US President said.

14 die in Lanka fighting

AP, Colombo

Scattered gunbattles and a roadside bomb blast in Sri Lanka's embattled north killed 11 Tamil Tiger rebels and three government soldiers, the military said Saturday.

Sporadic fighting in northern Mannar district killed 10 rebels and two soldiers Friday. Fifteen insurgents and four troops were also wounded, said a defense ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of government regulations.

Tamil guerrillas triggered a bomb targeting an army truck in northeastern Welioya region Friday

night, killing one soldier. Separately, a gunbattle along the front lines in Welioya killed one Tamil rebel and wounded 13 others, four of them soldiers, he said.

Rebel spokesman Rasiyah Ilanthirayan was not immediately available for comment Saturday.

It was not possible to independently verify the military's claims because fighting took place deep in the northern jungles, where access is restricted. Both sides commonly exaggerate their enemy's casualties while underplaying their own.

The government has pledged to capture the rebels' de facto state in the north and crush them by the

end of the year. But diplomats and other observers say the army is facing more resistance than they had expected.

Fighting has escalated along the northern front lines since the government withdrew from a long-ignored cease-fire in January.

The Tamil Tigers have been fighting since 1983 for an independent homeland for minority ethnic Tamils, who have been marginalized for decades by governments dominated by the Sinhalese majority. More than 70,000 people have been killed in the fighting.

Dalai Lama envoys start talks with China today

AP, Beijing

Chinese media railed against the Dalai Lama and his supporters Saturday and pledged to crush any campaign seeking independence for Tibet, ahead of a meeting between Beijing and envoys of the exiled spiritual leader.

The meeting in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen would be the first between the two sides since violent anti-government protests erupted in Tibet in March.

Prime Minister Samdhong Rimpoche of the India-based Tibetan government-in-exile said

envoys are scheduled to arrive in Hong Kong on Saturday and travel to the neighbouring city of Shenzhen for meetings to begin Sunday.

The representatives, Lodi Gyari and Kelsang Gyaltzen, would convey "deep concerns" over China's handling of the situation in Tibet and would put forward suggestions to bring peace to the region," the Tibetan government-in-exile said Friday.

China has faced mounting international calls to negotiate with the Dalai Lama, and some experts believe Beijing agreed to

meet to ease pressure ahead of the Olympics, which begin in August.

The Tibet talks were not mentioned Saturday in China's entirely state-run media, but two articles continued to accuse the Dalai Lama and his supporters of organizing riots with an aim of breaking the far western Himalayan region of Tibet away from Chinese rule.

"The hope of realising Tibetan independence by the Dalai clique has become more and more dim. When their hopes shattered, the Dalai clique launched bloody violence, this was their last act of madness," the Tibet Daily said.

Pak military operation in Baluchistan stopped

THE DAWN, Quetta

Pakistan Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has said that the military operation in Baluchistan has been stopped.

Addressing the Baluchistan cabinet here on Friday, the prime minister asked the federal and provincial governments to withdraw all cases registered against former chief minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal so that he could be released.

"I asked the military to stop operation in Baluchistan until I am briefed by the new provincial government on the ground realities in the province," he said.

"It has been decided that no army action will be carried out in the province until a strategy is

formulated in consultation with representatives of the provincial government to deal with the issue of law and order in the province," he said.

Prime Minister Gilani said he had been briefed by the army on the law and order situation in various areas but he had postponed the briefing on Baluchistan till the formation of the provincial government. He said he wanted representatives of Baluchistan to attend the briefing so that a decision could be taken after consultation.

The prime minister urged the provincial ministers to play their role in improving law and order.

"You can manage law and order because you represent your parties and also the tribes," he said.

US religious rights panel wants Vietnam, Pakistan blacklisted

AFP, Washington

A US religious freedom watchdog on Friday asked the State Department to include Vietnam, Pakistan and Turkmenistan in its global blacklist of religious freedom violators, and maintained Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, on a watchlist.

In its recommendation to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, the US Commission on International Religious Freedom also wanted Myanmar, China and North Korea to be kept in the department's "country of particular concern" blacklist together with Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Eritrea and Uzbekistan.

The independent commission, set up by US law to monitor religious freedom across the globe, also maintained Afghanistan and Bangladesh in its watchlist together with Belarus, Cuba, Egypt and Nigeria.

The 10-member panel was divided whether to downgrade predominantly-Muslim Iraq, where widespread persecution of Christians has been reported, to the blacklist from the watchlist, saying it needed more time to make the decision.

The commission makes an annual recommendation to the State Department ahead of its compilation of its annual report on

international religious freedom.

The panel wanted Vietnam to be reinstated in the department's blacklist, saying the government continued to imprison and detain dozens of individuals advocating for religious freedom reforms in the communist-led state.

Vietnam was removed from the list in November 2006 on the eve of a visit by US President George W. Bush to the former battlefield enemy nation.

The State Department admitted Friday that there were still "a number of issues" on religious freedom in Vietnam.

But "the actions that the Vietnamese government has taken to address some of our concerns makes them a country that does not merit being included on the CPC or the countries of particular concern list," said Tom Casey, a department spokesman.

Commission member Leonard Leo said the panel's view differed from that of the department.

"We continue to find that lifting the CPC designation for Vietnam was premature," he told a news conference.

Ethnic minority Buddhists and Protestants in Vietnam "are often harassed, beaten, detained, arrested and discriminated against and they continue to face some efforts to coerce renunciation of faith," the report said.

Uttara Bank Limited
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT (4TH FLOOR)
HEAD OFFICE, 90, MOTILHEEL C/A., DHAKA-1000.

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed quotations are hereby invited from the bonafide, well experienced & technically sound Architectural/Engineering Firms for Internal Renovation & Decoration Work of Uttara Bank Ltd. 1) Comilla Branch, Dipika Cinema Building (1st Floor), Kandirpar, Kotwali, Comilla & 2) Eastern Plaza Branch, Eastern Plaza (4th Floor), 22/7 Free School Street, Sonargaon Road, Hatirpool, Dhaka. Intending Tenderers having prerequisite qualification & experience may apply on their letter head pad alongwith the attested copies of requisite work completion Certificate, IT clearance Certificate, VAT Registration Certificate and academic Certificate of the Graduate Architects under their regular service for purchasing Tender Documents from the office of the undersigned on cash payment of Tk. 2000/- (Non refundable) per set per Branch on or before 28-05-2008 during office hours. Firms having no working experience for the same nature of Internal Renovation & Decoration Work Valued not less than Tk. 30.00 Lac in a single work order in any Govt./Semi Govt. Organization or Corporation or Autonomous Body or Bank or in any Organization of above category within the last 3 (three) years and not having at least 1 (one) Graduate Architect with minimum 5 years practical experience in their regular service need not submit any quotation.

The Bank will supply necessary Plan and Drawing for the work. The successful Tenderer will have to prepare detailed working drawings and necessary changes/alterations in the Plan and Drawing as per practical requirement in consultation with the Bank Management.

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The Uttara Bank Limited reserves the right not to accept the lowest Tender and to reject any Tender or part thereof or all Tenders without assigning any reason what so ever.

ENGR. M.A. AWAL
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER

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জাতীয় গণমাধ্যম ইনস্টিটিউট
১২৫/এ, দারুস সালাম, মিরপুর রোড, ঢাকা-১২১৬

সংখ্যা: জাগই/ভাভার-১/২০০৬(অংশ-২)/১৪৫
১৭ বৈশাখ ১৪১৫
৩০ এপ্রিল ২০০৮

বিষয়ঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি সংশোধন

দি ডেইলী স্টার প্রতিকায় গত ২১-৪-২০০৮ তারিখে প্রকাশিত তথ্য মন্ত্রণালয়ধীন জাতীয় গণমাধ্যম ইনস্টিটিউটের জন্য Digital Color Video Camcorder, Camera Tripod Adaptor, Digital Still Camera, Analog Audio Mixing Console, Meeting Amplifier and Microphone (Delegate Unit) ক্রয়ের লক্ষ্যে গত ১৭-৪-২০০৮ তারিখের NIMC/Maint-98/2007/1130 সংখ্যক দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে নিম্নলিখিত সংশোধন করা হয়েছে।

12.	Tender last selling date	:	11-5-2008 up to 4:30pm
13.	Tender closing date & time	:	12-5-2008 at 12.00 noon
14.	Tender opening date & time	:	12-5-2008 at 12.30pm

এই সংশোধনীটি দরপত্র দাখিলের অংশ হিসেবে গণ্য হবে।

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তারিখঃ ১১/০১/১৪১৫
২৪/০৪/২০০৮

রচনা প্রতিযোগিতা

বিশ্ব পরিবেশ দিবস ৫ জুন ২০০৮ উদযাপন উপলক্ষে শিক্ষার্থীদের মধ্যে পরিবেশ বিষয়ে সচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির উদ্দেশ্যে পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর কর্তৃক বিভাগীয় পর্যায়ে রচনা প্রতিযোগিতার আয়োজন করা হয়েছে। প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণ সংক্রান্ত তথ্য নিম্নে সন্নিবেশিত হলোঃ

ক্রমিক নং	বিভাগের নাম	রচনার বিষয়	শব্দ সংখ্যা (অনধিক)
ক	১ম থেকে ৫ম শ্রেণী	আর নয় কার্বনের বিষয় -- চাই পরিবেশবান্ধব অর্থনীতি	২৫০
খ	৬ষ্ঠ থেকে ৮ম শ্রেণী	(Kick the Habit! Towards a Low Carbon Economy)	৫০০
গ	৯ম থেকে ১২ম শ্রেণী		১০০০

অগ্রহী ছাত্রছাত্রীদেরকে বাংলা/ইংরেজি ভাষায় উল্লিখিত বিষয়ে রচনা টাইপ করে অথবা স্বহস্তে লিখে ডাকযোগে অথবা সরাসরি নিজ নিজ বিভাগীয় কার্যালয়ে আগামী ২০ মে ২০০৮ তারিখের মধ্যে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে প্রেরণ করতে হবে।

নিম্নে বিভাগভিত্তিক রচনা প্রেরণের ঠিকানা প্রদত্ত হলোঃ

ক্রমিক নং	বিভাগের নাম	রচনা প্রেরণের ঠিকানা
১	ঢাকা বিভাগ	সৈয়দ নজমুল আহসান, গবেষণা কর্মকর্তা ও সদস্য সচিব, রচনা প্রতিযোগিতা বিষয়ক উপ-কমিটি, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, পরিবেশ ভবন, ই-১৬, আগারগাঁও, ঢাকা-১২০৭। (ফোনঃ ৯১৩৭৯৫৯, ই-মেইল nazmul@doe-bd.org)
২	চট্টগ্রাম বিভাগ	পরিচালক, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, পরিবেশ ভবন, জাকির হোসেন রোড, ফরেজ লেক, খুলসি, চট্টগ্রাম। ফোনঃ ৬৫৯৩৭৯।
৩	খুলনা বিভাগ	পরিচালক, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, পরিবেশ ভবন, বয়রা, খুলনা (কমিশনার বিল্ডিং এর সামনে)। ফোনঃ ৮৬১৫০৭।
৪	রাজশাহী বিভাগ	পরিচালক, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, পরিবেশ ভবন, নিশিন্দারা, বগুড়া। ফোনঃ ৬০৮১০।
৫	বরিশাল বিভাগ	উপ-পরিচালক, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, নাসরিন জিলা, পুট-৩৯৩, হোল্ডিং-৯৯, ফকিরবাড়ী রোড, বরিশাল। ফোনঃ ৬২৪৮২।
৬	সিলেট বিভাগ	উপ-পরিচালক, পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তর, বাড়ি নং-১ (সুরজী), রোড নং-৩৫, ব্রক-ডি, শাহজালাল উপ-শহর, সিলেট। ফোনঃ ২৮৩০২৭৮।

প্রতিযোগির নাম, শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠানের নাম ও ঠিকানা, শ্রেণী, পিতা/মাতা/অভিভাবকের নাম ও যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা (টেলিফোন/মোবাইল/ই-মেইল, যদি থাকে) ইংরেজি ও বাংলায় আলাদা কাগজে লিপিবদ্ধ করে সঙ্গে পাঠাতে হবে। নামের উপর প্রতিযোগিতার গ্রুপ উল্লেখ করতে হবে। প্রতিটি গ্রুপের জন্য প্রথম, দ্বিতীয় ও তৃতীয় স্থান অর্জনকারীকে পুরস্কার প্রদান করা হবে।

সৈয়দ নজমুল আহসান
গবেষণা কর্মকর্তা
ও
সদস্য সচিব
রচনা প্রতিযোগিতা বিষয়ক উপ-কমিটি
ফোনঃ ৯১৩৭৯৫৯
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জিডি-২০৪৯