

The Daily Star

PUBLIC
DEBATE



Today, on Page 4, Oli Ahmed, Bir Bikram, Minister for Communication and Member, Standing Committee, Bangladesh Nationalist Party argues against holding the next general elections under a caretaker government. Readers' opinions on the subject are welcome.

Inside Today

International

South Yemeni forces retreat from a strategic base near Aden



Pakistani best selling author Tehmina Durrani Page 5

Business

Uncertainty grips US-Japan trade talks

European states seeking to lift minimum wage levels in South, alleges Mahathir Pages 6, 7

Rising Stars

A letter from the Ministry of Adolescence; Tidbits; A star in her own right, Just for you; and Life Page 8

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day



The Magic of Dots and Lines Page 3

HOLIDAY

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed from May 21 to 23 on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper from May 22 to 24.

NEWS BRIEFS

1 killed, 30 hurt in road mishap

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, May 20: An unidentified villager was killed and 30 others were injured when two passenger buses collided at Tongi Bazar.

Ten of the injured were sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital while seven others were under treatment at Tongi Hospital.

Fire at Bangkok tourist hotel

BANGKOK, May 20: Hundreds of hotel guests fled a blaze in a central Bangkok tourist hotel late Thursday but no injuries were reported. The fire in the 1,000-room Ambassador Hotel on busy Sukhumvit road broke out in a third-floor room and was put out after an hour, police said.

The Daily Star



Rao urged to open talks with Pakistan Clinton tones down stand on Kashmir, N-issues

WASHINGTON, May 20: President Clinton Thursday urged Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao to engage in a constructive dialogue with Pakistan over the future of disputed Kashmir, reports Reuter.

But he made his appeal without rancour and the two leaders, after talks described as friendly and productive, went out of their way to signal closer ties between two countries who have had strained relations in the past.

"Today we began what I hope will be a very close working relationship as our two countries forge a stronger partnership," Clinton told a news conference "our nations

share many common values, and speaking as friends, we explored ways to deepen our ties and to expand cooperation."

Said Rao: "The President and I agreed that we have in unprecedented opportunity to free India-US bilateral relations from the distortions induced by the coldwar."

In the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the White House since Rajiv Gandhi in 1987, Clinton pointedly declined to criticise India for alleged human rights abuses in Kashmir and for pursuing a nuclear weapons programme.

"We have some things that we have agreed to continue to discuss with regard to the hu-

man rights issue and the proliferation issue, and we will continue to discuss them," said Clinton.

He said at another point, "when two nations are friends, it doesn't mean that they agree on everything or that they should. But in the context of their friendly relationships, they are then able to discuss differences, problems or issues between them."

As he spoke, several hundred people demonstrated against Indian policies in Kashmir in Lafayette Park across the street from the White House.

India and Pakistan have fought two wars over the dis-

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News Analysis

Budget : The soft option

By A Special Correspondent

On June 6 Finance Minister Saifur Rahman will present his fourth budget under the present government. With the next elections not too far away there is a lot of speculation that the fourth budget will be 'softer' than the previous ones.

In his last three budgets Saifur Rahman has tried quite aggressively to raise investment in the economy. To achieve this he needed to raise the rate of savings first. Thus, in the first budget he went after raising more taxes and reducing unproductive expenditure so that increased public saving can boost the domestic savings rate.

In the second budget Saifur Rahman continued to push for more revenue and, simultaneously, focused on industry, import and export measures in the hope of making the private

investors interested in investing more in export-oriented industries.

The third budget maintained the push for generation of higher savings through collection of increased tax revenue and further liberalised imports.

In the last three years the economy has seen a number of positive developments. The proportion of the GDP that is invested has increased from 11 per cent to 14.5 per cent, according to the Planning Commission. The imbalance between imports and exports has been more than halved. Foreign exchange reserves are at an extremely comfortable level. And, although foreign investment of any significant

amount is yet to come in, in

view of the current US-Japan

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Minister refuses to be brow-beaten Agitating CAAB staff threaten fresh action

By Asiuzzaman

An uneasy situation has been prevailing for the past two months at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) with the employees agitating for realisation of their 17-point demand.

As the employees staged demonstrations at the airport to press home their demands, the authorities suspended six leaders of the workers and charged-sheets two of them. Police was also deployed at the headquarters of the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) to ensure normal functioning.

The employees will go for a fresh action programme early next month, sources said.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan, however, said alterna-

tive arrangements have been made to face any emergency situation.

Even if all the 3,000 employees go on strike at a time, they can disrupt operations at the airports only for half an hour," Mannan told The Daily Star.

The 17-point demands of the employees include trade union rights, aviation allowance, profit bonus, technical allowance, increase of laundry and some other allowances and increased housing and medical facilities.

Some 3,200 employees at the seven airports of CAAB have been agitating at the call of the Civil Aviation Karmachari Oikya Jote.

The authorities had ac-

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Pak opposition deplores 'secret deal' with US on N-inspection

ISLAMABAD, May 20: Pakistan opposition today accused the government of entering into a secret deal with the United States to open the country's nuclear facilities to inspection, reports AFP.

The opposition attack came after Foreign Minister Assef Ahmed Ali said Wednesday that Islamabad was ready to consider proposals from the United States on 'non-intrusive' means to verify that Pakistan was not producing nuclear weapons.

The Leader of the Opposition Pakistan Muslim League, Nawaz Sharif, a former Prime Minister, said "To agree to non-intrusive verification means inspection which is worse than a roll back."

The Foreign Minister's statement came as Pakistani President Farooq Ahmed Leghari's departure on a private visit to the United States to meet US officials.

Buddha Purnima May 24

By Staff Correspondent

Buddha Purnima, the most sacred festival of the Buddhist Community will be celebrated all over the country on May 24.

The day is a public holiday.

Buddha Purnima — the full moon day in the month of 'Baishakh' — commemorates three most significant events of Lord Buddha's life. On the same day — he was born, attained supreme enlightenment and passed away.

Nearly 10 lakh Buddhists of Bangladesh, mostly based in Chittagong, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Cox's Bazar, Comilla, Noakhali and Patuakhali will celebrate the festival through day long programmes beginning with 'prabhat feri', the barefoot march in the dawn.

Prayers, Buddha Puja, Pan Panchali, offering to monks, religious meetings and illumination in the evening are the other highlights of the day.

Draft law to further control NGOs

By Masud Hasan Khan

The government has drafted law to have more supervisory powers over the country's socio-cultural bodies as well as private voluntary development organisations, better known as the NGOs, official sources said.

An 11-member committee, headed by an additional secretary of the Finance Ministry, prepared the draft Bangladesh Voluntary Activities (Regulation) Act, 1993 seeking repeal of five older laws like The Societies Registration Act, 1860; Section 26 of the Companies Act, 1913; Voluntary Social Welfare Agencies (Regulation and Control) Ordinance 1961, The Foreign Donation (Voluntary Activities) Regulation Ordinance 1978 and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Ordinance, 1982.

The draft law provides that no social and cultural organisation, NGOs and the service clubs would operate in the country without approval of the authorities.

These organisations have to regularly submit reports on their activities to the registration authorities showing the state of their financial affairs.

Sources said that under the

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Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

The holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second biggest festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated tomorrow.

A three-day public holiday begins today.

The Muslims of the country will sacrifice cattle, goats and sheep celebrating the Eid. The occasion commemorates the first such sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (RA) hundreds of years ago.

In a message on the occasion, President Abdur Rahman Biswas has urged the countrymen to be imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice for prosperity in all spheres. "We have to dedicate ourselves in realising the significance of sacrifice," the President said.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in her message said, "the significance of holy Eid-ul-Azha is to seek nearness

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PM offers prayers at Arafat

2m perform Hajj

ARAFAT, Saudi Arabia, May 20: Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today performed the holy Hajj here with over two million Muslims assembled from six continents, reports BSS.

Over two million Muslims surrendered to Almighty Allah, chanting in unison, "Labbaik Allahumma Labbaik" (Oh Allah I am before you) on the vast plain of Mount Arafat.

Begum Zia offered combined Zohr and Asr prayers at Arafat.

The Prime Minister descended to the Muzdalifa valley before sunset and offered Maghreb and Esha prayers there. After staying at Muzdalifa past midnight Friday she is scheduled to proceed towards Mina for the ritual of stoning at Zamzam early Saturday morning. She will then proceed

towards the Haram Sharif at Makkah and will perform Tawaf-e-Ziarat there.

Begum Zia, who has come to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of the Custodian of the two Holy Mosques King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, performed Umrah yesterday in Makkah and took part in a special prayer, seeking peace, prosperity and welfare of the people, development and progress of Bangladesh and solidarity of the Muslim world.

AFP from Jeddah adds, Saudi Authorities said the Hajj had passed off without incident despite threats from Iranian pilgrims to hold an anti-US demonstration in defiance of a Saudi ban.

Some 62 million cold water capsules donated by Saudi King Fahd were distributed to the

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Greetings

The Daily Star wishes its readers and patrons a very happy Eid.

Eid day likely to be rainy

There will be 'sun and shower' today and tomorrow (Eid day) almost all over the country as well as in the capital, reports UNB.

"The onset of the south-westerly monsoon which ushered the rainy season, is approaching," Sajedur Rahman, Deputy Director of the Storm Warning Centre at the Met office told the agency yesterday.

He said the hot spell which was prevailing all over the country is over and the temperature is unlikely to rise any further.

Sajedur said the recent heavy rainfall all over the country certainly would help the growth of summer crops.

City's main congregations

By Staff Correspondent

The main Eid congregation in the capital will be held at the National Eidgah in the Supreme Court premises at 7:30 am Sunday.

In case of inclement weather, it will be held at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque at the same time.

Four Eid congregations will be held at the Baitul Mukarram Mosque. The first congregation will be held at 6:30 am, the second at 7:30, the third at 8:30 and the last at 9:15 am.

The Maghbazar T and T Colony Jame Mosque Committee will organise a prayer at the colony mosque at 7:00 am.

An Eid congregation will be held at the Dhanmondi Eidgah Maidan at 7:30 am.

Bangladesh Rifles will hold its prayer at the Pilkhana Central Jame Mosque at 7:30 am and another at the number 10 Pilkhana mosque at 9:30 am.

Two Eid congregations will be held at Rajarbagh Police Lines one at 8:00 am and the other at 9:30 am.

The time table of other congregations to be held in the metropolis are: Mirpur Outer Stadium — 7:00 am, Aminbagh Jame Mosque — 7:00 am, Star Mosque — 7:30, Uttar Madapara Jame Mosque — 7:30, Nurjahan Road Baitul Fazle Mosque — one at 7:30 and the other at 8:15, Abu Jar Gifari College premises — 7:30, Mohammadpur Pisciculture Housing Society Mosque — 7:30 and Ajimpur Government Employees Community Centre premises at 7:30 am.

4 officials of fishing company granted bail

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 20: Four officials, including two directors of Sea Resources Ltd, a big joint venture fishing company, were released on interim bail granted by the court here yesterday.

They were arrested by Port Police on May 7 under the Special Powers Act.

Meanwhile, all navigational and communication equipment seized by the Port Police from two godowns of Sea Resources Ltd were shifted to the Customs godown in the presence of a magistrate.

Police claimed the equipment were seized because the company officials could not produce proper documents. But company officials said despite necessary