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# The Daily Star

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**Announcement**

We have the pleasure to announce the introduction of a new column on Page 4, "Crosscurrent", to be published every Tuesday, by the well-known columnist C.A.F. Dowlah.

The author will write on current topics with particular emphasis on problems impeding the growth of the private sector.

—Editor

**Inside Today**

**Article**

**High Time for Legal and Administrative Reforms**

Column: Crosscurrents by CAF Dowlah Page 4

**International**

Rao under pressure to share power ahead of polls Page 5

**Business**

Inadequate power generation prime cause of frequent disruption White House issues order banning US trade investment with Iran Page 6

**STOCK MARKET**

DSE Index 763.76 (+0.04%)  
 Market capitalisation Tk 45.23 billion  
 Turnover in volume 51225  
 Turnover in value Tk 8.32 million

**Supplement**

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains one page supplement on Eid-ul-Azha Page 8

**Holiday**

The offices of The Daily Star will remain closed on May 10, 11 and 12 on the occasion of the holy Eid-ul-Azha.

There will therefore be no issue of the newspaper on May 11, 12 and 13.



TV picture taken during the Hajj prayers in Mecca yesterday.

— Star photo

## Two million perform Hajj

RIYADH, May 9: Two million Muslims gathered at Mount Arafat in Saudi Arabia today and spent the day in prayer as the annual Hajj pilgrimage reached its climax, report Reuters. AP.

At sunset the pilgrims began their journey to Mina, where they will stone pillars symbolising the devil over the next three days as Muslims around the world celebrate Eid-ul-Azha feast.

In every direction as far as the eye could see along a plain, worshippers in identical white robes stood silently in a symbolic preview of doomsday, when Muslims believe every human being will stand before Allah and be judged for their deeds.

Before dawn, worshippers converged on Arafat in droves, packed in every kind of vehicle and even loaded onto luggage racks on buses overflowing with passengers.

The more zealous worshippers climbed the Mount of

Mercy, a prominence where Muslims believe Prophet Mohammed (SM) prayed, for prayers which continued through the afternoon.

After daylight, the plain resembled a large city at rush hour. Pilgrims chanting "At Thy Service O Lord, At Thy Service," headed out of the

mosques, packing the sidewalks.

Cars and buses remained frozen in a traffic jam while policemen wore surgical masks to escape the gas fumes.

Makkah, which Muslims around the world face for their ritual five daily prayers, was the birthplace of Islam's 7th century Prophet Mohammed (SM).

Arafat was where he spoke to his believers during his last pilgrimage.

Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford the expense must perform the Hajj once in a lifetime. The rite attracts the largest concourse in the world.

This year some 1 million Muslims from around the world were joined for the rituals by another million Saudis and other Muslims living in this kingdom.

The pilgrimage has proceeded smoothly except for a fire that swept through the pilgrims' encampment outside

## Iranians stage demonstration

TEHRAN, May 9: Iranian pilgrims held an anti-American demonstration at Mount Arafat near Makkah today in defiance of the Saudi authorities, the official Iranian news agency Irna said, reports AFP.

The demonstration took place just after midday prayers as two million pilgrims crowded towards the mount, where the Prophet Mohammed (SA) gave his last sermon.

The pilgrims "cried death to America and death to Israel!"

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## Preparation of voter list, delimitation Khaleda asks party MPs to be very vigilant

Star Report

In a hurriedly called meeting yesterday, BNP chief Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia directed party MPs to be vigilant during the forthcoming voter registration in their respective constituencies.

She also asked them to gear-up organisational activities during the Eid holidays to face the upcoming general elections.

Held at the International Conference Centre at Tejgaon, the meeting was attended by about 100 MPs, including a number of cabinet ministers. The separate division-wise briefings were conducted by party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder with Begum Zia in the chair.

The meeting was convened at a short notice with most of the MPs being summoned over telephone since Monday.

According to meeting sources, the Prime Minister asked the party legislators to assist the Election Commission in preparing the voter list and to keep a close watch over the registration process, which begins nationwide on May 25.

The BNP chairperson also asked her party MPs to be watchful about the ongoing delimitation of parliamentary seats and laid stress on proper groundwork for the next general elections rather than worrying about getting

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## Tk 300cr okayed for voters' database, ID cards

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved the project "Issuance of laminated identity card, computerised voter data base and voter list" at a cost of Tk 300 crore including a foreign exchange component of Tk 217 crore, reports UNB.

The project was approved at a meeting held Monday night at the Secretariat Cabinet room with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman in the chair.

The Election Commission (EC) will undertake the project aimed at issuance of ID cards to approximately six crore eligible voters of the country within December this

See Page 12 Col 3

## Maid murder Mother, daughter sent to jail

By Staff Correspondent

Rukhsana Chowdhury and her teenaged daughter Sharmin Chowdhury Hira, accused of killing their maid, have been sent to the Dhaka Central Jail.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday rejected a prayer by the Detective Police for a week's remand of the two for further interrogation.

CMM Shahiduddin Ahmed also fixed May 20 for hearing the bail petitions of the accused.

The mother and daughter are charged with involvement in the death of one Monwara Begum, a maid who worked at their Concord Tower apartment near Bangla Motors in the city.

Monwara's body was found

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Sharmin Chowdhury Hira, 16, a co-accused along with her mother Rukhsana in the alleged murder of their maid, were produced in the court of the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate yesterday.

**Eid greetings**

The Daily Star wishes its readers, patrons and well-wishers a happy Eid-ul-Azha.

**Eid-ul-Azha tomorrow**

By Staff Correspondent

Holy Eid-ul-Azha, the second biggest religious festival of the Muslims, will be celebrated throughout the country tomorrow.

A three-day public holiday begins today.

The Muslims of the country will sacrifice domestic animals on the occasion which commemorates the noble example set by Hazrat Ibrahim (RA) who did not hesitate to sacrifice his beloved son Hazrat Ismail at the command of the Almighty.

The main Eid congregation in the capital will be held at the National Eidgah at 7:30 am. In case of inclement

See Page 12 Col 7

## Measurers against guilty fertiliser dealers postponed

The Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) will extend all-out cooperation in supplying fertilisers among the farmers in remote areas at a fair price as usual, an official hand-out said yesterday, reports BSS.

This was told at a high-level meeting of the leaders of the BFA with the Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam in the chair. The meeting discussed various aspects relating to smooth distribution system of fertilisers.

The meeting decided to

See Page 12 Col 7

## Clinton-Yeltsin summit today

MOSCOW, May 9: After coming together on common ground to mark the allied Victory in Europe, US President Bill Clinton and President Boris Yeltsin sit down on Wednesday for one of the toughest summits since the Cold War, reports Reuters.

Both men will seek to play up the positive sides of their encounter and emphasise the strategic partnership between the former superpower rivals which is firmly on track.

But with relations marred by differences over the Chechnya conflict, possible Russian nuclear sales to Iran

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## Nepalese DPM due on May 27

By Staff Correspondent

Madhav Kumar Nepal, the Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal will arrive in Dhaka on a 4-day visit on May 27, it was learnt yesterday.

Madhav Kumar Nepal, who is also Minister for Defence and Foreign Affairs, will discuss bilateral issues including economic cooperation.

## BSRS to resume lending soon

Star Report

Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) is soon expected to resume industrial lending as a development finance institution (DFI), a high-level official of the organisation confirmed yesterday.

The Cabinet on Monday approved a reorganisation proposal for BSRS, allowing it to resume operations as a DFI.

The Cabinet approved a proposal for restructuring and strengthening the BSRS to

make it more viable and profitable," said the official.

The restructuring plan includes lowering the cost of funds under a re-financing scheme, strengthening the loan recovery drive, rehabilitation of the sick industries and funding new projects. The official pointed out that most of the restructuring programmes have already been initiated.

Earlier in 1985, following mounting overdue loans and a

poor recovery rate, the government imposed an embargo on BSRS against funding new projects.

Now, BSRS can resume operation as a full-fledged development finance institution and it can sanction new industrial loans," he added.

The government, meanwhile, has shelved the privatisation plan of BSRS following a poor response from the donors in funding its restructuring. The donor community had earlier suggested the privatisation of the Sangstha and a tentative plan was initiated to do it this year.

The BSRS official noted that the Sangstha has already paid off previous loans worth Tk 108 crore owed to the government and to a multilateral donor agency. The move was taken after the government provided a fresh loan of Tk 175 crore to BSRS last year as

See Page 12 Col 8

## Depression over Bay

The depression over west central Bay and adjoining area of Andhra coast moved north-westerly and centred at about 1,150 kilometre southwest of the Chittagong port at 6 pm yesterday, reports UNB.

It is likely to intensify further and move in north-north-westerly direction and may cross Andhra coast by early morning today. Met office said.

Maximum speed to sustained wind within 45 kilometres of the depression centre is about 40 kilometres per hour, rising to 50 kph in gust/squall.

Maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted distant cautionary signal no 1 while all fishing boats and trawlers over deep sea asked to keep close to the coast and proceed with caution.

## FICCI proposes cut in personal income tax

By Staff Correspondent

The Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) yesterday proposed that the government should raise the personal income tax exemption level from the present figure of Tk 55,000 to Tk one lakh in the coming budget.

At a meeting with the National Board of Revenue (NBR) in the city, the FICCI placed a series of proposals on income tax, wealth tax, gift tax, foreign travel tax, electricity duty, VAT related matters, tariff anomalies, protective tariff, tariff value etc.

The meeting was attended by NBR Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan, FICCI Vice President Gerliard G Doege and officials.

The FICCI noted in its proposal said, "Although the tax threshold has been raised in the 1994-95 national budget, it (personal income tax) re-

mains too low, while the bands are too small. As a result, the highest marginal rate is rapidly reached, thus compromising the ostensible purpose of moderating the tax burden."

Recommending changes in the personal income tax rules, it said that the tax on Tk two lakh should be 15 per cent, on Tk three lakh 20 per cent and for over three lakh 25 per cent.

The foreign investors' chamber urged the authorities to extend the tax holiday scheme in order to continue to encourage investors and withdraw that in line with developments in the particular region.

In its proposals, sought by the NBR through a recent circular, the FICCI said that the ceiling of house rent allowance received in cash and exempt

See Page 12 Col 3

## Another businessman murdered in city

By DMCH Correspondent

Barely hours after a trader was robbed and killed by muggers near the Curzon Hall, another businessman was murdered by some unknown assailants in the city's Shahidbagh area late Monday night.

According to sources, one Sadek Khan, 26, a businessman, bleeding profusely, was left inside an autorickshaw by a group of youths near Kakrail.

Prior to that, the youths, numbering two or three, had hired the autorickshaw at Shahidbagh, telling the driver that they needed to rush the seriously ill Sadek to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

However, when the autorickshaw reached Kakrail, the passengers asked the driver to stop the vehicle. When the driver stopped, the youths got down and told him that they needed to hire another autorickshaw. The driver waited a while for the youths to return but they never came back.

Then, when the driver turned and looked behind, he saw blood trickling from the head of Sadek, who was covered with a piece of cloth.

Sekander, the driver raised an alarm, hearing which many passersby gathered. Some of

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## Muggings on the rise

Star Report

Muggers are back on city streets in renewed strength.

Organised gangs of muggers are becoming increasingly active in different parts of the city despite police claims of strong vigilance.

Innocent rickshaw passengers become their prime victims in most of the cases where these gangs swoop on them at street corners in broad daylight using scooters, motor bikes and, in cases,

Available statistics show that police has arrested only 30 muggers and recovered about 17 local and foreign-made fire arms and ammunition from different parts of the city during the last one month.

Police officials said more than 50 armed gangs were now engaged in mugging and such other offences in the city. In most cases these petty criminals are young unem-

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