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The Daily Star

Fingertip Convenience
 Standard Chartered
 12 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 5.00

VOL. V NO. 110 REGD. NO. DA 781 BAISHAKH 31, 1402 BS, DHAKA SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1995 ZILHAJJ 13, 1415 HIJRI

ANNOUNCEMENT
 The Daily Star asks business leaders:
WHAT DO YOU WANT IN THE NEXT BUDGET?
 Beginning tomorrow the Daily Star starts an interview series on the coming budget and the economic situation. Based on a random selection of business leaders we asked ten questions relating to the ongoing economic reforms, opinions and expectations about the next budget.
 See details in the Business Page.

Inside Today
Article
The West Remembers
Fall of Hitler: What should We Do?
 Column : On The Record
 by Shah A M S Kibria
 Page 4

International
 UNSC urged to stop Israeli confiscation of Arab land
 NPT won't work unless Israel joins: Egypt
 Page 5

Business
 Formalities completed for construction of Saidabad Water Treatment Plant
 Japan to take retaliatory steps if US imposes trade sanction
 Pages 6, 7

Travel & Tourism
 A week on the Padma and Brahmaputra; How big is a Sundarban tiger?; Travel briefs; and Travel editor's note
 Page 8

Metropolitan
Dhaka Day by Day
 Camels and Cows for Korbani Eid
 Page 3

NEWS BRIEFS
Biswas returns
 President Abdur Rahman Biswas returns to Dhaka this morning ending his nine-day visit to the United Kingdom, reports BSS.
 During his stay in London, President attended the Victory in Europe (VE) programmes marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II.
 President Biswas and Begum Hosne Ara Rahman attended a luncheon hosted by Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace and a reception hosted by British Prime Minister John Major. They also attended a banquet given by Lord Mayor.

Khaleda visits Zia's mazar
 Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia on Thursday visited the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar on the occasion of holy Eid-ul-Azha. The Prime Minister placed wreaths at the mazar and offered fatha there, reports BSS.

Hasina condemns shrine destruction
 Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday condemned and protested the destruction of the shrine of Hazrat Sheikh Nuruddin Nurani at Char-e-Sharif in Kashmir. This heinous incident has hurt the religious, peace and democracy loving people, she said in a statement, reports UNB.

Famous Muslim shrine burnt down in Kashmir: 29 guerillas killed Arson, shooting continue

SRINAGAR, May 13: Police fired gunshots and tear gas to disperse angry crowds who burned several schools, government buildings and Hindu temples in Kashmir, in apparent retaliation for the destruction of a 15th century Muslim shrine, officials said today. At least one person was killed in the police firing in Nawakadal locality on the outskirts of the state capital Srinagar, officials said.

Kashmir valley. But it was lifted for three hours in the evening in some localities on the outskirts of Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu-Kashmir state. The battle between troops and guerillas over the Muslim shrine in Char-e-Sharif was one of the biggest confrontations in a 5-year-old separatist rebellion that has killed 11,500 people. The clash ignited fires that destroyed 1,500 homes and businesses and Char-e-Sharif's mosque dedicated to Kashmir's patron saint Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani. It was built in 1460. Soldiers found two more bodies in the smoking ruins of the town, raising the guerilla

death toll in the three-day battle to 29, the military said today. Two soldiers also were killed in the fighting. Army officers said 35 to 40 militants were believed to have been in the shrine when it burst into flames before dawn Thursday, and soldiers were searching for survivors. The guerillas occupied the mosque two months ago, provoking a standoff with troops.

Dhaka concerned
 Bangladesh has expressed deep concern at the loss of lives in a gunbattle between Indian forces and the Muslim militants and the destruction of a 650-year-old mosque in Kashmir, reports UNB. A Foreign Office spokesman Thursday said, the government of Bangladesh expressed deep

Major Mast Gul, whose sep- See Page 12 Col 2

PM goes to Seoul May 25 Dhaka may offer special zone for ROK investors

By M Anwarul Haq
 Bangladesh is likely to seek investments in joint ventures during the upcoming official trip of the Prime Minister to Seoul beginning May 25. Dhaka may also offer to set up an exclusive economic zone for South Korean investors, it was learnt. On the trip, taking place at the invitation of President Kim Young Sam, Begum Khaleda Zia will be accompanied by a number of cabinet ministers, senior officials and a delegation of leading businessmen. Strengthening of economic cooperation and trade expansion will top the agenda of the visit and also dominate the official talks between President Kim and Begum Zia. The two leaders are also expected to exchange views on bilateral

cooperation and matters of regional and international issues of common concern. An investment seminar is due to take place in Seoul during the Prime Minister's trip where interested Korean entrepreneurs and businessmen will get an opportunity to learn about business prospects in Bangladesh. Around 200 leading members of the Korean chambers of trade and industry have been invited to the seminar. Members of the fairly large business delegation, the biggest since the one which accompanied the Prime Minister on her trip to Japan last year, are expected to explore new areas of economic cooperation and strike joint venture deals. See Page 12 Col 8



Imran Khan to wed his English fiancée in June

LONDON, May 13: Former Pakistan Cricket Captain Imran Khan plans to marry Jemima Goldsmith, daughter of tycoon Sir James Goldsmith, a spokesman for Goldsmith said on Friday, reports Reuters. The marriage will take place "at the end of June," said a director of Taskforce Communications, a media relations consultant to Goldsmith. "Sir James and Lady Annabel are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter to Imran Khan. The marriage will take place at the end of June," a statement said. The spokesman was unable to say where the wedding would be held, or give any further details. "I am afraid there is absolutely nothing more I can add at this stage," he said. "The family is not prepared to add to this statement in any way." Imran, 42, is considered one of the world's most eligible bachelors. His fiancée is 21. An Oxford graduate and a dashing figure on the social scene during his 17 years English County Cricket, he now wears the traditional Pakistani long shirt and baggy pants or pyjamas. Since retiring from cricket See Page 12 Col 3



The city's main Eid congregation was held at the National Eidgah on Thursday. — Star photo

Eid-ul-Azha celebrated

By Staff Correspondent
 Eid-ul-Azha, embodying the spirit of sacrifice, was celebrated in the country Thursday with due solemnity and religious fervour. All across the country, Muslims who could afford it sacrificed cattle and goats, emulating the example set by Hazrat Ibrahim who did not hesitate to sacrifice his most beloved son Ismail at the command of the Almighty. The sacrificial meat was distributed among the poor, neighbours, relatives and friends. According to custom, animals can be sacrificed on all three days of the festival, including up to the Asr prayers on the third day, which was yesterday. A three-day public holiday for the second biggest Muslim festival ended today, however, attendance in most govern- See Page 12 Col 5

\$121m WB loan for gas development project

By S Y Bakht
 The World Bank has approved a 120.8-million US dollar soft-term loan as part of the 171.7-million dollar gas-sector infrastructure development project (GIDP). The project includes setting up of the Ashuganj-Bakhrabad inter-connector pipeline, drilling of three new gas wells in Rashidpur and a gas processing plant. The World Bank's soft-term lending arm, the International Development Association (IDA), extended the credit in the United States capital Washington on Tuesday last. According to official sources, the United Kingdom would also provide a 26.9 million dollar ODA fund for the project. The remainder would be provided by the government. The two-year WB project is being seen as "extremely critical" in improving the overall gas transmission system to meet the increasing demand in the country. It would end a long delay in completing the necessary development of infrastructure in the gas sector, which has resulted in a major supply constraint. The Bank also set some preconditions for the loan to bring about reforms and greater private-sector participation in the country's energy sector. The GIDP is designed to alleviate gas supply shortages and also to improve the management of the gas sector. See Page 12 Col 7

13 killed, 143 injured in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent
 At least 13 people were killed and more than 143 injured in road accidents on the Dhaka-Aricha and Dhaka-Chittagong highways during the Eid holidays. Eight passengers died, seven on the spot when a Kurigram-bound night coach overturned at Kamalapur at about 7:30 pm on Wednesday. Police said at least 80 people injured in the accident were taken to various hospitals for treatment. The bus which according to eyewitnesses was overloaded with home-bound people met the accident on the eve of Eid-Azha while it was trying to overtake a truck. Seven passengers died on the spot and another succumbed to his injuries at the Ganoshasthya Hospital near Savar. The dead were sent to the Dhaka Medical Hospital for autopsy. On Eid day, a Dhaka-bound minibus from Aricha fell into a roadside ditch at around 10 pm killing one Shakil, 31, and an unidentified person. Local people said at least 30 others were injured. Two separate cases were filed with the Dhanrai thana. Three people were killed and at least 33 others injured in four separate road accidents on Wednesday and Thursday last on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway according to reports from agencies and correspondents. A collision between two passenger coaches left two persons dead and 14 others injured near Alekharchar on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway on Wednesday. Seven people were injured in a road mishap between two auto-tempes which collided at Barura on Thursday. In another accident one person was killed and five were injured when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus ploughed through a road side shop at Korpal. Seven others were injured in another road accident at Sunagazi on Wednesday morning.

Stampede claims 3 in Khulna during zakat distribution

From Our Correspondent
 KHULNA, May 13: Three women were killed and several injured in a stampede here on Wednesday while taking zakat clothes from the residence of a shrimp exporter. The dead were identified as Ambia, 45, Hosne Ara, 28, and Kabirase, 25. The injured were released from Sadar Hospital after first aid. According to police, over five thousand people gathered in front of the residence of one Wazed Ali Biswas, a shrimp exporter, for zakat clothes on Wednesday. At one stage the crowd broke the queue and tried to rush ahead which resulted in the death of three in the stampede. Three separate UD cases have been filed. The bodies were buried without post mortem, it is learnt. Meanwhile, the city Awami League brought out a procession demanding arrest of Wazed Biswas.

Buddha Purnima today

Buddha Purnima, the most sacred Buddhist festival, will be celebrated today by about 10 lakh Buddhists of the country, reports UNB. The day has been declared as public holiday. Buddha Purnima, the full-moon day in the month of Baishakh, commemorates three most significant events of Lord Buddha's life. On this day, he (Lord Buddha) was born, attained supreme enlightenment and passed away. On the eve of the Purnima, President Abdur Rahman Biswas in a message felicitated the Buddhist community with a word of praise for their contribution to the welfare of the country and countrymen. Biswas hoped that as patriots-citizens they would continue their active participation in country's advancement in future. In a separate message, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said the present government ensured full freedom and rights of all communities and set a shining example of religious harmony in the country. Buddhism is the religion of humanity, non-violence and peace. It has a glorious tradition in Bangladesh. The soil of Bangladesh provided a gateway to its spread to Southeast Asia," she recalled. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina yesterday greeted the Buddhist community on the See Page 12 Col 7

Voter registration Hasina asks partymen to remain vigilant

From Our Correspondent
 TUNGIPARA, Gopalganj, May 13: Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina today asked the party workers to remain vigilant during voter registration beginning May 25. She asked them to report any incident of discrepancy or irregularity to the central office of the party. The Awami League chief was addressing a conference of the Tungipara thana unit today at the residence of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Lashing out at the ruling party, the Awami League chief said that the BNP has set up a unique example of a partisan administration. Begum Khaleda Zia, she said, was giving false hope to the voters in order to win the next elections. The BNP has frustrated the hopes and aspirations of the people during the last four and a half years of its rule, she added. She said the BNP has already started an extensive election campaign at the thana and district levels. Sheikh Hasina called upon the party workers to finish the organisational conferences of the village and thana level committees within June 30 in order to bolster the organisational strength of the Awami League. The meeting was presided by Laik Ali Biswas and addressed by Kazi Abdur Rashid, Muhammad Ali Khan Miah, Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and Bazul Alam. **Constituencies : EC to hear objections from tomorrow**
 The Election Commission will begin public hearing on May 15 on written demands, objections, recommendations and opinions received regarding preliminary list of constituencies for electing members in general seats of the See Page 12 Col 8

8 murdered in week in city

By Staff Correspondent
 Yet another murder took place in the capital on Eid day (Thursday), raising the number to eight in the past one week. Sabid Jahangir alias Farid, son of film director Fazal Ahmed Benazir, was allegedly killed by his friends at an unknown residence in the city on the night of Eid day, police said. Farid's body, with marks of injuries on his chest, abdomen and penis was recovered from a ditch adjacent to the proposed Rajuk housing project at Joarsahara under Cantonment thana, according to police and medical sources. Police suspected that Farid might have been killed following altercations with his friends centring an act of womanizing. Farid was called out from their Tanipara house at Khilkhet area Thursday night and since then he was missing, police quoted the victim's family members as saying. Police found Farid's body on Friday morning after his father filed a case with the Cantonment thana accusing Harun, Mintu and some others of killing his son. Harun, Mintu and others reportedly called Farid out of his house on the night of Eid day. Farid, who recently returned from the United States, was scheduled to go back to the US after the Eid-ul-Azha along with his father. Nobody had, however, been arrested until last night. The body was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Tk 16 cr more will be needed to raise primary teachers' grants

By Reaz Ahmad
 The next annual budget will have to make provision for an additional sum of Taka 16 crore to pay government support grants to 44,000 teachers of 11,000 registered non-government primary schools and ibtada'i primary madrasahs. The government will have to allocate Taka 55 crore for the purpose of paying the teachers the annual grants, paid in monthly instalments. In 1994-95, the sum required under this head was only Taka 39 crore 4 lakh and 56 thousand, according to competent sources in the education sector. The government recently decided to increase the cash benefit for the teachers of registered non-government primary schools and ibtada'i madrasahs. The money will be paid into the personal accounts of the teachers through banks. Since 1991, a maximum of four teachers from each of the 11,000 registered non-government primary schools and ibtada'i madrasahs in the country were entitled to receive a monthly grant of Taka 500 each as special relief. In the face of continued agitation by the teachers, the government last February agreed to enhance the grant amount by categorizing the schools and madrasahs according to the length of their registration with effect from January this year. Hence, the teachers of schools and madrasahs registered five years or more ago will get Taka 745 each as grant, while the teachers of institutions registered between two and four years ago will get Taka 651. The teachers of institutions whose registration has been done less than two years ago will get only Taka 525 per month. Meanwhile, the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) unit of the Primary and Mass Education Division has recently channelled Taka 21 crore 50 lakh to the accounts of the teachers as arrears grants for the months of January-April this year in 435 out of the 473 thanas in the country through the branches of four designated banks. Earlier, Taka 13 crore 20 lakh was paid in this regard during the first six months of the current fiscal at the old rate of Taka 500 per month. When asked, an official concerned told The Daily Star that teachers of the remaining 38 thanas were yet to receive their arrears because necessary information about their bank accounts had not been forwarded to the CPE unit in time. Until December last year the grant fund used to be channelled through treasury memos drawn by the Thana Education Officers (TEOs), who later distributed the money among the teachers. But, following repeated complaints of malpractice in that procedure the government has decided to channel the money directly to the eligible teachers through their bank accounts. The four designated banks See Page 12 Col 7

Mystery balloons land in Japan

TOKYO, May 13: Thirty large balloons with mystery plastic tubes and tiny batteries attached to them descended on wide areas of Japan today, police said, reports Reuters. There was no indication if the balloons, which measured five metres long when deflated and had a diameter of two metres, were linked to a bomb blast at Tokyo's International Airport earlier today or to a series of recent poison gas attacks. Police said that over an eight-hour period from morning to evening, 30 vinyl balloons floated to the ground in an area from Yokohama, the port city of Tokyo, to Tottori prefecture, 500 km (320 miles) south, all on Japan's main Honshu island. The balloons caused no injuries but set off new security worries among a population already nervous because of a series of gas attacks over the past two months.

India agrees to help fight Lankan Tigers

COLOMBO, May 13: India has responded to Sri Lanka's request for assistance in fighting Tamil guerillas by stepping up surveillance in a narrow stretch of sea separating the two countries, official sources said today, reports AFP. The Indian navy has already enforced a major blockade in the Palk Strait to prevent the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from using the waterway, the sources said. However, it was not immediately known when the Indian navy stepped up surveillance in the Palk Strait which has been used by LTTE guerillas mainly to smuggle fresh supplies to their bases on the island from southern India. The Palk Strait separates southern India from northern Sri Lanka, large parts of which are under LTTE control. India has also agreed in principle to carry out an air surveillance of Sri Lanka's northeastern coast, official sources said. LTTE boats have frequently used sea routes to operate between bases in the east and the north. Sri Lanka decided to seek help from India and several other nations following a wave of LTTE attacks on military facilities in the embattled northeast, triggered by the collapse of a three-month-old truce on April 19. The LTTE has blown up two navy boats, shot down two air force planes, and attacked two army camps and a police post, killing a total of 218 security personnel. India had earlier said that it had not received any request for military assistance from Sri Lanka. Meanwhile government troops and Tamil guerillas traded heavy fire yesterday in northeastern Sri Lanka, as fresh fighting in the region left four soldiers and an unspecified number of rebels dead, officials said. Guerillas from the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) killed four soldiers in a fire fight in northern Trincomalee district, as troops continued an offensive against rebels in the region, officials said.

Low forming over Bay

BHUBANESWAR, May 13: A well marked low pressure area was forming over the Bay of Bengal off the Orissa coast as the rain-ravaged areas of the state were trying to recover from the deluge they were subjected to since Tuesday last, reports PTI. The first spell of heavy rains that pounded the state, particularly the areas in the southern part, were triggered by the deep depression which crossed the Andhra Pradesh coast on Tuesday night. With the meteorological office here forecasting heavy rains in the state over the next 48 hours under the influence of the new depression over north-west Bay, the government has instructed all the district authorities to be ready to meet any eventuality.