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**Business leaders speak out**  
Today: S M Ziaul Haq, Chairman, Bus-Truck Owners' Association.  
Tomorrow: Sajjad Hossain, President, Bangladesh Computer Society.  
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Nepalese party calls for return of land granted to India under the Sugauli Treaty  
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**Business**

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**STOCK MARKET**

DSE Index	764.31 (+0.07%)
Market capitalization Tk	45.27 billion
Turnover in volume	109394
Turnover in value Tk	16.71 million

**Health**

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Dhaka Day by Day



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**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Fahd greets Biswas**

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday received messages of felicitation from the king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha. King Fahd wished happiness and prosperity of the brotherly people of Bangladesh and prayed for utmost welfare, success and glory of the Muslim Ummah. Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud also expressed identical sentiment in his message, reports UNB.

**Abedi hospitalised**

KARACHI, May 15: Agha Hasan Abedi, founder of the collapsed Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI), has been hospitalised with breathing problems, hospital officials said today. Abedi's family has refused comment. Abedi, partially paralysed by a stroke he suffered years ago, is confined to a wheelchair and has serious heart problems, reports AP.

**17 killed in Tajik violence**

MOSCOW, May 15: At least six Tajik soldiers, a policeman and 10 rebels were killed in a new wave of fighting at the weekend before talks between the Tajik government and rebel leaders, Russian news agencies said, reports Reuters.

## Depression crosses into Orissa

# High tide washes away shrimp beds, salt pans

By Staff Correspondent

High tide whipped by rain and squally wind submerged the country's low-lying coastal areas yesterday as the mild depression in the Bay of Bengal passed over Bangladesh, crossing the Indian state of Orissa.

Clouds swept by the eye of the depression caused scattered rainfall all over the country, marking a welcome end of a nearly three week-long stifling hot spell.

The Met Office said the depression over the northwest Bay crossed the Orissa coast at about 6:30 pm Monday, overflowing some of the embankments in the low-lying areas, and washing shrimp beds and salt pans along the Bangladesh coast.

However, no report of any human casualty was readily available from our correspondents.

Some kutcha dwellings were damaged due to water rise while people in Char Dhal of Char Fashion, Char Kukri Mukri, Nijhum Dwip of Hatiya and Char Nizam of Manpura rushed to the nearby cyclone shelters, they said.

The normal high tide swelled by Sunday's full moon caused such increase in the water level, officials of the Meteorological Department explained.

The Cyclone Preparedness Centre (CPP) officials in Dhaka said they received reports of water increases by an average of three to four feet in 30 coastal thanas.

CPP volunteers were alert in these areas and were relaying cautionary signal number three, which means that the port is threatened by squally wind, they added.

Our Cox's Bazar correspondent reported that the surging water had flooded shrimp beds and salt pans in the district.

Besides, low-lying areas of Peshkarpara in the town, Ali Akbar Dal area in Kutubdia, Dhaigati, Matarbari and Shaplapur were also inundated by water.

Most parts of the country experienced moderate rainfall yesterday bringing further relief to the drought-hit people, particularly the farming community.



Day-long showers, caused by a mild depression in the Bay of Bengal, led to water-logging in many parts of the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Delimitation of 15 constituencies finalised

The Election Commission yesterday finalised delimitation of jurisdiction of 15 parliamentary constituencies in the districts of Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Dinajpur and Nilphamari, reports BSS.

The commission on the first day of the public hearing on the delimitation of the areas of the constituencies, finalised the jurisdiction of respective constituencies after hearing both the sides concerned coming from the districts and reviewing the documents and reports.

Following are the numbers and names of the constituencies with their respective areas: Panchagarh-1 Tetulia of Panchagarh district, Panchagarh-2 Sadek, 20 wards of Tetulia, and 30 wards of Chittagong divisions, and moderately heavy falls at places over the coastal regions of the country today.

There may be light to moderate rain and showers at one or two places over Rajshahi division.

Rainfall is likely to continue in the next two days with little change for another five days, the forecast said.

## Saudi Fund for Development team due today

A seven-member delegation of Saudi Fund for Development will arrive in Dhaka today to follow up the progress of the Saudi-aided projects, reports UNB.

During their tour, members of the delegation, led by Dr Abdul Aziz Bin Mohammad Al-Turky, are expected to visit some projects in Chittagong and Cox's Bazar areas. They will also talk with officials on Saudi development aid to Bangladesh.

## More Bangladeshis may get US immigrant visas

By Staff Correspondent

Kathleen T Rochester, Information Officer and Syed Asaduzzaman (Bachchu) of the USIS were also present.

Dreher said, "It is part of our job to assist visitors to the United States. We are here to issue a visa if a person qualifies. At the same time we have to be convinced that the applicants are bona-fide tourists. We do not enjoy turning down a genuine visa applicant."

Asked why a large number of applicants failed to receive visas, Dreher said, many of those who applied did not meet the basic requirements. "It is essential that those applying for a US visa convince the Visa Officer of his intention to return to the country and not stay back."

The Visa Officer is responsible to determine through and interview if the person who is asking for a visa would come back.

Dreher said he was aware of complaints from those who failed to receive a visa. But added, "We have a limited time to interview people. On an average, as many as 200 applicants seek visas. And in July, during the admission season, the number sometime increases to 350 persons a day."

Dreher, however, said, "If there is any genuine complaint, we definitely look into it. Besides, one can come back and be interviewed again."

There are instances when several people come back to take frequent chances for receiving a visa for which reason a previously imposed restriction NMITY (No More Interviews This Year) has been done away with since August last to provide a greater opportunity, Dreher explained.

He said a Department of Justice survey conducted about a year ago showed that nearly one-fourth of the Bangladeshis who were granted non-immigrant visas stayed back in the United States.

"The non-returning rate is high and one has to be careful in issuing a tourist visa," Dreher said. However, he added, the problem of staying back illegally was not confined to Bangladeshis alone.

"Right now, it is estimated that two million of the four million people who are staying illegally in the United States entered legally."

The chief of the US consular section said, "We are very concerned about allegations."

# More Bangladeshis may get US immigrant visas



Jemima Goldsmith, 21-year-old daughter of millionaire British financier Sir James Goldsmith, who is to marry Pakistani cricket superstar Imran Khan, being driven in a car from her Surrey home in England by her mother (not in picture) Sunday. — AFP/UNB Photo.

## Protests across Kashmir continue

# Opposition demands Rao's resignation

NEW DELHI, May 15: Indian opposition parties lambasted the prime minister today and threatened a no-confidence vote over the government's Kashmir policy, as Indian troops enforced a curfew there for the fifth day, report AP, Reuters.

Parliament suspended business for a heated debate on the burning last week of the town of Charar-e-Sharif and its vicinity.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, leader of the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), criticised the government for refusing to take responsibility for the gutting of the shrine in Charar-e-Sharif town.

"This is an indecisive, non-functioning and weak government. This government is giving a picture of helplessness. This government should go," Vajpayee thundered in parliament's Lok Sabha, the lower house.

Speaker of Lok Sabha Shivraj Patil said he had received 14 demands from opposition parties for a discussion on Kashmir.

George Fernandes, Samata Party leader, demanded the removal of Kashmir's governor, former army chief General K V Krishna Rao, and said Prime Minister Rao should also resign.

"We want this government," he said.

## Salam phones Zillur, proposes dialogue

By Staff Correspondent

The ruling party yesterday made a formal for a dialogue with the Opposition in an effort to end the continuing political crisis in the country.

BNP Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukdar yesterday phoned his Awami League counterpart Zillur Rahman and conveyed the offer for talks.

"He phoned me this morning and requested an initiative for a formal dialogue on the present political situation," Zillur Rahman told The Daily Star last night.

"I reminded him about our demands and said unless those were met, anchoring the demand for a caretaker government no dialogue could yield any fruitful result," the AL General Secretary said.

Rahman added: "I did not turn down his proposal and told him that I would inform him of the Opposition stance after discussion with my colleagues after the return of my party chief Sheikh Hasina."

The main opposition AL president Sheikh Hasina, now on a trip to the northern districts, is expected to return to the capital tomorrow.

Immediately after her return, the AL would hold a press conference on the present political situation, a senior AL leader said.

The BNP Secretary General said yesterday, "Our aim is to make the groundwork for a negotiated settlement which may culminate in formal talks between the two leaders, meaning Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina."

He said that the BNP was always in favour of negotiated settlement of the present political standoff but unfortunately both sides had failed to reach a settlement.

He said that if leaders of both camps sit with an open mind something could surely be worked out.

Talukdar referred to the Prime Minister's recent offer to sit with the Opposition, See Page 12 Col 2

## Mystery fumes engulf Japan's subway station

YOKOHAMA, Japan, May 15: Mystery fumes engulfed a major subway station in Yokohama, Tokyo's port city tonight, overcoming at least 20 people including three who were rushed to hospital, police reported, says Reuters.

There was no immediate indication that the fumes were linked to previous poison-gas attacks in Japan, including two previous incidents in Yokohama last month that sent 500 people to hospital.

But it was a new security scare for Japan, which has

## Dhaka condemns Kashmir incidents

Bangladesh yesterday condemned strongly the destruction of the shrine complex at Charar-e-Sharif in Kashmir and expressed concern over the deterioration of situation in the only Muslim-majority state of India, reports UNB.

The holy complex, also comprising a mosque, was burnt to level and about 50 people were killed during a fighting between the Indian security forces and Muslim militants fighting for freedom on Thursday.

The government of Bangladesh continues to view with serious concern the reported deterioration of the situation

## South Asia has rapidly grown in importance for US: Raphael

South Asia has rapidly grown in importance for the United States, according to a USIS press release issued in Dhaka yesterday.

Narrating her experience during her recent trip with the US First Lady to five South Asian countries Robin Raphael observed her visit brought to the fore the human face of US interests in South Asia. "Mrs Clinton's visit reminded us that we share other important concerns including the environment, poverty, disease, and the status of women and the family. She stressed the importance of investing in the human resources of the region, focussing particularly on women and girls," she said.

During this trip, Robin Raphael said, "we learned a great deal about the challenges facing the people of South Asia. We found a deep admiration for the United States through-out the region and a strong desire for American engagement and leadership there. But we also saw how South Asians are applying their own talent, energy and inventiveness to solve problems."

The US Assistant Secretary of State, said, Mrs Clinton was struck by the success of efforts such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to build the economic strength of families and communities. "Such models have relevance in America as well as Bangladesh," she said.

She also pointed out that the economic reforms instituted by Prime Minister Rao's government in India have opened the economy to accelerated change. There is a rapidly growing class of consumers whose economic and political demands will have a major impact on Indian society.

Pakistan, undergoing its own economic transformation, is also grappling with the vexing question of how to build a modern Islamic state, she added.

Throughout the region, democracy is a vibrant, if still

## Dialogue on IRBD draft report begins today

By Staff Correspondent

A two-day dialogue on the draft report of Bangladesh's Development (IRBD) begins today in the city.

The objective of the dialogue, organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue, a private think-tank, is to expose the draft report to public discussions and put the facts and analyses presented in the report to constructive comment.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and the Prime Minister's Special Envoy Morshed Khan will be present as special guests at the inaugural session of the dialogue to be held at the Sonargaon Hotel at 2:30 pm.

The opening will be followed by an overview session to be addressed by four designated discussants — Dr Mashur Rahman, Secretary of Railways Division, Terecan Baysan, Chief Economist of the

## Imran-Jemima marriage hottest news

LONDON, May 15: The hottest news in the British press on Monday was the upcoming marriage of former Pakistani cricket star Imran Khan and Jemima Goldsmith, daughter of wealthy industrialist Jimmy Goldsmith, reports AFP.

The former Pakistan cricket captain announced the wedding plans in a press

statement here at the weekend.

The contrasts quickly became grist for the London tabloids: He's 42, she's 21, he's Muslim, she's a Jewish-catholic, but has reportedly converted to Islam.

The Sun ran a picture of the grinning bride-to-be in a very low-cut black cocktail dress, holding a fluted glass of something, under the headline: "50 lashes if you do this in Pakistan, Mrs Khan."

See Page 12 Col 8

## 60 killed, 200 hurt in Indian train accident

NEW DELHI, May 15: At least 60 people were killed and 200 injured in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu when an express train collided head-on with a goods train which apparently ignored a stop signal, officials said today, reports AP.

Railway Minister C K Jaffer Sharief told the Press Trust of India (PTI) news agency that the accident, which occurred around midnight near the Tamil Nadu town of Salem, appeared to have been caused by "human failure."

Sharief said the driver of the empty goods train had apparently disregarded a stop signal on the single track line.

The Commissioner for Rail

## DCCI demands tax-free investment in 4 sectors

The Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) urged the government to make tax-free the investment in electronic assembling industry, computer software, cutlery and agro-based industries for their flourishing and employment of huge unemployed manpower of the country, reports UNB.

"Tax-holiday period should be continued up to the year 2000," said DCCI president Rashed Maksud Khan in an exclusive meeting with National Board of Revenue, (NBR) Chairman Dr Akbar Ali Khan, held at the latter's office yesterday to discuss tax-related problems.

Khan underscored the need for increasing the taxpayers' capability to pay tax and in that context he emphasised employment generation.

The DCCI president recommended that a list of basic raw materials should be prepared to avoid confusion and complicity at the time of import of raw materials by the established industries.

He said that import of industrial raw materials should be free from all formalities and priority in customs clearance should also be ensured.

See Page 12 Col 7

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