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 Tomorrow : Haji Mohammed  
 Ali, Chairman, Bangladesh  
 Jute Goods Association  
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 Baby away with  
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 PLO warns of reviewing  
 entire peace process  
 MNLF accuses Manila  
 of sabotaging peace  
 talks  
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 Tk 168.97m earned  
 from leather sector in  
 93-94 fiscal  
 Congress dissidents  
 slate Rao's trademark  
 policies  
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**STOCK MARKET**  
 DSE Index 738.23 (-0.78%)  
 Market capital Tk 43.78 billion  
 Transactions in volume 71224.50  
 Transactions in value Tk 12.29 million

**Environment**  
 A dying Padma causing  
 human misery and  
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 Human rights on hunting  
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**Dhaka Day by Day**  
 You Can keep Your  
 Sweetmeats, Just pass  
 Me the Peanuts  
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**NEWS BRIEFS**  
**Shopkeeper  
 murdered**  
 From Staff Correspondent  
 CHITTAGONG, May 22: A  
 shopkeeper was allegedly  
 murdered by unidentified  
 miscreants at Boalkhali here  
 last night, police said. Mojaffar  
 Ahmed, 65, was stabbed by the  
 miscreants and succumbed to  
 his injuries inside his cloth  
 shop, police added.

**23 children die  
 in Orissa accident**  
 NEW DELHI, May 22: At  
 least 23 school children were  
 killed in an eastern Indian  
 state when a truck they were  
 traveling in overturned, a news  
 agency said Monday, reports  
 AP.

**Ferry services  
 suspended**  
 Ferry services of the BIWTC  
 between Sirajganj and Bhuapur  
 (Char Singli) has been sus-  
 pended today until further  
 notice. According to a BIWTC  
 press release, Bailey bridge on  
 the river Dhaleswari collapsed  
 at 10:30 am today due to ero-  
 sion on both sides of the  
 bridge. The BIWTC has sus-  
 pended its ferry service on the  
 route as no transport can ply  
 following collapse of the  
 bridge, reports BSS.

**Workshop on stock  
 exchange in Ctg**  
 From Staff Correspondent  
 CHITTAGONG, May 22: A  
 workshop under the joint aus-  
 pices of the Securities and  
 Exchange Commission and  
 Chittagong Stock Exchange  
 was held today at the BGMEA  
 conference room at Agrabad.

## Child Labour : BGMEA chief ready to go to US Efforts still on to find an honourable solution

By Staff Correspondent

A threatened boycott campaign starting yesterday in the United States against Bangladeshi garments for using child labour has spurred efforts to defuse the situation and reach a negotiated settlement.

The President of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' Association (BGMEA) yesterday proposed to lead a delegation to the United States to explain the association's position regarding the failed negotiations for the phased elimination of child labour in the industry.

It is learnt that the regional chief of the UNICEF arrived in the capital yesterday and held a series of meetings with BGMEA officials in an effort to find a solution to the problem.

In a correspondence with the Washington-based Child Labour Coalition, BGMEA chief Redwan Ahmed, MP, requested a hearing of his association's case regarding the rejection of a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) with some international and non-governmental organisations for the gradual elimination of child labour from the garment sector and a subsequent schooling programme for the retrenched children.

The Coalition, a grouping of over 40 US national organisations working to end the exploitation of children in the workplace, threatened in a letter to the BGMEA Sunday that it would call for a general boycott of garments made in Bangladesh beginning yesterday. Over one-third of the country's garment exports go to the US market.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Redwan Ahmed said that in his letter to Pharis J Harvey, a co-chairperson of the Coalition, he had proposed to lead a team to Washington to explain the reasons why the majority of the BGMEA's affiliated members rejected the proposed MOU.

"We are ready to go to Washington to explain our position."

"The members felt they had very valid reasons not to accept."

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Brothers Union's Bakhtiar makes a vain effort to stop Mohammedan Sporting's Jewel Rana during yesterday's final of the Nirma Cup DMFA soccer tournament at the Dhaka Stadium. Mohammedans took the title with a 3-1 win. Report on Page 10. — Star photo

## Dhaka, Delhi should reduce trade gap

A three-day unofficial dialogue between India and Bangladesh concluded in the city yesterday with both sides recognising that reduction of the trade imbalance is the key to better relations between Dhaka and Delhi, reports UNB.

According to a consensus report issued on the dialogue, the two sides felt that Delhi should unilaterally remove all trade barriers on Bangladeshi imports to reduce the widening gap in bilateral trade.

India should unilaterally remove all tariff and non-tariff barriers on imports from Bangladesh," said the report.

It also said the participants believed that India would not lose anything if it completely opened up its economy to imports from Bangladesh.

The report mentioned that India's exports to Bangladesh have been increasing by 30 per cent every year for the past five years while Bangladesh exports showed only a modest gain. The imbalance will be more if illegal cross-border trade and tourism to India are taken into consideration.

The Dhaka-based think tank, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), organised the dialogue. The Indian side was represented by the CRP (Centre for Policy Research), a Delhi-based think tank.

The dialogue was designed to influence the policies of the two governments in resolving existing irritants in relations between the two neighbouring countries. The first round of dialogue took place in Delhi last February.

Politicians, former ministers, former diplomats, business leaders and intellectuals formed the delegations of the two sides.

The dialogue recognised the widening trade imbalance between Dhaka and Delhi as the major cause for irritants in relations between the two countries.

The participants also

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## 'Farakka affecting India also'

By Staff Correspondent

The Farakka problem is not only our problem — nine districts of India are feeling the effects of Farakka. Akbar Hossain, Minister of Environment and Forests, said at a seminar on the "Role of law in Environment Protection" held in the city yesterday.

Organised by the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), the seminar was held at the Planning Commission auditorium.

The keynote paper was delivered by Mahesh Chandra Mehta, a leading environmental lawyer from India.

Mehta's cases against industries causing pollution near the famous Taj Mahal in Agra have made worldwide headlines. In one instance, Mehta was able to secure the closure of 212 industries with a single court order.

"Today we are living in gas chambers," Mehta said, referring to the air pollution problem in the subcontinent. He pointed out that the environment knew no boundaries. He suggested proper monitoring of environmental matters in the SAARC region.

"Dissemination of information on environmental matters is very important," Mehta emphasised and said the people affected by environmental degradation should be compensated. He also warned that waste was being brought into this region by western countries under one pretext or another and accepted by the countries in the name of earning foreign exchange.

Other speakers at the seminar highly commended Mehta's work and also took the opportunity to vent their opinions on the Farakka issue.

Special Justice Supreme Court judge Justice Mustafa Kamal said, "A large tract of land in Bangladesh's northern districts is facing desertification because of unilateral withdrawal of water by India." But he also said that domestic industries and the West contributed to the problem as well.

State Minister for Establishment Barrister Aminul Haq, another special invitee, said that Mehta should file a case in the Indian Supreme Court against the environmental damage caused by the Farakka dam not only in Bangladesh but also in India.

Dr. Mohiuddin Farooque, Secretary-General of BELA, said, "The present-day emphasis on the environment is neither fancy nor fantasy." He also said that our judiciary was not lagging behind in protecting the citizens. "Law is a weapon for damning and condemning any abuse or misuse."

Professor KAA Quamruddin gave the vote of thanks and

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## Rehabilitate child labourers, demands BGSF

By Staff Correspondent

President of Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation (BGSF) and Joint Secretary of Bangladesh Human Rights Coordination Council Mohammad Khurshid Alam has deplored the garments factory owners' decision to terminate the services of all child labourers from the export-oriented industry by October 31.

In a statement yesterday, he resented that no programme regarding rehabilitation and education of the child labourers was undertaken.

"We came to know with deep concern and surprise that the owners of the garments industry in Bangladesh will totally eliminate child labour unilaterally by October 31 this year. No programme for the education and rehabilitation of these children was announced. This is heartbreaking and inhuman," the

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Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia admiring a portrait of Kazi Nazrul Islam at the city's Shilpakala Academy premises yesterday after inaugurating a three-day national programme marking the poet's 96th birth anniversary on May 25. — Star photo

## Cabinet approves draft agreement with ROK

The Cabinet yesterday approved the proposal for signing an agreement between Bangladesh and the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the field of science and technology, reports UNB.

An official announcement said the approval was given in a regular weekly meeting of the Cabinet, held at Bangabhaban with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair.

The agreement is expected to be initiated during the Prime Minister's visit to South Korea, beginning Thursday.

The Cabinet also endorsed the draft bill titled Safety Aviation Against Air Crimes 1995. It aims at implementing in Bangladesh some international conventions prescribed for ensuring more safety for air-travel.

Another proposal for time extension to supply Gewa wood to the Khulna Newspaper Mills and top-tying Sunday wood to Khulna Hardboard Mills upto June 1996 was okayed in the meeting.

The Cabinet approved yet another proposal for amending Section 13 (1) and 8 (6) of 1978 of the Ordinance of International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B).

## Sino-Bangla JEC meet from tomorrow

A 10-member Chinese delegation headed by Madam Li Guohua, Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, arrives in the city today to attend the 8th meeting of the Bangladesh-China joint economic commission (JEC), reports BSS.

The JEC session will begin tomorrow. Lutfullahil Majid, Secretary, Economic Relations Division, will lead a 14-member Bangladesh delegation at the meeting, an ERD press release said yesterday.

The meeting will review the decisions of the last JEC meeting held in Beijing in August 1992 and progress of the on-going projects, negotiate new credit proposals for development projects, discuss bilateral trade and proposal of tariff reduction to boost Bangladesh export to China and formation of joint business

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## PM opens birthday programmes Nazrul's works guide to nat'l progress

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday said the literature and songs of rebel poet Kazi Nazrul Islam will always act as a guide in the national progress, including flourishing of culture, reports UNB.

Kazi Nazrul Islam is an inexhaustible source of the nation's revolutionary spirit, she said while inaugurating a three-day national programme to observe the 96th birth anniversary of the national poet.

The inaugural function at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium was also addressed by State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum, journalist Obaidul Huq and Cultural Affairs Secretary Mohammad Mokhlesur Rahman.

Organised by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, the national-level programmes will also be observed on May 24-25 at Trishal in Mymensingh, Daulatpur in Comilla district and in Comilla town.

Addressing the function, the Prime Minister called upon all to further strengthen the efforts to ensure development imbued with Nazrul's teachings of social commitment.

"Nazrul, the poet and revolutionary, is an inspiration of renaissance, self-confidence and freedom... His chief mission was against injustice, exploitation and superstition," she said.

Begum Zia reminded that Nazrul's writings and songs were to create mass awareness and mass awakening. "His appearance on the literary scene was in the backdrop of anti-British agitation and non-cooperation and Khelafat movement," she said.

She also recalled Nazrul's extraordinary talent as a poet, lyricist, composer, musician and journalist. "He has enriched and glorified our literature, society and culture."

The Prime Minister mentioned the new trend set in literature by the humanitarian poet. "Hopes and aspirations of the oppressed people of the world has been strongly reflected in his writings. He dreamt of a developed society

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Fakhrul Islam Munshi, a former Jatiya party deputy minister under Ershad, formally joined the Awami League at a function at the party's central office yesterday. AL president Sheikh Hasina is also seen. — Star photo

## Fakhrul Munshi joins AL Hasina accuses BNP of wasting public money

Awami League president Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the BNP government of spending public money for its party activities, reports UNB.

"People's tax money is being spent for organisational activities of the BNP," Hasina alleged while addressing a meeting at the Awami League central office in the afternoon.

The Awami League chief also accused the ruling party of profiting from the recent fertilizer crisis.

Hasina also blamed the government of killing 18 farmers, 17 workers and 55 businessmen and said that people's lives and property are not safe under the BNP government.

Referring to the prevailing political crisis, the opposition leader said this government is not at all sincere to resolve the crisis. It talks about a dialogue only to confuse the people, she

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## Fate of ID card project hangs in the balance

By Staff Correspondent

The Election Commission (EC) will take a final decision within a couple of days on whether it should go ahead with its plans for introduction of identity (ID) cards for nearly 60 million voters, official sources said yesterday.

Following a meeting with some computer experts and software traders Sunday, EC officials have been forced to rethink, realising that the task of issuing ID card to each and every voter within six months, was a rather tall task, EC sources said.

The participants in Sunday's meeting, though failing to reach a consensus were, however, general of the view that every voter could not

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## Writ filed against CEC's appointment

A lawyer yesterday filed a writ with the High Court Division challenging the appointment of Justice AKM Sadek as the Chief Election Commissioner, reports UNB.

The petitioner contended that the newly-appointed Chief Election Commissioner is a retired judge and as per the Constitution he cannot hold any post of profit or engage himself in the service of the republic except in a judicial or quasi-judicial post.

The official of the Chief Election Commissioner is neither judicial nor quasi-judicial; it is a constitutional post of administrative nature, said Advocate Salimullah, the petitioner.

Hearing on the admissibility of the writ is likely to be held today before a High Court bench comprising Justice Ismailuddin Sarkar and Justice Abu Sayed, court sources said.

Advocate M Faruq will move the writ on behalf of the petitioner.

## Foreign ships unloading SSP fertiliser

KHULNA, May 22: Two foreign ships started unloading granular Single Super Phosphate (SSP) fertiliser of grey colour at Mongla Port today, reports UNB.

The two vessels — MV Long Hi of Vietnam and MV Al-Kantara of Egypt — were earlier not allowed to discharge the cargo as the Customs officials assumed there was a ban on the import of granular SSP of black and grey colour, an official source said.

Two trading houses, one from Dhaka and the other from Jessore, imported 12,500

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## 3 killed as storm hits Ishurdi

PABNA, May 22: Three people were killed and 25 others injured when a severe storm lashed Ishurdi thana Sunday night, leaving a trail of wreckage, reports UNB.

Among the dead were two brothers who died when a branch crashed on them while picking mangoes under a tree at Shahpur village.

They were identified as Nazmul Haque, 26, a student of the Dhaka Law College, and

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