C'wealth meets today under shadow of north-south split

The 52 leaders of the Commonwealth of Nations are to meet today in Abuja for a summit designed to promote democracy and development but overshadowed by the threat of a north-south split over

Traditionally gentlemanly affairs, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) is held once every two years to give the leaders a chance to talk candidly behind closed doors about the problems of the world.

But the suspension of President Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe from the body's council 20 months ago after he was re-elected in a poll marred by violence and fraud, has triggered deep divisions that threaten to overshadow proceed-

In the build-up to this year's meet in the Nigeria, the split has taken on the appearance of a quasi-racial divide between the former British colonies in Africa, and the "white Commonwealth" of Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Some African leaders, most publicly South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki, have lobbied for Mugabe to be brought back into the fold, while Australia's Prime Minister John Howard wants Zimbabwe permanently expelled.

The summit's Nigerian host, President Olusegun Obasanjo, came under pressure from both sides in the row and made a last-minute visit to Harare before deciding late in the day not to invite Zimbabwe.

The row, fuelled by high-octane anti-Western rhetoric from Mugabe himself, has at times appeared capable of splitting the Commonwealth.

But on Wednesday the body's Kiwi secretary general, Don McKinnon, played down the racial angle and said the dispute transcended the north-south divide.

Asked whether, as Mugabe claimed, there was a white alliance out to get at Zimbabwe, he told

Innocent Jamal FROM PAGE 12

legal help of Bangladesh Legal Aid ervices Trust (BLAST). He could have been released earlier, had the court officials sent his release order

Jamal returned to his house at Isergaon village in Mymensingh with his maternal uncle Tyeb Ali

many other shopping, wrapping

"In Bangladesh we like to

advance step by step -- first you can

import the finished product (biobag) from Norway, then you can

import the raw materials from Italy

and produce the bags in locally

installed plants and lastly, you can

get the technology of the raw material itself from us," said Innocenti.

Agrotech Chairman Rashed

Iqbal told The Daily Star that a letter

of intent was submitted to the Board

A different range of other agro-

of Investment (BoI) for local pro-

based products and technologies

also caught the visitors' eves. Some

of the other institutes which

showcased their products promi-

nently include, Alim Industries

Limited, Agro-based Technology

Development Programme,

Bangladesh Rice Research Institute,

Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, BRAC, British American

Tobacco, Capital Paper and Pulp

Industries Ltd., Faruq Fertilisers

Ltd., Ferdous Biotech, Hortex

Foundation, Kazi Farms, Nestle

Bangladesh, Royal Danish Embassy

commercial banks and foreign and

local specilised banks also opened

stalls at the exposition -- all pro-

State Minister Mirza Fakhrul

claiming the recent cut in the inter-

Islam later said this exposition that

winds up today should give enough

impetus to local entrepreneurs to

invest in agro-based industries. He

Student abducted

by Indians returns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The college student abducted four

and a half months ago by an Indian

gang from Tahirpur upazila border in Sunamganj was handed to Bangladesh authorities by the

Indian Border Security Force (BSF)

Mannan of village Charagaon of Tahirpur, returned to his parents.

19 and demanded Tk 15 lakh in

from where Indian police recovered him from a hotel and arrested four

Rafiqul Islam, son of Abdul

The gang abducted him on July

He was taken to Nagaland later,

On receiving information about

their son from the BBC's Dhaka

office, Rafique's parents wrote a

petition for his return to Bangladesh

vesterday afternoon.

ransom.

of the abductors.

Besides, various nationalised

and Taiwan Trade Centre.

est rates on farm credit.

duction of biobags.

and packaging materials.

"I've talked to just about every Commonwealth leader more than once over the past six months. There's variety of views over how to deal with Mugabe, there's by no means a split between Africa and the rest of the world."

He also said that the meeting could produce a "very strong state-ment" that could help reconcile the rich and poor worlds on another issue -- trade -- ahead of the next round of WTO talks, which have

McKinnon himself could, how-

Ahamadias

of the application with 173 signa-

tures to The Daily Star.

The police that suffered injury in the November 21 attacks said they were looking for an amiable solution to the problem side by side with taking preparations for preventing any attack on the Ahamadia mosque

"We are trying to resolve the matter locally through negotiations. We have not taken any hard line so far as this is a religious matter and we are trying to find a peaceful solu-tion," said an officer of Tejgaon Police Station. He said there was a political face

in the crisis that could not be handled the police alone.

Saikhul Hadis, a fundamentalist leader and several imams have added fuel to the anti-Ahamadia movement by giving rabble-rousing statements. "Now the government should step in and handle the issue politically, the officer said.

After the November 21 attack, the police filed a case against over 5,000 people for attacking the police, not the Ahamadias. Police are yet to arrest anyone and make any headwavin the case.

Attacks on the Ahamadias have surged in recent years. On Monday Balardiya village of Sharishabari Pourasabha of Jamalpur, a militant group damaged one of their mosques and called an anti-Ahamadia demonstration there for

According to press reports, militants raided the house of Abu Sama Sarkar and damaged a corrugated $iron\text{-}roof mosque on the premises.}$

In Kushtia, an Ahamadia community of 13 families came under attacks last month that left a woman dead, but police are yet to act.

Locals have reportedly boycotted the Ahamadias of Fazilpur in Feni.

expressed the government's readi-

ness to give necessary support and

incentives to, what he dubbed, was

the present thrust sector of

Bangladesh after the boom in the

further cuts in bank interest rates for

the agriculture sector and under-

scored the need for greater market

At a seminar yesterday after

noon, Dr M Asaduzzaman of BIDS

and an expert from UK, Dr Brian

Smith, presented separate papers

on 'Food Safety and Quality,' while

Bangladesh Krishi Bank Managing

Director Sajedur Rahman read out

his paper on 'Overview of Financing

Moazzem Hossain presented his

paper on 'Media in Promoting Agro-

other seminars on important agri-cultural issues also were held.l

Larma challenged

The chairman of the Chittagong

Hill Tracts Development Board

(CHTDB), Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan,

yesterday challenged Jyotirindra

Bodhipriyo Larma, saying he was

ready to quit from the body if he

could guarantee peace in the wake

"But you have to give a written

guarantee that all problems in the

CHT region would be resolved with my resignation," Bhuiyan, also a

lawmaker, said in a speech to a rally

Larma, president of the Chittagong

Hill Tracts Regional Council and

chairman of Parbatva Chattagram

Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS),

called a hartal in the CHT region for

December 8 for the realisation of a

set of demands that include

Bhuiyan's resignation from the

People will resist you (Larma) if you

destroy peace in the region with

alliance are preparing to resist the

Front, an organisation of indige-

nous people that opposes the landmark peace deal signed in

1997 to end insurgency in the CHT

and a bitter rival of Larma's PCJSS,

has also called a strike in

Khagrachhari for December 6.

arms," Bhuiyan thundered.

hartal.

"Face us in a democratic way.

Local units of the four-party

The United Peoples Democratic

Bhuiyan's challenge came after

at Dighinala in Khagrachhari.

on demands

for CHT peace

OUR CORRESPONDENT,

of his resignation.

Agribusiness' and journalist

Over the last two days, several

The state minister favoured

garment industry.

vestment.

12 Indians still in Rajshahi jail after serving out 15-day term

BSS, Rajshahi

Twelve Indian nationals have been confined to Raishahi Central Iail for more than two years although they served out their 15-day jail term in 2001.

On June 26, 2001, police held 13 ndians for illegally entering Bangladesh, official sources told the official news agency yesterday.

A magistrate's court in Rajshahi sentenced each to 15-day imprisonment under the Border Regulation Act, 1952, on September 9 and October 11, 2001.

The court also ordered police to deport the Indians after their jail

The detainees are Matiar Rahman, Jan Mohammad Sheikh, Ramzan Sheik, Jahirul Islam, Akbar Ali, Murtoza, Abdul Mazid, Emraj Ali, Sajjad Hossain, Raihan, Muluk Chand and Montu, while another detainee, Entazul alias Injil, died in

Meanwhile, local unit of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Frust, a legal aid organisation, took nitiatives to send them back to

In most cases, Indian Border Security Force refuse to take back their nationals at Sona Masiid Land Customs Station, sources said

School boy rescued from Madhupur forest

BSS, Mymensingh

Mymensingh police rescued a schoolboy on Wednesday from Madhupur forest area, 11 days after he was abducted.

Kotwali police raided the forest ate at night and rescued Sayedur Rahman Sajal, son of Shamim Ahmed of Charpara in Mymensingh. Police also nabbed the abductors, Anu and Samad of Muktagachha upazila.

A gang abducted Sajal from Mymensingh town at gunpoint on November 23 and demanded Tk 2 lakh as ransom, police said.

A case was lodged with Kotwali

Headmaster's house torched in Feni

UNB, Feni

Unidentified miscreants set fire to the house of a school headmaster and vice-president of district Awami League (AL) at Sonapur in Feni vesterday.

Miscreants poured petrol around Sonapur High School Headmaster Mir Hussain Bhuiyan's residence at around 3:45am and set it ablaze. Bhuiyan. also the general secretary of Feni District Teachers' Association (FDTA), his wife Dilara Begum, son Rajib, daughter Nasrin and two maids came out of the house sensing fire in the backvard. However, all the belongings were gutted, eyewitnesses said.

Local fire fighters doused the

Senior government officials and police visited the spot in the morn-

Local AL condemned the incident at a rally in the afternoon and demanded punishment to the culprits.

Communal forces set the fire, Abdur Rahman, AL district general secretary, alleged.

The FDTA brought out a silent procession and held a rally protest-ing the arson attack on Bhuiyan's

Banshkhali

FROM PAGE 12

remote Dongra village shortly before 4:00am over the attack that sparked countrywide outrage.

Kalu, believed to be part of a gang of robbers based in Dongra, was taken on a seven-day remand.

The latest capture brought the number of arrests to nine, but police could not extract any information from them, which can lead to the arrest of the masterminds behind the arson.

In the sweep led by Additional Superintendent of Police (south) Mahbubul Alam and ASP (north) Chowdhury Monjurul Kabir also nabbed two others, Nizam and Ayub Ali, as suspected robbers.

Shop owners FROM PAGE 1

centres in the capital during Ramadan and the Eid-ul-Azha.

President of Dhaka Mahanagar Shop Owners' Association Helaluddin Helal and other leaders from the capital as well as from Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Comilla and Narail were present.

The director general of Ansar and VDP, members of Rajuk, senior officials from the home ministry and police were present in the

Mahi for ouster

names of lawmakers with whom he had talks on the issue.

"If the BNP high-ups do not allow me to hold the programmes under the banner of Amra Zia Hobo, we will form another such organisation," he warned.

He hoped that the BNP policymakers would let him know shortly what they think about his Mahi's new plans first surfaced

at an Iftar party on November 21, a day before his father made a call to unite the country's civil society members against failure of the present government. Replying to queries about

recent initiatives of his father and Dr Kamal Hossain, Mahi said, "I don't agree with them that the government has failed to govern the country." But, he said Bangladesh was at a critical junc-

"Being his son we live under the same roof. But I have nothing to do with his political thinking right now. I have my political identity, and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, other leaders of the BNP and also Γareq Rahman are my leaders.' On Dr Kamal Hossain's call, he

said, "I am a member of the BNP, a lawmaker of the party and believe in ideology of late president Ziaur Rahman, I have no relation with Dr Kamal's initiatives as the BNP has nothing to do with them.'

About apprehension that he may be fired, Mahi said, "I am not uttering even a single word in contrary to party constitution and if anyone can prove so I will accept any punishment. I am not in politics to serve any particular person nor do I believe in family dynasty in About alleged corruption by

Hawa Bhaban, BNP's alternative power centre, Mahi said, "I cannot say anything without specific evidence. A building can do no corruption, persons (there) can be corrupt. Elaborating on his plan, Mahi

said he would organise seminars and workshops and produce special programmes for electronic media to build awareness against corruption and criminal activities. He was optimistic that senior BNP leaders would cooperate with him by joining the programmes.

The programme would begin in the old part of the city before being spilled into Mymensingh, Comilla

The programmes include creation of a force of 50,000 trained political activists and setting up of 'School of Democracy and Nationalism' for training party Mahi paid rich tribute to

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman, saying, "I do not sub-

scribe to the politics of Bangabandhu but that should not bar me from showing respect to him, who is the undisputed leader of the country's liberation war." He also lauded late president Ziaur Rahman for his role in different capacities, as a soldier, politician, president and a human being

Mahi strongly protested a recent comment by BNP lawmaker Shahidul Islam about him and his father and said he produced programmes for the BTV following all rules and regulations of package programmes.

'Ziaur Rahman was the great man

who proclaimed our independ-

Other office bearers of Amra Zia Hobo were present at the press conference.

Meanwhile, Albert D Costa, founding president of the organisation, vesterday said he would hold a press conference in the city on December 9 to denounce Mahi's 'misusing the organisa-

Yangon FROM PAGE 1

and commerce for both countries and connect peoples of the neighbouring countries, they observed.

Repatriation of Rohingya refugees will be expedited soon, Thwin assured the PM.

He also hoped bilateral rela-tions would reach new highs in

He conveyed greetings of Myanmar's Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe and Prime Minister General Khin Nyaunt to Khaleda.

The PM thanked the envoy and sent an invitation to her counterpart in Myanmar to visit Bangladesh.

PM stresses

army also received the AFWC certificates from her.

Chiefs of three services and the commandant of the NDC College received the prime minister on her arrival. She also had a photo session with the course members and exchanged pleasantries with them

Recalling the historic victory in the War of Independence, she said Bangladesh, being a peaceful nation, believes in peaceful coexistence with all countries.

"We do not like to show any nor do we like to attain such capacity in future," she said.

"But we should possess all the abilities to safeguard our motherland and sovereignty at any cost, if we are attacked upon. Like all other countries, we have the right to do

The prime minister said the responsibility of the country's defence and national security does not only rest on the armed forces or any department of the government but on all. "Neither is it limited only up to international boundary," she

"In the present days, the concept of defence and national security has widened a lot. In such a perspective, the whole administration and people should work closely," she said. Khaleda said the spirit of

national integrity and patriotism

needs to be transmitted to all levels

like the time during War of Independence. "If we can achieve this, we shall be able to reach our desired goal even with whatever resources allotted for defence of the nation," she added. Congratulating the graduating

officers, the prime minister hoped that they would use their acquired knowledge realistically to ensure the security, peace and stability of the country and work as 'thinktank' in the security paradigm. She recalled the contribution of

Ziaur Rahman to the establishment of the NDC College and expressed satisfaction that the national defence course had also included a wide variety of sociopolitical, strategic and economic issues involving national and regional security.

Trade unionism

FROM PAGE 1

before the next governing body meeting of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza) of which Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is the chairperson. Aman was reluctant to give

details of the committee meeting and its recommendations. Emerging from the meeting, he told journalists that the committee

report was yet to be finalised. On recommendations of the committee, he said: "Everything necessary for the welfare of workers would be done.

Industry Secretary Shoaib Ahmed, Berza Executive Chairman M Mofizur Rahman, representatives from labour, foreign, commerce and law ministries and the Board of Investment were present.

Bepza would seek time from the Prime Minister's Office on Saturday for the next board meeting, said its Executive Chairman Mofizur Rahman. The report said government's

move to convince the US to give another three years to allow trade unionism failed as the US trade representative officials turned down the proposal. On trade union activities, the

report said if the decision was taken, three labour related acts would have to be implemented in the exclusive industrial zones. The laws are: the Employment of Labour (Standing Orders) Act, 1965, the Industrial Relations Ordinance, 1969 and the Factories Act, 1965. The effective ness of the laws was suspended in the zones by the Bepza act.

The report also illustrated probable positive and negative impacts of trade union activities in the

The report saw chances of get-ting duty free market access to the US, negative image abroad, negative attitude of the US in signing agreements with Bangladesh, difficulties in getting US support in international forums and movement of buyers to other countries in the wings of trade unionism.

It also saw vulnerability of \$675 million investment in country's six EPZs, negative impacts on future investment, decline in annual export of goods worth about \$1.2 billion from the EPZs and drying up of business of several hundred mills and factories linked with the zones in the wake of allowing workers

Dy speaker

told The Daily Star.

The officials at the deputy speaker's office vacated the rooms

yesterday morning following an instruction by Akhtar Hamid Siddiqui. The caretaker of parliasecretariat then informed Shahidul Islam, who then reoccupied the two rooms in the The speaker allocated the cooms to the standing committee

chairman on November16 and he took over two days later. But the officials at the deputy speaker's office occupied the rooms. The speaker wrote to the deputy speaker on November 24 to vacate the rooms.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on Sunday intervened and asked both the speaker and deputy speaker to

minimise the rift between them. But the deputy speaker's office tried to control the rooms till Wednesday.

No progress in Kuril arms haul probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation into the Kuril Badda arms haul case has made no headway, with police failing to gather any significant information, five days after the massive arms

Investigators and top detectives said they will get leads to the arms cache once they quiz Abdul Aziz, the lone gunrunner, who is undergoing treatment at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in Dhaka after his

However, police sources said Aziz might not be his real name. A top Detective Branch official said they had ascertained his identity but would not disclose it.

Till yesterday, doctors at the CMH did not allow detectives to interrogate the gunrunner who was critically injured during the Sunday morning's firefight with police.

Police continued raids on different parts of the city and other areas of the country to nab other suspects. Four AK-47 assault rifles, two

revolvers, 20 hand grenades, four time bombs, a large number of AK-47 bullets and other explosives were seized, among other things, from a signboard shop in a predawn raid.

UP chairman

killing, sources said.

The other victim is Didarul Alam alias Kala Didar, 32, of Uttar Madrassah area under Hathazar

Three armed miscreants of a rival Jubo Dal group gunned Didar down, reportedly a cadre of Jubo Dal, BNP's youth wing, on way to his father-in-law's residence at Raidyerhazar at around 5.00pm Baidyerbazar at around 5:00pm police and sources said.

Didar was himself a criminal and involved in extortion, they

Suhrawardy FROM PAGE 1

his whole life for the welfare of the people by upholding democracy A pioneer in establishing rule of

law in this part of the world, Suhrawardy's political wisdom and uncompromising leadership made him a great statesman of his President Iajuddin Ahmed in a message paid deep respect to the great leader, saying he fought throughout his life for democracy and guided the people in the movements against undemocratic rule and autocracy.

and autocracy.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in her message mentioned Suhrawardy as a great politician, who dedicated his whole life for democracy.

Khaleda said Suhrawardy has been placed in a dignified position in our national life for his patriotism, political wisdom and far-Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament Sheikh Hasina in her message paid deep tribute to

his contribution towards democracy, rule of law and communal The Bangladesh Betar, Bangladesh Television and private TV channels will air special programmes on the life and activities of Suhrawardy today. National

would always remember him for

dailies will publish special articles on the great leader. Different organisations have arranged programmes to observe the day. The day's programmes will start with offering Fateha and placing wreaths at the mazar of Suhrawardy in the morning. Other programmes include seminar and discussion on the life and political career of the great leader.

Int'l passengers

Amadeus cannot function as SITA world's leading provider of global information and telecommunications solutions to air transport and related industries, snapped connection to Amadeus following the court injunction.

"We cannot book tickets and confirm reservation for international passengers due to the sus-pension of Amadeus operation. The passengers are suffering," an official of a travel agency, which subscribes to Amadeus service, said yesterday.

He said if the operation of Amadeus remains suspended for two more days, there will be a chaos in international ticket reservation, causing serious plight to passen-

An official of Amadeus said the company will go to higher court on Saturday to the lower court order vacated. He however refused to give details about the injunction. Earlier on August 2, the indus-

tries ministry asked Amadeus to submit its income tax certificate and a statement of the funds it remitted from Bangladesh during the last three years. Bangladesh Bank also asked the company to provide information about its businesses, tax and revenue payments. The company denied having evaded any Every time an airline or travel

agent books a ticket, using the Amadeus reservation system, the company earns \$3 to \$4 depending According to a rough estimate by industry sources, the four ser-

vice providers handled \$25 lakh worth of business during the first six months of the current calendar year. Of this amount, Amadeus alone earned around \$12,60,000. will accept its figure," he said.

BJP topples Congress

incumbency factor in Delhi and hold on to power for another fiveyear under the leadership of Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit although

with a reduced majority than the

previous assembly elections in

The race for power in Chhattisgarh, a state carved out of Madhya Pradesh three years ago, is poised for a close finish with BJP and Congress virtually breathing down on each other's neck as far as the number of seats are concerned in the 90-member state legislature.

Indications so far are that BJP might just scrape through to either get simple majority on its own or emerge as the largest single party.

But the big news of the day is BJP's unprecedented landslide victory in Madhya Pradesh, which has a 230-member legislature and Rajasthan with a 200-strong assembly. Even BJP leaders admitted they did not expect such resounding wins in the two states where the outcome of the elections left Congress stunned.

osses in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in terms of number of seats it had won in the previous assembly polls in 1998.

The Congress suffered massive

This was for the first time that BJP won more than 100 seats in Rajasthan.

So pronounced was the mandate in Madhya Pradesh that incumbent Chief Minister of the state and senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh, who has ruled the state for a decade at a stretch, conceded defeat within two hours of the start of counting of votes. There is general agreement in

political circles here that severe power crisis and bad condition of roads in Madhya Pradesh were the main reasons for the defeat of Congress. In Rajasthan, Congress defeat

was stunning because pre-poll surveys and exit polls had given its government victory with reduced Here again, the government's handling of drought for three successive years from the year

2000, anger among state govern-

ment employees over cut in some

of their benefits and caste equa-

tions have contributed to Congress' defeat.

In the national capital, the Congress has managed to stem anti-incumbency strain largely due to sharp factionalism in BJP and its aging leadership, which left the party in a disorganised state.

The BJP victories in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan ensure that the two states will have two young women as their first chief ministers in firebrand Hindutya leader Uma

Bharati and Vasundhara Raje. The two ladies won with convincing margins from their constituencies and have all along been projected as BJP chief ministerial

candidates.

With this, five Indian states will have women chief ministers. Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Delhi already have women heading the state governments in Rabri Devi, J Jayalalitha and Sheila Dikshit respectively.

The victory of BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and the good show in Chhattisgarh has come after a series of debacles the party suffered in assembly polls in several other states in the last five years. During that period, the party could win on its own polls only in Gujarat and Goa.

The result of December 1 polls in the four states also brings to a halt the Congress' winning streak in most of the assembly elections which had raised the number of states ruled by the party to 14. The result of the latest assembly

elections is unlikely to spur BJP to

go for early parliamentary polls, which are due in September next

year, if public statements of the party leadership are any indica-Although Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had asked BJP MPs yesterday to get ready for parlia-mentary elections, other BJP leaders quickly moved in to nip in the

the battle of ballots. Political observers here say BJF needs quite sometime to put its organisation in order in the most crucial states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar which together have the largest number of parliamentary

bud possibility of interpreting his

remarks as indicative of advancing

Municipality polls

FROM PAGE 1

elections," Safiur said.

On electronic voting, Safiur said it was not possible in the next polls, adding: "India could not introduce the system across the country in the last 26 years.

"How will we be able to launch the system overnight without a political consensus?" he asked. He also said that the United Nations Development Programme

turned down the EC's request for fund to launch electronic voting. Although officials of the EC secretariat supported Safiur's proposal for a one-off voting, the CEC disagreed. "We should hold the ballot in several days to ensure it is free and

fair," Syed said. "If the law and order s peaceful, the elections may be held in a day.' Criticising Safiur's position, the CEC said: "Why are you thinking negative? We had decided earlier that electronic voting would be

Meeting sources said Safiur protested Syed's remarks, saying the EC had never taken such a decision.

launched in next elections," the

Safiur's comment raised the hackles of the CEC and trigged a heated debate for minutes. Officials of the EC secretariat told the meeting that the tenures of 144 of 260 municipalities expire

BB governor FROM PAGE 12

development programme, he added.

The investment would get another shot in the arms as banks have assured the central bank of lowering lending rates, he said. Regarding the inconsistency in the foreign direct investment (FDI)

figures of the Board of Investment (BoI) and the central bank, Fakhruddin said, "BoI can have a survey (on FDI) of its own. But before publishing its findings, it should consult with the appropriate authorities (Bangladesh Bank) that deals with the FDI." The governor has already pro-

posed the BoI to co-ordinate with the BB before publishing FDI from the next time. The BoI recently announced

that the FDI flow was up by 71 percent and it stood at \$287 million between January and June. This figure is 55 percent higher than that of the central bank. The BB recognises the investments that were made through the

banks as FDI. Reinvestment by

foreign companies and inter-

company borrowing are also con-

sidered as FDI after scrutiny. The

BB conducts survey regularly to monitor the FDI flow. "We need to scrutinise all the figures as there could be many gaps in the information provided by companies," the governor pointed

"That is why we have asked the BoI to send us its company-wise FDI survey report. If our scrutiny finds the claims satisfactory, we

between March 15 to August 24 According to election law, polls in the corporations will have to be

eld between March 15 to Of the 144 municipalities, tenures of 10 expire after May where elections will be held later.

The government has allocated Tk 10 crore to conduct the polls. On preparations for holding the

oting, EC officials said work on the updation of the voters' list would be finished by January 30. The last municipality elections were held from February 23 to

February 25 in 1999. The presided over the meeting held at his office. Election Commissioner M Munsef Ali were also present.

FROM PAGE 1 The summit of the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation was originally planned for January this year

but was postponed after India declined to attend because of tension over Kashmir.

participation at the summit. But India has ruled out bilateral talks at the summit, saying Pakistan must first cut off support

Pakistan, which denies direct involvement in the 14-year revolt n Indian Kashmir, has repeatedly called for resumption of talks to resolve the 56-year-old dispute

regional journalism.

cations in Pakistan, Hong Kong, Γhailand and Singapore. He later joined the Press Foundation of Asia as its Executive Director in the 1970s. In 1981 he became the UNESCO's Regional Communication Advisor for Asia

He went on to hold important

positions in various regional publi-

He launched The Daily Star in 1991 and worked tirelessly to establish this newspaper as a leading independent national daily even until the day before his flight to Bangkok for treatment.

Rifles (BDR) authorities that took up the matter with the BSF. The BSF at a flag meeting at Laurergar border handed him over

Shopping bags

Vajpayee

Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement it welcomed Vajpayee's confirmation of his

to separatist Muslim militants fighting Indian security forces in its part of Kashmir.

over the Himalayan region. SM Ali

FROM PAGE 12 cub reporter to one of the country's most brilliant editors in a career spanning 44 years

man of the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB). He was educated in Calcutta,

He was also the former chair-

He started as a reporter with the Pakistan Observer during his student days at Dhaka University.

and the Pacific and was based in the Malaysian capital of Kuala

989 and had a brief stint with The Bangladesh Observer as its Editor

Dhaka and London.

SM Ali was one of the few Asian journalists who stood apart in

Ali returned to Bangladesh in