NEWS

seat business in all educational

Women leader Shirin Akhter

The leaders demanded reinstal-

tels and distribution of seats on the

Women leaders Hajera Sultana,

Afroza Haque Rina, Tahera Begum

Jolly, Arifa Akhter Anu, Jahanara

Begum and advocate Zohra Parvin

also spoke at the press conference.

Pak commerce

deficit to the tune of Tk 142.64 crore

with Pakistan during the first quarter

of 2005-06 fiscal year. Bangladesh

exported goods worth Tk 64.29

crore whereas its imports amounted

Bangladesh exports raw jute,

ute goods, chemicals, plastic and

tea to Pakistan, while its major

imports include textile and textile

Meanwhile, the first meeting of

chemicals, machinery and vehicles.

the SMC, comprised of the com-

merce ministers of the Saarc states,

will be held in Dhaka on April 20. The

meeting aims at taking measures to

make operational the South Asian

Free Trade Area (Safta) that has

been given legal effect since this

the Safta implementation arrange-

ments. It will also review the prog-

ress of launching trade liberalisation

programme (TLP) under the Safta

agreement with effect from July 1

A two-day meeting of the Safta

Committee of Experts (CoE) will

precede the SMC meet on April

At present, the country gener-

ates between 3,200 and 3,400 MW

against the demand of 4,500 MW

power, forcing the authorities con-

cerned to resort to load shedding

between 1,100 and 1,300 MW

After assuming office in 2001,

the BNP-led alliance government

planned to implement about 19

power plants across the country to

add 2800 MW to the national grid by

2007 to match the annual 10 per-

cent growth in power consumption.

But only three projects could

come into operation, adding about

415 MW to the national grid, due to

during the peak hours of a day.

The SMC will review and finalise

basis of merit.

FROM PAGE 1

to Tk 206.93 crore.

January.

2006.

18-19

Big powers

European Union.

nuclear facilities.

activities

mile area.

poses." ElBaradei said.

is

exclusively for peaceful pur-

More than two years of talks

At a conference in Berlin, secu-

Tehran's ambassador to the

"We can enrich uranium any-

IAEA said air strikes would not

destroy Iran's uranium enrichment

where in Iran, with a vast country,

Aliasohar Soltaniveh said, citing

inderstein of the Washington-

rity experts and officials discussed

Iran, including the possibility of US

FROM PAGE 16

opposes heavy Security Council involvement on Iran, fearing it would lead to punitive measures. Moscow last week proposed gutting a large part of the draft that asks Tehran to suspend uranium enrichment efforts, which could produce weapons-grade fuel.

Tehran says its nuclear research between Iran and Germany, France is for peaceful purposes, while the and Britain reached an impasse West believes it is a cover for bomb earlier this year after Iran resumed making uranium enrichment research.

On Thursday, the foreign ministers of the five council powers and Germany are due to meet in Berlin to hammer out strategy and try to military strikes against Iran's break any remaining impasse on the statement.

"We are dealing with nervousness from some of the parties on what will happen next and uncertainties. Russia has particular concerns, including very high equities in Iran," a senior British official said in London

Britain's UN ambassador, Emyr Jones Parry, told reporters: "We need to agree on the text and if possible to have it ready for adoption. If we can finish it before

Thursday, we will." But he cautioned that the five were only "edging forward.

"We're looking now at a mix of different comments on basic texts," Jones Parry said. "We've made a bit of progress but we have guite a lot more progress to make.

the way. Russia, diplomats said, had now submitted a draft statement to US officials of distorting a briefing counter one from Britain and France and all proposals are to be sent to by the IAEA in claiming Iran had governments of the five overnight. made significant gains in mastering

'There are all kinds of drafts and all kinds of amendments," Bolton said, adding that he, too, "proposed some compromises that will be reported back to the capitals and we are going to continue to see if we can't reach agreement."

The last version from the Europeans arrived on Saturday morning, said China's UN Ambassador, Wang Guangya,

In Berlin, IAEA director-general Mohamed ElBaradei urged Iran to halt all uranium enrichment work concluded.

Shanta now fears

FROM PAGE 1

why the inhuman and cruel behav-Shanta filed a case under the iour of the police on Shanta should Women and Children Repression not be declared a violation of the Prevention Act, accusing two DCs constitution, the Police Regulation and others of misusing power, of Bengal and relevant laws.

torturing and repressing her. The rule also ordered the respondents to show cause as to the CMM Court two days after she why they should not be directed to ensure that the petitioner will not be was tortured. harassed or arrested in various PRESS CONFERENCE forms, including filing of cases in the Narrating her horrible experience of

name of fictitious complainants. police brutality, Shanta said she Dr Shirin Sharmin Chow-dhury, repeatedly begged the police not to Barrister Shamsul Hasan and torture her as she was pregnant, but Barrister Tania Amir moved the writ the police did not pay any heed. for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Abdul Baset stood Shanta's lawyers, said Shanta had

for the state SHANTA'S DEPOSITION

to have an abortion following doctors' suggestion. Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar recorded the statements of Shanta and eight others in the to torture Shanta assuming that she second case filed against her and went there for picketing. Shanta said she went to Dhanmondi on that closed the stage of deposition of witnesses following a writ petition by day to pick her son, a student of Willes Little Flower School, from his

the complainant. Earlier on March 19, Judge Mohammad Muiibul Kamal of the First Special Tribunal for Prevention Women and Children Repression, Dhaka ordered a iudicial probe into the brutal police action on Shanta.

FROM PAGE 1 implemented projects will be and help revive collapsed nuclea

diverted to help implement the talks between Tehran and the priority projects," Saifur told We are not in a position today to reporters. say that (Iran's nuclear) programme

ADP

He asked the Planning Commission members, heads of six divisions under the Commission and officials concerned for quick implementation of the projects as the budget for the next fiscal year is approachina fast.

"We'll hold a meeting next week to examine the ADP implementation process and to see which projects can surrender the resources," the minister said replying to a guery.

He, however, said it will not be possible to divert resources from local components, but it can be done from external resources.

Replying to another question, Iran's more than 600,000 square Saifur said there has been a huae rise in spending on fuel oil A report made public on Monday due to price hike in the interna-David Albright and Corey tional market while the revenue earning has been lower than based Institute for Science and expected for less import of tax-International Security estimates that able items and higher import of Iran would need at least three more vears, and perhaps much longer, to non-taxable items.

make nuclear arms, depending on A senior official, who how many problems it runs into on attended the meeting, said projects of the current fiscal The report accused anonymous involving Tk 24,500 crore will suffer from non-availability of en the major powers this month funds and the government will implement 25 new and six revised projects on priority the process of enriching uranium to basis. the point it can be used to make

bombs "Looking at a timeline of at least three years before Iran could have a nuclear weapons capability means that there is still time to pursue aggressive diplomatic options, and time for measures such as sanctions to have an effect, if they become necessary," the report

The order was passed after

Shanta filed the first case with

Barrister Tania Amir, one of

She said the police have no right

coaching at the Dhanmondi Boys'

torturing Shanta need to be pun-

Court lawyer Atiur Rahman was

present at the press conference.

Shanta's husband Supreme

High School.

ished.

BB asks FROM PAGE 1 Shakil alias Mollah Omar and Hridoy Chowdhury. High officials of a number of

names

banks however pointed out that it will be very difficult to find out if there is any bank account in the name of any militant as the BB could not provide addresses against all the

Dhaka court

FROM PAGE 1 Battalion (Rab) and his accomplices at Khagan under Savar Police Station sometime between 12:15pm of March 8 and 6:30am of March 9.

The accused in the case are State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, his cousins Mirza Hafizur Rahman and Mirza Nurul Islam, Home Secretary Sarfarraj Hossain, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Quayyum, Additional IG (Headquarters) Anwarul Iqbal, Additional IG (Special Branch) Fakrul Ahmed, and Additional IG (Criminal Investigation Department) Khoda

Baksh. The other accused are Director General (DG) of Rab Abdul Aziz Sarker, its commanding officer, second-in-command, DIG of Dhaka Range Dr Sadikur Rahman,

Protesters threaten

FROM PAGE 16

people who said Thaksin should quit dropped to 26 points, down from 48 percent on Saturday.

"This could mean that as the protesters move, they are losing sympathisers," pollster Nopadol Kanikar said, adding that traffic concerns appeared to be behind much of the discontent.

Police said they will deploy at least 450 extra traffic officers in the area on Wednesday.

Thaksin, who was campaigning in his home town of Chiang Mai, said the government might take action against demonstrators if they cause serious disruption.

"We may use legal procedures to take action against protesters. But we will avoid using violence to control demonstrations," he told reporters.

The neighbourhood poses a special security concern because the protest at Siam Paragon will take place near the palace of Thailand's beloved Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, and just one block from national police headquarters.

Chamlong Srimuang, one of the protest leaders, rejected the police worries.

"All of Bangkok is gridlock already. We won't be the cause of the traffic jam, the prime minister will. If he resigns, we will return home," he told reporters.

Owners of Siam Paragon and two adjacent malls decided to close at least for Wednesday and Thursday and will meet Thursday to decide when to reopen. The decision shutters a major component of downtown Bangkok's retail core.

Experts doubt

FROM PAGE 1 yesterday.

"The election commission will

have to take massive preparations to hold the polls. If it doesn't have adequate time, it will not be possible to do that," he explained.

Emphasising removing all controversies immediately from the EC, former caretaker government adviser ASM Shajahan said if the situation in the EC remains unchanged it would have an adverse impact on the next election, as well as on the country's democracy.

"So, the crisis should be resolved immediately," Shajahan told The Daily Star yesterday.

About the activities of the present EC, he said there is a lack of transparency in some activities that has resulted in people's nonconfidence in it. "This constitutional body is now suffering from people's non-confidence, which is not desirable at all." he pointed out.

Hafizuddin said, "It's a very serious matter as the chief elec-

Siam Paragon alone draws some 100,000 shoppers a day, 40 percent of them foreigners. The sprawling high-rise mall which fills most of a city block expects sales of 10 billion baht (256 million

dollars) this year. The opinion poll was a boost for Thaksin, who is hoping for a popular reaffirmation of his leadership in Sunday's election.

He called the election three years early in hopes of defusing the protest movement, but an opposition boycott and claims of fraud have already marred the vote

India confirms FROMPAGE 1 clean-up and sanitising will be

followed," Kumar said. Although India has tested scores

of people in areas where chickens have tested positive for bird flu, it has not reported avian influenza in humans.

Kumar said teams of veterinary workers were being sent to Jalgaon district and culling would begin on Wednesday

India has been testing birds in hundreds of villages around Jalgaon and the town of Navapur, which is one district away from Jalgaon and where the first out break was reported last month.

According to the World Health Organisation, 186 people have been infected with the H5N1 strain of bird flu worldwide. Of these, 105 have died.

Millions of chickens and other birds have been culled in countries in Europe, Asia and Africa.

certified copy of the rule," he told journalists.

FATE OF VOTER

LISTING Uncertainty looms large over the fate of preparing a fair voter list on time, as the CEC created huge controversies by undertaking a programme to prepare a fresh electoral roll since January 1 by a unilateral decision. Nobody in the EC knows when the voter list will

be published and whether it will be a fair one. The task of publication of the

draft voter list was scheduled on February 28. But the EC failed to do that. Even the task of collecting and scrutinising information about the prospective voters, scheduled to end on January 1, are yet to be completed.

The CEC's unilateral move for a fresh voter list preparation has been facing a lot of legal challenges. On two writ petitions, the High Court on January 4 asked

electoral rolls. But the EC contin-

ued the fresh voter listing, ignor-

ing the court directives. Finally

the CEC filed an appeal against

the High Court directives on

February 1, which is still pending

held at RU for mugging

RU CORRESPONDENT

3 JCD men

Locals and students captured three Jativatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) members of Raishahi University (RU) as the JCD men were attempting to snatch cash from a student yesterday in front of Bangabandhu Hall on the campus.

The muggers were identified as Shovon, JCD RU unit member and student of MBA programme of Department of Accounting, Rana and Jewel, both members of Ziaur Rahman Hall JCD unit and forth year students of Department of Anthropology.

University administration and JCD leaders however managed to rescue the three later from the angry students and locals

Sources said Ratan Mia. a student of Department of Statistics, drew Tk 25,000 from a bank on the campus around 10:00am for his trip to India for treatment

The JCD cadres followed him to Bangabandhu Hall and stopped him on his way. They tried to force him on to a rickshaw at gunpoint.

Responding to Ratan's crv for help students and pedestrians caught the JCD leaders and gave them a thrashing. Students of Bangabandhu Hall confined the muggers for three hours inside the dormitory's quest room.

Other JCD leaders led by RU unit joint convener generals Rana and Russel rushed to the spot and tried to get release of their party members.

Bangabandhu Hall Provost Shaikh Zaman and Assistant Proctor Abul Hasnat appeared on the spot and released the JCD men after they gave a written statement that they would not do such a thing in future.

Unfair practice

FROM PAGE 16 According to sources, each of the 40 feeder vessels operating between Chittagong and Singpaore has to wait at least three to four days at the outer anchorage for getting permission for berth.

For per day waiting, each ship incurs an average loss of \$10,000 to \$15,000.

As a result, feeder operators are ready to pay even Tk 2 lakh in kickbacks for getting one-day priority in berthing. Normally a container ship takes at least 3-4 days to discharge from the terminal after unloading and loading containers. The discharge time has been reduced for gearless vessels after allocation of one terminal for them.

During inspection of MV Young Xing the mercantile marine department officials also found gross violation of the load line act. They did not find any endorseand energy supply and improved ment of load line certificate about

Eden College

FROM PAGE 16

Since then, the students have been institutions and bring back normalcy staging demonstrations to press to the Eden College their demands, including punishment of the JCD activists responsipresented the keynote paper at the ble for the attack. press conference held at the office

At a rally at Central Shaheed of the Karmajibi Nari. Minar yesterday, the students issued an ultimatum to the college lation of the students evicted earlier authorities to reopen the dormitories from their seats, expulsion of the within seven days, otherwise they JCD leaders who had launched would go for tougher movements. attack on general students, increasing the number of seats in the hos-

Contacted, Acting Principal of the college Prof Jahan-e-Gulshan said that they would reopen the residential hostels as early as possible.

Meanwhile, the education ministry held an emergency meeting yesterday to review the present situation at the college. The principal and the Superintendent General of the college dormitories Julekha Khatun attended the meeting, ministry sources said.

The decision of the meeting could not be known up to 7:10pm.

The meeting was to discuss whether Prof Feroza Begum could be reinstated and review the report of the probe committee formed to investigate the alleged seat business at the college hostels.

Sammilita Nari Samaj in a press conference yesterday demanded the government take steps to stop

Sunny FROM PAGE 16

from the charge sheet, as evidence

leading to their involvement with

Sunny, younger brother of Abdur

Rahman and also a member of

JMB's top tier Majlish-e-Shura

masterminded the countrywide

August 17 blasts. He was arrested at

Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute on

had seized 56 items of arms, ammu-

nition, explosives, bomb-making

materials, and books on jihad from

the house of Abul Khair at South

ADB plans

Emile noted that Bangladesh has

improved "dramatically" during the

last 15 years with great achieve-

ments in areas like human develop-

ment, primary education, and

He said the macroeconomic

texture is also very sound, but

having some future challenges like

congenial atmosphere to attract

ADB can help achieve

Bangladesh's economic objec-

tives." said the ADB executive, who

identified the challenges in making a

further leap forward, including

infrastructure for sustainable power

"We exchanged views as to how

healthcare and sanitation.

Manda in the city's Sabujbagh area.

Following his information, Rab

now in custody Rab dropped the names of Monir and Abul Khair, landlords of Sunny,

JMB was inconclusive.

December 13 last year.

FROM PAGE 16

private sector.

The court also asked the chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM) to assign a magistrate to probe the allegations against the accused and submit a report within seven days.

Govt slaps 24-hr ban

FROM PAGE 1

peaceful programme, the capital will be brought to a halt and the ongoing movement take a new turn," Jalil had warned earlier vesterday.

The ban comes at a time when an atmosphere is emerging conducive to holding discussions between the ruling and the opposition sides on the electoral reform agenda.

Directed by the government highups, DMP Commissioner SM Mizanur Rahman imposed the 24-hour ban from midnight today to midnight tomorrow on what he considers a security threat to the Secretariat.

The ban is imposed on carrying all kinds of arms, explosives and other harmful substances as well as rallies, processions, demonstrations, laying a siege to and sit-in programmes around the Secretariat.

The DMP commissioner in a press release said a programme of some political parties has posed a security threat to the Secretariat, which is an important establishment of the government and a restricted area Maintaining a peaceful atmosphere and public safety there is needed," he added

DMP Sources said it has been planned to halt the opposition activists far awav from the Secretariat bv barbed-wire barricades and deploying additional security forces.

The mainstream opposition combine that has been agitating since last year has already faced several government-sponsored obstructions to their programmes.

Law enforces foiled the opposition's March 12 programme to lay siege to the Election Commission Secretariat.

The government declared the opposition line-up's February 5 longmarch programme illegal, and said, to protect public interests and property, it would resist any attempt of creating a law and order situation.

Again, ahead of the oppositionannounced November 22 grand rally last year, a government-backed transport workers union enforced a wildcat strike to foil the rall RESTRICTEDAREAS

The areas and roads that fall under the

ban include Osmani Udyan, Abdul Gani Road and from its west end to Bangabazar and Doel Chattar via High Court intersection, South GPO Link

Road to House Building crossing to Matshya Bhaban roundabout via Topkhana Road and Kadam Fountain. The restricted areas also include

Mokarram Mosque's south gate, Topkhana crossing to Kasturi Hotel at Bijoynagar, and the old Diabetic Association office in Segun Bagicha to Carpet Lane near Shilpakala Academy.

All roads, lanes and playgrounds in the areas are also under the ban. **OPPOSITION PREPERATION** The opposition combine meanwhile has undertaken massive preparations to mobilise huge people from al across the capital and the adjacent districts for tomorrow's programme.

leaders of the opposition parties and their front organisations held series of meetings preparatory to the programme

day said the talks with the ruling coalition on electoral reforms will not vield any positive result, adding they will have to realise the demands through street movement.

of a dialogue. Dhaka City 14-party coordinator

The Daily Star yesterday.

and from the grabbers.

Noor Hossain Square to Baitul

In the last couple of days, senior

Opposition leaders at a rally yester-

"We are not at all concerned about Mannan Bhuiyan's reply, as our demands are crystal clear and we think they have to be realised through street agitation, not talks," Jalil told a

He, however, said they are not against the dialogue but people would not tolerate the time killing in the name

Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya said they have completed all preparation for the programme. "We've planned to gather over one lakh people around the Secretariat from different parts of the capital," Maya told

Superintendent of Police (SP) of Criticising the police high-ups for Dhaka Baktiar Alam, Officer-innot giving any statement after the Charge (OC) of Savar Police incident, Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan Station Mohammad Haider Ali, said those who are involved in

Sub-Inspector (SI) Mortuza, 16 unidentified members of Rab-4, six unidentified constables and 16 other people.

In his complaint, Nazrul said Babar's cousin Mirza Hafizur

Rahman forcefully took possession of 11 acres of land at Miton village of Savar on February 16, but thousands of local people led by Dhaka district unit Jubo League leader Iman Ali managed to recover the

On March 8. Rab personnel arrested Iman Ali at a Dhaka court when he appeared before it in a criminal case filed against him. The next day, the complainant came to know that his brother was killed in 'crossfire" and his body was lying at Khagan in Savar.

Iman was killed as he protested the land grabbing by Babar's cousin, the complainant alleged adding that the planning and killing were executed under the direction of high-ups including the state minister

Advocates Abu Sayed Sagor and Fazilatunnesa Bappy moved the revision case on behalf of the complainant.

Govt approves FROM PAGE 1

proposal to invest in the country's fast-growing hotels and tourism sector.

"The KHI in its proposal said it would invest one billion dollars in the country's tourism and infrastructure sectors," Mohammad Lutfullah, a senior officer at the Board of Investment told AFP.

The company would like to buy the Sonargaon Hotel and transform into a Four Seasons Hotel. Alwaleed bin Talal is the principal owner of the hotel chain.

Pan Pacific Hotels currently runs the Sonargaon but its contract expires in 2007.

KHI focuses on the luxury hotels sector in high-growth markets such as the Middle East, Africa, Asia and parts of Europe.

tion commissioner is also a sitting judge of the Supreme Court's Appellate Division and his colleagues in the court issued the suo moto rule against him.'

Eminent jurist Dr M Zahir also echoed him, saying it is unprecedented in the legal history of Bangladesh that the Supreme Court has issued a contempt rule on a chief election commissioner who is also a sitting judge of its Appellate Division.

"This shows our judiciary is discerning and analytic in its assessment of a situation and is strict about its prestige," Zahir observed

On a question on the CEC's possible course of action, Zahir said. "I don't know what the chief election commissioner will do. But, it seems the election commission is busy appearing in the court, and the entire situation is murky. He [the CEC] may decide to do what is in the best interest of the country."

CEC MA Aziz yesterday declined to say anything about the rule. " I will talk on receiving the

Carjackers on the prowl

FROM PAGE 1

Gate and Mohakhali bus stand and Nakhalpara areas. The Tamu and Hag groups

usually kill the drivers of the vehicles they hijack.

One day in mid-February, Mujibar's three-wheeler was blocked by a microbus in Uttara. Four young men and a woman got down from it, beat up Mujibar and took away the autorickshaw.

Later, a broker named Swapan at a CNG filling station in Maghbazar asked Mujibar to pay Tk 60,000 to get it back. As a proof that he knows where the vehicle is, Swapan showed Muiibar the papers of the three-wheeler.

While the CNG-run threewheelers are mostly sold back to their owners, taxicabs and private cars are usually sold out to other customers in changed condition.

After lifting a car the criminals take the vehicle to garages in and outside Dhaka and change their colour and chassis. Some car-lifters arrested recently told the police that they arrange forged papers with the help of some officials at the

with the country's apex court. With the appeal pending with the court, the EC cannot fix the dates of publication of the draft and the final voter lists. And the field-level task of information collection and scrutiny of the

prospective voters has also come to a halt across the country. Moreover, the controversies

over the appointments of CEC MA Aziz, two election commissioners--Justice Mahfuzur Rahman and SM Zakaria--are yet to resolved, as the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine rejecting the appointments has declared that

they would not contest the polls under the present EC

> Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) before selling them.

The police, however, have no information about the exact number of cars and three-wheelers stolen in FROM PAGE 1

a particular month, but police sources claimed the number would be several hundred for the country.

SM Mizanur Rahman, commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), told The Daily Star that they have recently formed a committee under the additional commissioner of DMP to find out ways to check car

lifting The gangs involved in the trade are very organised and get direct

help from a section in the police A recent police investigation found out the link of the officer-incharge (OC) of Nabiganj Police Station in Habiganj with the carlifters. The accused police officer owns two showrooms in Dhaka where the stolen cars are put on display for sale.

When contacted, the OC, how ever, denied all the charges.

the missing cranes the EC to revise the existing

The ship's master could not produce any document relating to absence of cranes in the ship. This unauthorised alteration of ship's structure might also hamper the stability of the ship, the official said.

Shipping ministry sources, however, said the priority berthing was given to encourage the gearless ships call at Chittagong port and avail the quick loading and unloading facilities using the gantry cranes installed at a cost of around Tk 150 crore.

Container handling at the port has been accelerated after installing gantry cranes, the source said, adding that now the cranes are handling 12 to15 containers per hour.

JCD leader

FROM PAGE 16

formation of their unit committee. Witnesses said at least 30 Jubo League activists suddenly attacked the other members of the front with sticks and iron rods when their names were not mentioned for the committee. Five of injured were treated at the DMCH yesterday afternoon while the rest in local hospitals.

BGMEA

calling upon the entrepreneurs to help implement the programme.

The apex trade body of the apparel industry took up the crash programme immediately after the fire at KTS Textile Industries (Pvt) Limited in Chittagong and formed a 40-member committee divided in 10 teams to monitor with cameras the RMG factories.

Under the programme, the BGMEA will fine a factory Tk 10,000 if it keeps its gates closed during working hours for the first time and Tk 50,000 for the second time. The BGMEA will cut all facilities to the factory if it commits the same offence for the third time.

The teams will also provide training for the mid-level management of the member factories in this regard.

road "I think these are feasible," he said, indicating that the country

could overcome the hurdles with right planning. Under the project being prepared, ADB will provide necessary

funds for installation of the proposed 240-MW Siddirganj peaking plant.

A year of test

FROM PAGE 16

Service, who is currently in Dhaka to conduct a televised debate entitled 'Bangladesh -- Can Democracy Deliver?"

Talking to The Daily Star at a local hotel, Sackur said that now is the time to decide how real the people's commitment to democracy

"You have got to make sure that your general election is free and fair and all political parties can be drawn into the process," he said

The debate, for which Sackur is n Dhaka, will be filmed today, linking Dhaka and London and it will provide the country with a global platform to discuss the future of Bangladesh.

The panel in Dhaka will comprise Nazmul Huda, minister for communications, Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to the Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and Tarek Masud, a Bangladeshi film director.

In London, the panel will comprise Baroness Uddin, the first Bangladeshi to be given a peerage in the British House of Lords and Mahfuz Anam, publisher and editor of The Daily Star. The show will be broadcast on BBC World Television, with a global audience of over 270 million households, on April 8 and April 9. The local TV channel ntv will also broadcast the programme on April 8.

The BBC journalist said the most striking problem Bangladesh faces in many ways is cynicism based on rampant corruption.

"It is obvious that most Bangladeshis believe in democracy as they fought for their right to vote. But the people are beginning to wonder whether the political system

currently works, delivering accountability, transparency and integrity, which the people expect from their politicians, Sackur said.

"If the system does not deliver for lenges, he said.

fund constraints and repeated changes in government policy. Finance Minister Saifur Rahman

said they were considering holding an Asian Forum bringing leaders from the countries of the continent to devise their programme planning with "Asian orientation".

too long, there will be a dangerous level of cynicism and frustration, and that is what Bangladesh has to watch." he said.

lation to become so cynical about

their elected politicians that they

would rather have military dictator-

ship. The next year is therefore

he continued, " You have to reach a

point where the political parties are

sufficiently mature and honest, that

they are prepared to play by the

rules, play fair, respect each other

and fight truly a democratic elec-

election is not seen as fair, honest

and transparent then I think

Bangladesh will face real problems.

Around the world there is a belief

governments function best when

they are accountable and honest

and when there is a trust between

the citizen and the political class and

if that is lost, governance is in dan-

feeling that people see the future

and believe that Bangladesh can

get better in terms of standard of

living and quality of life. That belief is

based on real achievements. Your

growth rates are high. You look

around the region and there is no

reason why Bangladesh cannot

Bangladesh can take advantage

of globalisation in many ways.

There are markets out there

Bangladesh can exploit. There are

industries and labour force, which

can deliver and find markets around

the world. There are reasons to be

optimistic but there are also chal-

lenges ahead. That's why the next

year is so important, to prove that

Bangladesh can meet the chal-

launch itself in the same ways."

"Despite grave poverty, there is a

"If you fail the test and if this next

tion.

ger." he said.

crucially important for Bangladesh,

"You cannot afford for the popu-