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Inside Today

Article

Challenges before the Indian press

Is it fear or lack of professional commitment?
 Column: Between the Lines by Kuldip Nayar
 Page 4

International



Russia, India to sign cooperation treaty in March
 Page 5

Business

Tk 1050 crore LCs opened in November
 Page 7

Feature

Development



A new order for children
 Page 8

Notice

For unavoidable reasons, our regular feature 'Dhaka Day by Day' has been dropped today. We regret the inconvenience caused to our readers.
 —Editor.

NEWS BRIEFS

JS session today

The winter session of the Parliament resumes today (Wednesday) at 3 pm. The session was adjourned last Thursday, reports UNB.

ALPP meet tomorrow

A meeting of Awami League Parliamentary Party will be held on Thursday at 11 am at the conference room of the Leader of the Opposition, a party press release said. Chief Whip of the Opposition Mohammad Nasim has requested all members to attend the meeting, reports BSS.

UP election control room

A control room has been opened at the headquarters to collect the news of law and order situation on Union Parishad elections. The control room will remain open from 6 am to 12 pm (except Friday) till February 6, reports BSS.

RMP from July

RAJSHAHI, Jan 21: Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury announced here today that Rajshahi would have metropolitan police from July next, reports BSS.

Austerity by Indian HC

The Indian High Commission in Dhaka will not hold a reception on the occasion of India's Republic Day on January 26 in view of austerity measures adopted by the Indian government, a High Commission press release said. The same will also apply to the Indian diplomatic posts at Chittagong and Rajshahi.

Transport strike in Sherpur

SHERPUR, Jan 21: A wildcat transport strike began in the district today protesting damage to minibuses by a group of angry students, reports UNB.

Natore Cabinet meeting takes 10 major decisions

Tuition free for girls upto Class Eight

NATORE, Jan 21: The special Cabinet meeting held at the Uttara Ganabhaban today with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair decided to take up several development projects in the country's northern region for its overall socio-economic uplift, reports BSS.

The more than three-hour long meeting took the decision to establish heavy industrial complexes comprising bi-cycle manufacturing plants, agricultural machinery and equipment manufacturing plants and foundry and general workshop at Chhatpukuria near Bogra - Shantahar road.

The Cabinet also decided to set up a silk industrial estate in Rajshahi and stressed the need for setting up more sugar mills in the northern region. It was the first Cabinet

meeting held at the Uttara Ganabhaban by the democratic government since it came to power. It was also the second Cabinet meeting as late president Ziaur Rahman held the first one on November 17, 1980.

The late President held Cabinet meetings in Sylhet, Chittagong, Dinajpur, Khulna, Barisal, Patuakhali, Kushtia, Faridpur, Rajshahi and Natore.

The last Cabinet meeting presided over by late president Zia outside Dhaka was held in Mymensingh on May 1, 1981.

The special Cabinet meeting today also decided to examine the possibility of setting up another export processing zone at Mongla.

The Cabinet gave top priority to the construction of Jamuna multipurpose bridge for rapid development of the

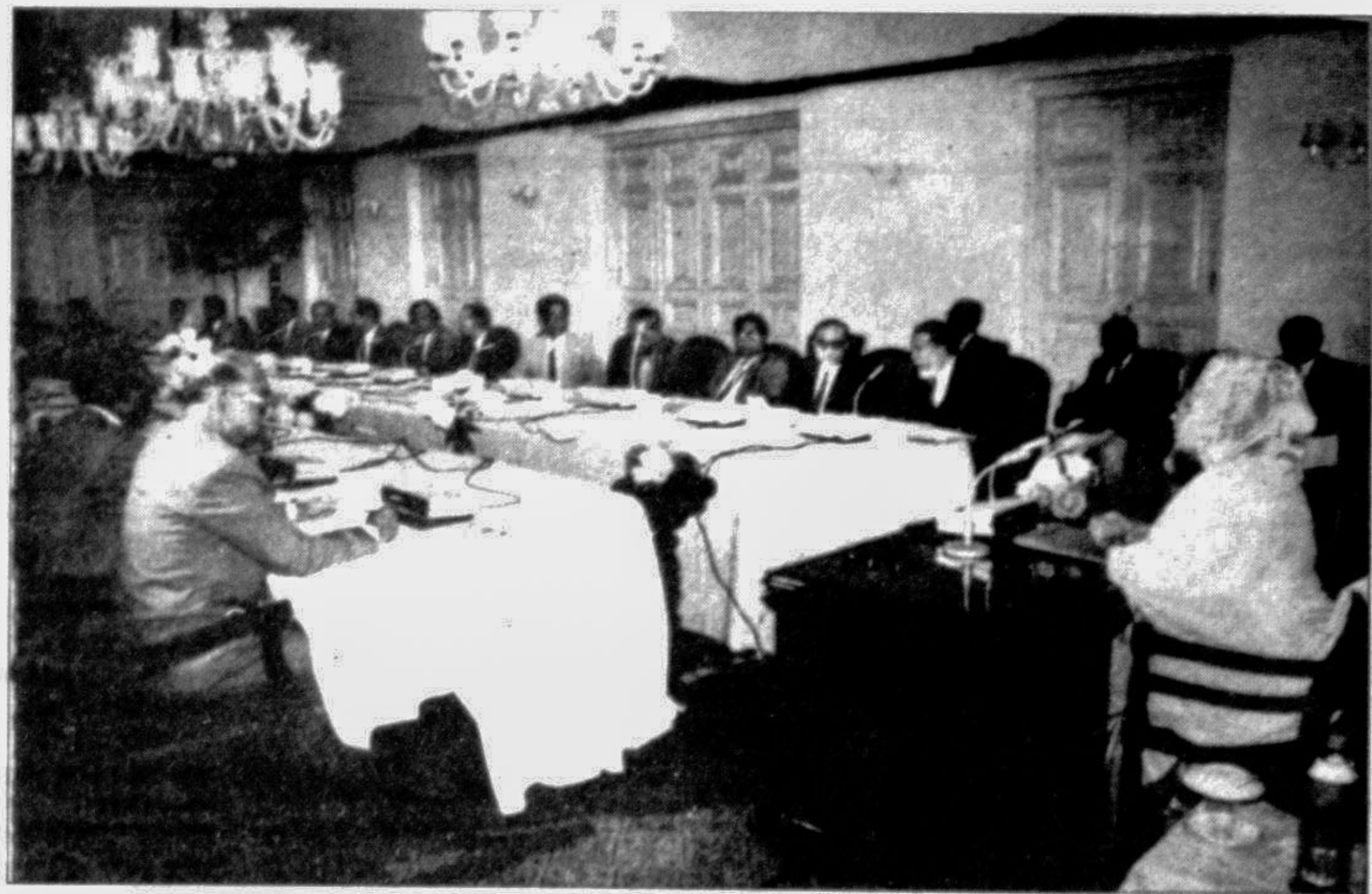
northern region. The meeting was informed that the construction of embankment had already started for the purpose.

The meeting took the decision to set up a separate Barind project authority. Under this project Taka 357 crore will be spent for the development of 25 upazilas.

The Cabinet meeting attached high priority to the Dinajpur coalmine and Maddhapara hard rock projects. It hoped that the Asian Development Bank would provide assistance to implement the projects.

The meeting decided that bilateral efforts would be made to mobilise fund to implement the projects.

The meeting decided that a study would be made to solve



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia presiding over the cabinet meeting at Uttara Ganabhaban, Natore yesterday. — PID photo

UP polls begin today amid tight security

By Staff Correspondent

The fifth elections to the country's grassroots level government bodies — the union parishads — begin today (Wednesday) amidst tight security.

Voters are more enthusiastic and the number of candidates has increased considerably this year than the UP elections held in 1988.

Polling will be conducted in 600 unions on the first day. With a view to controlling law and order during the polling the Election Commission (EC) has imposed the heaviest ever 14 days, unlike that in the UP polls in 1988, all held in a day.

Beginning today the elections will continue till February 6 with two Fridays kept as non-polling days.

Out of 4,440 union

parishads, polling is being held to 3,899 UPs. Voting in four unions will not take place as all the candidates (four chairmen and 36 members) there have already been elected unopposed.

The unions are: Charkeva (Sadar Upazila, Munshiganj), Hatta (Ujirpur Upazila, Barisal), Omarpur (Balaganj Upazila, Sylhet) and Faruka (Bilaichhari Upazila, Rangamati). Besides, 46 chairmen and 290 members of different UPs have also been elected unopposed.

Elections to 537 remaining UPs will be held later as tenures of some of these unions yet to end and court injunctions imposed on others.

According to the Election Commission

'EC won't tolerate violence'

The Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, yesterday night called upon all to extend active cooperation in holding free, fair and peaceful Union Parishad elections upholding "at any cost" the example set up in this regard during the parliamentary polls last year.

"As active cooperation of the people is needed for free, fair and unquestionable elections, those involved in the conducting of polls should come forward to work with honesty, sincerity and devotion for the purpose," he told the nation in a radio-television address on the eve of the UP elections beginning today.

Justice Rouf said the

Creation of post of Deputy Prime Minister Opposition plans bargain

By Mahfuz Ullah and Nurul Kabir

Opposition political parties are contemplating a bargain with the BNP before extending support to the constitutional amendment for creating the post of Deputy Prime Minister.

The 13th Constitution (Amendment) Bill, now being pondered by the ruling party, is expected to be placed before the House during the current session to redefine a minister. Article 56 of the Constitution as amended by the 12th amendment does not include either the post of a Deputy Prime Minister.

The creation of the post of Deputy Prime Minister, authoritative sources say, became necessary to appease Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury.

Deputy Leader of the House and his followers BNP leaders are finding it difficult to activate Prof Chowdhury without giving him 'due honour', they added.

Such a post is required to "take care of certain contingencies", says a minister, who is a lawyer and an influential leader of BNP.

When the Prime Minister is out of the country or unable to discharge duties for a certain period someone should be next in line officially to take over, the minister argued.

A leading lawyer member of the Awami League, who is also an MP, told The Daily Star "if the bill is moved we shall adopt a give-and-take strategy...to be precise, we would

ask for their (BNP) support to the Indemnity Repeal Bill."

Before the passage of the 11th and 12th Constitution (amendment) Bills, the Awami League argued to maintain the post of Deputy Prime Minister during the deliberations of the committee that scrutinised the amendments.

Prof Chowdhury, in addition, wanted to keep the provision for a vice-president and threatened to give note of dissent if his proposals were not accepted.

Prof Chowdhury had to cool down when the party Secretary General Abdus Salam Talukder intervened.

Rashed Khan Menon, MP, and General Secretary of the

Police recover arms from Ctg school

CHITTAGONG, Jan 21: A special team of port police recovered some arms and ammunition from Ananda Bazar primary school at Halishahar here last night, police said today, reports BSS.

The arms and ammunition which were found inside the room of the school included, one country-made LMG one pipe-gun, two bayonets and eight round of cartridges.

Police said that some miscreants were using the arms for dacoity and hijacking.

The miscreants fled away from the spot when they learnt of the arrival of police.

Chandgon police recovered one SBL, one country-made LMG, two crackers, two daggers, one VCR, one TV and arrested two persons from Afghan Masjid area DC road today.

Kotwali police recovered one colour TV, one VCR and some electronic goods from Terri Bazar area and arrested three persons in this connection.



Sammitito Sangskritik Jote demonstrated in the city yesterday demanding trial of Golam Azam. The Jote members also burnt his effigy on the occasion. — Star photo

'Nation still paying for amnesty to war criminals'

By Staff Correspondent

The Sammitito Sangskritik Jote (SSJ) at a rally yesterday demanded the trial of Prof Golam Azam, Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, as a war criminal. The Jote also pledged to continue its movement till he was punished for what he did. The Jote said it would go for a bigger movement from February 8 if no decision was taken by the government about Golam Azam.

The rally held in front of the National Press Club was addressed by Mafidul Huq, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Ataur Rahman, Golam Qudus and Mamunur Rashid with Faiz Ahmed, Convener of the Jote in the chair.

Faiz Ahmed said Jamaat-e-Islami was conspiring to divide the nation by fanning up communalism.

He said the Jamaat is an anti-liberation force.

Faiz Ahmed noted that the anti-liberation forces were now engaged in infiltrating in to different tiers of the administration. If they were not resisted at this moment, it would be terrible for the nation, he warned.

Mafidul Huq called upon the people to resist the rise of the communal forces and said the nation had suffered a lot for allowing them to be involved in politics.

Nasiruddin Yusuf demanded ban on communal politics and said that the general amnesty to the war criminals was a blunder for which the nation is still paying, he added.

'Collaborators were right inside Mujibnagar govt'

By Staff Correspondent

The Liberation War seems to be becoming a forgotten chapter of the fairy tales of Arabian Nights.

A new socio-political organisation under the style Amra Muktiyoddhar Santan (we are the children of freedom fighters) that was floated yesterday observed.

Announcing a 31-member central executive committee at a press conference at the National Press Club, the organisers vowed to build up a social movement to uphold the spirit and values of the country's War of Independence and to resist the distortion of its history.

Ehsanul Amin and Abn Sayeed Al Mahmud Swapan have been made president and general secretary of the body, respectively.

Forces of Victory are on the wane due to conflicts and clashes of interests among them, an inaugural statement read out of the general secretary of the organisation said.

We pledge for an objective presentation of the national history for the generations to come through our programmes, the statement said, and there is no alternative to the revival of the spirit of the independence struggle to

combat social and cultural decadence that has gripped the nation.

The nation's struggle for freedom was not confined within the nine-month bloody war, rather it was the culmination of a long-drawn struggle for emancipation of the Bengalis.

The organisers demanded trial of all 'rajakars' as war criminals and expressed their solidarity with the move for holding public trial of Golam Azam on March 26, the Independence Day.

Conspirators were there

Battered Tongi station hampers train movement

From Our Correspondent

GAZIPUR, Jan 21: Inter-city trains had to stop before getting the go-ahead and proceed cautiously as the Tongi Junction station operated Tuesday under police guard, officials said.

They said that train movements were delayed because the station's operation systems had been damaged in Monday's rampage by a mob.

Train movements were being controlled manually, they said. It would take one-and-a-half month to restore the damaged automatic inter-locking system, said Railway Division Manager Iqbaluddin Chowdhury.

He said that operating machines and railway property worth an estimated Taka one crore and 32 lakhs were damaged by the mob, that attacked the station angered by the absence of a shuttle train after the Biswa Jtama that concluded Monday.

High railway officials visited the spot Tuesday while railway police began investigating the incident.

Workers plan resistance to disinvestment scheme

By Inam Ahmed

The workers and employees of three corporations which the government plans to disinvest will put up all-out resistance to thwart the disinvestment process.

Leaders of the Sammitita Sangram Parishad told this correspondent they would not let the authorities hold the extraordinary general meeting (EGM) required for the disinvestment. The Parishad will also go for stern actions like putting up barricades, strikes

BNP still non-committal on Indemnity repeal bill

The Special Parliamentary Committee on the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill was to be facing difficulties in finalising its report for the ruling party's inception, reports UNB.

Political sources told UNB yesterday (Tuesday) that fate of the bill aimed at clearing the way for trial of the killing of country's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman now solely depends on the political decision of BNP.

But the BNP high command

is yet to give "green signal" to the BNP members on the parliamentary committee scrutinising the bill.

Competent sources said the committee had completed scrutiny of constitutional and legal points of the bill and found it all right.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz who heads the 15-member committee is learnt to have consulted some constitutional experts, including former Chief Justice Aemaluddin Hussain and Justice Debesha

Battacharya.

The experts are said to have suggested that there would not be any complication if the Indemnity Ordinance is rescinded. The ordinance is a bad law and it should go, they observed.

The Indemnity Ordinance was promulgated by the then President Khandker Mush-taque Ahmed on September 26, 1975, giving immunity to the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The ordinance was later

ratified by the government of President Ziaur Rahman through the 6th Constitution Amendment.

Some constitutional and legal experts were of the view that the ordinance could be repealed by a simple majority in parliament.

But since it has become part of the constitution, a small amendment like "except the ordinance 50 of 1975" could be added to paragraph 18 in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution with the sup-

port of two-thirds of MPs.

The Special Parliamentary Committee was granted two more weeks on January 15 to finalise its report on the bill and place it before the House for consideration.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad is learnt to have had talks with BNP policymakers, including Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder and Col (Rtd) Oli Ahmed, on the question. Azad requested them to discuss the matter

with their party chief and come to a final decision.

Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim moved the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill, 1991 on August 8 last year just two days after unanimous adoption of the 12th Constitution Amendment Bill that revived parliamentary democracy in the country.

Reliable sources said BNP negotiators assured their counterparts in the Awami League of their cooperation in repealing the ordinance.