SAARC to gear up drive for free trade zone

NEW DELHI, Jan 10: The seven-nation South Asian bloc yesterday agreed to accelerate its drive to create a regional free trade zone, by cutting tariffs across the board, trade ministers of the countries said, reports Reuter.

At the end of a two-day meeting in the Indian capital. Pakistan said it would resolve the issue of granting India most favoured nation (MFN) status shortly, Indian Commerce Minister P Chidambaram told journalists.

This was the first time that the trade ministers of the seven nations met since the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was set up more than a decade ago.

SAARC comprises India. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives.

In a joint statement after the meeting the commerce ministers said they had entrusted a special team, comprising representatives of the seven nations to work on rel-

From Page 1

"We share your enthusiasm

memoire to the banking sec-

on the reform agenda and

appreciate the project con-

cept note prepared by your

team," said Fredrick Kilby of

the WB headquarters, adding,

"While it is ambitious, it is

essential for the future

growth of both financial and

real sector." As a first step to

help monitor the preparation

effort, the Bank in agreement

with the government has al-

ready prepared a work pro-

gramme for December and

ject preparation plan, the

first year's programme will

be accomplished before the

start of the project through

King Hussein

in Israel

Jordan's King Hussein ar-

rived in Israel's biggest

copter was broadcast live on

closed off main streets and

deployed 6,000 policemen to

secure the visit, which in-

cludes a stop at a hospital

where Prime Minister

The King, a pilot, flew a

He got out of the cockpit

Jordanian army helicopter to

Israel's Sde Dov Army Base

and warmly embraced Israeli

Prime Minister Shimon

Peres. An Israeli military

band played the national an-

thems of both countries

which signed a peace treaty

Nuban Ahmed

From Page 1

blood". "Let us abhor terror-

ism" and "We deny co-exis-

also took part in the human

chain expressing solidarity

with the general students.

These organisations included

Dhaka University Teachers

Association (DUTA), Dhaka

University Alumni Associa-

tion, Anti-terrorist Student

Parisad, Dhaka University

Journalists' Association

(DUJA), Dhaka University

Debating Society (DUDS),

Group Theatre Federation,

Nagorikbrinda, Sammilita

Sanskritik Jote, Kabita

Parisad, Abriti Samanoy

Parisad, Bangladesh Medical

Association (BMA) and some

far Ahmed, Ahmed Safa, Hos-

sain Zillur Rahman and Fara-

had Mazhar were among

who attended the pro-

From Page 1

Party. "The BNP is trying to

coax them (Jatiya Party) into

rescheduling of elections

date and the deadline for fil-

ing nomination papers a

"farce". She also termed the

Chief Election Commissioner

a "spineless" person. "He is

only acting under the orders

of the Prime Minister instead

of working independently. He

(CEC) has been appointed in

that post to enable the BNP

steal vote," the AL chief al-

held. The voters' list is faulty.

It should be corrected first,"

Minister over phone and

proposed a live Radio-TV talk

on the non-partisan, neutral

caretaker government issue.

She turned down the offer

and said that she did not un-

derstand what a neutral and

non-partisan caretaker gov-

ernment meant. During Er-

shad regime, she used to un-

many innocent people were

being harassed in the name

of arms recovery. AL leaders

Hasina also alleged that

derstand that," Hasina said.

Hasina demanded.

This election cannot be

"I had called the Prime

leged.

Hasina termed the

elections," she alleged.

Ataus Samad, Prof Mozaf-

prominent persons

students' organisations.

Different organisations

tence with terrorism."

on the edge of Tel Aviv.

Yitzhak Rabin died.

in October 1994.

metropolis, reports Reuter.

TEL AVIV. Jan 10:

The arrival of his heli-

television. Police

According to FSDP's pro-

January.

Banking system

evant mutual tariff conces sions and removal of the se-

lect trade barriers. The panel, the inter-governmental group (IGG) on trade liberalisation, will meet next March in Colombo.

"The panel may consider adopting sectoral and acrossthe-board approaches in addition to the product-byproduct approach to accelerate the process," the joint statement said.

Sidestepping decades of political friction between its two largest members. India and Pakistan, the group launched a preferential trading accord last month with a

Barapukuria

From Page 1 ted for a road from Moheshpur of Madhyapara to Barapukuria.

"The authorities should immediately develop a set of Mine Codes which involves only Tk 30 to 35 lakhs. But they are looking for foreign assistance for this small amount," claimed the official.

formal agreements with two

year programme include: en-

actment of new central bank

and bankruptcy law, amend-

ments to financial courts act,

Rupali Bank privatisation,

preparatory work on capital

adequacy, asset valuation, etc.

range of reform measures

taken under the FSRP now at

work in the real sector de-

pends to a considerable de-

gree on the efficient perfor-

mance of the banking sec-

tor," said a well-placed

source in the Finance Min-

istry. "The on-going reform

will be further intensified

under the project for the fi-

nancial sector to play its im-

portant role in the develop-

capital adequacy of banks

based on risk weighted as-

sets, fundamentally improve

the income position of banks

to ensure that after restruc-

turing they will be able to

sustain operations and grow

profitably and privatise Rupali

Bank immediately," said a

JU celebrates

silver jubilee

tomorrow

By JU Correspondent

(JU) will observe its silver ju-

bilee tomorrow amid festivi-

cluding a colourful rally and

theatrical performances and

recollection of memoirs has

been organised on the cam-

pus to celebrate the 25th an-

niversary of founding of the

A number of former

teachers and students who

are now well-placed in dif-

join the festivities.

on January 12, 1971.

ferent fields are expected to

versity of the country was

founded on August 20,1970

and was formally inaugurated

Ahmed was appointed the

first Vice-Chancellor of the

Economics, Geography.

Mathematics and Statistics

had started on January 4 in

total of 4178 students under

three faculties and one insti-

tute. There are nine residen-

tial halls, five for the male

students and four for female

duced 4907 graduates and

4050 post graduates so far. It

like Liton Chowdhury were

being harassed, but no search

is conducted in the residen-

tial halls of education institu-

that ruling party terrorists

were sheltered in many of

The week-long AL pro-

gramme includes a 'padajatra'

from Gulshan on January

12, mass-contact tour from

Recalling the homecoming

January 13 to 15 and torch

of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

from jail in Pakistan on Jan-

uary 10, 1972, Hasina said

that the Awami League had a

record of carrying out pro-

democracy and pro-people

politics and that the current

movement was also aimed at

ensuring peoples' right to

vote but "not to go to power."

AL central leaders including

Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur

Rahman, Begum Sajeda

Chowdhury, Abdur Razzak,

Tofael Ahmed, Amir Hossain

Amu and others.

The rally was addressed by

procession on January 16.

has 328 teachers now.

The university has pro-

The university has now a

The lone residential uni-

Professor Mafizuddin

Initially, classes in the

departments —

university.

university.

the same year.

tour

students.

those halls.

recovered so far?"

Hasina vows

Jahangirnagar University

A day-long programme in-

"Our aim is to restore the

ment of the nation."

central bank official.

"The success of the wide

Major tasks in the first

major donors.

goal to create a free trade zone by the year 2000.

It granted mutual tariff cuts on 226 items, but ministers agreed they were not enough

"The aim would be to expand the list of 226 tariff lines covered in the first round to the maximum possible extent in order to make a significant advance toward the objective of SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Area) within the agreed timeframe," the statement said.

Monday proposed applying zero or near zero tariffs on primary commodities, which comprise 64 per cent of intra-SAARC trade. India is SAARC's largest member.

India's Chidambaram on

Bowing to pressure from Bangladesh, the ministers said the negotiating group must give special treatment to SAARC's least developed

The seven-nation region is home to 1.2 billion people and has a combined gross domestic product of 300 billion US dollars.

India bans

abortions

of female

fetuses

NEW DELHI, Jan 10: India

has banned abortions of

healthy fetuses if medical

tests show they are female.

New Year's Day, but was an-

nounced only Tuesday. It

seeks to eliminate the

widespread practice of abort-

ing female fetuses in this

asked all facilities that per

form amniocentesis and

sonograms — which deter

mine the sex of fetuses - to

They also have asked that

those procedures be done

only when doctors have rea-

son to believe the fetus may

be abnormal. India last year

outlawed clinics that spe-

cialise in testing fetuses' sex

but the tests themselves are

the female abortion legisla-

tion in August 1994, but it

could not become law until

all state legislatures gave

their consent. That happened

at the end of 1995, said NN

Sharma, a spokesman for the

Health and Family Welfare

prescribes imprisonment of

three years and a fine of 300

dollar — two months of an av-

Subsequent offenses will

draw up to five years in

prison and a fine of 1,500

tors all can be punished un-

statistics available on female

infanticide or abortion of fe-

male fetuses, but the dispro-

portionate number of males

in India show it is a

the number of females per

1,000 males declined from

934 to 929, according to the

latest national census. In de-

veloped countries there are

1,060 females for every

1,000 males. In sub-Saharan

fer sons because they bring

parents wealth in the form of

dowry. In Hindu families

sons inherit family wealth

and light their parents' fu-

neral pyre, opening the way

for their souls to go to

Businessmen on

hunger strike

Some 70 businessmen of

Dighinala thana, affected by

fire at a bazar, went on fast-

unto-death in front of Press

Club here today for a plot to

establish a market, reports

KHAGRACHHARI, Jan 10:

Most Indian families pre-

Africa, there are 1.020.

heaven.

Between 1981 and 1991

widespread practice.

Mothers, fathers and doc-

There are no national

erage middle-class salary.

For first offenders, the law

India's parliament passed

legal, as is abortion.

Ministry.

der the law.

Authorities have already

male-dominated culture.

register their patients.

The law took effect on

reports AP.



Danielle Mitterrand, the wife of late former French President, leaves his Paris home where the lay in state late Tuesday. Outside the building dozens of Parisians have gathered, leaving red roses, the symbol of Francois Mitterrand's socialist AFP/UNB photo party.

Mitterrand's funeral

World leaders pay last respect today

PARIS, Jan 10: A host of world leaders will gather in Paris tomorrow to pay their last respects to former President Francois Mitterrand, France's longest serving head of state and a key figure in post-war world

politics/ reports AFP. Some 20 heads of state or government will gather for a memorial mass at the Notre Dame cathedral to pay tribute to Mitterrand, who died from prostate cancer on Monday aged 79, eight months after leaving office.

At exactly the same time the Socialist leader will be buried in an intimate family ceremony in accordance with his wishes in the family vault in his home town of Jarnac. southwest France.

The simple ceremony will be in line with previous French presidents including General Charles de Gaulle and Georges Pompidous who also declined the pomp and circumstance of a state fu-

Participants at the Notre Dame mass to being at 11 am (1000 GMT) at exactly the same time as the Jarnac ceremony will include key political leaders whose countries

Gold seized

at ZIA

By Staff Correspondent

International Airport (ZIA)

seized 160 tolas of gold from

a Bangladeshi passenger yes-

gold bars from Md Sayeed,

38, who arrived from Dubai

by an Emirates flight at

around 10 am, Customs

sources said. A departmental

case has been filed in this

branch police in a raid at a

store in Kawran Bazar in the

city recovered banned ci-

garettes worth about Tk 1.45

lah Store at the first floor of

the Kawran Bazar kitchen

market at around 12:25 pm

and recovered 250 cartons of

Benson and Hedges ci-

of the shop, Mokter Hossain,

35, in this connection. A case

has been filed with Tejgaon

Gulshan incident

From Page 1

the nine arrested persons

was released on bail on Tues-

lam and release of one of the

accused persons later

sparked violent protest at

Gulshan during which angry

people gheraoed the thana

clashed with police and held

The killing of Shamsul Is-

Police arrested the owner

Police raided the Bismil-

Meanwhile, the detective

connection.

lakh, police said.

garettes, police said.

thana.

a rally.

The officials recovered 16

Customs officials at the Zia

were marked by Mitterrand over his 14 years in office. Those already confirmed include German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Israeli

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev may also attend. For Britain the Prince of Wales has been confirmed. while Prime Minister John Major's presence has been muted. Although US

President Bill Clinton will not

President Ezer Weizman.

Editorial on page 4

attend personally, a high level official is to be desig-

A national day of mourning has been declared to mark the funeral. Flags will fly at half mast on all public buildings while public offices and sehools will respect a minute's silence at 11:00 am.

France has been grieving since Monday morning when Mitterrand died at his official residence near the Eiffel Tower after a long battle against prostate cancer.

Mitterrand's body will remain there until Thursday morning when it will be flown by military aircraft to Jarnac.

Remove PM, help

Jamaat urges President

end crisis,

The Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday urged the President to play a 'historic role' by removing the obstacles in taking measures for overcoming the present political crisis, reports UNB.

"The president will have to play a historic role rising above any party or opinion before the political crisis turns into a constitutional crisis," said Matiur Rahman Nizami, the Secretary General of the Party, at a rally in the afternoon.

Jamaat city unit organised the rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram national mosque following the two-day hartal that concluded Tuesday evening.

The Jamaat leader identified the prime minister's 'obstinacy and lust for power as the main obstacle on the way in taking efforts by the president for resolving the staggering political crisis.

Rail link restored

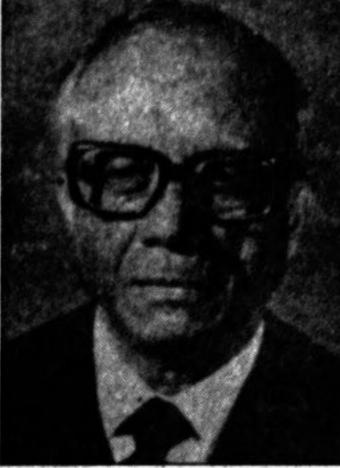
CHANDPUR, Jan 10: Rail communication between Chandpur and Laksam that disrupted following train accident at Kongaish between Hajiganj and Waruk on Monday evening was restored at 4:15 am today, reports

The rail authority resumed the communication this morning after 34 hours of rescue operation.

Alamgir M A Kabir dead

Alamgir M A Kabir, an emnent social worker and a former adviser to the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed died here vesterday morning of old-age complications. He was 85, reports BSS.

Kabir, a former Inspector-General of Police was also president of both Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) and Bangladesh Diabetic Association. He was also associated



with a number of organisations including Society for Care and Education of Mentally Retarded, Bangladesh and Foundation of Mental Health.

The recipient of Independence Day award for social work in 1979, Alamgir Kabir was born in 1911 at village Kamarpur, Faridpur. He belonged to the illustrious Kabir brothers family of Bangladesh and India. Humayun Kabir. former Education Minister of India, was his elder brother Akbar Kabir, his younger brother, was adviser to President Ziaur Rahman, and Jahangir Kabir, his another brother is a sitting minister in West Bengal.

Alamgir Kabir joined the Indian police service in 1935. He held the post of Inspector General of Police in the then East Pakistan from 1962 to 1969. A widower. Kabir left behind two daughters. One of his sons-in-law Humayun Kabir, is now the Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States.

Namaj-e-Janaza of Kabir was held at four places including FPAB office and po-

He was buried at Begum Bazar graveyard in the city. . President Abdur Rahman Biswas, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina, in separate messages, yesterday condoled the death of Alamgir M A Kabir.

Maid shot dead

let struck Fatema.

a local mastaan along with some of his accomplices went to the building to pick up one person from the place. They started firing and hurled crackers when local people resisted them. At the time, a stray bullet hit the maid. The gang attacked the

Police from Kotwali thana recovered the body of Fatema. who hailed from Barisal. No one was arrested in this connection till last night.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yes-

Ansar, VDP

VDP Development Bank to create employment for the members of the auxiliary lawenforcing force as they are not able to create jobs owing to want of capital as well as financial difficulties.

"My dear brothers and sisters (Ansar-VDP) are the owners of this bank. You will buy share and take credit from it. And you will increase your income and create jobs with the help of this bank for yourselves and your families."

Begum Zia bought the first share at the function.

The Prime Minister also distributed share certificates of Ansar-VDP Unnayan Bank,

The Widnight Bile

Chechens free 3000 hostages

KIZLYAR, Russia, Jan 10: Chechen rebels freed up to 3,000 hostages they seized in a southern Russian city and left early today in buses for their breakaway republic still holding more than 100 hostages, officials said, reports AP.

Israel frees hundreds of Palestinians

SALEM, West Bank, Jan 10: Israel freed hundreds of Palestinian prisoners today under a self-rule deal with the PLO just days before the first Palestinian national elections, witnesses said, reports

The first batch of 35 inmates kissed the ground and hugged anxious relatives after being bussed to an Israeli military checkpoint on the northern West Bank border with Israel They were among some

800 prisoners, including members of Islamic and leftist groups opposed to Israeli-PLO peace moves, due to be freed by the end of the day in various parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Under an accord signed with the PLO last September. Israel agreed to free 1,200 prisoners ahead

HSC candidates boycott test exams in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Jan 10: HSC examinees of the Rajshahi Government College and Barendra College today boy cotted their test examinations demanding separate question papers for each Education Board of the country,

reports UNB.

College sources said the All College Council, an organisation of the HSC examinees. led the boycott programme. Later, they brought out a

procession and held a rally at Amtala on the Rajshahi College campus,

Bid to kidnap schoolgirl: 3 nabbed

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 10: Local people foiled an attempt to kidnap a schoolgirl and nabbed three of the kidnappers at Shimultala in the town today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said a gang of about seven youngsters in a microbus waylaid the rickshaw of Gulnahar Mithil, 16. a student of class X of Kaliakanda High School, at Shimultala as she was returning home from the school at about 10:30 am.

On hearing hue and cry of Mithil, daughter of one Abdul Malek of Kaliahoripur village. local people rushed to the spot and nabbed three of the youngsters along with the microbus.

Later, they handed over the three young men -Anisur Rahman of Shantibag, Dhaka, microbus driver Nurul Islam and Shakil Parvej of Gosal road in Sadar thana to police.

JP rejects From Page 1

jailed husband and JP Chair-

man. She rejected rumours

about a JP deal with the government to participate in the elections. No solution to the present

political impasse is possible without having Ershad at the negotiating table, Raushan

Moudud Ahmed said executive powers shall have to be vested in the office of a nonpartisan person and not in the President's office.

Palestinian elections on January 20. Most were jailed for resisting Israeli occupa-

"I feel more sad than happy," said 22-year-old Mustafa Abu Arra, a member of the Islamic militant Hamas group who spent four months in jail without trial.

"My colleagues are still in jail being treated as a bargaining chip in the hands of the Israelis," he said.

Prisoners said a total of 220 prisoners were freed from Israel's Megiddo prison - including the 35 who arrived at Salem on their way to Jenin - for other West Bank cities.

Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day observed The Homecoming Day of

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed in capital Dhaka and elsewhere in the country yesterday, reports UNB. On this day, in 1972,

Bangabandhu returned home after nine months of captivity in Pakistan during country's Liberation War. To celebrate the day,

Awami League and its front organisations, different sociocultural and political organisations arranged various programmes. In the capital, the day's

programmes began with hoisting the national and party flags at the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue. Awami League president Sheikh Hasina accompanied by the party leaders gar-

landed the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban, Dhanmondi, at 8 am. Later, different political and socio-cultural organisations and people from all

walks of life thronged at the Bangabandhu Bhaban and placed wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu. The organisations include

Dhaka city Awami League, Jativa Sramik League, Juba League, Chhatra League, Mohila Awami League, Krishak League and Bangabandhu Parishad.

Old man murdered in Faridpur

FARIDPUR, Jan 10: A slaughtered body of an old man was recovered from a rice godown at Chawkbazar in the town this morning, reports UNB.

Police said, they found the body of Sudhir Kumar Ghose, 60, of Nagarkanda thana with several cut marks at his throat and abdomen from the godown owned by one Joy Gobinda Saha.

Sudhir Kumar, a dealer of hessian bags, had been staying in the godown at night for several years.

Police suspected that Sudhir Kumar might have been killed by miscreants who ransacked the godown and tried to break its iron safe volt early today, police

Police, however, recovered the iron safe from near a pond of the godown intact.

A case was registered with the Kotwali police. District Police Superintendent visited the spot and further investigation is on.

ADMISSION IN BACHELOR OF DENTAL SURGERY COURSE CDC WELCOMES TO A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR

GRADUATE STUDY IN DENTISTRY. City Dental college, a Government Approved Dental college, under Dhaka Univiercity invites application in prescribed forms

obtainable from the college authority on a payment of TK.350/ =only, for the students interested to study dental Surgery. Eligibility for Admission

1. The applicant must have passed S.S.C & H.S.C. Examination or their equivalent. Total marks obtained in S.S.C.& H.S.C. should be more than 1300. Both the examinations should be passed in 2nd or 1st division.

3. Biology must be a subject of study in H.S.C. examination. Noumber of students: 50 only

Admission will be granted on basis of the results of S.S.C. &H.S.C. examinations and admission test. One poor student will be given opportunity to study completely free.

Principal

Prof. A.H. Sajedur Rahman MBBS (DAC) BDS (PB) FICD (USA) MFDI(UK) FELLOW, WHO, PGT(UK)

CITY DENTAL COLLEGE

Founder principal, Dhaka Dental College.

Rabeya Saranic, 1085/1, Malibag Chowdhury Para Dhaka-1219. Ph: 419429, 409786

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Another PPP activist tions, she alleged claiming gunned down The AL chief accused the members of the militant wing

Home Minister of sheltering KARACHI, Jan 10: Four terrorists and said," "the gunmen ambushed and killed Home Minister had said a member of Prime Minister there were over one lakh il-Benazir Bhutto's party on legal arms in the country. But Wednesday, police said, rehow many of those have been ports AP.

> Abdul Qayum, 45, is the third member of Ms Bhutto's party to be gunned down in this ethnically troubled port city since Tuesday. Police said Qayum, a coun-

> cillor on the Karachi Municipal Council, was walking to his office in Liaqatabad. one of the most violent neighbourhoods in Karachi, when at least four gunmen opened fire with automatic

> On Tuesday police recovered the bullet-riddled bodies of two other Bhutto supporters, including another municipal councillor, Abdur Barri, 55, who had been kidnapped from his home, tortured and shot. While no one is claiming

responsibility for the recent

killings, the police is blaming

of the Mohajir Quami Movement, representing Indian Muslims who settled here after 1947. Mohajirs, who represent

about 70 per cent of Karachi's 12 million people. say they are treated like second class citizens. They are demanding recognition as a fifth ethnic group in Pakistan, believing that will give them equality.

Successive governments have refused their demands. but in the past year their struggle has turned increasingly violent. Militants regularly target members of the Karachi se-

curity force. Last year 122 policemen and paramilitary Rangers were killed. Ms Bhutto's government has held several rounds of peace talks with the MOM's largest faction, led by Altaf Hussein. However, both sides

accuse the other of negotiat-

ing in bad faith.

port city of Karachi. Seven people were killed

and 35 wounded when a bomb exploded on a crowded bus of the state-run Karachi Transport Corporation carrying up to 80 passengers in the evening rush hour on Sunday.

which has its seat in Karachi. guaranteed to keep secret the identity of any informants and provide them with state protection.

under a seat.

Reuter adds: The Sindh provincial government offered a reward of one million rupees (29,000 dollars) today for information leading to the arrest of those behind a bomb attack on a bus in Pakistan's

A newspaper notice said the Sindh government.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blast, which bomb disposal officers say was caused by a homemade timed device weighing at least six pounds placed

From Page 1 The cause of the attack could not be known immedi-

However, sources said that

office of a rice agency there.

Amu, Tofael From Page 1

terday held a meeting with four of her cabinet colleagues at her Tejgaon office to take their views on the current political impasse.

From Page

Begum Zia said.