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Beijing for strong ties with Dhaka

From Staff Correspondent

BEIJING, July 23: The twoday annual bilateral consultation meetings between Bangladesh and China ended here today with a renewed pledge from Beijing that the existing ties would be further strengthened with the coming into power of a new government in Dhaka.

The consultation meetings were held between Vice Foreign Minister in-charge of Foreign Affairs Tang Jiaxuan and visiting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Faroog Sobhan. Ambassador Mustafizur Rahman and Director General at the foreign office Sirajul Islam also attended meetings.

Embassy officials said that the Chinese leaders welcomed the Foreign Secretary's visit and demonstrated China's desire to strengthen the bilateral relations. A Bangladesh diplomat said that the annual consultations acquired special significance this year because of

Sources said that China's relations with Dhaka would improve even more as China holds Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in high esteem. Hasina earlier visited China in 1993 as Leader of the Opposition in parliament.

From Page

members in the body

position member.

Fifth Parliament.

liament

Business Advisory Committee

of the House with four BNP

According to the BNP legis

lators, four representatives in a

15-member body was not

enough since they had more

than one third members of the

330 member House. They also

argued that the Speaker had

considered JP representative

in the committee to be an op-

gued that they had been rather

magnanimous in taking four

BNP MPs in the committee,

while the BNP had allowed

only two AL members in the

Advisory Committee of the

JP and JSD Lawmakers were

very much members of the

Opposition in the present Par-

of Procedure, the Speaker said

that it was his discretion to

nomination of Justice Sha-

Chowdhury argued that it was

inconsistent with certain pro-

vision of the Constitution.

Quoting Article 99 of the Con-

stitution, he said that a retired

Judge could hold any "office of

BNP put forward the same ar

From Page 1

Dr Suvit Yodmani said that

mental education.

gument, while both of them

Mahbubur Rahman of the

Role of media

profit of the Republic.

habuddin, Salauddin Kader

During the debate on the

announce the advisory body.

However, quoting the Rules

They also argued that the

The ruling party leaders ar-

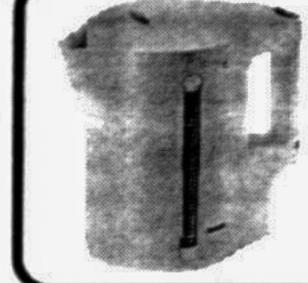
Foreign Secretary Faroog Sobhan told The Daily Star that the visit was "extremely useful and positive". He said that he had also conveyed the greet ings of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and conveyed the wishes of the new government to maintain and further bolster the existing

Sobhan said his visit has set the stage for the exchange of high level visits between the two countries in the near future and it "clearly demonstrated China's desire to renew closer ties with the new gov-

The Foreign Secretary said he was really impressed by the warmth and hospitality showed by the Chinese and informed that he had been able to meet some top leaders in Beijing.

On the first day of the consultations on Monday the entire gamut of bilateral relations were discussed between the two sides while today regional and international issues of mutual interest was discussed, it

tations were held in Dhaka in August.



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JS Business Advisory body nominated

Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury yesterday nomi-nated a 15-member Business Advisory Committee in Parliament, reports UNB.

The members are: Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, Zillur Rahman, Abdus Samad Azad, Tofael Ahmed, Mohammad Nasim, Abdul Hamid Advocate, Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah. A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury. Khandaker Delwar Hossain, H M Ershad, M Saifur Rahman, Advocate Rahmat Ali and Kazi Shamsur Rahman.

The Speaker is the ex-offi-

Pahartali sub post office looted

CHITTAGONG, July 23: Dacoits looted valuables including prize bond, phone card and cash worth Tk 32,416 breaking open the locker of the Pahartali sub post office on Monday night, reports UNB.

The employees left the post office at 6 pm after finishing their job on the day and found the office door broken while they came to join their work this morning, police said.

The robbers also ransacked the official papers and documents which were seen scattered on the floor.

A case was registered with the Doublemooring police.

Godowns

From Page 1 throw-away prices, showing those as rotten, she said.

Following a Cabinet decision, the Ministry concerned formed a two-member inquiry committee on July 8 to investigate the allegation and submit a report on it.

The committee members are Habibur Rahman Khan, a retired judge and Mozammel Hossain, a retired additional secretary — the time limit for submission of its report would be fixed after the terms of reference are proposed sources concerned said.

About the present government's claim of food deficit the Food Minister had told The Daily Star in a recent interview that when the BNP government quit power, it left a food deficit to the extent of 45 lakh tons, "but, credit goes to the caretaker government which minimised the deficit by procuring more foodgrains and now the volume of food deficit stands at 23 lakh tons.

"Now, our main focus is on keeping the market stable. We took decision on Sunday last to purchase one lakh ton rice. We will also buy wheat. Besides. right now we have a food stock of 10 lakh tons," the minister had said.

Ctg dacoity

From Page 1

1.60.000/-, 16 tolas of gold and other valuables. In the second such robbery about 12 armed people, wearing shorts, stormed into the house of ex-ward commissioner Sekander Ahmed at the high level road of Lalkhan Bazar early in the morning.

According to police, the dacoits confined all the family members in a room. They decamped with valuables, including gold ornaments, a TV, a VCR and money.

Meanwhile, one alleged mugger snatched a golden chain from a woman at the Ghatforhadbeg Aziz Company crossing at 9:30 am.

Local people chased the mugger but failed to catch

him, witnesses said.

people, are also eager to know

including Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, demanded of the chair to expunge the provocative comment of Shambhu, the Awami League MP from Barguna. They also demanded Shambhu to withdraw his remark.

Amidst shout and thumping of the desk with files, Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury told the House that he did not hear the remark of Shambhu and said he would examine the matter and give his decision

But Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury demanded an im-

3 more Bills tabled in JS

special committee for its report to be submitted to the House within three days. Telecommunications Minis

ter Mohammad Nasim, on behalf of Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury tabled Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (Amendment) Bill, 1996, and Fisheries Research Institute (Amendment) bil. 1996, amid objection from the Opposition BNP members M Saifur Rahman and M K An-

LGRD Minister Zillur Rah-

From Page 1

oners from the Dhaka Central

member inquiry committee headed by the Additional Inspector General (Prison) recorded statements of more than 35 persons including officers, employees and prisoners at the Central Jail. The committee is likely to submit its report within a couple of days. jail sources said.

ing five convicts, only have

at its meeting scheduled to be held today at 4 pm.

could not take any decision without approval of the Council, the supreme administrative body of the private hospi-

rules can continue their job as per previous rules," he said. They have been given the op-

held at the BIRDEM auditorium at 5 pm today after the meeting of the Council, Mahtab

BNP questions

A lively discussion followed when several constitutional experts and veteran lawmakers from both aisles of the House locked in a debate over the is-

State Minister for Law Ab-

sections of the Constitution. He said it was a settled matter as another former chief justice, Badrul Haider Chowdhury, also contested the presi-

dential election in 1991.

Chowdhury, after hearing the logics of the two benches, gave a decision that the question of legality raised by Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury is 'out of order'.

Row over AL MP's remarks about BNP in JS

The Speaker, who reminded the members that the House cost Tk 15,000 every minute while in business, had to take about an hour to defuse a debate vesterday, reports

The noisy debate erupted when taking the floor on a point of order, Treasury Bench member Dhirendra Debnath Shambhu made a comment that BNP men were involved in each case of theft, robbery and terrorism in the country these

coity and terrorism, there is BNP, Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal," Shambhu said, sparking off immediate protest from the BNP side

Three more Bills were placed in the Jatiya Sangsad

4 securitymen

Meanwhile, the three-Of the 13 escapees includ-

been arrested so far.

He said the authorities

an employees' union, regularisation of some staff members and cancellation of the recently introduced contract service system. A press conference will be

dul Matin Khasru defended the move to nominate Justice Shahabuddin as president candidate, and also cited relevant

security forces engaged in the hill region to protect integrity

Shambhu would be published in press at home and abroad. Treasury Bench member Kader Siddiqui also favoured withdrawal of the remark "if Shambhu at all made such a comment.

Jamaat MP Delwar Hossain Saidee also requested the Speaker to settle the matter immediately to facilitate resumption of normal business of the House. He reminded the House of the expenses being incurred due to an unnecessary debate.

Half a dozen BNP lawmak-

ers, including AYM Khalilur Rahman, Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, requested the Speaker to settle the issue by vesterday. Amidst the row, treasury

bench member Wajiuddin Khan suddenly stood up and accused Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia of using unparliamentary language in the House He referred to Begum Zia's

deliberation during the question hour when she said that punjabi and coat had been taiored with sarees meant for relief during the Awami League

deny his accusation against BNP for terrorism and robbery. nor apologised. He said his comment was based on newspaper reports. Sheikh Selim of the Awami League sharply criticised the

noise whenever a ruling party MP took the floor. An apparently annoyed Speaker interrupted and announced that he would expunge all 'unparliamentary and

BNP lawmakers for creating

comment ended there, but nearly an hour has passed by

Shahabuddin

habuddin said, "after election to the post of President, a person ceases to remain a party

In this context he gave reference of India saying that during the last 48 years, partymen were elected President but they never retained the party membership after elec-

stressed that the political parties in the country should develop the political culture of

When his attention was fice of the President did not enjoy executive powers in a parliamentary system, he said

"It is the legislators who are the powers of the President should be enhanced Justice Shahabuddin said

When asked about former

was sent to jail during his tenure as Acting President, Justice Shahabuddin said that he was happy that Ershad was elected to the Jatiya Sangsad. Law will take its own course regarding the cases against Ershad, he said.

From Page 1

Candidates now answer by filling dots in the answer sheet for objective-type question having 50 marks per paper. These answer sheets are scanned by computer and given marks.

For the other answer sheet for the remaining 50 marks for subjective-type questions are given a computer code and distributed among teachers to give score.

added. "The teachers send to the Board the score on a sheet having the particular computer code — which is again entered in the computers for tabulation and identification of the candidate.

tion system he said that traditionally, an invigilator had the authority to increase 10 points in each 100-point answer sheet. "That had created a corruption racket," the Chairman said. "Even headmasters of some renowned schools were punished for tampering tabulations in the past.

The press conference was attended also by Secretary of the Dhaka Board Aman Uflah, officials Abul Khayer Khan Chowdhury, Bazlur Rashid, Abdul Jalil. computer programmer Manzurul Kabir and computer system analysts from Dhaka, Jessore and Comilla boards.

President as has been done in the past. Why does the selection of a President in a parliamentary system, acquire such importance? The reason lies in the experience of the last two and a half years. The neutral and

non-partisan role of that office has become of crucial importance because we have seen that when everything else fails - even the parliament - then only the President remains as a symbol of unity in the coun-

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Getting the floor, Maj. (retd) Hafizuddin Ahmed of the BNP said the questions were designed to belittle the past government

Irregularities in relief distribution

Unanimity to hold JS discussion

By Staff Correspondent

pened because there were no

BNP MP from Rangpur.

The flood-hit Bandura ferry ghat in Nababganj of Dhaka district

Awami League, BNP and

Jativa Party were unanimous

vesterday to have a full-fledged

discussions in the House on

the irregularities in distribu-

tion of relief and its politicisa-

Hamid told the House that a

general discussion on the is-

not give ans ruling on the mat-

scheduled debate on the irreg-

ularities and politicisation in-

volving relief distribution from

the Prime Minister's Relief

Fund originated when ruling

party lawmaker Mirza Azam, in

a supplementary to a written

question, spoke on alleged

discrimination in distribution

of relief during the five-year

up to protest Azam's allegation

that sarees and other relief

items were distributed in

stituencies represented by the

Industries Minister Tofael

Ahmed, in reply to a question

by Mirza Azam, gave a detail

list on the distribution of dif-

ferent relief goods during the

out that in some constituen-

cies represented by some top

leaders of the former BNP gov-

ernment the allocation were

munch higher than those of

Party, amid continuous shouts

by the BNP lawmakers, added

that the constituencies in

Rangpur were missing from

serves a lot of credit in intro-

ducing an altogether new, en-

lightened and encouraging

precedence in our, in many

especially the aspirants.

book? This, and her decision

not to appoint any minister as

chairperson of parliamentary

headed by the oppiositon.

shows very healthy initial

signs. Earlier, by reporting to

President Biswas on her return

from the trip to Saudi Arabia,

she gave proof that she will not

denigrate the position of the

committees, with several to be

Fazle Rabbi of the Jatiya

the Opposition MPs.

The minister also pointed

Earlier, Commerce and

larger numbers in the con-

then ruling party members.

The BNP lawmakers sprang

BNP rule.

last five years.

The nearly 40-minute un-

Deputy Speaker Abdul

ald but he did

Responding to this, Tofael Ahmed replied that he had no intention to belittle the former government and added, "We're just highlighting the facts.' He said that during the BNP regime his own constituency (Bhola-1) and its adjacent one

(Bhola-2), represented by a member of his party, got no allocation of relief and the total amount — Tk 50 lakh - meant for the two areas went to a third constituency of the dis-At this stage, Leader of the Opposition and former premier Begum Khaleda Zia took the floor to protest the Treasury bench allegations involving her office while she

Opposition members) were no more MPs then as they resigned en masse. Therefore, how could we allocate them relief materials? Even then, sanctioned many of those who asked for it. There are records of to whom and when we

was in power. "They (the then

The Opposition leader went on saying, "We distributed sarees among the people. We did not make coat or panjabi out of

Joynal Abedin Faruk of the BNP stood to point out that the relief items from the PM's fund were sanctioned through the respective deputy commis-

sioners and not the MPs concerned. Tofael Ahmed welcomed

political parties. As President

Biswas never rose above his

partisan politics, consequently

he never enjoyed either the

its nine years' rule. sanctioned the relief." she Speaker Abdul Hamid viewed

that the proposed discussion could be held. All voters to get ID.

cards by June '97 Some 30 per cent voters have so far been given the identity cards, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru told parliament yester-

day, reports UNB.

JS bodies From Page 1 from the Opposition, formed the committee after Hasina's

proposal was approved by voice

The 15-member special committee, headed by treasury bench member Advocate Rahmat Ali, will scrutinise the bills and report back to the

House within three days. Besides the chairman, the treasury bench members in the committee are : Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, State Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Abdul Matin Khasru, Abdul Mannan, Sajeda Chowdhury, Col (rtd) Shawkat Ali, Dr Mizanul Huq and Sheikh Fazlul

Karim Selim. Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina proposed the names of Kandaker Delwar Hossain, Jamiruddin Sircar, Aminul Huq and Ziaur Rahman Khan from BNP, and Advocate Fazle Rabbi and Tajul Islam Chowdhury from JP, and Kazi Shamsur Rahman of Jamaat-e-

Islami to the committee. The BNP lawmakers strongly opposed formation of the committee, saying it was done arbitrarily without consulting them.

They also resented that the Prime Minister proposed names of the Opposition members in the committee without the knowledge of the Opposition. Protesting, the Opposition also challenged that the

committee was formed in

breach of the Rules of Proc-

edure.

BSS adds: Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia said the treasury bench did not consult them as to who would represent the Opposition side to the Special Committee. "Without consulting us the treasury bench has selected the Opposition members for Special Committee unilaterally," she said. "It was our rig to propose the names of Opposition members to the Special Committee.

Jatiya Sangsad. He also contradicted Begum Zia's contention that the then Opposition MPs were no more parliamentarians while the reliefs were allocated during 1994-95 fiscal year. "We resigned on 28 December 1994 but the resignation letters

Star photo

were accepted on 20 June 1995", he explained. Tofael proposed for a fullfledged discussion on politicisation in the last five years and threw a challenge to produce documentary proofs of all acts of politicisation by the former BNP government in the House

or resign in default. To end the debate, Samad Azad proposed to fix a day to discuss all such issues. Kabir Hossain of the BNP supported the proposal saying

it should cover all the regime

since 1972. Tofael promptly replied, We're ready to discuss from 1972 to 1996". His suggestion was backed by all the MPs who

continued thumping the table in approval. JP lawmaker Fazle Rabbi also added that his party was

also ready to give accounts of Having seen a consensus on the issue, a happy Deputy

media should not only use words but also, if possible, set examples by deeds for involving their communities in development. At today's meeting the work of some newspapers in com-

munity development through project initiation was highlighted. Speakers lauded the role of the Korean newspaper The Dong Daily and Bangladesh's The Daily Star. The Dong Daily set upon the "Green Scout" movement jointly with the organisation called "Clean water search

Star carried out an awareness drive through "Save Dhaka Campaign" in conjunction with the scouts, youths and the municipal corporation. The workshop observed that currently there are nearly 20 million environmental

headquarters" while The Daily

refugees while nearly one billion people live in absolute More than half of Asia's population live in environmentally unsafe conditions being

exposed to toxicity from air.

water and soil conditions. It

From Page 1

Infantry Division on Monday.

said a press release of the 24

the security forces for the al-

leged kidnapping of Kalpana

Chakma, the organising secre-

tary of Hill Women Federation.

was "pre-planned" and a

"conspiracy" to tarnish the im-

The 9-page press release

detailed what it said the evil

activities of the so-called Shan-

tibahini, Pahari Chhatra

Parishad, Pahari Gano Parishad

any credible allegation against

the security forces and the

non-tribal people, these organ-

isations have chosen to "create

false issues like kidnapping" of

There is many a discrep-

Kalpana Chakma to earn sym-

ancy in the press statements

issued by these hill organisa-

tions and the FIR filed by

Kalpana's brother Kalindi Ku-

mar Chakma in Baghaichhari

thana. Also, other evidences

clearly show that the allegation

against the army was not at all

press release added that

clothes, books and other per-

sonal belongings of Kalpana

Chakma were not found in her

Quoting local sources, the

acceptable, it said.

pathy at home and abroad.

It said after failing to put up

and Hill Women Federation.

age of the Army.

It said the attempt to blame

On the final day the partici-Daxing County.

in the world.

pants will visit Liu Minying Vil-

Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal. Pakistan, Philippines. Singapore, Sri Lanka, Świtzer-

land, and Thailand.

24 Infantry Div: Conspiracy house immediately after the incident of alleged kidnapping. "So the question arises, whether Kalpana was really kidnapped as claimed or she went into hiding on her own accord supporting the unholy

efforts of the Shantibahini to

embarrass the new govern-

ment, creating an issue by involving the security forces. Referring to the June 12 election, the press release said, the hill organisations had supported the Shantibahinibacked PGP leader Bijoy Ketan Chakma in the election against Awami League candidate Di-

pankar Talukder.

It said these Shantibahinisupported hill organisations. worried by the apparent popularity of Dipankar Talukder among the tribal and non-tribal people, started intimidating and harassing the tribal leaders and the ordinary tribal people. They had so far kidnapped some 35 Awami League sup-

porters in the hill region before and after the election, it said adding that after the defeat of their own candidate in the polls, the hill organisations had created the kidnap issue (of Kalpana Chakma) in a bid to bring public opinion in their

The security forces, equally concerned with all sections of

the whereabouts and welfare of Kalpana Chakma, more so "because of the attempt to tarnish the image of the army. The press release said the army has not imposed any restriction on inquiry into the incident of alleged kidnap,

rather it is extending all nec-

essary cooperation to unearth

The press release also

mentioned that the 24 Division

the truth. From the very beginning, the security forces was cooperating with the authorities concerned to interrogate any army personnel and even to conduct search at the Ugalchhari army camp.

had announced a Tk 50,000 reward for anyone providing information on the whereabouts of Kalpana Chakma. The 24 Infantry Division made an earnest appeal to all concerned to refrain from doing anything or issuing any statement without knowing details of the incident that might impair the image of the

and sovereignty of the country. "Because the terrorists are active to fulfil their conspiratorial designs by undermining the security forces, nay the government," the press release

otherwise the remark of

Where there is theft, da-

A number of BNP members,

later on

mediate decision saying that

vesterday, reports BSS. The Bills were sent to the

man tabled in the House Water Supply and Sewerage Authority Bill, 1996 without any objection from the Opposition members.

Jail on July 15.

From Page 1 added that the final decision regarding the employees demands would be taken by the 26-member BIRDEM Council

"Those who do not want to work under contract service

The Employees Welfare Association of the BIRDEM, representing around 1700 nurses, ward boys, clerks, drivers, peons and other employees called the strike on Sunday last demanding right to form

From Page 1 said the matter could be referred to the Supreme Court through the President as per the Article 106 of the Consti-

Speaker Humayun Rashid

Shambhu, who was given floor at this stage, did neither

indecent' words used during the day's proceeding. The debate over Shambhu's

From Page 1

The President-elect

accepting peoples' verdict and hoped that the parties would reach a consensus on major national issues. drawn to the fact that the oi-

that he was aware of it. to look into it," he said when asked whether he thought that

that under the existing system, the President can advise the government on all important national issues. He hoped that the government would consider it with due importance. president H M Ershad who

DB to review

and computerised evaluation.

'As the answer sheet do not even have a registration number, it is virtually impossible for anyone to identify to whom it belongs. Therefore, it reduces all chances of corruption or tampering," the Chairman

Criticising the old evalua-

the list and asked the minister what were the criteria for dis-Begum Zia's statement but said tributing the relief. it was not given as per the In reply, Tofael said it hap-Rules of Procedure of the A salutary choice try. But he cannot play that clearly as is possible, that the role if he is not trusted by all PM is trying to break new sections of the people, and especially by the opposition grounds. Sheikh Hasina de-

ways, rotten political culture. prestige or the trust which She demonstrates courage in would have enabled him to play going out of her party fold in the referee's role. choosing the next President, In our system the President especially in view of the 13th. really does not have any power. amendment. The significance Therefore it is all more reason of the decision also lies in the that the chair be occupied by a fact that it was greatly, if not man who brings weight to the publicly, resisted by insiders, office by his own reputation of integrity, courage, impartiality, Does this mean that Sheikh and nonpartisanship. This Hasina really wants to play the again makes the choice of Mr. parliamentary game by the

> The signal that Prime Minister sends by nominating Mr. Shahabuddin as the President is indeed a most welcome one. As we understand, it is one of strengthening the norms of parliamentary democracy and of putting some check, however indirect, to her own powers. We look forward to her restoring the role of the Chancellor and of other such post to that office. A more functional President can take over many of the ceremonial roles from the PM, leaving her more time for administrative and developmental work. A man like Shahabuddin can also help the PM in her task of attempting to restore our image abroad by attending global conferences of intellectual bodies

and by leading goodwill delega-

tions to important countries.

Shahabuddin so very welcome.

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The Baily Star -

the new government in Dhaka.

ernment.

was learnt. Last year the annual consul-

Unscheduled debates

proposed that the issue be sent to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court for an But quoting Article 66(2) of the Constitution, State Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Abdul Matin Khashru told the House that

the Office of the President "is

not an office of profit.

Ruling out the contention of the two BNP lawmakers. Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury declared the issue to be "out of order. Earlier, the House wit nessed an hour-long unscheduled debate on the use of 'unparliamentary" words by a ruling party MP. The issue ended with the Speaker's

tary words used so far by the MPs of both the Treasury and Opposition benches. The House was adjourned at 11:45 pm till 5:00 this after

commitment that he would

expunge all the unparliamen-

target The government has fixed jute production target at 47.09 akh bale in the current financial year, reports UNB.

year is 8.85 lakh bale higher

than that of previous fiscal

The target of 1996-97 fiscal

Jute production

was also noted that between 100 and 300 living species disappear every day. David Lazarus, Regional Communication and Information Officer of UNEP, men tioned about UNEP's pro-

grammes like providing train-

ing to mediamen and women.

Stressing on increased regional collaboration, Lazarus said UNEP runs Infoterra one of the most comprehensive environmental networks

Key-note speeches were read out by some participants There will be more workshop sessions tomorrow and the participants will break up

into several groups to discuss

points raised at the workshop.

lage, a model eco-village in The workshop is being participated by mediamen from Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Laos