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Awami League leaders at a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city yesterday protesting killing of city's Juba League leader Galib.

Gateway to South Asia

under a common platform for resolving some identical problems being faced by the four countries. Other issues likely to be discussed include the problems of trafficking of women and children and cross-border trade and smuggling. It will also address the issues of environmental degradation and river management.

Another area that is likely to be seriously addressed is cooperation in combatting insurgency and terrorism in the re-

An inter-ministerial meet ing was held on Saturday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finalise Bangladesh's position on the new concept. Presided by State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhu y the meeting was attended by State Minister for Planning Dr Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and three secretaries of the government and representatives from different ministries.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan left Dhaka yesterday to attend the Kathmandu meeting

Meanwhile, the approach paper prepared by Nepal mentions three phases in the proposed process of sub-regional cooperation. It says that the first phase should comprise a study and should be completed in 6 to 9 months. "The analysis should demonstrate opportunities, strengths, weaknesses, including constraints and possible approaches to sub-regional cooperation. It shall also attempt to estimate the costs of non-cooperation." Team of national and international con-

Body to probe fire at N'ganj jute mills

The government has formed an eight-member probe body to investigate the fire at two jute mills in Narayanganj on Monday, reports UNB.

The committee, headed by the Narayangani district additional magistrate, has been directed to submit its report within 48 hours, said a PID handout yesterday.

The committee members also included the Deputy Commissioner, Police Super, local MP, and representatives from Fire Service, affected mills and Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce.

Zobaida's bail From Page 1

Amin Chowdhury and Justice Shah Abu Naim Mominoor Rahman by a judgement on March 23 granted bail to Zobaida Rashid, wife of Col (dismissed) Abdur Rashid Khandker, one of the main accused in the case.

Soon after passing of the HC judgement, the same evening the government rushed to the residence of Justice Latifur Rahman of the Appellate Division, who upon a petition ordered stay of operation of the HC judgement and fixed yesterday for hearing of the petition.

Attorney General K S Nabi and senior Advocate Sirajul Huq specially appointed public prosecutor, moved the case on behalf of the state, while Advocate Mahbubur Rahman, a BNP-MP, appeared for Zobaida Rashid

She was arrested on November 2 in an arms case and subsequently was implicated and shown arrested in the Bangabandhu murder case.

sultants would be appointed for the first phase.

In the second phase, envisaged to last for a period between 12 to 24 months, will locate. "the resources to be mobilised for the investments.

The Nepalese approach paper further noted, "it is expected the plan, being basically given to development of infrastructure of the sub-region, shall be designed to enhance the logistics capacities of the participating countries in terms of subregional (free) ports, inland container/dry ports, high speed railways, inland waterways, air-cargo terminals, transshipment centres, cold storage centres for agro-produce, grids for gas/electricity/oil distribution, free trade zones, transit corridors and facilitation infra-structures.

It also added. "For example, Chittagong could serve as another gateway to the seas for the entire North and North East sub-region of South Asia, including parts of Myanmar."

It further said, "One may even begin to conceptualize the prospects of Chittagong serving as a regional free port - just as a new international airport sit uated in Nepal can serve as another transport hub for the re-

The Phase III of the approach paper relates to "implementing the recommendations of the Action Plan developed in Phase II. It could last for a period of five to 10 years. It is the institution-building phase in sub-regional cooperation." the approach paper prepared by Nepal added.

901 more tribal refugees return From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: The repatriation of tribal refugees resumed through the Tabalchhari transit point of Khagrachhari district today.

A total of 901 refugees of 146 families returned home through this transit point, official sources said.

The repatriation through this point is scheduled to continue till April 7.

2.20 kg of heroin seized in city

By Staff Correspondent Police recovered 2.20 kg of heroin from a residential hotel at Mirpur in the city Monday afternoon.

Acting on a tip off, Mirpur thana police raided Hotel Borobagh at Dakshin Bishil at about 12.30 pm and seized the drug from a room, said police last night.

Hasina From Page 1

The Prime Minister recalled China's contribution in nationbuilding activities, specially in the communications sector in the form of constructing three friendship bridges while the fourth friendship bridge is nearing completion.

The Prime Minister said a very congenial atmosphere for foreign investment was prevailing in the country following government's liberalised and attractive investment policy. She hoped that Chinese in-

vestors and entrepreneurs would come forward to invest in Bangladesh and develop the friendly country's economy.

CPC leader Ma Qizhi said the CPC and Awami League both had won people's verdict to run governments and there were ample scope for cooperation between the two nations.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Ctg city AL confce held

Mannan, Mohiuddin retain posts of president, secy

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: State Minister for Labour and Manpower M A Mannan and city mayor Alhaj A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury were re-elected president and general secretary respectively of the city chapter of Bangladesh Awami League for the next three years term at triennial council session held here today, reports BSS

Mohammad Ishaque Mia, a former MP, was re-elected senior vice-president.

A seven-member committee including the three elected office bearers was formed at the council session which will elect a full fledged committee of the chapter within the quickest possible time. Earlier the conference began

here today with a call for

greater unity for strengthening

the party base in order to

achieve people's confidence as well as to serve the nation. Held at local Engineers Institution the council session was inaugurated by presidium member Abdul Mannan MP with the hoisting of the national flag while State Minister for Labour and Manpower M A

Mannan hoisted the party flag.

Forty-three councilors of the city Awami League also hoisted the party flags simultaneously when National Anthem was being played.

General Secretary of AL city chapter Alhaj Mohiuddin Chowdhury presented his report in the inaugural session, largely attended by leaders of Chittagong north, south units, councillors, delegates eminent citizens, leaders of different professional groups, and other front organisations including Jubo League, Chhatra League

and Krishak League. The inaugural session was chaired by M A Mannan.

Samad Azad leaves for Seoul

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad left Dhaka for Seoul yesterday afternoon on a three-day official visit to South Korea, reports UNB.

During the visit, Azad will call on President Kim Youngsam and hand over a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to him.

JRC meet uncertain

From Page 1 war Misra, leading a five-member delegation, was scheduled to arrive in Dhaka on April 9 to attend the first-ever JRC meeting since the Ganges treaty between the two countries in December.

But the latest turn of events in New Delhi this week, in which the Indian Congress withdrew support from a 13party coalition that Premier H D Deve Gowda cobbled, threw everything into uncertainty.

AL rally

From Page 1

word against the Shikha in

cantonment but are opposing

that of the Suhrawardy Udyan

as it directly indicates true his-

tory of the war and also the de-

in the administration are help-

ing the BNP in their subversive

activities." said the AL leader

who is not in government but

one of the policy-makers of the

Abdur Razzak said, "We know in

whose interest Khaleda Zia has

come down on to the street -

that is the defeated force of

Minister Tofael Ahmed said Be-

gum Zia and her party were

hatching conspiracy as part of a

blueprint prepared by the ISI of

violent activities as trial of the

killers of father of the nation

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman began," he added.

Galib killing is a must.

Bangabandhu.

"They went mad and started

Tofael said the trial for

Post and Telecommunica-

tions Minister Mohammad

a strike call as totally fake and

said they called the hartal for

the interest of the killers of

Monuments for 4

nat'l leaders

to be built

League general secretary and

LGRD and Cooperatives Minis-

ter Zillur Rahman said steps

would be taken to build monu-

ments in memory of four na-

tional leaders - Syed Nazrul Is-

lam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M

Mansur Ali and Kamaruzza-

addressing the foundation lay-

ing ceremony of Bangataj audi-

torium to be built at the cost of

Taka 1.25 crore in memory of

the first prime minister of

Bangladesh Tajuddin Ahmed in

Razzak Ali

From Page 1

The court further ordered

within 12 weeks as to why

Shaikh Razzak Ali should not

stay of all further proceedings

of Khulna Police Station case

110-25 dated March 20, 1997 un-

der Section 409/423/109 of the

Penal Code read with Section

5(2) of the Prevention of Cor-

ruption Act, till disposal of the

It was alleged in the FIR that

the accused misappropriated Tk

five lakh out of Tk 25 lakh allo-

cated from the Development

Fund of the Prime Minister by

recommending sanction of the

amount in favour of two NGOs,

Khaleda

From Page 1

to create suffering for the peo-

ple, our movement is for estab-

"We do not want to disturb

the entire nation for a particu-

lar region's problem. Our pro-

gramme will be region-based,

unless and until the govern-

ment forces us to go for na-

tionwide-action," she said ad-

dressing a gathering of rootless

hawkers in front of her party

party wants to hang on to power

by handing over country's inde-

pendence and sovereignty to

she told the authorities not to

evict the hawkers without their

proper rehabilitation. The poor

hawkers will have to be pro-

vided the opportunity to do

their business until their reha-

with you," she told the pave-

ment vendors and called upon

all to rally round the banner of

BNP to free the country from

the "clutches of conspirators."

"You are not alone, we are

Referring to hawkers' issue,

Begum Zia said the ruling

central office in the evening.

Banochaya and Banofool.

lishing their rights."

others.

bilitation.

be granted anticipatory bail.

He said this here today while

man, reports BSS.

Gazipur pourashava.

bail petition.

GAZIPUR, Apr 1: Awami

Nasim described BNP issues for

Commerce and Industries

Water Resources Minister

"A section of people hiding

feated forces," he said.

ruling party.

1971."

Pakistan.

"They did not say a single

Gowda is facing a rollercoaster ride in Parliament to prove his mandatory majority next week, where every vote will count, putting a break in Misra's trip to Dhaka, sources said. They said the first-ever

meeting of the JRC, since the Ganges accord and after seven years of the last ministeriallevel JRC meeting in June 1990. was scheduled not only to review the first three months of the accord, but also to initiate talks aimed at a permanent sharing formula for the Teesta

Besides, the meting was slated to review the progress of the Ganges accord in the wake of faltering flow in the river during the last days of March before the onset of the critical 'lean period', scanning the data at Farakka Barrage and at Hardinge Bridge point in Bangladesh. Engineers from both the

countries have been stationed at the two points to measure the river's flow everyday as per the treaty. The meeting was to consider

a detailed report based on the monitoring of availability of the Ganges flow at Farakka point, the rate of discharge

through the 152 gates of the massive barrage, which went into operation in April 1975.

Data on water availability from four observation points the Farakka point, the Feeder canal which diverts water from the barrage to flush Calcutta port, the Navigation lock and the Hardinge Bridge point were also to be analysed at the meeting according to the provisions of the 30-year Ganges agreement.

Officials, however, remained tightlipped when asked to confirm the reports that Misra's visit has become uncertain.

Water Resources Ministry sources said they have not yet received any official confirmation from New Delhi, or from the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, about the postponement of the visit due to the high stake political drama in the Indian capital.

BB asks banks Travel agency . From Page 1

hard-earned foreign exchange, the official said.

Considering the situation. he added, the central bank asked the banks to demand high margin for opening LCs discouraging the importers, but the rates to be demanded were left on the respective banks.

The foreign exchange reserve level is hovering around 1800 million US dollars for last few weeks, which is equal to payment bill for imports of about three months. The government is planning

to build a forex reserve of 2000 million US dollars at the end of the current 1996-97 fiscal year. the central bank official said.

League Chhatra League activist was stabbed to death in the town today, reports UNB. Police and witnesses said Anisur Rahman, 19, an HSC examinee of Bulbul Government College, came under attack on the Edward College campus at

BCL activist

stabbed to

death in Pabna

PABNA, Apr 1: A pro-Awami

around 1:15 pm when he was walking with his girlfriend. Anis, a resident of Nainamoti in the town, succumbed to his injuries on way

to hospital. Meanwhile, police arrested Shamsul Islam, 20, an HSC candidate of Edward College, in this connection.

In the evening, Bulbul College unit of pro-Awami League Chhatra League brought out a protest procession in the town and blamed BNP-backed Jatiy atabadi Chhatra Dal for the killing.

Ctg JCD activist succumbs to stab injuries

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: A JCD activist who was stabbed in a terrorist attack at a bazar in Mirersarai thana of the district on Monday died here today, reports UNB. Witnesses said some uniden-

tified miscreants indiscriminately stabbed Moslem Uddin, 23, a local leader of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, at Abu Torab Bazar on Monday evening. Moslem was first taken to

Mirersarai Thana Health Complex and then shifted to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital where he died in the morning.

looted in Ctg CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: Gun-

men attacked a travel agency at Hotel Agrabad in the port city today and looted valuables worth about Tk 1.2 lakh, reports UNB. Police said Erel Gomes, the

owner of Al-Siraj Travels, and its staff Conrad Daniel were injured in the attack. They were admitted to a local clinic with stab injuries. They said a gang of five

armed muggers swooped on the travel agency at about 11:30 am and took away a fax machine. a telephone set, some dollars and Saudi rials, and some pass-

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) yesterday approved 23 development projects with an outlay of about Tk 2402.69 crore, including Tk 568.59 crore in project aid, reports UNB. The approval was given at an

ECNEC meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the National Economic Council Bhaban. The projects include Greater

Electronic Scale

Transcom Electronics Limited

Obg.: 716353, 723578, Khuina: 720304, Bogra: 6215

Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V.

for lighting products, radio and TV sets

Dhaka: 815306-9, 819625-9, 8899993

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Chittagong Power Distribution Project (3rd phase). Meghna-Bakharabad Gas Transmission Project, Extension of Passenger Terminal Building at Zia International Airport (1st phase). Development of Barisal Airport. Urban Basic Service Delivery Project. Development of Zakir Hossain Road in Chittagong, and Urgent Sewerage System Rehabilitation and Expansion Project.

The approved projects also include construction of Water and Sewerage Facilities under Dhaka Urban Infrastructure Improvement Project, construction of SM Barrack for Ansar and VDP in different districts and Battalion Headquarters, and construction of Judicial Officers' quarters in Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Rajshahi and Chittagong. Other projects are: Construc-

tion of Dharala Bridge at Kurigram-Bhurongamari Road, development of Habiganj-Nabi-

Speaker meets

From Page 1

dent a copy of vote of thanks given by the members of parliament to him for his speech in the House on the opening day of the third session of the 7th parliament on January 15.

He also apprised President Shahabuddin of the activities of parliament session and handed over a copy of its proceedings to him.

Secretary of Parliament Secretariat Abul Hashem, Secretary to the President Muhammad Enamul Huq and Additional Secretary of the Parliament Secretariat Khandakar Abdul Huq Mia were present on the occasion.

SC Bar polls From Page 1

cured 508 votes defeating his nearest rival Shafique Ahmed. of Awami League, by 13 votes.

Zainul Abedin, also backed by BNP, got 365 votes and his nearest rival Abdul Awal 268 votes, while the nominee of Awami League S K Siddique got only 222 votes.

The other office bearers elected to the association are: S A Rahim and M M Haider Ali vice-presidents; Md Golam Mostafa treasurer; Md Enayetur Rahim and Khadija Begum Helen assistant secretaries. Golam Kibria, Mahmuda Begum, A K M Zahirul Hoque, M A Quayyum Chowdhury. Md Khurshedul Alam, Ranjan Kumar Chakravorty and Md Taherul Islam were elected members of the Executive Committee. The election was held on

March 30 and 31. Some 1256 voters, out of total 1448, cast their votes.

Pakistan From Page 1

mous Eighth Amendment. Former prime minister and opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, whose government was sacked twice under the Amendment welcomed the move saying, 'this is, of course, a good news for the nation and we are going to support Nawaz Sharif on the issue. Sharif claimed that Presi-

dent Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari, whom he met for 45 minutes yesterday, had given consent to 'this decisive and bright moment in our history.' "A complex constitutional

issue has been solved amicably and through mutual understanding," with the president agreeing to his move, he said. The infamous Amendment,

inserted in the Constitution in 1985 by the partyless parliament of President Zia-ul-Haq's regime, has been used four times to dismiss elected governments since May 1988 when it was first invoked to dismiss Mohammed Khan Junejo's government. Leghari dismissed Bhutto's

government late last year under the Amendment, which gives wide-ranging discretionary powers to the president to dismiss the government and the National Assembly, appoint services chiefs and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Chief Election Commissioner, creating constant political instability in the country.

CID to investigate Salam murder CID has taken over the in-

vestigation of the killing of Abdus Salam, an Awami League leader of Demra thana in the city, reports BSS.

Abdus Salam, vice-president of the 88 number ward committee of Bangladesh Awami League was gunned down when he was taking tea at Muradpur under Demra thana on Sunday night.

23 projects involving Tk 2402.69 cr okayed ganj-Sherpur Road as Regional Highway, construction of two bridges on Sylhet-Salutikar-Companiganj-Bholaganj Road. construction of Gorai Bridge on 8th kilometre of Kushtia-Rajbari Road, rehabilitation of 83 meter gauge and 28 broad gauge carriages, Chittagong WASA Second Interim Water Supply

Let's make things better

PHILIPS

Rehabilitation Project, balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and extension of the Cooperative Dairy Complex, construction of multipurpose buildings to be used as school, mosques, clinic and shelter during calamities under Saudi grant, Institute of Child and Mother Health, Northwest Fisheries Extension Project (2nd phase), Netrokona Integrated Agricultural Production and Water Management Project

analogue lines to digital). The 23 approved projects include eight revised projects, said an ERD press release.

(DAE Component), strengthen-

ing of Bangladesh Sugarcane

Research Institute and 2 lakh

digital telephone installation

(including conversion of 66,000

Basu, Sonia From Page 1

going round to different

Congress leaders to make an effort to see the doors for dialogue between Congress and the UF was not closed. Sources said Sitaram Kesri

might not have objection if the United Front agreed to change Deve Gowda and elect somebody Asked whether he would ac-

leader, Kesri said that he had great respect for Basu. Asked if he would accept Jyoti Basu as the prime minister, the Congress president said "let

cept Jyoti Basu as the new

it happen ... it is not happening.' Kesri made it clear that he would not block anybody from becoming prime minister but it must not be Deve Gowda.

Analysts said today, Hindu nationalists BJP hope to gain in a major way in any future elections if the country's ruling coalition falls.

The BJP is the single largest group in the Indian parliament with 162 seats in the House of 545 members. Although it cannot form any government on its own, it is not averse to a cohesive coalition.

Water level

From Page 1

months. On March 27, the flow in the river was the lowest in recent times, being 6,457 cusec.

According to Water Development Board sources, on the morning of December 31, 1996, water level in the Padma was 11.79 metre; the next day water level fell to 11.77m, when the treaty took effect.

Available data show that

water level in the Padma near

Rajshahi on December 31, 1996,

was 11.79m; December 31, 1995,

11.79m; January 1,1996, 11.70m; January 1,1997, 11.77m; January 10, 1997 11.47m; January 10, 1996, 11.54m; January 20, 1997 11.15m; January 20, 1996, 11.14m; January 31. 1997. 11.03m; January 31, 1996, 11.37m; February 10, 1997, 10.88m; February 10, 1996, 11.02m; February 20, 1997, 10.58m; February 20, 1996, 10.87m; February 28, 1997. 10.40m; February 28, 1996, 10.83m; March 10,1997, 10.30m; March 10, 1996, 20, 1997, 10.45m: March 10.39m; March 20, 1996, 10.25m; March 27, 1997, 9.74; March 27, 1996, 9.95m; March 28. 1997. 9.72m; March 28 1996. 9.92m: March 29. 1997, 9.70m; March 29, 1996, 9.89m;

April 1, 1996, 9.75m. BNP programme

From Page 1 sures against many other party leaders and activists. The BNP Secretary General

March 30, 1997, 9.73m; March

30, 1996, 9.84m; March 31,

1997, 9.73m; March 31, 9.79m;

April 1, 1997, 9.73m; and on

read out a four-page statement, dealing mainly with what it described as excesses committed by the ruling party against the opposition, besides containing its 26-point demand. "Participation of parliamen-

tary committee in the probe body for the share market scam and making its report public, compensation to people who lost their savings in the share market scam, restoration of national holiday on November 7. the Revolution and Solidarity Day: cancellation of the Special Powers Act." are some of the major demands.

Other demands included: The move to grant India corridor through Bangladesh and allow it to use the sea port must be stopped, no sub-regional grouping should be formed through misinterpretation of the SAARC charter, cancellation of initiatives to import electricity from India. meeting the power crisis by expanding the existing facilities and an end to efforts for using Bangladesh to crush internal rebellion in India.

On April 12. BNP units will also submit memorandums to the Deputy Commissioners of districts, giving details of repression on their workers.

- Star photo national airline is yet to organise. Is the PM serious about talks? breached and life of Arafat was

put at risk. Imagine that it was

a grenade and not shoes or that

it was sticks of dynamite and

From Page 1

tions by definition is an involved process. In fact the mistake is to assume that it is not. As to the time it will take, much depends on the eagerness of the two sides in pushing the process ahead.

On the contrary, if the offer of discussion that the PM has made is approached in a perfunctory and amateurish manner then it will meet the same fate as all other such offers have met. However, preceding all the

moves suggested above, the question that we need to ask the Prime Minister is whether she is sincere about talks with the opposition. Why do we ask? Permit us to give two recent examples which raised these

questions in the public mind.

First, allegations have been made that BNP activists threw shoes and coconut debris on the car of our most honoured visitor Yasser Arafat on his way to the airport for departure. Assuming that BNP did it, we condemn them for it in the same tone as the Prime Minister did before the editors last Monday. Yes, BNP has shamed the nation by showing that we do not know how to honour guests, and that too on the occasion of our

Silver Jubilee celebrations. However the more serious question is that security was

not coconut debris that was thrown at Arafat's car. What would have happened then? How could such a security lapse occur? At first this should have been made into a breach of security issue, and only later a political issue. Our secret services (there are many) and all those responsible for the safety of our State Guests should have been taken to severe task, explanations should be called from them, and some heads should have already rolled, for our country's image would have been tremendously damaged if anything would have happened to Arafat. Yet, nothing more than a police enquiry was ordered and actions against two

came public, political campaign has been launched against the opposition. Second incident deals with Feni. Two BNP workers have been killed - one brutally murdered, and the other killed in an open attack on a political procession. If nothing else, these are law and order issues, and yet not a word of condemnation has been uttered either by the head of the government, or the home minister. Why is it that only when one's own party peo-

police officers were reportedly

taken. Before police report be-

ple are killed that we express regret or outrage? Why can't we feel the minimum of empathy when an opponent dies (after all he/she is human too, and Allah's creation). Government belongs to the whole people and not to one party. It is the duty of a government to ensure the life and safety of all, even of BNP workers. If there are BNP criminals,

then they must be tried. No

brutal murder of any body -

even of the hardened criminals

- can be acceptable to a demo-

cratic government. In the background of these incidents if the BNP doubts the sincerity of the PM's appeal for talks, can we blame it?

On the other side, Khaleda Zia has asked for retaliatory measures by her activists in response to any future attack on them. We severely criticise her for that call and do not find her action appropriate for a democratic leader (see editorial). She is asking her people to take law into their own hands.

In spite of all the indications to the contrary, we welcome Sheikh Hasina's call for talks, and urge Khaleda Zia to respond positively. Please do not allow your personal feelings or party rivalry to destroy whatever chance there is for the economic growth of the country.

For our future's sake - talk.

Intending Hajj pilgrims vent their anger demonstrating in front of Bangladesh Biman office after failing to get their flights confirmed. Some 2800 non-ballotees wishing to perform hajj, who obtained visa and bought tickets, are waiting for their flights, which the