

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 councillors of the city Awami League also hoisted the party flag 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 Young-sun and hand over a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to him.

JRC meet uncertain

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 13-party coalition that Premier H D Deve Gowda cobbled, threw everything into uncertainty.

Gowda is facing a roller-coaster 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 ministerial-level 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 river.

Besides, the meeting 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

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.

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BCL activist stabbed to death in Pabna

PABNA, Apr 1: A Pro-Awami 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 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 Shamzul 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 Jatyatatabadi 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 unidentified miscreants indiscriminately stabbed Moslem Uddin, 23, a local leader of the Jatyatatabadi 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.

Travel agency looted in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 1: Gunmen 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 his staff Conrad Daniel were injured in the attack. They were admitted to a local clinic with stab injuries.

They said a group 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 passports.

23 projects involving Tk 2402.69 cr okayed

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 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: Construction of Dharala Bridge at Kurigram-Bhaurangamari Road, development of Habiganj-Nabiganj-Sherpur Road as Regional Highway, construction of two bridges on Sylhet-Salutkar-Companiganj-Bholaiganj Road, construction of Goral Bridge on 8th kilometre of Kushtia-Rajshahi Road, rehabilitation of 83 meter gauge and 28 broad gauge carriages, Chittagong WASA Second Interim Water Supply 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 (DAE Component), strengthening of Bangladesh Sugarcane Research Institute and 2 lakh digital telephone installation (including conversion of 66,000 analogue lines to digital).

The 23 approved projects include eight revised projects, said an ERD press release.

Basu, Sonia

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 else.

Asked whether he would accept Jyoti Basu as the new 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 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.

Speaker meets

den 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 Khondaker Abdul Huq Mia were present on the occasion.

SC Bar polls

cured 508 votes defeating his nearest rival Shaquie 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 Health assistants secretaries; Golam Kibria, Mahmuda Begum, AKM Zahidul 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

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 President 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 powerless 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 investigation 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.

BNP programme

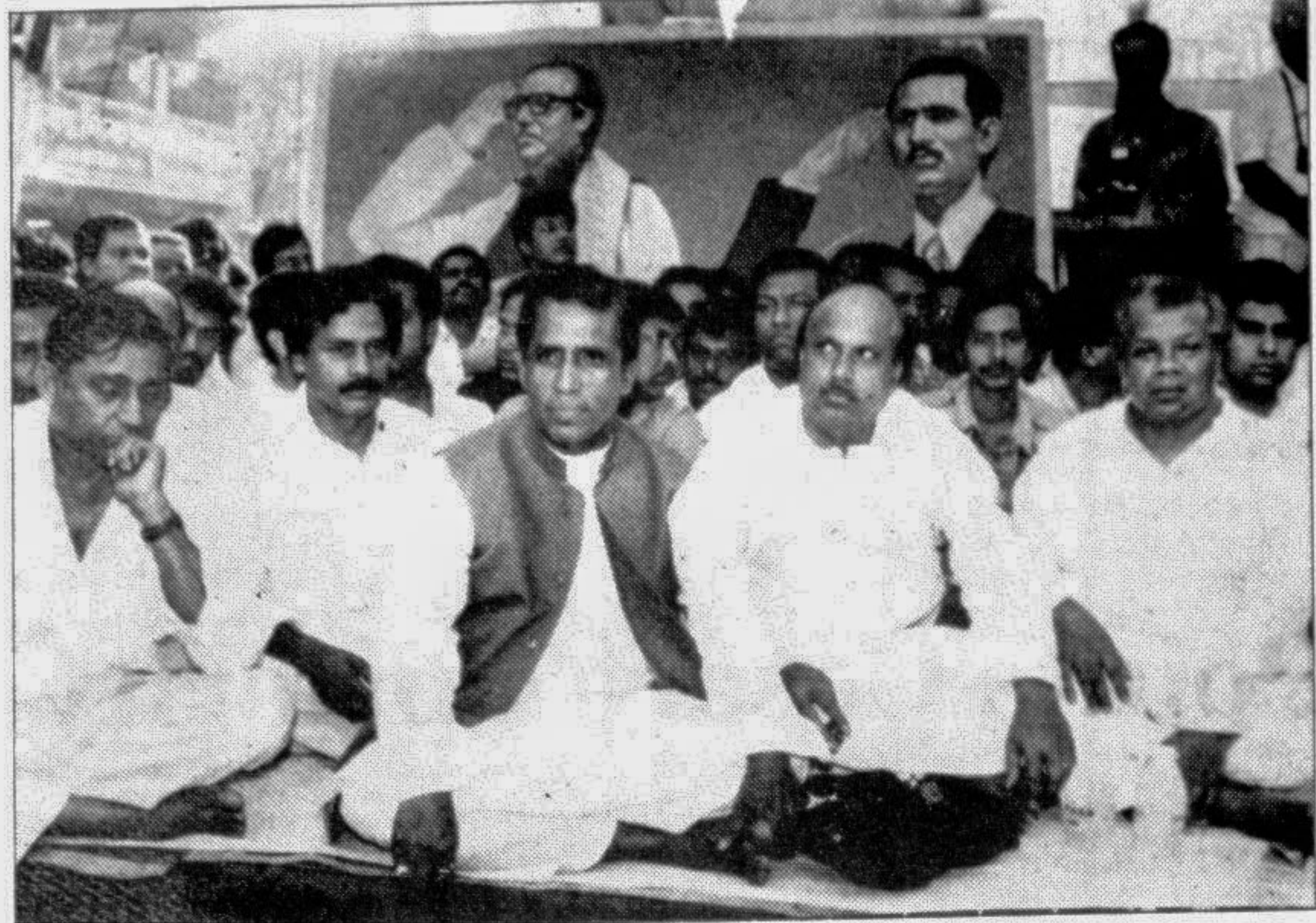
sure against many other party leaders and activists. The BNP Secretary General read out a four-page statement, dealing mainly with what it described as excesses committed by the ruling party against the opposition, besides containing its 26-point demand.

'Participation of parliamentary 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 a 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.

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

Gateway to South Asia

From Page 1 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 region.

An inter-ministerial meeting 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 Chowdhury, 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 consultants 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, to development of infrastructure of the sub-region, shall be designed to enhance the logistic capacities of the participating countries in terms of sub-regional (free) ports, inland container/dry ports, high speed railways, inland waterways, air-cargo terminals, transshipment centres, cold storage centres for agro-product, 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 situated in Nepal can serve as another transport hub for the region.'

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.

AL rally

From Page 1 They did not say a single word against the Shikha in cantonment but are opposing that of the Suhrawardy Udyan as it directly indicates true history of the war and also the defeated forces,' he said.

'A section of people hiding in the administration are helping the BNP in their subversive activities,' said the AL leader who is not in government but one of the policy-makers of the ruling party.

Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak said, 'We know in whose interest Khaleda Zia has come down on to the street — that is the defeated force of 1971.'

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed said Begum Zia and her party were hatching conspiracy as part of a blueprint prepared by the ISI of Pakistan.

'They went mad and started violent activities as trial of the killers of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman began,' he added.

Tofael said the trial for Galib killing is a must. Post and Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Nasim described BNP issues for a strike call as totally fake and said they called the hartal for the interest of the killers of Bangabandhu.

Monuments for 4 nat'l leaders to be built

GAZIPUR, Apr 1: Awami League general secretary and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman said steps would be taken to build monuments in memory of four national leaders — Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin Ahmed, M Mansur Ali and Kamaruzzaman, reports BSS.

He said this here today while addressing the foundation laying ceremony of Bangataj auditorium to be built at the cost of Taka 1.25 crore in memory of the first prime minister of Bangladesh Tajuddin Ahmed in Gazipur pourashava.

Razzak Ali

From Page 1 within 12 weeks as to why Shaikh Razzak Ali should not be granted anticipatory bail.

The court further ordered stay of all further proceedings of Khulna Police Station case no-25 dated March 20, 1997 under Section 409/423/109 of the Penal Code read with Section 5(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, till disposal of the bail petition.

It was alleged in the FIR that the accused misappropriated Tk five lakh out of Tk 25 lakh allocated for the Development Fund of the Prime Minister by recommending sanction of the amount in favour of two NGOs, Banochaya and Banofool.

Khaleda

From Page 1 to create suffering for the people, our movement is for establishing their rights.

'We do not want to disturb the entire nation for a particular region's problem. Our programme will be region-based, unless and until the government forces us to go for nationwide-action,' she said addressing a gathering of rootless hawkers in front of her party central office in the evening.

Begum Zia said the ruling party wants to hang on to power by handing over country's independence and sovereignty to others.

Referring to hawkers' issue, she told the authorities not to evict the hawkers without their proper rehabilitation. The poor hawkers will have to be provided the opportunity to do their business until their rehabilitation.

'You are not alone, we are with you,' she told the pavement vendors and called upon all to rally round the banner of BNP to free the country from the 'clutches of conspirators.'



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 national airline is yet to organise. — Star photo

Is the PM serious about talks?

From Page 1 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 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 in security issue, and only later a political issue.

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, then they must be tried. No brutal murder of anybody — even of the hardened criminals — can be acceptable to a democratic 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 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.

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