



IK Gujral wins vote of confidence

NEW DELHI, Apr 22: India's newly-elected United Front minority coalition government won a vote of confidence here today bringing an end to weeks of political chaos in the country, reports AFP.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's government, sworn-in on Monday, won the motion on a voice vote after a 10-hour debate.

But, with the result seen as a foregone conclusion, many speakers focused instead on pleading with the country's reformist former finance minister to join the new government and forge ahead with its economic reforms.

Even Gujral, whose multi-party United Front government is a virtual replica of the previous coalition headed by H D Deve Gowda, made a personal appeal to Palaniappan Chidambaram.

See Page 12 Col 4

Strong JEC to benefit Dhaka, Bangkok: PM

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for strengthening the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) of Bangladesh and Thailand for the common benefit of the two countries, reports agencies.

She was talking to the Deputy Foreign Minister of Thailand, Pitak Intrawithayakul, now on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, when he called on her at Ganobhaban yesterday evening.

The Prime Minister said the two countries have ample scope for cooperation in different fields to develop both the economies.

We have many things common, that could help cooperate.

See Page 12 Col 6

Action against 5 BG Press employees for SSC question paper leakage

The government has taken punitive measures against five more officers and employees of the Bangladesh Government (BG) Press for their alleged involvement in leakage of question papers of the recently concluded SSC examination, an official handout said yesterday, reports BSS.

According to the handout, the government on the basis of primary enquiry report has temporarily suspended three binders of confidential cell of the BG Press.

A showcause notice has been served to the Deputy Controller of the Press for his negligence to duties.

The controller of BG Press has been asked to submit his written statement on the basis of the allegation, the handout added.

Inside Today

Article

Gujral: Working for a Change of 'Mindset'

by Sanjoy Hazarika
Page 4

Focus

Making computers productive: All eyes on the guns with political power

Page 5

International

Zairean rebels close off refugee camps: 60 dying a day

Page 8

Business

Bangladesh on Thai priority list of potential trade partners, Thai minister tells meeting with DCCI

Clinton okays economic
ban on Myanmar
Page 6

Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a one-page special supplement on Thailand Trade Fair 1997
Page 9

Notices served on 26 defaulting directors

Bank MDs to be held liable for loans in fake names: BB

Star Report

Bangladesh Bank (BB) has warned the chief executives of all commercial banks that they would be held personally liable for failure to report loans taken by the directors under fictitious names.

The warning was issued last week in the wake of the central bank's move against loan defaulters.

However, bankers say this notice will be ineffective as it will be virtually impossible to prove the identity of the loan recipients. They fear that the new order may lead to hasty identification of offenders by banks, which could create legal tangles.

Prior to issuing this new order earlier this month, the BB had instructed eight private banks to serve notices on 26 bank directors to repay a total of Tk 41.09 crore in defaulting loans. These directors will have to resign if they fail to repay the loans within the next two months.

However, 10 of the 26 directors have already adjusted their loans. They are: Tofazzal Hossain (Tk 0.12 cr) and Mohammad Ali (0.17 cr) of NCCBL, Habibur Rahman (Tk 0.19 cr) and Syed Moazzem Hossain (Tk 0.01 cr) of Pubali Bank, Anwar Hossain (Tk 0.91 cr), Azizul Haq Chowdhury (Tk 0.08 cr), and

Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury (Tk 0.09 cr) of City Bank; S N Hoque (Tk 0.003 cr), Aynul Huque (Tk 0.003), and Shah Alam (Tk 0.15 cr) of Social Investment Bank.

This new action was taken following the central bank's updating the loan classification of all the banks in December last year.

The eight banks which have been asked to serve notices are: Islami Bank, NCCBL, Pubali, Uttara, UCB, City, NBL, and Social Investment Bank.

The defaulting directors who are yet to adjust their loans are: Mohammad Fazle Azim of Islami Bank (Tk 1.72 cr); Kazi

See Page 12 Col 8

Letters to PM, foreign missions

Arrest warrant against Peregrine chief protested

Star Report

Peregrine Investment Holdings Ltd., a Hong Kong based company, has written letters to the Prime Minister and foreign missions in Dhaka, protesting the arrest warrants against its Chief Executive in Bangladesh, who has been indicted in the share market scam case.

"I am writing to protest in the most vigorous terms about the arrest warrants issued against our employee, Ms Runa Alam, the managing director and founder of Peregrine's investment banking business in Bangladesh and Mr. Sabeth Siddique. It is quite clear to me that their inclusion among an arrest list of 36 Bangladeshis from financial institutions is an act of gross injustice," Philip Tose, Chairman of Peregrine, said in the letter.

His letter came in the wake of filing of cases against 15 companies, brokerage firms and dealers on April 2, after

months of probe on the scam by an independent committee headed by Prof Amirul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University.

It found that the accused had been involved in manipulations and fraud to jack-up prices in the two stock exchanges, sending the Dhaka Stock Exchange index from about 900 points to 3647 points, during a bull run in the July-November period of last year.

In his letter, Tose said: "The issue of an arrest warrant against her, clearly for politically motivated reasons, will have devastating results for Bangladesh, including the possible closure of Peregrine's business in Bangladesh; the loss of 46 local jobs, the delay if not cancellation of major infrastructure projects in Bangladesh; the irreparable damage to Bangladesh's name

See Page 12 Col 7

BB Governor for using criminal laws against loan defaulters

Bangladesh Bank Governor Lutfur Rahman Sarkar said criminal laws should be applied in dealing with the loan defaulters to salvage the crumbling banking system, reports UNB.

He observed existing banking system was about to collapse due to legal complexities in loan-realisation process caused by 'weak legal framework'.

"Loan defaulters are taking the advantage of this weakness... we have to think how to formulate more effective and tough laws for loan recovery," he told a meeting of legal advisers of scheduled banks in Dhaka yesterday.

The BB Governor stressed the need for application of criminal laws in realisation of outstanding loans as civil cases proved ineffective against defaulters.

"Action should be taken against the loan defaulters un-

See Page 12 Col 7

All 36 Manipuris on remand: Camera, leaflets recovered

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Apr 22: All the 36 Indian nationals from Manipur and two Bangladeshis, who were apprehended by the BDR from Ballaghat border Sunday night, were placed on police remand for 5 days yesterday afternoon.

Gowainghat Thana Magistrate granted the remand when the police sought 7 days remand.

However, police took only four of the arrested on remand due to space shortage in the thana hajat, on the first day. The others would be taken later, an official source said. Obsen and Ratan Singh, both Bangladeshis, and Inava and Mosen, both Indian nationals were taken on remand today. The 34 others have been kept in the jail hajat.

BDR caught the 36 Indian nationals from Ballaghat border Sunday night on charge of unauthorised entry into the Bangladesh territory, Bangladesh.

See Page 12 Col 8

Cricketers allowed to practise at Dhaka Stadium

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities to arrange training of the national cricket team in the Dhaka national stadium till construction of the proposed cricket stadium at Magbazar, reports UNB.

The Prime Minister gave the directive to State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Qader and President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP at the Ganobhaban yesterday, said an official handout.

Hasina also instructed the authorities to complete all necessary formalities soon for the construction of the cricket stadium.

She hoped that the national cricket team would prepare itself through appropriate training from right now to achieve the cherished result in the next World Cup Cricket to be held in

England in 1999.

Bangladesh qualified for the World Cup as unbeaten champions in the ICC Trophy in Malaysia this month. Kenya and Scotland are the other two teams which qualified for the 12-team World Cup.

Bangladesh has been placed in group 'B' with Pakistan, Australia, the West Indies, New Zealand and Scotland.

Reigning world champions Sri Lanka and India, South Africa, England, Zimbabwe and Kenya have been placed in Group 'A'.

Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), the highest body of the country's cricket, has applied to the International Cricket Conference in December last year seeking full membership of ICC that will automatically give test status to Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, now an associ-

See Page 12 Col 8

PCJSS for deferring peace talks

Star Report

The Parbatya Chattagram Janasanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political wing of the Shanti Bahini insurgents has suggested deferring the on-going peace talks on Chittagong Hill Tracts to May 11, according to official sources here.

The talks were scheduled to resume on April 30.

The PCJSS high command, in a letter to the government appointed National Committee on CHT has suggested the new date for the fifth round of peace talks. The letter was sent through the Liaison Committee. It reached Dhaka yesterday, the sources said.

The PCJSS has also suggested that the talks take place in Dhaka.

Earlier, peace talks between the two sides for ending the decades-old bush-war in the CHT ended inconclusively on March 13 in the city. Both sides had agreed to meet again on April 30 and extended the ceasefire until June 30. But they had

See Page 12 Col 2

Revised job quota system takes effect

The government has revised the quota system relating to direct appointment in the government offices, semi-government organisations and autonomous bodies and corporations, reports BSS.

In the revised quota system the sons and daughters of the martyrs in the War of Liberation as well as freedom fighters will be appointed in the existing 30 per cent quota for freedom fighters if they were not available.

A circular has already been issued by the Ministry of Establishment in this regard.

The revised quota has come

See Page 12 Col 1

Car passenger guns down bus helper

NARSINGDI, Apr 22: A bus helper was shot dead by a passenger of a private car on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Chhonpara in Arailhaz thana of Narayanganj district today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said Fayed Khan, reportedly the nephew of a minister, of Katabaria in Monohardi thana of Narsingdi district fired four shots from a revolver on bus helper Ukil Mia, 38, following an altercation when the car tried to overtake the bus at about 5:30 pm.

The bus helper fell down the speeding bus and was rushed to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital where doctors declared him dead.

The body of Ukil Mia, hailing from village Balushar in Narsingdi sadar thana, lay in the hospital morgue.

The shooter Fayed was under police custody till filing this report at night. Police of Madhabdi outpost seized the bus and the private car.

Ex-NDP activist shot dead in Ctg

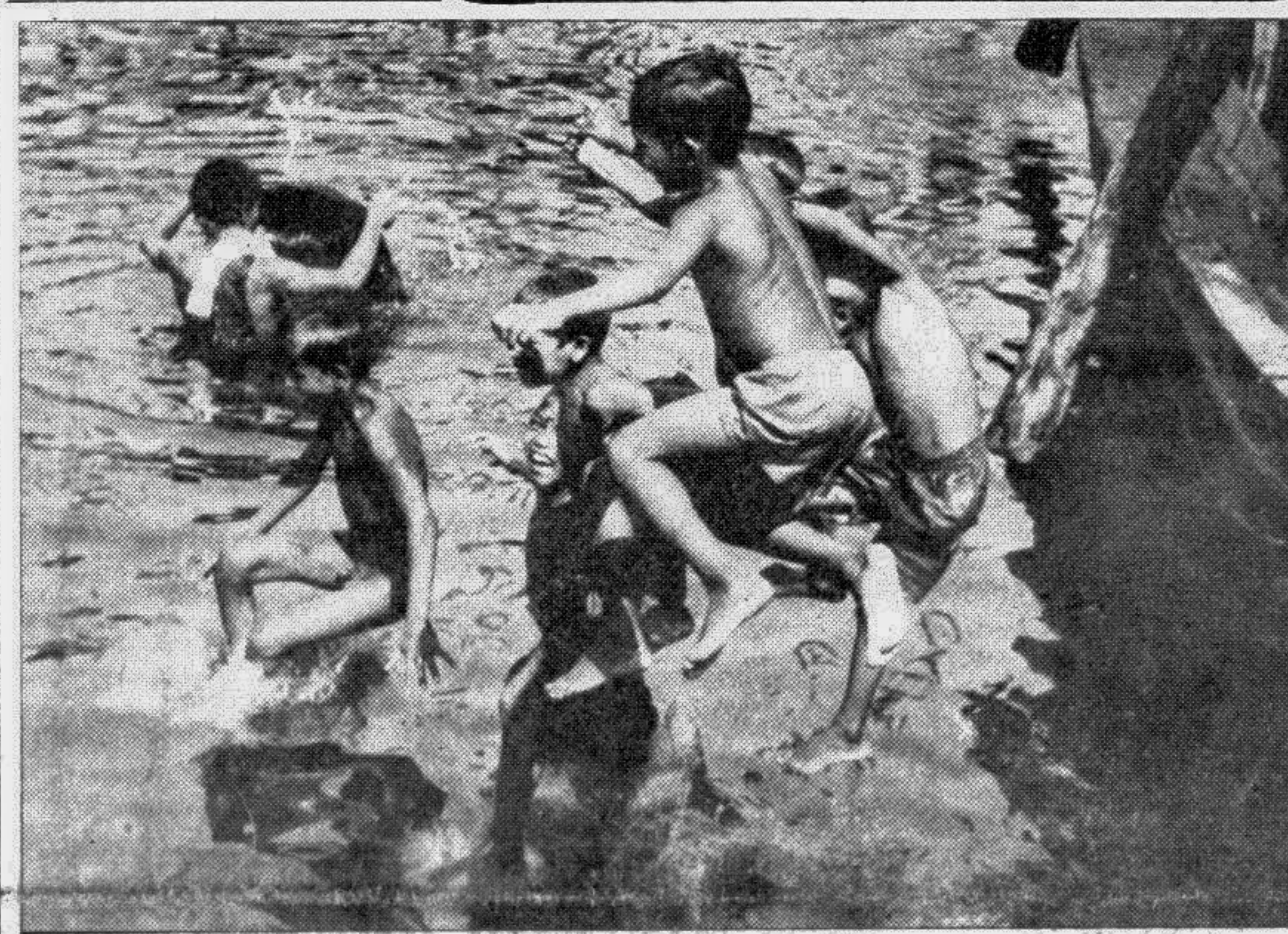
From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Apr 22: Unidentified assailants gunned down a former NDP activist at Ghatfahadbag area under Kotwali thana this morning, police said.

He was identified as Abdul Halim, 30, of village Kallabad under Razoan thana.

Police said the assailants had called Halim out of his rented house at 8:30 am and fired on him. He died on the spot.

The assailants hurriedly fled away by a microbus, witnesses said. Police said Halim was wanted by Razoon police in connection with two murder cases.



Children taking a dip in the Buriganga in the scorching heat yesterday.

— Star photo

Hailstorm lashes city

By Staff Correspondent

The city experienced the season's first hailstorm last night. Hailstorm, accompanied with rain and strong winds rising up to 68 kilometres per hour lashed the city and its adjoining areas for about fifteen minutes from 9:30 pm, pouring 16 millimetre rainfall, the Met office said.

The hailstorm lasted for five to seven minutes, the Met office said.

Sylhet and Tangail also experienced 11 millimetre rainfall each yesterday evening. There was slight rainfall in Mymensingh and Rangpur, the Met office said.

Our correspondent reports

See Page 12 Col 6

SAARC summit from May 12

The forthcoming SAARC summit is expected to work out a strategy for establishing broad-based links with other regional bodies like ASEAN, EU and APEC, reports UNB.

The 9th conference of the heads of state or government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) will be held from May 12 to 14 in Male, capital of the Maldives.

SAARC, formally launched in Dhaka in 1985, has so far identified 13 areas of cooperation.

See Page 12 Col 3

Runa Laila's prayer for restraining order on Swiss husband dismissed

By Court Correspondent

Singer Runa Laila's petition for a restraining order on her Swiss husband Ron Daniel Plinik was dismissed by the First Assistant Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday.

Runa filed the case last year to prevent Plinik from entering her "dream-house" in Mohamadpur, where she now lives with her mother and family.

The prosecution had earlier repeatedly prayed for time, making requests for adjournment of hearing on ground of the plaintiff's illness or "inability to attend."

The prosecution — Barristers Rabeya Bhuiyan and SMA Rahim — yesterday prayed for further time under Section 151 of the Civil Procedure Code.

But the court upheld the appeal by defence lawyers Amirul Islam and Tania Amir for dismissal.

See Page 12 Col 7

Khaleda won't join programme BTV must change its attitude first: BNP

By Reaz Ahmed

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia will not participate in any BTV programme unless it changes its 'attitude', party Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said yesterday.

"Until and unless BTV corrects its partisan attitude, my party will not take part in any of its programmes," he told The Daily Star.

Director General of the state-run electronic medium Sharier Z R Iqbal told this correspondent that BTV planned to air a

special live programme in which Prime Minister and Leader of the House Sheikh Hasina and the Leader of the Opposition would answer questions on important national issues asked by the editors of leading national dailies.

Deputy Director General of BTV Mostafa Kamal said, a letter was sent on April 5 to the private secretary to the Leader of the Opposition inviting her to take part in the planned programme at her convenience sometime in the last week of this month.

"Till date, we have not received any response in this regard. The invitation will, however, remain," he added.

The BNP Secretary General said that though his party chief would not participate in the programme, a reply to the BTV's invitation letter would be given soon. "In our reply, we will focus on the loopholes of BTV, its partisan attitude and its behaviour like the flagship of the ruling party," Mannan Bhuiyan noted.

He was of the view that debates on national issues should take place on the floor of the Jatiya Sangsad and not through BTV.

See Page 12 Col 7

Body to improve quality of BTV programmes

Government has formed a high-level experts committee with noted personalities for improving the standard and quality of programmes of state-run BTV, including the package programmes, reports UNB.

The seven-member committee is headed by renowned singer Kalim Sharafi as chairman while the general manager of BTV Dhaka centre will act as member-secretary, said an official handout.

See Page 12 Col 1

SAARC countries should extend preferential tariff concessions

NEW DELHI, Apr 22: The eighth meeting of the Committee on Economic Cooperation (CEC) of SAARC which ended here today decided that the third round of trade negotiations would be launched in July 1997 at Kathmandu and completed before the second meeting of the South Asian commerce ministers to be held later this year, reports BSS.

Briefing newsmen at the end of the two-day meeting Indian Commerce Secretary PP Prabhu said the committee felt that preferential tariff concessions should be extended to products which were being actively traded amongst SAARC countries.

The meeting also decided that all non-tariff barriers and quantitative restrictions should be removed as early as possible on all products covered under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrange-

Delhi meet ends

ments (SAFTA).

The Bangladesh delegation to the meeting was led by its Commerce Secretary Syed Alamgir Farruk Chowdhury.

The Indian commerce secretary said the meeting reiterated that the countries of the region should continue to extend preferential treatment to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

He said it was agreed at the meeting that the second SAARC Trade Fair may be held in Pakistan the date of which to be finalised shortly.

Prabhu said it was agreed that India would host the meeting on promotion and protection of investment in New Delhi in September-October while Pakistan would host the meeting on avoidance of double taxation.

He said it was agreed at the

meeting that certain categories of people would be included in the SAARC visa exemption scheme. Those are, he said, vice-presidents and executive committee members of SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry, executive committee members of the apex chambers of commerce and industry as nominated by the governments of the member countries, members of SAFTA committee of participants (COP), commerce ministers, permanent secretaries in trade ministries and up to three other officials from each member state as nominated by them.

Prabhu said the meeting decided to set up nodal points for collecting and disseminating information on monthly basis concerning important economic matters amongst the SAARC countries.

He said the committee agreed

See Page 12 Col 8

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The Management takes this opportunity to express its profound gratitude to the valued investors for their overwhelming support and confidence reposed in the Company.

The Management also gratefully acknowledges the co-operation extended and services rendered by:-

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Underwriters, Bankers to the issue
Satcom Computer's Ltd.
and
MANAGER TO THE ISSUE
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