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## AL-BNP accord

By Staff Correspondent

Following is the full text of the Awami League- BNP agreement signed yesterday.

The government and the main opposition party BNP, following four sessions held between them under the initiative and chairmanship of the Honourable Speaker on February 27, 28 and March 1, 2, reached consensus on the following points. At the outset of the meeting, the Honourable Speaker thanked members of both the parties for joining the discussion initiated by him and stated categorically that he would maintain complete neutrality following the Constitution, Rules of Procedure and custom in running the affairs of the House. In this regard, he

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## Khaleda's public meeting in Natore today

From Our Correspondent

NATORE, Mar 2: BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia is scheduled to address a public meeting at Bonpara in Natore tomorrow noon during the first leg for her three-day visit to four northern districts.

According to a party press release, the BNP chief is also scheduled to address the 42nd conference of the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh in Rajshahi city tomorrow evening. She will also address public meetings in Gaibandha and Naogaon districts on March 4 and March 5 respectively.

Rajshahi City Corporation Mayor Mizanur Rahman Minu told The Daily Star that all preparations were made to welcome Khaleda Zia.

## First Hajj flight today

The first of the two wide-bodied aircraft procured by Biman on lease arrived in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

With this 350-seater DC10-15 aircraft, Biman starts operating this year's Hajj flight today.

Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad will be present at the airport to bid farewell to the first batch of the Ballotee Hajj pilgrims at a simple ceremony at 8:00 am today.

## Inside Today

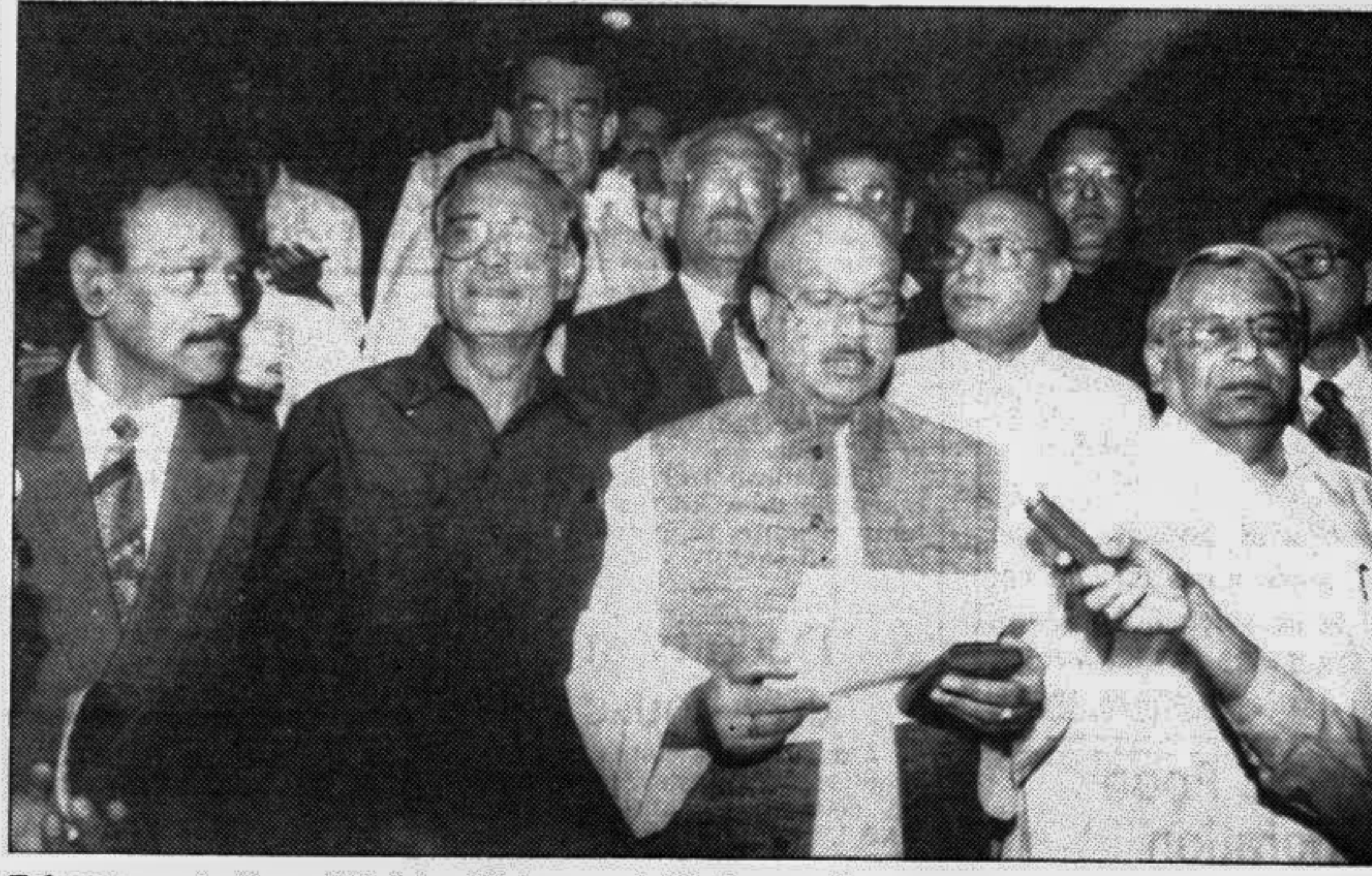
- Article**
- Chittagong Hill Tracts Revisited
  - Column: Frankly Speaking by Faruq Choudhury
  - Pakistan Awaits New Government at Delhi
  - Column: Between the Lines by Kuldeep Nayyar Page 4

## Supplement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a one page special supplement on Bangladesh Rifles

Week '98  
Page 8

# Accord signed: BNP to return to JS by Mar 8



Telecommunications Minister Mohammed Nasim reading out to newsmen the AL-BNP accord at the Sangsad Bhaban yesterday.

— Star photo by Amran Hossain

## PM asks cabinet colleagues Take steps to halt price hike of essentials

By Nurul Kabir

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked her cabinet colleagues concerned to take all possible steps to stop unreasonable price hike of essentials, particularly that of rice and onion.

She gave the directive in the weekly cabinet meeting held at her office yesterday afternoon.

The cabinet also approved, in principle, a draft legislation seeking setting up of the proposed Employment Bank. The PM asked Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Abul Muttibul Khasru to get the bill vetted by his ministry within a week.

In the beginning, the Prime Minister wanted to know the latest situation on the price-hike of certain consumer goods and warned her colleagues that the opposition parties would take political advantage of the situation, in case the government failed to keep the situation under control. Telecommunications Minister Mohammed Nasim also echoed the

Prime Minister, Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed and Food and Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury briefed the cabinet about the price situation and the measures they have taken so far to keep the situation under control.

They told the cabinet that the Open Market Sale (OMS) of rice across the country had already contributed to stabilise the rice price. The ministers also said that arrangements have been made for the private sector traders to import sufficient quantity of rice.

On the reported price hike of salt, the ministers told the cabinet that the private sector salt production was very good this year and there was no reason for scarcity of this essential item. They explained the sudden rise of salt price as "a conspiracy of certain quarter against the government" and assured the PM that measures had already been taken to

See Page 12 Col 6

## BJP leading as vote counting continues

NEW DELHI, Mar 2: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) continued to maintain its lead in 171 of the 399 Lok Sabha constituencies followed by Congress with 134 and the United Front with 66 while others in 28, according to a late night BSS report.

According to final unofficial results, Prime Minister I K Gujral and Finance Minister P Chidambaram, and former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda have been elected from Jalandhar in Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka respectively.

Meanwhile, Bharatiya Janata Party vice-president I K Sharma tonight claimed that the party was "still confident of a majority and forming a government" at the centre.

"If there was any marginal gap, it will not be difficult to fill," he said.

Congress admitted today that it had no hope of forming a government on its own as the first results were declared.

Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee said the BJP, its

main rival, was better placed to come to power.

Meanwhile, the BJP will initiate a dialogue with friendly parties from March 4 to form a government at the centre, party general secretary M Venkiah Naidu said.

As the counting was going he said the BJP will formally elect its parliamentary party leader on March 7 but added Atal Bihari Vajpayee had already been declared as the BJP parliamentary party leader.

AFP adds: India's state-run television forecast today that Hindu nationalists and their allies would fall just short of a majority after the election count.

The channel said the BJP and its dozen allies could win 256 seats in the 545-seat parliament, 16 short of a majority.

The Congress, the nationalists' main foe, would win 127 seats — less than the 140 they claimed in 1996 polls.

The outgoing United Front coalition would win 99 seats, down from its 1996 tally of 180.

## Manju removed as JP secy gen

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party Secretary General and Communications Minister Anwar Hossain Manju has been removed from his party post.

A Jatiya Party press release signed by party chief and former President H M Ershad, said last night, "Anwar Hossain Manju has been relieved of the post of secretary general by the chairman in exercise of the powers vested in him under Section 20 (B) of the JP constitution."

Nazim Rahman Manju, Additional Secretary General of JP has been appointed Acting Secretary General of the party till the next council meeting, the press release added.

When contacted last night, Manju told The Daily Star that Ershad did not communicate with him that he had been relieved of his party post. Manju said he came to know about it from other sources.

Asked whether he will continue with the JP, he said, "wait and see". While relieving him from his party post, Ershad did not ask him to resign from his cabinet post, Manju added.

Meanwhile Manju had an exclusive meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last

night. Asked about the meeting, he said "It did not have anything to do with the JP business."

Manju's removal from the party post has raised speculation among the political circles that the party is now set to split once again, sources said.

When contacted, the acting secretary general of JP said last night "Even after he was asked to resign Anwar Hossain Manju failed to discuss the issue with the (party) chairman till yesterday evening. So the chairman decided to relieve him of his responsibilities," said Nazim Rahman.

Earlier in the morning yesterday, Ershad sent a letter to Manju requesting him to resign from the party post, sources said. The letter was handed over to Manju at his residence by the private secretary to the party chairman.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday afternoon, Manju had confirmed received of the letter. Asked whether he would comply with Ershad's request and resign from the party post, Manju had said, "No comments."

Manju was asked whether he

See Page 12 Col 1

## Tofael blames a 'vested quarter' for 'artificial' salt crisis

The country has now a comfortable stock of more than 6.5 lakh tonnes of salt including 8,000 tonnes with the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB), reports UNB.

Explaining the actual position at a briefing in his office, Commerce Minister Tofael Ahmed told reporters that the salt market is absolutely normal.

"He accused a 'vested quarter' of trying to create an artificial shortage of salt and resulting in panic buying that lasted for a brief period on Sunday night."

"The situation is absolutely normal today," he said shortly after meeting with millers and traders that reviewed the demand and supply position of

See Page 12 Col 5

## Prices of onion, salt declining in city markets

Star Report

Prices of salt and onion are declining in the city's kitchen markets.

Retailers at the Kawranbazar and New Super Market were selling iodised salt at Tk 12 to Tk 15 per kilogram yesterday. The wholesale price was Tk 7 to Tk 10 per kg.

Some traders were seen selling non-iodized salt at a cheaper price. Sale of non-iodized salt is prohibited.

Onion was being sold at Tk 36 to Tk 40 per kg. However, bigger size onion was being sold at Tk 50 per kg.

Wholesalers at different city markets alleged that police intervened in their business yesterday.

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## Where is the ship with salt?

By Govinda Shil

Where is the ship waiting to unload salt at the Chittagong port?

When contacted by The Daily Star yesterday, neither the TCB Chairman nor the Commerce Secretary could say anything about the whereabouts of the ship.

Quoting TCB sources, a PID handout had said on Sunday, "A

See Page 12 Col 8

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See Page 12 Col 1

## Formation of JS Task Force suggested

By Staff Correspondent

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts has recommended that the cabinet may consider formation of a 'Parliamentary Task Force' to suggest constructive steps to undo the negative impact of union activities on the economy.

The Committee, in its second report placed in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday, noted with concern that "certain officers and employees' unions in government, semi-government and autonomous institutions have been trying to create disorder on the pretext of realising demands, applying unreasonable pressure and interfering in the day-to-day administrative activities".

Chairman of the Committee S M Akram, MP, presented the report in the House. Formed on November 20, 1996, the Committee had earlier placed its first report in July last year.

The second report said this Committee is sympathetic

to the need for improvement of the standard of living of the employees, officers and workers. Nevertheless the Committee believes that these activities have an adverse effect on overall productivity in a developing country like Bangladesh and such an environment discourages much needed foreign investment in the increasing development of the country.

In view of the negative impact on the economy, and in establishing good administrative system and developing the working environment, the Committee considers this issue worthy of being discussed by the Cabinet.

The report further said that in addition to taking other steps on the issue, the Cabinet may consider establishing a 'Parliamentary Task Force' and 'in view of the welfare of the majority of the people, the Cabinet Division is being informed to draw attention of the appropriate

See Page 12 Col 1

## Bangabandhu Murder Case Newspaper report, video of Farooq, Rashid submitted

Bangladesh High Commission in London following a request by the CID investigators. The video copy was taken from Grenda Film Library.

Judge Kazi Golam Rasul asked Farooq Rahman sitting in the dock if he had issued the statement published in Sunday Times.

"I can't read it now as I am not carrying my reading glass... I can tell you tomorrow," replied Farooq with a smile apparently hiding his nervousness.

His counsel Khan Saifur Rahman submitted that Farooq is not required to oblige the court as he had already pleaded not guilty. Farooq has also opportunity to make his own statement. Prosecution lawyer Ramzan Ali Khan supported him.

Earlier, the court recorded deposition of prosecution witness No 58 who is a counselor at Bangladesh Embassy in Yangon, also submitted a video copy of interviews of Col Farooq and co-accused Col Khandaker Abdur Rashid taken by Anthony Maskarenhass for Grenda Television. Rashid and 13 other accused persons in the case remained fugitives.

Haq was Director (Personnel) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when investigation in the case was going on and he supplied the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) the copies of the Sunday Times and the video.

He told the court that he collected the copies through the

quoted Lt Col Syed Farooq Rahman as saying, "I helped to kill Mujib, dare you put me on trial" was produced in the District and Sessions Judge's Court during the hearing of the Bangabandhu Murder Case yesterday, reports UNB.

The statement of Farooq, one of the 19 accused persons in the case, was published by the Sunday Times, London, nine months after the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on August 15, 1975.

The prestigious newspaper on May 30, 1976 published a news item on its 11th page under the heading "I Helped to Kill Mujib, Dare You Put Me on Trial," on the basis of a statement of Farooq sent to it. The statement carried signature of Farooq.

The newspaper also published two passport-size photographs under captions "Farooq Plotter" and "Mujib: Victim."

A copy of the newspaper was submitted to the court when it resumed hearing of the case after a week's recess.

Azizul Haq, prosecution witness No 58 who is a counselor at Bangladesh Embassy in Yangon, also submitted a video copy of interviews of Col Farooq and co-accused Col Khandaker Abdur Rashid taken by Anthony Maskarenhass for Grenda Television. Rashid and 13 other accused persons in the case remained fugitives.

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## 10 killed in Feni road accident

FENI, Mar 2: At least ten people were killed and 20 others injured when two buses collided head-on at Debipur on the Feni bypass road today, reports UNB.

Police said the accident occurred at about 1 pm when a Dhaka-bound coach of Saudia Paribahan rammied another bus coming from opposite direction.

Eight people died on the spot, while two others succumbed to their injuries on way to hospital.

Four of the dead were identified as Dipak Nandi, Mizanur Rahman, Abul Kashem and Maruf Kaderi.

The injured were admitted to Sadar Hospital, Feni Medical College Hospital and Shaheen Clinic. Condition of three persons was stated to be critical.

Police seized both the vehicles.

## Feni incident Both govt, British HC embarrassed

Star Report

The Feni incident in which gangsters terrorised oil company executives last Saturday has put the British High Commissioner and officials of Shell and Cairn in an embarrassing situation as they had violated protocol, sources said.

The incident has also embarrassed the government. But government sources said that this situation could easily be avoided by taking security measures if the authorities were properly informed beforehand about the visit by the oil executives.

Some 15-16 top oil company executives including the Chairman of Shell Transport along with the British High Commissioner were scheduled to attend a function in Durgapur area under Parshuram thana of Feni district.

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## Japan to conduct feasibility study of Rupsha bridge

Japan yesterday officially stated that it would conduct feasibility study of the Rupsha bridge this month, reports BSS.

Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh Yushi Kazu Kaneko conveyed his government's decision to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her Sangsad Bhaban office.

The decision of the Japan came in response to a request made by Sheikh Hasina to Japanese Prime Minister R Hashimoto during her official visit to Japan last year.

Kaneko also informed the Prime Minister that Japan would take trainees from Bangladesh for river management.

Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Dr S A Samad, Foreign Secretary M Mostafizur Rahman and ERD Secretary Dr Mashur Rahman were present.

## Ex-minister Hannan Shah indicted in corruption case

Former minister A B Siddique have been indicted in a corruption case filed by the Bureau of Anti-Corruption, reports UNB.

Dhaka Divisional Special Judge A K Mohammad Ali yesterday framed the charge against them. The accused persons, however, pleaded not guilty.

Inspector of Bureau of Anti-Corruption Ratul Krishna Hawlader filed the case with Motiheel police against Hannan and Siddique on September 16, 1996.

Hannan was accused of giving a work order of Adamjee Court Annex building worth Tk 6,28,31,575 to Siddique & Company. By abusing his position, Hannan Shah added Tk

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**ফু-ওয়াং সিরামিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রি লিঃ**

বাড়ী নং-৫৫, সড়ক নং-১৭, বনানী, ঢাকা

**কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ**

বিসমিল্লাহির রাহমানির রাহিম

পরম করুণাময় আল্লাহতালার অশেষ মেহেরবাণীতে আমরা আনন্দের সাথে জানাচ্ছি যে, কোম্পানীর ১০০ (একশত টাকা) মূল্যমানের ৫.০০ (পাঁচ) কোটি টাকার ৫.০০ (পাঁচ) লক্ষ পাবলিক শেয়ার বিক্রির আবেদনের বিপরীতে ২২.৪৫ কোটি টাকার অধিক (সোড়ে চার গুণের বেশী) আবেদনের টাকা জমা পড়েছে।

ফু-ওয়াং সিরামিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রি লিঃ এর প্রতি সম্মানিত বিনিয়োগকারীদের বিপুল সাড়া এবং আস্থা প্রকাশ করার জন্য কোম্পানীর ব্যবস্থাপনা কর্তৃপক্ষ এবং ইস্যু ম্যানেজার বিনিয়োগ কারীদের প্রতি গভীর কৃতজ্ঞতা প্রকাশ করছে।

সাথে সাথে বিভিন্নভাবে আন্তরিক সাহায্য ও সহযোগিতার জন্য সিকিউরিটিজ এন্ড এক্সচেঞ্জ কমিশন, ঢাকা স্টক এক্সচেঞ্জ লিঃ, চট্টগ্রাম স্টক এক্সচেঞ্জ লিঃ, আইসিবি, সকল ব্যাংকারস্ টু দি ইস্যু এবং আভার রাইটারসদের প্রতিও গভীর কৃতজ্ঞতা জানাচ্ছি।

বিনীত

বদেশ ইনভেস্টমেন্ট ম্যানেজমেন্ট লিঃ  
ম্যানেজার টু দি ইস্যু

ফু-ওয়াং সিরামিক ইন্ডাস্ট্রি লিঃ  
ইস্যুয়ার

## Nepal asks India to ease transit terms

KATHMANDU, Mar 2: Nepal has asked India for liberal trade transit terms along a new road across its southern neighbour to Bangladesh, officials said today, reports Reuters.

Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral agreed last year to let landlocked Nepal use a 71-km (44-mile) stretch of its territory as a new transit route to reach ports in Bangladesh.

The route links Kakarvitta in eastern Nepal with Bangladesh through a narrow strip of land in India's northeast.

It was formally opened in September, 1997 and 25 containerised trucks are allowed to cross at a time to enter Bangladesh every Saturday and Sunday under Indian escorts.

The arrangement, made on a trial basis, is subject to review by both sides after six months, which ended last Saturday.

"We have requested India to allow all sorts of carriers, including open trucks, to transit through India," Commerce Secretary Mohan Dev Pant told Reuters.

Nepal also wants the route to be opened for its use on all weekdays.

Pant said a response from New Delhi had been delayed because of India's elections, which ended on Sunday in all but six constituencies.

Nepali businessmen said the facility allowing movement of trucks only on weekends made it expensive for hauliers because returning trucks are forced to wait several days.

Nepal depends on India for transit facilities and uses the facility for its third-country trade. The new route is described as an alternative to Calcutta Port, which has become congested, causing shipping delays and raising costs.

সাক্ষরতার এক দশক

# বসুন্ধরা

আপনার প্রিয় ঠিকানা

একদশক পূর্তি উপলক্ষে অর্ধেকের চেয়েও কম দামে গুট ক্রয়ের শেষ সুযোগ গ্রহণ করুন - লাভবান হউন

বসুন্ধরা প্রকল্পে ১৯৮৮ সালে প্রতি কাঠা জমির মূল্য ছিল ১.২৫ লক্ষ টাকা, ১৯৯৭ সালে যার মূল্য দাঁড়িয়েছে প্রায় ৮ লক্ষ টাকা।

আপনি জানেন কি? বারিধারা ডিপ্লোমেটিক জোন এক কাঠা জমির মূল্য ৩০ থেকে ৩৫ লক্ষ টাকা। কিন্তু বারিধারার সমতুল্য এক কাঠা জমি বসুন্ধরা দিলে মাত্র ৩,২৫,০০০/- টাকায়। এ সুযোগ সীমিত সময়ের জন্য।

৮ই মার্চ ১৯৯৮ পর্যন্ত।

**ইস্ট ওয়েস্ট প্রপার্টি ডেভেলপমেন্ট (প্রাঃ) লিঃ**

(বসুন্ধরা গ্রুপের একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান)

সেনা কল্যাণ ভবন (১৪ তলা) ১৯৫, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা - ১০০০  
ফোন : ৯৫৬৯৯৪, ৯৫৬৯৯৫ ও ৯৫৬৯৯৬ সাইট অফিস : ৬০১৭৪০  
ফ্যাক্স : ৮৮-০২-৯৫৬৯৯২ ও ৯৫৬৫৪৯