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BNP announces fresh agitation programmes

Opposition BNP yesterday announced fresh agitation programmes, including country-wide demonstration on July 27 and DC office gherao from August 5, reports UNB.

The demonstration day will be observed protesting torture and harassment on Bangla-speaking people and opposition activists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and their arrest.

They will lay siege to DC offices at 21 district headquarters demanding adequate supply of water and power and protesting price hike of essentials and deterioration of law and order.

BNP secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement has called upon all units of the party and the people to make the demonstration and DC office gherao programmes success.

Import through Tamabil border suspended

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, July 16: Import of coal and other items through the Tamabil border in Gowainghat thana remained suspended for the seventh day today, an official said this afternoon.

The Indian transport workers stopped work following a dispute with the members of the BSF since July 10. It resulted in the immediate stoppage of the movement of trucks from across the border. Several meetings were held between the BSF officials and leaders of the transport workers during the last few days, but yielded no result, the official added.

More than 100 Indian trucks carry coal and other items through the Tamabil border everyday.

Labour unrest at Haripur Gasfield

From Staff Correspondent SYLHET, July 16: Police has been deployed in the Haripur Gasfield following continued labour unrest over the appointment of some new permanent workers, said an official today.

Police said, the situation became tense three days ago when the information of appointment of 26 new workers reached the gasfield.

There are 279 workers working on a daily-basis in the five gasfields under Sylhet Gas Fields Company Limited. Most of them had been working for years and demanding regularisation.

The new appointments of 26

ROK chancery opens

The newly constructed chancery and residence of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea was formally opened yesterday at the Baridhara diplomatic enclave, reports BSS.

Shin Sung-oh, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea was the chief guest on the occasion. He blessed the opening ceremony by hanging the newly designed embassy emblem and planting a commemorative plant within the compound, a press release said.

About one hundred members of Korean community in Dhaka attended the ceremony.

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Magurchhara disaster

Damage to eco-system estimated at Tk 600 cr

By Mizan Ali and Iqbal Siddique

"Re-generation of a stable eco-system generally requires a period exceeding over 100 years," said a member of the expert committee.

"But in our conservative estimate, we calculated that the damages to nature in Magurchhara could be brought to a sustainable level in 50 years," he added.

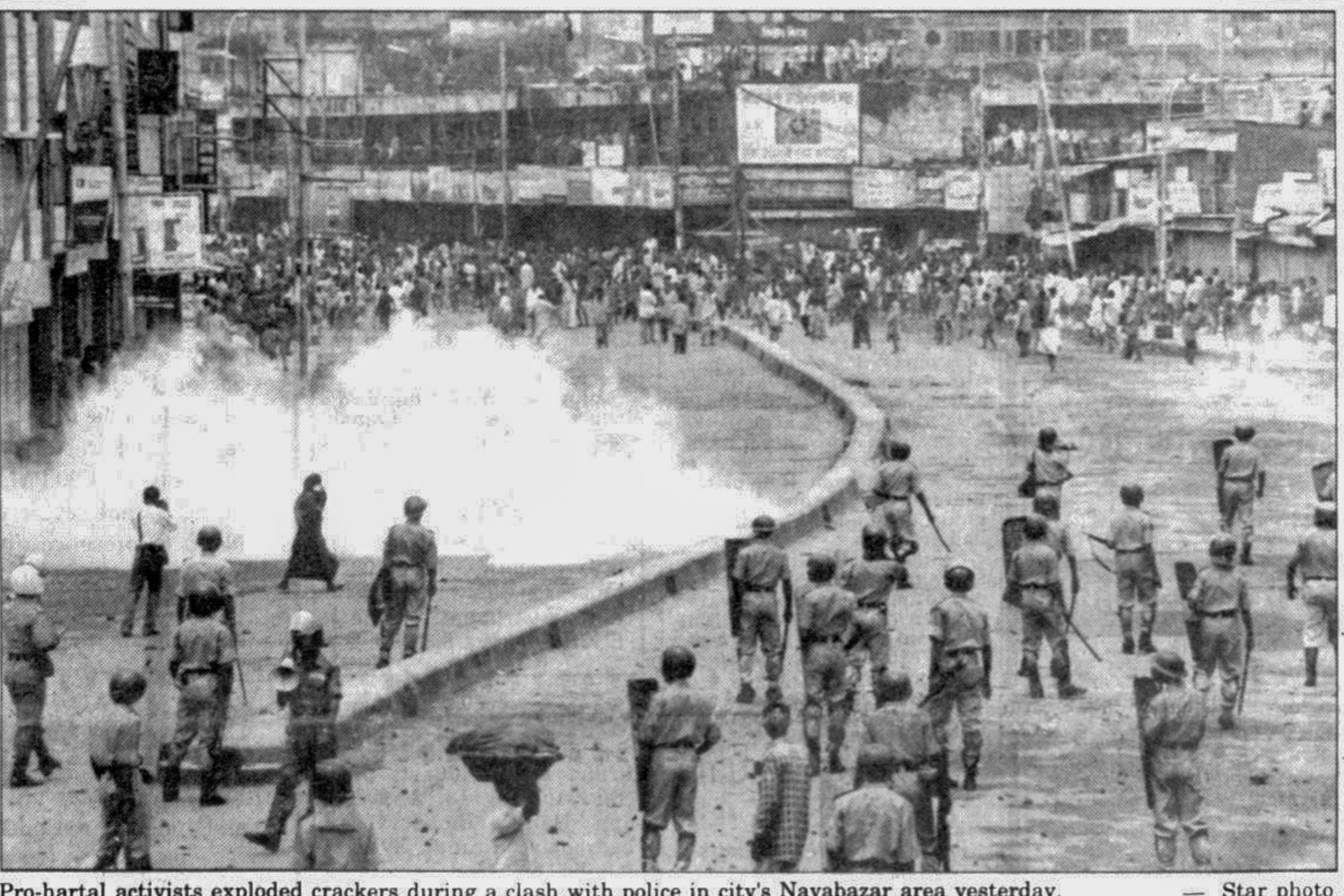
The four-member expert committee submitted its report to the Ministry of Forest and Environment on July 1. Committee members visited the site twice for preparing the report, sources said.

The committee comprised officials from the Department of Environment, Department of Forest and representatives of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies.

Environment ministry officials said they will study the report before forwarding it to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to claim compensation from Occidental for the damage.

At least 87.5 acres of reserved forest belonging to the Forest Department were damaged. The experts quantified the damage as — severe damage to 20 acres of forest partial damage to 26 acres and minor damage to 41.5 acres.

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Pro-hartal activists exploded crackers during a clash with police in city's Nayabazar area yesterday. — Star photo

Police pick up 150 during hartal

70 hurt in sporadic clashes

By Staff Correspondent

areas in the old part of the city was the main trouble spot during the six-hour hartal that began at 6:00 am.

The city BNP office is at Nayabazar.

Clashes between police and pro-hartal activists broke out around Nawab Yousuf market at Nayabazar and spread up to Tanti-Bazar, North-South Road and Bangshal. In some of these areas, clashes continued beyond the hartal hours.

Clashes between pro and anti-hartal pickets took place in Motijheel, Farmgate, Mahakhali, Mirpur and Demra areas. A number of autorickshaws and tempos were damaged and some rickshaws were burnt in those areas.

Initially the hartal programme was for the whole country, but it was revised on Wednesday.

The alliance said the programme was revised considering the sufferings of the people due to floods.

The trouble at Nayabazar started at about 8:30 am and continued till about 2:00 pm. BNP workers took control of the area and clashed with police in riot gear several times.

The pickets hurled brick bats and crackers during the chase and counter-chase. Shots were also fired during the period.

Abdullah, 32, was bullet-hit when pickets clashed with police at Bangshal Crossing at about 11:30 am. He was sent to

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Confce on foreign investment

16 Asian nations fail to find common stand

NEW DELHI, July 16: Opinion leaders from 16 Asian developing nations preached caution on foreign investment but found no consensus today on whether they should roll out the red carpet for multinationals or be reluctant hosts, officials said, reports AP.

Participants ... have been of the view that host developing countries should exercise discretion to selectively permit foreign direct investment (FDI) in priority areas in line with their national development objectives," the Indian government said in a statement after the two-day discussions on international investment arrangements wound up today.

The developing nations also want mandatory transfers of technology from multinational corporations when investments are made in local markets, the statement said.

India hosted the meeting of government officials, industry leaders and voluntary groups with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to discuss international investment arrangements.

UNCTAD officials said the purpose of the conference was to familiarise developing nations with existing investment arrangements. The discussions were not open to the press.

"The discussions brought out clearly the complexities involved in any attempts toward a global investment regime — a complexity that was evident when the OECD countries, which initiated the move ... were not able to reach an agreement on investment," India's Press Information Bureau said in the statement.

In April this year, trade and finance ministers from the

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Team leaves for London today to avert closure of SB branches

By Staff Correspondent

A high-powered government delegation is leaving for London today to settle the fate of the five branches of the Sonali Bank there.

The 2-member team comprising Sonali Bank Managing Director Mahbubur Rahman Khan and Bangladesh Bank Deputy Governor and former Sonali Bank Managing Director Ibrahim Khaled.

The team will hold talks with officials of the Bank of England regarding measures to avert the closure of the SB branches in the UK.

The decision to send the high-level delegation was taken at a meeting with Finance Minister SAMS Kibria in the chair recently after a letter was received from the Bank of England saying that it may take drastic steps regarding Sonali Bank's operations in the UK.

Flood situation grave: 17 dists hit, 11 more die

By Staff Correspondent

The flood situation in the country deteriorated further yesterday with the inundation of fresh areas in different districts leaving 11 people dead.

Water levels of most major rivers continued to rise aggravating the flood situation in 17 districts.

The flood situation may experience further deterioration following general rising trend in water levels in the major rivers and significant rainfall in the upstreams," the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre said yesterday.

The Flood Information Centre said major rivers in the four basins were still flowing above their danger marks. The Brahmaputra was flowing 32 cm above the danger level at Bahadurabad, 10 cm at Sirajganj and 46 cm at Aricha.

The Old Brahmaputra at Jamalpur, the Lakhya at Narayanhat, the Ganges at Goalundo and Bhagyakul, the Khowal in Habiganj, the Gumti at Comilla, the Muhuri at Parshuram and the Halda at Narayanhat were flowing above their danger marks.

The affected districts are: Rajbari, Gaibandha, Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Pabna, Kushtia, Sherpur, Sirajganj, Bogra, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Kishoreganj, Faridpur, Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Rangpur and Comilla.

Our correspondents reported four deaths in Pabna and one in Gaibandha. News agency UNB reported six deaths from Mymensingh, Rajbari, Sherpur, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts.

Our Pabna correspondent reports: Four children drowned in flood water in Bera thana Wednesday night. Two of them fell down from a boat in village Kukri and one each from Durgapur and Char Sadullapur villages died as they fell down from two congested raised bamboo platforms (machans).

The flood has engulfed 15 out of 18 thanas of the greater Pabna district.

Flood situation has aggravated in the district as fresh areas have been inundated. The affected 15 thanas are: Pabna Sadar, Bera, Sujanagar, Chalmohar, Bhangora, Faridpur, Santhia, Sirajganj, Kazipur, Belkuchi, Chouhalli, Tarash, Raiganj, Ullapara and Shahzadpur.

Our correspondent from Gaibandha reports: The flood situation in the district worsened further with inundation of fresh areas.

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Depositing resignation letters

Top BNP leaders criticise move

By Staff Correspondent

An emergency meeting of the BNP Standing Committee was adjourned late last night without taking any decision on the issue of some party MPs depositing letters of resignation from Jatiya Sangsad to the party chief.

The meeting will resume on July 21, a day after the by-election in Barisal-5 constituency of Jatiya Sangsad.

Some 30 party MPs deposited their letters of resignation to Leader of the Opposition in parliament and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia that sparked off serious dissatisfaction among the party rank and file.

Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury reportedly took the initiative.

However, the members of the standing committee were tight-lipped about what had transpired at the meeting. But sources close to those attending the meeting told The Daily Star that some senior members of the committee were critical about those who took the move of collecting resignation letters from the party MPs.

They suggested that the MPs who have signed the resignation letters should withdraw those immediately. They also demanded punishment to the initiators of the move to make sure that they do not take such initiatives without the approval of the party leadership.

Some other members of the standing committee, however, opposed the idea of punishing the initiators, while a few were yet to come up with their views. They would speak when meeting resumes.

Meanwhile, following press reports on the issue, the party MPs and district-level leaders rushed to the capital to know the developments from the top leaders, while dozens of anxious party activists were seen moving around Begum Zia's Minto Road office yesterday evening.

Earlier, Dr Moin Khan, a member of the party's national executive committee and re-

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Prof Alauddin appointed JU VC

By JU Correspondent

Pro-Vice Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Alauddin Ahmed has been appointed Vice Chancellor of the university for a four-year term.

President and Chancellor of JU Shahabuddin Ahmed made the appointment.

He is likely to take over on July 18 as the tenure of incumbent VC Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury expires on July 17.

When contacted, Prof Alauddin confirmed that he received

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Acting attorney-gen resigns

Mahmudul Islam takes over as new AG

By Staff Correspondent

Mahmudul Islam, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court, was appointed Attorney General (AG) yesterday.

President Shahabuddin Ahmed appointed him the tenth Attorney General of Bangladesh as per the provision under Article 64 of the Constitution, until further order, a Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Ministry notification said yesterday.

When contacted over telephone, the newly appointed AG said that he had taken over the charge of the office.

Earlier, Additional Attorney General Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan, who had been discharging responsibilities as acting AG, submitted his resignation at about 1:30 pm yesterday.

Bhuiyan was made the Acting AG following KS Nabi's resignation from the post of the Attorney General on May 29, Nabi, while attending an international conference in UK, came to know that his tour had not been approved by the prime minister. He returned immediately and submitted "voluntary resignation on personal grounds."

Nabi, the former law secretary of the Awami League, was made AG on July 31, 1996, following the party's return to power.

Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan told The Daily Star that he also had resigned on personal grounds.

"I want to return to my private practice," said Bhuiyan who was appointed as the Additional AG, on June 1, 1982.

Asked whether he had been advised by the government to resign, Bhuiyan denied, saying "I have resigned voluntarily."

The letter of resignation addressed to the President has been sent to the Law Ministry for its forwarding, he said.

Mahmudul Islam was born in Rangpur on March 1, 1937 and enrolled as a pleader in June, 1961 and practised in Rangpur district court. He acted as Special Prosecutor of War Crimes from April 1972 to December 1973 and as Assistant

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BCL leader shot dead in Jhenidah

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, July 16: A BCL leader was shot dead on Mahtabuddin Degree College campus in Kaliganj thana of the district this morning.

The victim, Rezaul Karim Reza, 20, president of Kaliganj Thana Unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, was shot by some young man in front of the office of the college principal at about 10:20 am. He died on way to hospital.

UNB adds: The administration has imposed Section 144 restricting meetings and processions in Kaliganj thana following the killing.

CID investigating Faruk murder

By Staff Correspondent

CID has started investigating the murder of former Jatiya Party MP Lutfur Rahman alias Kala Faruk who was allegedly strangled on July 6.

Besides, Dhanmondi police were collecting information regarding the murder. They officially took over the case from

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South African President Nelson Mandela stands with Graça Machel, wife of the late former president of Mozambique Samora Machel. South African news reports said that the couple are expected to get married tomorrow, Mandela's 80th birthday, at a private ceremony at the President's Houghton home in Johannesburg. — AP file photo

Continued ROK investment assured

South Korea has assured continued investment in Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The assurance was given in a letter to Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad from his Korean counterpart Dr Park Chung Soo.

Shin Sung-oh, the visiting Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of Korea handed over the letter when he paid a courtesy call on Azad at his office yesterday afternoon.

South Korea is Bangladesh's third biggest investor and Youngone, a Korean firm, is the largest investor in the Export Processing Zone. About one thousand Korean nationals are employed in nearly 60 small and big Korean firms operating in Bangladesh.

Azad said the Korean minister in his letter lauded the success of Bangladesh in national development and diplomacy. Dr Park mentioned that success of the present government was

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Alternatives

Our next issue of Alternatives will come out on 29 July 1998 in The Daily Star and the theme for the issue is **Urban Public Toilet**.

Scholars, researchers, activists and all other interested parties at home and abroad are requested to send their articles by 26 July 1998 to Dr Imtiaz Ahmed, Executive Director, Centre for Alternatives, Room No. 431, Lecture Theatre, Arts Building, Dhaka University, Dhaka-1000. Tel: 9661900-59, Ext: 4550; Fax: (8802) 836769; E-mail: imtiaz@bangla.net