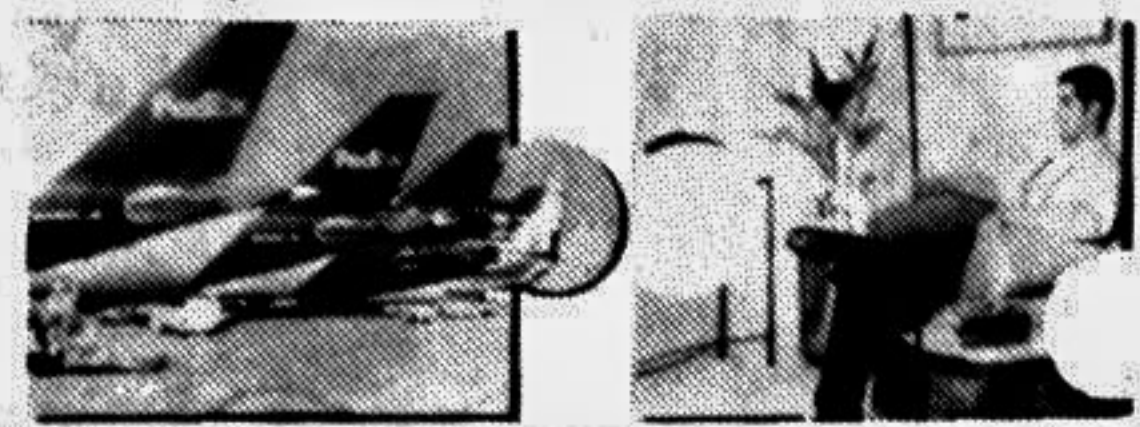


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Down to Earth Conservation Imperatives for City's Historical Relics

By ASM Nurunnabi

It can hardly be overemphasised that preservation of past culture is very important to nourish our sense of identity, national pride and self-esteem. There is, therefore, an overwhelming need for creating a general consciousness among the people on the importance of conservation activities relating to our past heritage.

Mass reception to Khaleda near BJMB postponed

The mass reception to BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, scheduled at the western side of Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge on July 25, has been postponed due to worsening flood situation in the country, a BNP press release said yesterday. reports UNB.

Tremor jolts Taiwan: 4 killed

TAIPEI, July 17: A strong earthquake jolted Taiwan today causing rock slides on a southern mountain that killed at least four people and injured 19, reports AP.

The quake, with a preliminary magnitude of 6.2, was felt throughout Taiwan and on the coast of mainland China. It was centered about 14 kilometers west of Alishan, known also as Mount Ali, about 300 kilometers (180 miles) south of Taipei.

SQ Chowdhury

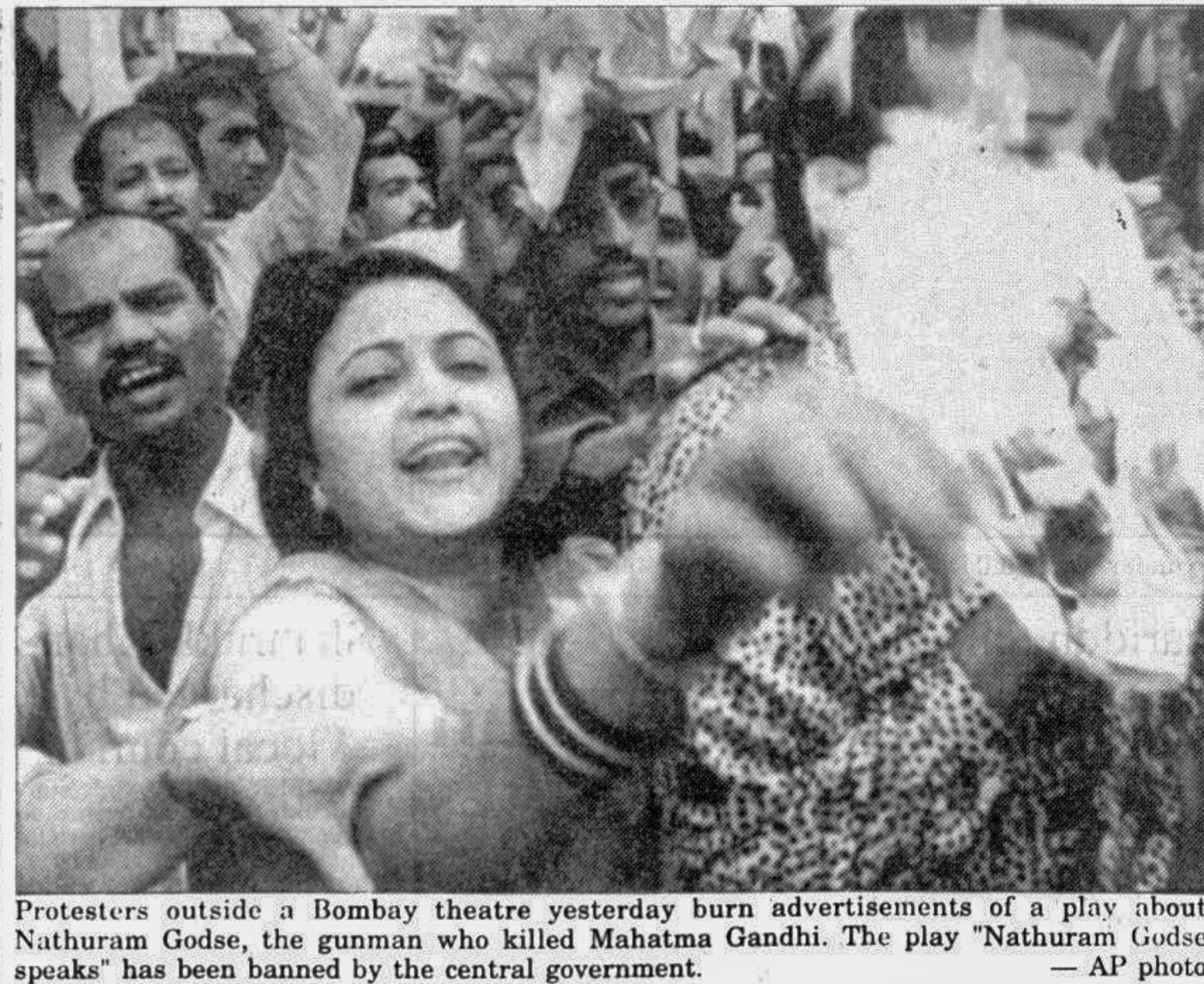
Chowdhury indicated the BNP may go for final bout if there is any rigging in the Barisal by-election on July 20. Asked if his resignation is a reflection of protest against the leadership of BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, he denied it outright.

He said, "I have given the total and unilateral responsibility to the party chief to use my resignation letter as and when she deems it fit. She has not the authority to use it or throw it into dustbin."

In reply to another query, he said he does not aspire to be the BNP secretary general as he does not consider himself competent for the post. He, however, said one certainly may feel for a more effective Secretary General for BNP "in terms of a political movement."

"It is the party hierarchy to decide the matter. I don't want to make any comment on it," Chowdhury said.

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Protesters outside a Bombay theatre yesterday burn advertisements of a play about Nathuram Godse, the gunman who killed Mahatma Gandhi. The play 'Nathuram Godse speaks' has been banned by the central government.

SAGQ tries should make maximum use of their available resources before seeking external assistance. The private sector should be encouraged to play its role in a bigger way, he said. Rahman said the projects taken up by the sub-regional grouping would be supportive and complementary to national plans and those would not be substituted for bilateral, multi-lateral or regional cooperation. The idea of the Bangladesh foreign secretary was widely appreciated by other member countries.

SAARC: All eyes on dialogue

Foreign Ministry officials said Bangladesh was the only country that took an initiative to know the minds of the two leaders. "We came off better informed about the views of India and Pakistan but we have not told how Delhi and Islamabad propose to keep the South Asian region free from the dread of a nuclear holocaust."

A senior official said it is likely that five of the seven members of the SAARC - Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, the Maldives and Sri Lanka - are likely to insist individually and collectively on receiving clear cut assurance both from the Indian and Pakistani leaders about making South Asia a zone of peace.

The other SAARC countries have a responsibility to extract commitments from the two big neighbours that they would not jeopardise the prospect of development for their teeming millions by going ahead with an arms race, and that too a nuclear one. Only concrete moves by India and Pakistan could contribute to confidence building measures after the May explosions," said a senior diplomat.

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury said: "The most interesting discussion of the forthcoming SAARC summit would be the meetings between Indian and Pakistani prime ministers. This in itself is of course a positive development, but given the present pronounced position of

the two countries, it would be illusory to expect anything dramatic. However, India and Pakistan could both demonstrate their goodwill at the SAARC summit to build up confidence."

What the state minister said carries a lot of content. And SAARC members are expected to discuss and devise a system for regular consultations between member states on contentious issues, an observer said.

The Colombo summit at Male had already agreed that members could have informal consultations relating to bilateral matters. At the Colombo summit, it is likely that the members might adopt a resolution institutionalising the process of bilateral consultations. Should that happen, analysts feel, SAARC would make a positive step forward in defusing tension not only between India and Pakistan but also draw a mechanism for discussions on critical bilateral problems between neighbours to act as a safety valve for carrying ahead the on-going process of regional cooperation.

The Colombo summit became uncertain following the nuclear explosions. Silent diplomatic efforts of several countries, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives ultimately paved the way for the summit.

In the process three sets of date had to be revised and the final schedule could be agreed upon after hectic consultations with all members by the current Chairman of SAARC, Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, and the host country's foreign minister Lakshman Kadirgamar of Sri Lanka.

Gayoom could not proceed to all the SAARC capitals as is customary for the outgoing SAARC heads, but later the Sri Lankan foreign minister visited the capitals carrying letters of invitation from the host country's President Chandrika Kumaratunga.

Among the subjects to come up for discussion would be poverty alleviation, social

US-India talks. Clinton was required by law to cut off loans and aid to India and Pakistan following their nuclear tests, and only Congress can lift the sanctions. Legislation approved by the Senate Wednesday would give Clinton waiver authority for up to 12 months. Rubin said the administration wants waiver authority for an unlimited period.

If granted waiver authority of the type now under consideration, the administration would not -- I emphasize the word 'not' -- be prepared to use such authority in whole or in part until there has been substantial progress toward achieving the goals set forth in the UN Security Council Permanent 5 declaration of June the 4th in Geneva," Rubin said.

Flood situation

From Page 1. Our correspondent reported from Sherpur. Three persons died of diarrhoea during the last 24 hours as the flood situation deteriorated in 10 out of 14 unions of the Sadar thana yesterday, affecting at least two lakh people and having about 70,000 marooned.

The dead are Riazuddin (50) of Kulurchar Barui para and Akram Hossain (25) and Shahana Begum (10) of Bagolgarh under Sadar thana, official sources said. Diarrhoea has broken out in areas under the Sadar thana.

Atiqur Rahman Atiq MP and Deputy Commissioner Naofel Mia visited the flood affected areas. Some 3000 families have taken shelter in the Brahmaputra embankment and in different schools and colleges, the sources said.

Road communication between Sherpur and Jamalpur remained snapped for the last five days. Our Nabna Correspondent adds: Most of the educational institutions in eight out of nine thanas of the district have been closed. Road communication in most areas was snapped. Incessant rain continued and over one lakh people in the 16 flood-hit areas have been marooned.

Our Natore Correspondent says, vast areas in eight unions of two thanas in the district have been submerged following a sharp rise in water levels in the rivers Padma, Atrai, Baroi Gur and Nandakujia. Sukash, Dahia, Hulhulia, Chhatardighi and Ramananda Khajura unions of Shingra thana and Chaplia, Nazirpur and Naopara unions of Gurusadar thana have been affected as breaches developed in the flood protection dam near Sardahanagar, official sources said.

A large number of flood affected people have taken shelter on the embankment. UNB Khagrachhari Correspondent says: The overall flood situation in the district improved further as water receded fully from the low lying areas of the district. People recovered the body of Moklesur Rahman (30) who drowned at Balutia area near Khagrachhari-Ramgarh road. Water-borne diseases have broken out in the affected areas.

Police SI shot during gunfight with terrorists. From Staff Correspondent. CHITTAGONG, July 17: One police sub-inspector received bullet wounds during a gunfight with some armed terrorists in Bahaddarhat area under Chandgao thana in the city this evening, police said.

He was admitted to hospital. The gunfight began when a large contingent of police went there at 6.15 pm to arrest a terrorist, Suja Uddin, police said. The terrorists fled the scene after half an hour. Young woman. From Page 1. The in-laws added that they lodged a general diary with Cantonment thana on Wednesday in connection with the missing.

But Alamgir, a brother of Ferdousi, alleged that Abbas and his parents were involved in the killing.

Latest craze. From Page 1. Airmen from the nearby Clark Air Base, which has been converted by the government into an economic zone.

The bars have announced a contest for internet surfers to concoct potent mixtures and names for cocktails flavoured with the popular anti-impotence pill, which the government is still testing for possible harmful effects before it is retailed in the widely conservative and predominantly Roman Catholic nation.



Justice Zakir Ahmed dead

NEW DELHI, July 17: Justice Zakir Ahmed, an Additional Judge of the High Court division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, died of bone marrow cancer here early this morning at All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS). He was 56, reports BSS.

His wife and only son were present when he breathed his last at 5:50 am. The body of the deceased is expected to be flown back to Dhaka on Sunday (July 19) by a British Airways flight. Hearing the news, Bangladesh High Commissioner in New Delhi, CM Shahi Sami, and other officials of the High Commission rushed to the AIIMS.

Justice Zakir underwent bone-marrow transplantation in the AIIMS in September last year. He came to Delhi again in April this year for follow up treatment but his condition started deteriorating. President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, in a condolence message, has expressed deep shock at the death of Justice Zakir Ahmed.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina also condoled the death of Justice Zakir.

Viagra import

From Page 1. ter producing prescriptions. Young men may be attracted and abuse the drug. They are the most likely users of the drug even if they do not need it. This is what worries us most."

Viagra has varying degree of side effects. It may not suit patients suffering from hypertension (high blood pressure), said Cardiologist Dr Momenuzzaman of the National Institute of Cardio-Vascular Diseases (NICVD). "A patient suffering from high blood pressure must check with a heart disease specialist before taking the drug or he may die."



Common Sand Boa, the endangered snake

By Special Correspondent

Pickled inside a glass jar, a Common Sand Boa or the Russell's Earth Boa, found by wildlife biologists for the first time in Bangladesh, provides students of Dhaka University an opportunity to know more about the member of the Python family.

The 24.5 inches long snake, beaten to death by villagers at Kudair in Bhupur thana of Tangail, was brought to the university by a team of zoologists.

The villagers found the female reptile sneaking into a rat hole and pulled her out, said Prof Kazi Zaker Hossain, who has preserved it at the Zoology Department of DU.

The snake survives on a diet of rats, mice, frogs and lizards. But it never harms humans, rather works as a friend of farmers, destroying rats," Prof Hossain told this correspondent.

The villagers' action attracted the Zoologists while on a survey near the Bangabandhu Jamuna Bridge. Prof Hossain said the snake is mistaken as a baby python or 'Ajagar'. But there are only two

species of the python available in Bangladesh, who grows up to 19 feet in length.

But the Boa, usually found in India, was never known to have existed in Bangladesh.

Prominent herpetologist Raymond Whitaker, who visited Bangladesh, said "it is common throughout India on the plain or low hills, but rare or absent in most of Bengal."

Common Sand Boa may or may not be found in other areas of Bangladesh. It is basically nocturnal, keeps hiding a few inches under sand or sandy soil and comes out in the evening for hunting, Prof Hossain said.

It finds out some rat-infested area, takes shelter in a rat hole and keeps waiting for its prey. Like other pythons, it catches the prey, twists its body around before suffocating it to death for swallowing slowly. The Common Sand Boa is highly endangered. It is harmless, beneficial and one of the most beautiful snakes in the world. It should not be treated like other snakes, but should be protected for our own benefit," Prof Hossain said.

Pak PM's sect

From Page 1. hill-side complex he inherited from his predecessor Benazir Bhutto, sacked for misuse in 1996.

The secretariat building is situated on 12.6 acres with a frontage of 1,220 feet on Constitution Avenue near the seats of the parliament, the presidency and the Supreme Court.

It has a seven-storey central structure with four identical wings extending from it with a covered area of 359,342 square feet, amid lush landscaped gardens.

The building contains 372 office rooms with 113 bathrooms, 29 kitchens, an auditorium with 360-seat capacity, a 250 seat banquet hall, three conference rooms, four lounges, a meeting hall, a library, a mosque, a cafeteria, a bank and a post office.

Seoul to back

From Page 1. lieve she can play a role acceptable to both parties".

Shin said his country appreciated the peace initiative of Bangladesh leader both domestically and regionally.

As for the reunification of the two Koreas, he said not much progress has been made in short term, but "we are confident of long-term progress". He said, "We want to continue dialogue with the North for peaceful reunification. After the new government came to power, the peace initiative - having continued dialogue with North - has been further geared up," he added.

He leaves here today at the end of his three-day visit. Korean ambassador in Bangladesh Tae Kyu Han was present during the interview.

SAVE MORE

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US-India talks

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Comprising a population of nearly 1.2 billion, nearly one-fifth of the mankind, whose level of poverty, education and development is still groping to catch up with that of the developed world, SAARC was dubbed by the Western media as the "the poor man's club."

The Bangladesh Prime Minister, leading a big delegation, is due to leave Dhaka for Colombo on July 28 by a special flight of the Biman.

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