SAARC summit

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee urged the SAARC summit

opening here today to focus on

economic issues and warned that

politics should not hold up the

lished in The Himalayan Times

newspaper here, sought to shift

attention at the summit away from

mounting tensions between India

the most important area the summit

nomic cooperation with real content,

our region will miss the globalisation

"Unless we energise the eco-

"It is important not to let our

Vajpayee said the international

common economic agenda be held

hostage to narrow political ends or

community should pressure nations

into stopping its support of "terror-

ists" carrying out attacks against

sponsoring and sheltering terrorist organisations," Vajpayee said.

Two launches

Dakatia River:

attacked on

"Some states follow a policy of

should consider," Vajpayee said.

"Economic cooperation remains

The Indian PM, in remarks pub-

issues

AFP, Kathmandu

regional body.

and Pakistan

Vajpayee for focus

only on economic

## Pakistan detains 200 **SSP** militants

Pakistani authorities have detained scores more Islamic activists accused of escalating tensions with India and fanning sectarian violence in the country, officials said yester-

day.

The Sunni extremist Sipah-eSaba Pakistan (SSP) said police
rounded up more than 200 of its supporters in overnight sweeps while a Shi'ite radical group Tehreek-e-Jafria Pakistan (TJP) said 100 of its members were

Police officials said the operation launched early Thursday had netted more than 80 people in different parts of the country's populous Punjab province.

But they said they had warrants to arrest a total of 200 people, including members of some militant outfits operating in Indian-controlled

"We have 200 arrest warrants and hope the operation would continue for a couple of days more, senior police official Farman Ali Gujar told AFP.

"We have arrested people from both Sunni and Shi'ite factions," Multan police chief Ahmed Reza said, adding that they had been detained under public order laws.
"The action has been launched on

Minor girl burnt alive

at Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

A minor girl was burnt alive while her brother received serious burn injuries in a fire at the town's Muchipara area here last night.

According to family sources, Reshmi, 6, was burnt alive while her brother Ridoy, 4, sustained serious burn injuries in the fire that originated from a kerosene lamp and gutted the whole house of Tulshi Das, father of the victims. The victims were asleep when

the fire broke out. Local people with the help of Fire Brigade brought the fire under control. Ridoy was admitted to Pabna

### Blair in Bangalore, talks with

tensions between nuclear rivals India and Pakistan.

Blair, who has held discussions with US President George Bush about defusing the crisis, is due to meet Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee tomorrow (Sunday) before heading to

Pakistan over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir.

### Vajpayee tomorrow REUTERS, Bangalore

the federal government's directive. Other police sources, who requested anonymity, said the

detainees also included members of

militant groups waging a 12-year-

old separatist campaign in the

Indian-administered zone of divided

already arrested more than 100

members of two militant Kashmiri

outfits which India blames for the

December 13 attack on its parlia-

and Jaish-e-Mohammad have been

The government of moderate Pakistani President Pervez

Musharraf on Wednesday

announced it would move to curb

Islamabad also resolved to take

Government officials have said

action against madrassas, or reli-

gious schools, of radical Islamic

parties, which are accused of pro-

Musharraf is likely to unveil a

national strategy to eliminate "ha-

tred, militancy and sectarian

extremism from society" next week.

extremism and fanaticism responsi-

rounded up in the sweep.

claimed hundreds of lives

moting religious militancy.

Leaders of both Lashkar-e-Taiba

Pakistani authorities have

Kashmir state.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived in the southern Indian city of Bangalore yesterday ahead of top-level talks aimed at easing

Blair's visit comes amid a tense military standoff between India and

### Alam murder

Farida, daughter of Latif, and Henowara told police that they knew nothing about the murders. Alam's two sons -- Noor Alam

Babul and Jahangir Alam Khokon -arrested earlier, are also being interrogated.

Sources in Detective Branch police said they are examining various clues to the murders.

One source claimed that Alam had a guarrel with local ward commissioner aspirant Shadat Hossain a few days before the murders when the latter tried to park his car on the premises of Alam Market, owned by the industrialist. Hossain had threatened Alam, the source claimed.

Alam had informed his family members and some of his employee about the matter. Any possible link between the murders and the quarrel is being examined, the source said.

Another sources claimed that some DB officials are trying to divert the investigation for financial gains.

Another sources claimed that a hired gang of miscreants had a 'secret' meeting at Alam's farm four days before killings. Police suspect that the caretaker might have some information about the gang.

The two arrested sons of the

industrialist told DB during interrogation that they had strained relations with their father over his 'lifestyle' but are not involved in the

But police suspect that the two sons masterminded the murders to grab the huge property of their

Another source claimed that Pir Sayedabadi and a son of the Pir of Lalbagh used to visit Alam's house. Some political leaders also used go there to attend musical sessions

Alam and three of his house maids Rahima, Shakina and Kamala -- were slaughtered at his

#### Blair

at West Kellia, Joypura.

The British PM came here Thursday with his spouse Cherrie Blair kicking off his tour of the three countries in the subcontinent.

He will travel to both New Delhi and Islamabad and hold talks with Prime Minister A B Vajpayee and President Gen. Pervez Musharraf to defuse tensions along the borders

## Admission forms

Class I of these 24 public schools, ministry sources said.

Preparation of question papers and evaluation of answer papers for the tests will be processed centrally for the first time this year, in order to bring transparency in the entire process of admission, a highly placed official of the ministry said.

Admission tests will be held on three different dates according to the three categories that the schools have been placed under.

Schools under category "A" are: Government Laboratory High School, Mirpur Government High School, Motijheel Government High School, Khilgaon Government High School, Nawabpur High School, New Government Girls High School, Islamia High School and Mohammadpur Government High School. Admission tests for these schools will be held on January 8.

Schools under category "B" are: Motijheel Govt. Girls High School, Narinda Government High School. Dhaka Govt. Muslim High School, Banglabazar Government Girls High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar High School, Government Science College (School section), Dhanmondi Girls High School and Armanitola Government Girls High School. Admission tests for these schools will be held on January 10.

Schools under category "C" are: Dhanmondi Government Boys High School, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar

Government Girls High School Kamrunnesa Government Girls High School (Dhanmondi), Collegiate School, Kamrunnesa Government Girls High School (Tikatuli), Ganobhaban Government High School and Tejgaon Government Girls High School. Admission tests for these schools will be held on January 12. Meanwhile, hundreds of guard-

ians and their wards thronged the premises of the city's reputed Ideal School and College as tests for admission into Class I of the school began yesterday. A total of 3,384 youngsters sat for the test at its Motijheel section. Admission tests for Class I of the school's Banasree section will be held on January 11, sources said.

Admission tests for Classes II, III and IV of its Motijheel main section will be held on January 6 while tests for admission into Classes II through IX of its Banasree section will be held at its main section at Motijheel on January 6.

Vigarunnisa Girls School and Holy Cross School, two reputed educational institution for girls yesterday completed admission procedures for Class I to enrol as many as 200 students

Out of the roughly 200 schools in the city, only 24 are public where tuition is subsidised by the government. Both admission and tuition fees are relatively much higher in the rest of the schools that

### 12 hurt in road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway

UNB, Manikganj

Some 12 people were injured in separate road accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway here yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the first accident took place at about 6 am when a Natore-bound truck fell into a roadside ditch after hitting another truck standing at Seota in Sadar upazila leaving 10 people

Four of the injured, including truck driver Majnu, were admitted to Sadar Hospital. Later, the truck driver was shifted to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka in critical condition.

The other three were identified as Anwar Hossain, Sakhimuddin and Azimuddin.

ble for bloody sectarian violence in Besides, two people, including a The violence blamed on militants woman, were run over by a coach at from the majority Sunni and the minority Shi'ite Muslims has already Mulzan area yesterday. They were also admitted to the hospital.

Another report adds: Some 15 people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of villagers at Barairchar in Sadar upazila on Thursday.

Witnesses said the trouble erupted in the evening when supporters of Nurul Hag and Rashid of the village locked into a clash over a land dispute.

Six of the injured Tara Begum Ekram Hossain, Nurul Haq, Abdur Rashid, Aminul Haq and Abdul Majid were admitted to the hospital.

### Omar

FROM PAGE 12 know it," Karzai said in an interview with ABC News.

"He's a criminal of an international standard and he should be delivered if the US wants him ... to the United States." Karzai said.

Afghanistan's Minister for Reconstruction said on Germany's ARD television on Thursday he believed Omar had been captured. and Australia's ABC television said yesterday it had heard the same from a senior official of the Northern Alliance, the main opposition to the Taliban.

But a US military spokesman said he had no knowledge of it. "We don't have anything on that," Marines Major Ralph Mills, a spokesman for the US Central Command in Florida, told Reuters.

#### Summit delayed FROM PAGE 1

mate" exists for a bilateral summit in Kathmandu with Pakistan, foreign ministry spokeswoman Nirupama Rao said yesterday.

"There is no indication regarding such a meeting and there is a need for a conducive climate between India and Pakistan," she told reporters in Kathmandu.

"It is not as if the door has been shut with Pakistan for a dialogue, but under the present circumstances when the seat of a democracy was attacked a certain threshold was crossed," she said, referring to a December 13 attack on India's parliament.

BSS savs. the 11th SAARC summit is expected to begin here at 11.30 am today at the King Birendra International Conference Centre.

But it could not be known whether the summit scheduled for three days would be reduced to a two-day affair.

Now all the seven leaders of as many SAARC member countries are in Kathmandu.

Nepal which had intensified, six weeks back by clamping countrywide emergency, its fight against six-year old domestic insurgency by Maoist extremists, is hosting the summit amid heavy security.

Already the senior officials. followed by the foreign secretaries and finally the foreign ministers of the seven member countries completed the meetings of their respective tiers, as per SAARC charter requirements, preparatory to the

#### Ctg port FROM PAGE 12

'Besides, police and BDR teams should be kept standby for assistance during anti-smuggling raids" he also added.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Navy during its routine patrol few days ago seized a consignment of smuggled electronic goods.

#### Hospital wastes FROM PAGE 12

easily carried to nearby homes by stray cats and dogs, thereby endangering the lives of all the inmates of the houses and even their neigh-

bours. The role of the house flies in

this respect is no less hazardous.

It is common knowledge that the large hospitals in the city normally dispose of their wastes on roadside garbage heaps. So far as knowledge goes, none of such hospitals has a medical waste management system, not even an incinerator to decontaminate the infectious wastes

According to experts, there are scientific methods for destroying waste samples and used syringes and saline bags. In the interest of urgent considerations of public health, it is incumbent on the authorities concerned to take appropriate measures for breaking the rackets of evil-doers making financial gains from these heinous activities.



Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba receives Prime Minister Khaleda Zia on her arrival at Tribhuban International Airport in Kathmandu yesterday.

## US considering sending an envoy to South Asia: Powell

AFP, Washington

Secretary of State Colin Powell said Friday that the United States was considering whether to send a peace envoy to mediate in the India-Pakistan crisis, which he warned remained a "very dangerous situa-

In an interview with the BBC, Powell, who has conducted a campaign of telephone diplomacy throughout the crisis, said that there were some encouraging signs that the standoff was easing slightly, but judged a solution was still far away. Ahead of a South Asian summit

to be attended by Indian and Pakistani leaders in Nepal, Powell said his administration was confident in its diplomatic personnel in the region, but could send a senior envoy to South Asia.

going there to add to our efforts, this is under consideration and we will take a hard look at this at the beginning of next week after the leaders have returned from Kathmandu." State Department officials said

"As far as somebody actually

last week that the "obvious candidates for such a mission would be Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage or the department's head of policy planning Richard Haass, who is also coordinator for Afghanistan policy Powell said in the interview that

Washington was anxious to see the situation in South Asia stabilise, and hoped both sides would avoid a clash between their troops. "There are some encouraging

signs out there but I don't want to overplay this," he said.
"This is still a very dangerous

India and Pakistan, nuclear armed rivals, have mobilized tens of thousands of troops in recent weeks, after a sharp increase in tensions sparked by a December 13 attack on parliament in New Delhi. India blamed the attack on two

Pakistan-based Islamic militant groups who are battling New Delhi's rule in Indian-administered Kashmir, and said it was mastermined by Pakistani intelli-Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari

Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf will Saturday take part in a summit of the sevennation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu.

# Dhaka proposes review

yawning trade gap between the two countries, which is in favour of India, and the unfinished demarcation of

> The Indian side said the trade imbalance could be taken up at the commerce secretary level meeting between the two countries in near

Regional issues also featured at the talks held in a cordial atmosphere, officials said

The Bangladesh prime minister stressed dialogue to resolve the issues, especially between India and Pakistan. She told Vaipavee that as an elderly leader and prime minister of a big country, he should take initiative in this regard. The Indian side made queries on

security of minorities in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh side said there were some law and order problems and those were taken care of to ensure their safety and security.

Vajpayee congratulated Khaleda for winning the elections and invited

her to visit India at an appropriate

"I am an angel if everything is

On Sheikh Hasina's remark that

"the President engaged the armed

forces during the elections with a

motive", he said armed forces were

deployed a few days before the

motive behind this as well. She

herself nominated the Army chief

who said in a public meeting that he

would 'annihilate the Raiakars'.

How can the armed forces led by

this Army chief help the alliance win

Supreme Commander of the Armed

Forces, made it clear that the army

acted in accordance with the exist-

ing rules. "They were given no

In this respect, he mentioned

that the Chief Adviser (Justice

Latifur Rahman) met him 10 to 12

days before the election and

requested him to deploy armed

forces, citing that the army was

deployed during elections in 1991

The former President also

dismissed the remark of Sheikh

Hasina that trial of the murder of

Bangabandhu was started at the

court of the Sessions Judge instead

of a special tribunal under his

"The allegation Sheikh Hasina

made against me concerning how

The former President, who was

the elections?" he questioned.

special power."

and 1996.

"Sheikh Hasina explored a

election to maintain law and order.

done according to their desire,

otherwise I am a devil." he said.

past President.

Reciprocating, Khaleda also invited the Indian prime minister to visit Bangladesh. She also inquired about his health.

Farlier. Khaleda was given a

says UNB. As she disembarked from the plane, the Bangladesh leader was escorted onto a special podium near the hill-ringed Tribhuban Airport in the capital of the Himalayan

Kingdom and ceremoniously

warm welcome on her arrival here,

received by Nepalese Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba. The Nepalese Prime Minister introduced Khaleda Zia to the four Constitutional Heads of the Kingdom -- Chief Justice Keshab Upadhyaya, Chairman of the National Assembly Dr Mohammad Mohsin. Speaker of the Parliament T N Rana Bhat and Chairman of the

Raj Parishad Dr K Jung Ray Majhi. Opposition leader Madhab Kumar Nepal was also introduced to the Bangladeshi Prime Minister in the presentation line.

Shahabuddin reacts to remarks

the trial of the murder of

Bangabandhu should be started is a

downright lie. It is outrageous. I

never gave advice about how the

the case was started, she met me

and said that the case was filed at

the Sessions court so that nobody

expressed doubt about independ-

ence of the judiciary. She also

asked me about my impressions

regarding Sessions Judge Golam

days after this she said why there

was delay in conducting the case

and how General Ershad hanged

some members of the Armed

Forces immediately after the killing

court martial. A writ petition was

made against this case in the

Supreme Court, but it was rejected

Nothing more was discussed about

The former President also made

Mentioning that retired Chief

Justice Latifur Rahman was

appointed Chief Advisor of the

caretaker government in accor-

dance with the constitutional provi-

sion, he said he (Latifur Rahman)

gave an order for the transfer of 13

secretaries within one hour of his

from four secretaries about one

hour after the order was given. I

expressed my dissatisfaction. Later

"I came to know of this matte

the case of Bangabandhu murder."

few other relevant points.

appointment.

"I said they were tried in a field

of Ziaur Rahman.

Shahabuddin continued: Many

Rasul. I said he is a good man.'

"She herself filed a case. After

trial should be started," he said.

Thereafter, Khaleda Zia was greeted by 'Panchakanya' or five little girls in traditional dress, who bowed to her and presented her with The Bangladesh Prime Minister,

also accompanied by the Nepalese Chief of Army Staff, took salute of a band played national anthems of the Khaleda Zia was later introduced

with the Nepalese Foreign Minister, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and General Secretary of SAARC. Bangladesh's Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan, PM's Advisor on

Mass Education Professor Jahanara Begum, PM's Political Secretary Haris Chowdhury and Bangladesh's CDA Humayun Kabir were present on the occasion. Ceremony over, Khaleda Zia

was driven in a motorcade to Hotel Soaltee Crown Plaza where she will be staying during the long-deferred 11th summit of the seven-nation

the Chief Advisor told me that the

Awami League government trans-

ferred about 1,500 officials about

one month before expiry of their

term, and they did it with the pur-

pose of reaping benefits in the

Latifur Rahman as saving that this

was why he (Rahman) did not delay

in making necessary transfers to

negate the process started by the

the remark that the Chief Election

Commissioner was his choice is

entirely baseless. "On the contrary

Sheikh Hasina herself nominated

columnist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury

and drew a blistering conclusion

about the London-based

Traitor" -- written by Gaffar

Chowdhury and published by the

Janakantha in four instalments last

November and December is a

superb example of falsehood and

well-known columnist. He is also

widely known for the Ekushey song.

It is hard to believe that he could

indulge so much in telling lies. After

reading the article one would have

the feeling that he is fabricating

stories. Though I heard before that

Gaffar Chowdhury was exception-

ally adept at manufacturing stories,

I did not believe that. Now I believe.'

"Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury is a

He said the article -- "Portrait of a

Bangladeshi intellectual

distortion

Justice Shahabuddin also flayed

The former President also said

Awami League government.

Shahabuddin quoted Justice

election "

Seven passengers and three Ansars were injured when two launches came under attack by a mob on the Dakatia River at Raghunathpur near Chandpur.

Dhaka.

The owners of the launches alleged that the attack was made by extortionists as they did not pay Of the injured, two Ansars were

admitted to Chandpur Sadar

### official held with fake money in Kathmandu

UNB, Kathmandu

Police said the official. Sirai Ahmed Siraj, was arrested in the late afternoon from near Hotel mbassador in Lazimpat.

vas not given, was taken into custody as police recovered fake notes worth 9,200 US dollars and Indian currency notes valued at Rs 47,000.

The arrest on the eve of SAARC Summit embarrassed the Pakistan Embassy officials here and they were reportedly exerting pressure on the government to release the official.

#### "The coordinated efforts of the international community should be a aimed at pressurising them to aban-

don it.' The SAARC charter does not allow bilateral matters to be taken up for discussions, but contentious issues have managed to hold up progress in the seven-member body.

#### 50 hurt as villagers clash over appointment of imam in Sirajganj

At least 50 people were injured, 23 of them seriously, in a clash between two rival groups at village Chooldhari under Shahjadpur upazila yester

Police said the clash erupted at about 7.30 am between the supporters of Monzu group and Chandu group over appointment of Munshi irajul Islam imam of Chooldhari mosque

Both the groups used lethal weapons during the clash that continued for four hours.

Hospital, Sirajganj Community Hospital and Sirajganj Health Two separate cases were filed

UNB, Chandpur

10 injured

Witnesses said that about one hundred people attacked the launches MV Putul and MV Tutul at about 9:30 am just after the two vessels sailed from Ichuli ghat to

Milton from an abandoned house. A Pak embassy

in Pabna

Police on Thursday arrested a Pakistan Embassy official along with counterfeit US and Indian currency

The official, whose exact status

Siraj is likely to face extradition

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

The seriously injured persons were admitted to Sirajganj General

with Shahjadpur police station. None, however, was arrested in this connection till filling of the report last

rescued UNB, N'ganj

Abducted

businessman

Police rescued a businessman seven hours after his abduction in the town yesterday. A gang of miscreants abducted

Habibur Rahman Milton, 35, from his Killarpul residence at noon and confined him in a house in the area manding a ransom of Tk 5 lakh. Informed by Milton's mother police raided the area and rescued

### Three robbers held with arms

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna** 

Local people with the help of community police held three alleged robbers and seized arms and ammunition from them, when they were preparing for a robbery on the Pabna-Iswardi-Kushtia Highway

The incident took place at Sakrebari in the district.

The said robbers have been identified as Mehedi Hassan Rony, Monwar Hossain Moni and Abdul Mannan Ratan, from whom a foreign-made revolver, two shotguns and three rounds of ammunition were seized.

when a mob beat them up. Later, they were handed over to Isward A case was registered in this connection with Iswardi Police

The robbers sustained injuries

### **AL tells Blair**

Briefing newsmen after the meeting with Blair, Samad Azad told a questioner that they mentioned the presence of two "Taliban supporters" in the BNP-led coalition government of Khaleda Zia.

The delegation discussed issues of internal, regional and international terrorism during the half-anhour meeting. It stressed that the fight against terrorism should be intensified in every country for the sake of peace, stability and democ-"Terrorist activities have gripped

the people has become a regular phenomenon," the acting AL chief told the British leader. The repressed are not even allowed to take shelter of law, he said. "Terrorism is taking place in the

the country after the October 1

election and there is no rule of law

Torture on opposition activists and

absence of rule of law. During the meeting, the AL team placed documents on post-election violence, rape, murder and repression on the religious minority and AL activists across the country and replied to some queries by Blair.

The main opposition party blamed the ruling coalition for 'heinous attacks' on opposition activists, the religious minority and innocent people Samad Azad said they hoped that the growing tension between

two neighbouring nuclear powers -- India and Pakistan -would defuse as a result of the British leader's current visit. "We do not want any war in this region' In response to a question from Blair regarding AL's joining parliament session, the

replied that the party believes in democracy and always upholds democratic norms "It is our right to join parliament

session but the present government has created an atmosphere that prevents us from going to the House," the AL leader said. He blamed the ruling party for making the parliament 'ineffective'

#### Theft of clinker FROM PAGE 1 Two of the accused in the case are

absconding. The alleged absconders are KCCI president Sheikh Nazrul Islam and a foreign crew who was not identified by police on the pretext of security

Police said the KCCI president maintains two strong networks at national and international levels to operate gangs.

Islam, OC of Mongla thana. Meanwhile, leaders of the executive committee of Khulna chamber have expressed their sharp reaction at the alleged involvement of Shaikh

Nazrul Isľam in such a heinous

As he has been accused in a theft case, Nazrul Islam has lost the moral right to act as KCCI chief, some EC members said and demanded his immediate removal.

perishable and non perishable items including cement.

He could not be contacted for his

comment as he is absconding.

and will be recorded in a day or two with full evidences, said Kamrul

KCCI president are under process

Two other cases against the

The KCCI president is a business tycoon and importer of different