NEWS

uphold the interest of the country as

well as to contribute to the develop-

Minister Mosaddek Ali was present

AL can't sit in

Govt: Nasim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

JS with fascist

Awami League lawmakers would

not join the coming parliament

session, party Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim said yesterday.

can't go to the parliament," Nasim

"After today's police attacks, we

Political Secretary to the Prime

ment of their native land.

India agrees to talk duty-free access of 25 items: FM

UNB, Dhaka

India has agreed to discuss the proposed duty-free access of 25 categories of Bangladeshi items without linking it with other issues at secretary-level trade talks in Dhaka later this month

The Indo-Bangla trade talks, earlier scheduled to begin December 26, were deferred as the Indian side regretted its failure to attend at the eleventh hour.

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan who had bilateral talks with his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh in Kathmandu told reporters here yesterday that Bangladesh had requested for dealing with the dutyfree access issue separately without linking it to other issues as a confidence building measure.

"Indian side agreed to do that ... Let's see the progress at the next secretary-level trade meeting" planned for the third week of this month. Khan said. The Foreign Minister told a

questioner that there had been free and candid discussion on all bilateral irritants with Jaswant Singh and both sides agreed to resolve them through negotiations. Trade officials here said India

preferred to talk on several trade issues linked with each other, but Bangladesh would like to stick to specific issues mainly duty-free access of its 25-category products to India.

An Indian trade bureaucrat, who visited Bangladesh last month,

Khaled Imam murder Accused Samir placed on 5-day remand

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Samiruddin alias Mintu, 42, arrested in connection with the killing of former ward commissioner Khaled Imam, was placed

on a two-day remand yesterday. Detective Branch (DB) of police produced Samir before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka at about 4.00 pm yesterday and prayed for a five-day remand. The defence lawyers submitted a

petition seeking bail and cancellation of the remand prayer. After hearing both sides, the

magistrate placed the accused on a two-day remand.

Khaled Imam. BNP leader and former ward commissioner was shot dead by a group of assailants on December 31, last year near the Moghbazar Rail crossing in the city. Victim's elder brother Giasuddin Ahmed filed a murder case with Ramna thana the following day against unidentified people.

AL protests FROM PAGE 12

ter Matia Chowdhury and party

proposed inter-linked agenda like duty-free access with transit or transshipment

"Our request was to directly talk about the 25 categories ... We refused to link issues together or accept preconditions," a senior commerce ministry official told UNB.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee while visiting Dhaka in 1999 pledged to allow duty-free access of Bangladesh's 25category items on non-reciprocal basis in a bid to reduce the yawning trade gap with India.

But India delayed the implementation of its Premier's pledge despite hectic lobbying by Bangladesh government and the sending of a list fitems long ago. The balance of trade between

the two countries has always been in favour of India. Bangladesh suffered a deficit trade balance of US\$ 149.59 million in 1990-91 that rose to US\$ 771.25 million in 1999-2000.

Bangladesh's export to India rose to only US\$ 65 million in 1999-2000 from US\$31 million in 1990-91 vhile its imports shot up to US\$ 836.13 million in 1999-2000 from US\$ 180.65 million in 1990-91.

Fresh agitation after Hasina's return: ALCWC STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League would take up fresh agitation programmes after party President Sheikh Hasina returns rom her foreign tour on January 12. The decision was taken at a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) at the party's Dhanmondi office last night with acting party president Abdus Samad Azad in the chair.

The impromptu meeting of the ALCWC was held against the backdrop of police baton charge on senior party leaders and former ministers during yesterday's hartal. Expressing dissatisfaction at

'poor participation' of party leaders and workers in its programmes including yesterday's hartal, the ALCWC also decided to launch an rganisational tour programme soon boost the morale of party rank and

file across the country The meeting took stock of the latest political situation in the country and expressed deep concern at 'infringement' on democratic and political rights of the people.

It also discussed preparations for observance of the anniversary of Bangabandhu's homecoming today.

Porn video FROM PAGE 12

sister of a victim

ring anonymity

hiding a month ago.

Pintu

the act

remand and he admitted his involve ment in making porno for the cyber-netic bazaar. He also named five others who helped him. But, police declined to disclose

their names "for the sake of investigation". Police arrested him following a case filed with Ramna police by the

of Sumon and later marketed those

through VCD," said a source prefer-

resided at Mirpur, sources said. But,

following press report he went into

received an anonymous letter where one of the victims narrated

how Sumon and Pintu committed

Two months back, DB police

hails from Khulna and



Prime Minister Khaleda Zia distributes awards among winners at the 10th Asian Art Biennale she inaugurated in the citv vesterday.

policemen on what ground they "laid

a siege" to the AL office and barred

Policemen on the spot later

party men from entering their office.

acknowledged that there was no

ban on meetings and processions but they were instructed by higher

authorities not to allow such activi-

in charge of the police force at the

Bangabandhu Avenue, later told

resort to indiscriminate baton

charge. We just charged batons

mildly to clear the road blocked by

leaders) to clear the road for vehicu-

lar movement. They declined and

the party office to see the injured

leaders. Police chased them by

Other than the Bangabandhu

He said, "We asked them (AL

ADC (DB) Kohinur Mia, who was

"Police did not

ties during hartal.

newsmen there,

the AL leaders.

lawful action.

Police besiege AL office

ment"

processionists sat on the road in front of the Pir Yemeni Market. After a few minutes, at around

10:20 am, policemen in riot gear led by ADC of Detective Branch Kohinur Mia swung on the sit-in demonstration, charging batons indiscrimi-nately and firing tear gas shells, injuring the party leaders and some

activists As the sit-in continued, suddenly two empty double-decker buses of state-run BRTC appeared there from the direction of Golap Shah mazar. Police were heard telling the drivers to run the buses through the

sit-in. The buses were just vards away when Motia shouted at the drivers not to "move an inch". A young AL activist lay on the road. Police lifted him by pulling the neck and started clubbing the AL leaders indiscriminately to clear the road.

The injured leaders then left the place and went to the party office. Party workers immediately treated them with ice bags and painkiller medicines.

Police later picked up from the spot three persons including Israfil near the Golap Shah Mazar. Alam, Dhaka city unit general secretary of Sramik League, AL's labour Dhaka Bar General Secretary Mamtajuddin Mehdi tried to enter front.

In an instant reaction after the incident, Nasim said, "After today's barbaric attacks, AL would not go to this parliament.

Motia told newsmen there that police attacked AL's peaceful sit-in without any provocation although there is no ban on holding meetings and processions. Both the leaders said yester-

on the night of March 25, 1971.

taken to the then West Pakistan and

kept in prison. Immediately before

his arrest, Bangabandhu called

upon the countrymen to free the

nation from the Pakistani occupa-

during the hartal hours. Except auto-tempos and a limited number of buses and mini-

firing tear gas shells.

day's "unprovoked action combuses with less- than-capacity pelled the opposition to launch a passengers, no other motorised movement to dislodge the governvehicle plied the city streets during the hartal hours. However, rick-They wanted to know from the

shaws moved as usual All educational institutions, shopping malls and most of the private offices remained close in the city. Attendance was less than normal at government offices.

Movement of trains to and from the city was normal, railway officials said. Long-distance buses did not leave terminals in the city. Rangamati

Our correspondent reported that five AL activist and one activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, student wing of ruling BNP, were injured in a clash at Rangamati College during the hartal hours.

Police and witnesses said, machetes, cocktails, hockey sticks and brick bats were used during the hartal activists Netrokona

Hartal was observed in Netrokona district partially. Vehicles did not move in long-distance routes during the first three hours of the hartal. Offices functioned normally.

Chittagong BSS reported from Chittagong that the hartal hours passed off

Activities at Chittagong port were ormal. Avenue area, rest of city and most

parts of the country were peaceful from Rajshahi and Khulna that the divisional headquarters

11-party alliance condemns attack on deity STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the 11-party yesterday strongly condemned the damage of Shanidever temple and demanded exemplary punishment of the culprits.

At a rally at Shaheed Minar in the city they termed the incident as a hurtful and shameful for the nation.

The rally was organised by the 11-party after its leaders visited the temple at Shakharibazar yesterday evening

The leaders at the rally said that the incident was part of a planned aggression on minority communities unleashed by the anti-liberation force of Jamaat-Shibir after the October 1 election.

They alleged that the attack on the temple was the outcome of provocative remarks made by the Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Sayedi at Narayanganj three days ago

They accused Sayeedi of ordering the attack on the temple and demanded his arrest and punishment along with others involved in the attack.

Among other 11-party leaders who addressed the rally were Rashed Khan Menon, Monjurul Ahsan Khan, Khalekuzzaman, Haji Abdus Samad, Mahmudur Rahman Babu and Bazlur Rashid.

DCC dumping

"There is a proposal for a 100-acre dumping site in Amin Bazar area but it is now gathering dust at the Planning Commission," the official said.

People in Kalyanpur area said illegal dumping sites are causing public nuisance and pungent smell from the wastes is filling the air, affecting their health.

A local DCC official said owners of private lands were paying money to conservancy officials to have their low-lying lands filled. It is less costly and land owners ignore that the waste dumping sites could generate dangerous gas pockets underground within years and cause explosions, damaging their buildings and other structures. In Shashanghat area also, DCC

trucks are dumping waste in a pond to fill it. There are several other similar sites in the city.

"None of these sites and also the one at Matwail have any environmental clearance," said a DCC official

Alam murder FROM PAGE 12 ing newspaper reports but failed to arrest him.

When contacted last night, Investigation Officer of the case Mohammad Aktheruzzaman Bhuiyan said Dulal might be hiding somewhere in the city. His team is trying to track him

down its front organisations to organise processions, rallies, Milad Mahfil Dulal went to the residence of Saiful Islam, a neighbour of Alam, and discussion meetings across the with a bag full of money and a blood stained shirt a day after the killings,

> he mentioned Alam and his housemaids

3 US lawmakers hail Dhaka's moderate stance in world affairs

UNB. Dhaka

Three US lawmakers in separate letters to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed their keen interest to help promote common interests of the two countries as they appreciated Dhaka's moderate stance in world affairs.

They are Joseph Crowley, Chairman of the Bangladesh Congressional Caucus, Benjamin Gilman, Chairman of the Congressional Committee on International Affairs, and Congresswoman Carolyn B

Malonev A plaque has also been sent to the Prime Minister recognising Bandladesh as a moderate, democratic Muslim country

told reporters after police attacked The members of the US AL leaders at Bangabandhu Avenue during hartal hours. Congress in their letters congratu-Referring to Prime Minister lated Khaleda Zia on her party's Khaleda Zia's recent call to the main overwhelming victory at the October opposition for joining the parliament 1 general election and her assumpsession, he said, "We can't sit in the tion of the office of the Prime parliament with this fascist govern-Minister of Bangladesh. ment.'

Responding to a query, Nasim also said AL's participation in the Two US expatriates Golam Mehraz, President of the US-January 17 parliamentary by-polls Bangladesh Friendship Society, has become uncertain following and Gias Ahmed. Trustee of the yesterday's attacks. society, who are on a visit to "From today begins the move-Bangladesh handed over the letters ment to unseat this government, and plaque to the Prime Minister at her office yesterday evening.

the former home minister stated. In her reaction, AL leader and They thanked the Prime Minister former agriculture minister Motia for constituting a new ministry on Chowdhury said, "In my 40-year political career, it never so hap-Expatriate Welfare and Overseas pened that police clubbed leaders in Employment and expressed their a peaceful rally." resentment over the "misleading statements" issued by some politi-

Motia said police prevented AL leaders and workers from exercising their democratic rights although there was no ban on meetings and processions. She came down heavily on the

government for besieging the AL office using police force and for not allowing partymen to enter the office

mopped up the rest of the

Bangladesh batting with clinical

The 31-year-old exponent of the

old-ball produced reverse swing

time and again to baffle the lower

order. Debutant off-spinner Fahim

Muntasir played along the wrong

line only to see his off-stump cart-

Wagar also bowled Sharif in

similar fashion and fittingly ended

the Bangladesh innings by having

Enamul caught in the slips by

Leg-spinner Danish, who has

Mehrab's recall after three

hander offered a bat-pad catch to

Shahdab Kabir at forward short leg.

His opening partner Al-Shahriar

looked impressive with four elegant

boundaries through the mid-wicket

But Shahriar's habit of playing

Young Ashraful's one-day style

to clear the cover fielder of Kanaria.

but only succeeded in offering an

easy catch to Youhana. He made 27

off 31 balls that included three fours

been the tormentor of Bangladesh

in the Multan Test last year, evenly

shared the other four wickets with

Waqar wrecks hosts

efficiency

wheeling.

region.

Inzamamul Huq.

FROM PAGE 1 lunch at 103 for three

But the hosts completed their all too familiar collapse after the break, losing their last seven wickets for 20 runs.

cal leaders during their visit abroad.

volatile world situation," they said,

"such practice will act contrary to

Minister urged them to work with

utmost sincerity to protect and

Talking with the two, the Prime

long-term interests of the country."

"Against the backdrop of the

Although Wasim Akram bowled only sixteen legal deliveries before limping off the ground with hamstring strain and pace demon Shoaib Akhtar stayed on the reserve bench, wickets tumbled at regular interval after Wagar won the toss and invited Bangladesh to bat.

The only high point in the Bangladesh innings was Habibul Bashar's 53 Mr Consistent of the international newcomers completed his eighth Test half-century with the help of eight boundaries in 107 minutes

Abdur Razzak The morning however looked The dashing right-hander also bright for Bangladesh as they featured in the highest stand of 63 scored 59-2 in the first hour.

"Prepare for a fresh war to salvage the country from the clutches of killers and collaborators, otherwise, the future of the nation will be country to mark the day in jeopardy," she said.

Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and its front organisati

Bangabandhu's homecoming

peacefully in the port city. Our correspondents reported

hartal was observed peacefully in



leaders Dr Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin. Abdus Shahid MP. and Ahsanullah Master MP were not spared from 'barbaric" police action

"The government in a planned manner is pushing the country towards conflict and anarchy," the statement said warning that the government of Khaleda Zia will be held responsible for the consequences of their "fascist acts".

Azad-Zillur urged the party leaders and workers to face all misdeeds of the government with patience and courage and demanded release of all arrested during yesterday's countrywide halfday hartal.

They also thanked the people for observing the hartal and asked the government

Stern meets PM

FROM PAGE 12

cash-incentive programme as an rate alternative to the food for education programme

He also appreciated the government's programmes to provide free education to female students up to the higher secondary level and a monthly stipend of Tk 65 to each of the girl students securing first and second divisions in the secondary level

During the meeting, the Prime Minister detailed her 100-day programme and other reform measures to overcome the impasse inherited from the past Awami League regime.

She also focussed on the shortand long-term plans to strengthen the economy left shattered by the past government.

The PM sought World Bank's assistance in implementing reforms and development programmes of the government in various social and financial sectors for the welfare of the common people.

Khaleda Zia mentioned the development programmes undertaken in sectors like agriculture. rural development, power and energy, water resources, telecom munication and health, and hoped World Bank would render assistance for their implementation.

The WB executive briefed the Prime Minister on his visit to Bangladesh and his experience from meetings with some ministers and visits to a number of WB projects in Bangladesh.

He also praised the social programmes of BNP undertaken during 1991-96 period and its suc-

cess in reducing the child mortality Musharraf extended his hand to

World Bank Country Director Fredrick T Temple, PM's Principal Secretary Dr Kamaluddin Siddiqui and ERD Secretary Anisul Haq Chowdhury were present during the meetina

Afghan meet FROM PAGE 12 to British Prime Minister Tony Blair

to commit troops to the ISAF depending on the progress of the UN Trust Fund, which will contribute towards the expenses of maintaining non-western troops in

An agreement on the deployment of 4500 international troops in Kabul under the auspices of the ISAF was signed between British General Mc Coll and Afghan interim minister Yunus Qanooni on January

Bangladesh Permanent Representative in New York Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury is currently monitoring the progress of the UN Trust Fund, sources said.

Bangladesh, one of the 24 countries to send representatives at the installation of the new Afghan interim government headed by Karzai, looks forward to Hamid participate in construction work and export economic goods including tea, which has a great demand in Afghanistan

Several Bangladeshi companies and NGOs including BRAC are interested in participating in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan

tion forces.

From Page

The nation achieved independ-Pintu, with the help of Imtiaz ence on December 16, 1971, after Ahmed Sumon, who resides in Los nine months of armed struggle, and ngeles, USA, filmed some women the then Pakistani authorities were in bed within the period of July-August-September of 1999. compelled to free the Bangladesh leader. After his release from With the help of hidden camera, Pakistan jail Bangabandhu returned Sumon and his friends shot their home on January 10. intimate moments at the residence

AL chief and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina, who is now on a private trip in the United Kingdom, has issued a message on the occasion and called upon the people to observe Bangabandhu's Homecoming Day.

She called for waging a fresh struggle to restore the spirit of the Liberation War, which she said, was now being destroyed through conspiracy.

Vajpayee before the TV cameras as

the summit was being telecast live.

Vajpayee reciprocated the friendly

gesture by taking the hands of his

adversary into his own. Musharraf

also repeated the act on the con-

cluding day of the summit. He also

against the terrorists who had car-

ried out a suicide attack on the

Indian Parliament last month, trig-

gering the standoff along the Indo-

The handshake aroused a lot of

speculations but it nonetheless

failed to end the tension and

address its source, namely the

Kashmir issue. Pakistan regards the

Kashmiri separatists as freedom

fighters while India brands them as

terrorists, and accuses Pakistan of

backing them up militarily and

financially to make cross-border

rivals close to war.

harbouring them.

raids into India.

by the SAARC charter.

chalked out a day-long programme to observe the day.

Under the programme, the national and party flags will be hoisted atop the party central office, Bangabandhu Bhaban and party offices across the country at 6am. At 8:30am, party leaders and the activists will gather in front of the Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi in the city to place wreaths at the portrait of the Father of the Nation.

In the afternoon, the AL will organise a discussion meeting on Bangabandhu Bhaban premises Acting AL President Abdus Samad Azad will preside over the meeting. Meanwhile, AL general secretary Zillur Rahman in a statement yesterday directed all units of the party and

Opportunity sans major outcome

Damage of deity FROM PAGE 1 Hanif, arrested in connection with

the attack on the temple, was placed on a one-day remand vesterday. Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad

Hanif and leaders of the 11-party alliance also visited the area. The mayor assured the leaders of the minority community of punitive action against the culprits. Kalam went to Shankhari Bazaar

Sanidev Temple, kicked the deity of goddess Kali and damaged it at around 5.00pm Tuesday. Local people caught the attacker and handed him over to the Kotwali Police Station.

Additional police forces have been deployed in and around the area to avert any further untoward incident

Rahima. Sakhina and Kamala were killed at his New Jurain residence in Shyampur area on the night of January 2

Highway robbers FROM PAGE 1

Finally, the villagers surrounded the robbers near Boalsata bridge at around 9:30pm and started beating them with sticks, bricks and shovels. In a few minutes, most of the robbers were dead while some of them managed to escape.

Upon receiving the information, a police team from the Keranigani Police Station reached the spot at around 10:30pm to find the six dead. aged between 35 and 40. They took the bodies to the police station at night. Later, the bodies were sent to the Mitford Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police arrested Mostafa Chowdhury from the spot, suspecting his involvement in the robberv. Mostafa, hailing from Shibchar of Madaripur district, claimed himself to be a passenger of the robbed bus. Police also recovered a Chinese Rifle and several lethal weapons from the spot.

Villagers said two more rifles used by the robbers were also found in the beel and handed over to the local UP member

A case was filed with Keraniganj thana.

The villagers alleged that robberies were very common in the area and they guard their neighbourhood at night.

Many villagers said they were 'very happy' over the killings of the robbers

"Now that we will have some respite." said Khorshed Mia of Boalsata village

IMF stance

FROM PAGE 1 get the standby support to the balance of payment at five per cent interest rate. This could later be converted into soft loans under poverty reduction strategy facility.

Meantime, both the World Bank and the IMF have taken a critical view of the report of the recently formed expert committee on reforms. They say the report is basically a compilation of earlier donors' reports and does not have any political will embedded.

ins for the fourth wicket Aminul Islam who made 25 months ended on 11 when the right-

But once Bashar was spectacularly caught at mid-on by Danish Kanaria after playing early against a well disguised delivery from Waqar just into the second hour after the lunch break, Bangladesh's hopes of putting up a decent total went up in smoke.

too much on the on side ultimately Waqar, who bowled without brought about his down fall. He was success in the morning, then came adjudged leg-before for 18. close to a hattrick dismissing his Bangladesh counterpart Khaled cricket cost his wicket when he tried Mashud for a first ball duck.

But veteran Enamul Hoque denied the paceman from Punjab comfortably pushing the ball down o short mid-wicket. However that could hardly deter

the determination of Wagar who

(More stories on Sports Pages

Hasina to newsmen

FROM PAGE 12 dented "vote manipulation and conspiracy"

Hasina said that if in power in future, she would not look for any neutral person. "Rather, we will choose a party man for the post of the President.

In reply to a question, the former prime minister said it would not be prudent to take any decision on gas export until assessment of its actual reserve. The question of export can only be considered after keeping gas reserve for 50 years for Bangladesh, she added.

To another question. Hasina mentioned the granting of bail to Ershad Sikder, a terrorist, and release of the accused in the Jail killing Case. "There won't be any element of surprise if the killers of Bangabandhu get released one day," she said and criticised the government for interfering in the court affairs.

About the formation of the ministry on the expatriate Bangladeshis, she said time would say about the utility of this ministry for expatriates. "I've not yet understood whether the new ministry was needed for the minister or the minister was needed for the minis-

During the meeting, Hasina's olitical secretary and former deputy minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury, ex-state minister Syed Ashraful Islam MP, UK Awami

League President Shamsuddin Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Prof. Abul Hashem, Organising Secretary Shafiqur Rahman Chowdhury, AL leaders MA Gani and Sultan Sharif were present.

Art Biennale

FROM PAGE 12 build the gallery.

She expressed her firm commitment to finish the project and declared that the 11th Asia Biennale will be held at the new gallery. "After completion it will be the one of the world's best galleries," she said.

Terming the exhibition as the convergence of artists from across the world, the prime minister said this sort of festival composes positive culture.

The prime minister recalled with respect the leader of modern arts movement in the country, Shilpacharya Zainul Abedin, and the honoured artists of the soil, SM Sultan and Quamrul Hasan.

Bangladesh Post Office issued commemorative stamps on the occasion of the 10th Asian Arts Biennale, Bangladesh 2001. The prime minister at the inaugural function put the seal and signed the first day cover marking the formal release

The function over, Khaleda Zia went round the exhibition to see the art works displayed at the Osmani Memorial Hall Gallery

have ever since overshadowed the SAARC and its future, postponing several summits This time, the leaders at Kathmandu stressed the need for amendment to the charter allowing discussion of bilateral issues to ease

tensions apart from the much-talked about issues of poverty alleviation, terrorism and trafficking of women and children, the issues that affect all the members.

Bangladesh leader, Prime Pak border and bringing the nuclear Minister Khaleda Zia used the opportunity provided by the post-Vajpayee coolly reminded ponement to have a 45-minute Musharraf to take actions against meeting with Indian Prime Minister the terrorists while repeating his Atal Behari Vajpayee calling on him accusation against Pakistan of at his hotel suite.

They discussed some of the bilateral issues dogging the two neighbours. Khaleda Zia took up the issue of review of the Ganges water sharing treaty that was signed by her predecessor Sheikh Hasina in New Delhi in December 1996. The treaty provides for a review after two years. The review was not carried out in 1998. Khaleda had made it an election pledge to raise the issue and the Kathmandu trip gave her that opportunity.

The postponement of the summit for a day however proved to be a The Indian premier agreed to the blessing in disguise as leaders had a initiation of a process to have the chance to meet to discuss bilateral review as laid down in the treaty. issues, which is otherwise forbidden Both sides also agreed to take up the issue of trade imbalance that

When the SAARC was born after heavily favours India. Both leaders a summit of South Asian leaders in also invited each other to visit their Dhaka in December 1985, its charcountries at an appropriate time

ter forbade raising bilateral issues. Khaleda also raised the issue of But bilateral issues nonetheless

repatriating the Pakistanis stranded in Bangladesh since the War of Independence when she had a meeting with Pervez Musharraf. Musharraf, instead of rejecting the request, resorted to diplomatic parlance, saving that he would look

into the matter after addressing the repatriation of some three million Afghan refugees now camped in Pakistan

Maybe that is Pakistan's priority, but the tale of stranded Pakistanis or Biharis, some 250,000 of them living in filthy shanties without a future, has unfortunately failed to raise any sympathy in Pakistan

Pervez Musharraf himself is a Muhajir or an immigrant whose family like the Biharis migrated to Pakistan from India after India was

divided in 1947. Although the 11th SAARC summit failed to achieve anything concrete, it did raise hopes that its leaders through dialogues would be able to make dents on the solid wall of poverty plaguing the region, the home to a large segment of the world's population, make peace with each other to improve their lives and

foster cooperation to make the dream of a European Union or ASEAN-type of grouping in South Asia come true.

had an unscheduled and unpublicised informal talk with Vajpayee The senior Indian leader however urged him to take measures

fghanistan.