Gram Sarkar

Recommendations in light of Indian **Panchayet sought**

BSS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan here yesterday said proposed Gram Sarkar (village government) system would pave the way of effective and planned development of all parts of the country strengthening accountability and transparency of the local bodies.

"Planning for development would be designed at village level and development activities would get momentum involving cross section of people when the Gram Sarkar system would be implemented", he said while addressing a presentation meeting at the ministry, an official release said.

Members of a Bangladesh delegation, who recently visited neighbouring Indian state of West Bengal to see for themselves the much-talked about Panchavet system, explained their experiences at the meeting. Director of CIRDAP and a member of the delegation Dr M Solaiman spoke about a Panchayet system.

Mannan Bhuivan said local government should undertake plans and mobilise resources for development in their respective areas. In addition to this, it has to ensure transparency, accountability and proper utilisation of the resources. he said. He also stressed the need

UPDF-PCJSS gunfight leaves 2 dead in Khagrachhari

BSS, Khagrachhari

Two persons were killed in a gunfight between activists of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and the Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) here on Wednesday.

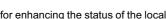
The dead were identified as tion yesterday injuring at least 20 passengers. Monu Chakma, 42 and his son Ton Chaingya Chakma, 18.

The clash was a sequel to a partment of the Dhaka-bound previous rivalry between the two . Balaka Express from Mymensingh rival parties over control of the area. slipped off the rails immediately Following the clash security

forces raided the area and recovered a rifle and eight bullets from a iungle at Duruchhari in Luxmichhari Upazila of Khagrachhari district.

RU Shibir

FROM PAGE 12



government representatives. The meeting decided to form a committee with Director General of Bangladesh Rural Development Academy (BARD) as its convenor to formulate recommendations in the light of Panchayet system befitting

Bangladesh. State Minister for LGRD Ziaul Hoq Zia, Deputy Minister Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu, Secretaries and senior officials of the ministry were present

Beximco Pharma FROM PAGE 12

After the change in dividend, the SEC served a show cause notice on Beximco Pharma on June 8, stating that such a change in dividend is tantamount to non-compliance with the securities law. "This appeared to be deliberate

and clear contravention to existing laws." the show-cause notice said. asking the company to appear before the SEC in the first week of September.

SEC officials said the company did not appear on the date. Rather i wanted to see a copy of the SEC official who attended the Beximco AGM on June 29. The SEC rejected the company's

reply and asked the directors of the company to appear before the Commission this week

Express train

Mymensingh:

Just two days after the derailment of

an express train at Bhawal in

Gazipur, another express train

derailed on the same route at the

Home Signal of Mymensingh junc-

Bangladesh Railway sources

and witnesses said a goods com-

after it left the station at about

Reasons were not immediately

"Frightened by the derailment of

a bogie, passengers started scram-

bling to get off the train, leaving at

least 20 injured," according to an

eyewitness account of the accident.

derails in

20 injured

UNB, Mymensingh

2.30pm

known.

Khaleda greets Carter UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has felicitated former US president Jimmy Carter on his winning this year's Nobel Peace Prize. In a message, she said it was a

recognition to his untiring efforts to uphold the principles of peaceful solutions to international conflicts and advance the cause of democracy and human rights globally.

Khaleda recalled her meeting with the former US president in Dhaka last year before the gen-

eral elections in Bangladesh. "As you are aware, at the elections, which have been globally recognised as being free and fair the BNP-led four party alliance was given a massive mandate by the democracy-loving people of

Bangladesh," she said She further said the personal commitment of Carter to strengthening the process of democracy is deeply appreciated by all. "We in Bangladesh look forward to seeing you again amongst us at a time convenient to you"

She also conveyed her best wishes to Mrs Carter.

Shibir leader killed, 21 hurt in armed attack by Sarbahara men in Pabna **OUR CORRESPONDENT,** Pabna

A Chhatra Shibir leader was gunned down and 21 others were injured in an armed attack by Sarbahara party men at village Jirgacha in Santhia upazila of the district on Friday night. The dead was identified as

Mostafa Ahmed, 25, a leader of Santhia upazila unit of Chhatra Shibir.

According to villagers, ten armed cadres of the outlawed party came to the village at midnight to collect tolls from the villagers.

On receiving the news, villagers with the help of Jamaat-Shibir activists resisted the gang. In the face of strong resistance, the outlawed party men opened fire on the villagers, leaving Shibir leader Mostafa dead and 21 others injured.

The injured people were admitted to different hospitals and clinics. Police yesterday arrested three people named Uzzal, Shelu Mia and

Zulhash in connection with the incident

Dhaka in close

Hasina denies

NEWS

FROM PAGE 1

ment celebrated its one year in power, the Awami League chief said. She quoted from press reports to say that on an average, 10 people were murdered every day since the coalition government took power a year ago. But the government is blaming the Opposition for the murders. This can not be accepted, she

said. "Even newspapers do not dare to report the incidents fearing attack", she said adding that three journalists were murdered and 425 tortured by pro-government activists.

Besides censorship, newspaper owners who have businesses can not project the truth fearing loss of business, she alleged.

Hasina refuted allegations made by the prime minister and her coalition government that some quarters were doing sabotage in a planned way.

There are newspaper reports that four ward commissioners were murdered by rival BNP men as a result of internal feud.

"BNP nominated 33 criminals to contest for posts of ward commissioner. They passed in the last election. It is they who are patronising terrorism. "Awami League activists are in no

position to do sabotage as they are fleeing homes due to the terrible political persecution in last one year. They can not return home".

The former prime minister was asked about allegations against some of her cabinet members and one MP's photo with armed criminals, published in newspapers

She said, "Then (during AL rule) you saw picture of one MP with criminals, but most of the present MPs are criminals. Some of them are accused in murder cases"

Newspapers published the same photo repeatedly as they had freedom (during AL rule), which has been curbed now, the AL chief said.

Pak polls

FROM PAGE 12

might soften their stance if they actually made it into government. "We will adopt a prudent policy. We will work in consultation with all internal forces," he told Reuters. "No one is a fool to put himself or his nation into trouble."

Others also looked forward to a more pragmatic approach.

"When they are in parliament, if they form part of government, they will become more responsible. said Rahimullah Yusuzai, a newspaper editor and expert on Pakistan's rugged border lands Afghanistan.

"But the way Pakistan has been arresting any suspect of al Qaeda and handing them over to the US, that is very unpopular here," he added. "Until now Musharraf has been doing this on is own, but now he is going to have to be very careful."

One retired Pakistani general said the scenario could become much more dangerous if the religovernments in the regions bordering Afghanistan but were excluded from government in the centre.

FROM PAGE 12 the Hindu-majority southern Jammu She denied that her government region, has said he believes the had curbed the power of the police chief minister should be from

Kashmir coalition

The PDP, which did not win any

Appointing a chief minister from

"We have to understand that

trouble lies here and we should be

sensitive enough not to do anything

that neutralises whatever we have

achieved in these elections." Mir

Jammu "will send the wrong sig-

administration Jammu and his deputy from Muslim-She said the police administration majority Kashmir, or vice versa. worked freely during her rule. "But now Kashmir has not been ruled by they are under control of criminals Police do not want to file case if any anyone from Jammu since 1953, when a Hindu king reigned. The tortured person approaches them. Ministers, MPs and party cadres state has been divided for a half-

control police now. Many policemen century between India and were sacked on partisan grounds. Pakistan, which both claim it in full. They are now working as party cadres. 'TNOs are functioning like thana seats in Jammu, insists the chief BNP presidents, OCs as secretaries, minister should be from the Kashmir DCs as district BNP presidents and

valley, the heart of the state's 13-SPs are working as secretaries," she said. vear insurgency. "Despite victimisation, people can not go to police for fear of further harassment or repression by BNP nals," said PDP legislator Ghulam men.

Hassan Mir. When Mahfuza, a freedom fighter's wife, was raped in Satkhira, the medical board comprising "BNP doctors" the issue of Kashmir and the milisaid she was not raped. "But chemical tancy, electing a chief minister who test of her clothes later in Dhaka found is not from the Kashmir valley will evidence of rape", she added complicate the situation further," he said.

Road accident kills three in Mymensingh OUR

CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Three persons were killed and 20 others injured in a road accident at Chandpur in Phulpur upazila yesterday morning. The dead were identified as

Meher Ali, 30 of village Chandrakona in Nakla upazila of Sherpur district, separatist Ghulam Mohiudin Sofi. said: "Whatever we decide we will Akkas Ali, 45, and Azaharul, 28, of village Hossainpur in Phulpur

upazila. Police said, the accident took place when a Dhaka-bound passenger bus from Sherpur skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch at around 7 am

Criminal wins unopposed in

but did not elaborate.

KCC elections STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Alleged criminal Asaduzzaman Litu has been unofficially declared elected Khulna City Corporation (KCC) commissioner from Ward No

He was declared elected as his wife Sabina Zaman Shampa, the only contestant, withdrew her nomination paper vesterday.

None but Litu and his wife filed nomination papers on October 6 for contesting the October 29 byelection in the ward.

Litu, allegedly involved in many crimes including murders is the chargesheeted prime accused in iournalist Shamsur Rahman murder case.

He was elected from this ward in KCC election held on April 25 this

But the seat was declared vacant Mohammad with their troupe memas he failed to take oath by surrenderbers from Nrityanchal performed ing to court in connection with the Shamsur Rahman murder case According to the returning officer for the by-polls, Litu must take oath within 30 days of gazette notification of the election result. If he fails, by-elec-tion will

Remarks on Prophet sparks off violence in India: 8 killed

A similar strike called by

Muslim bodies in India's financial

capital, Bombay, however, ended

the town and put up a barricade on

the road near railgate no 2 protest-

ing assault on a garments trader by

extortionists led by Ziku Khan

demanded Tk two lakh from

readymade garment trader Ramzan

in Deobogh area at noon. As he

refused to give in to their demand,

the extortionists beat him merci-

in the area came out of their shop.

rushed to the spot and chased the

Hearing the news, other traders

The traders later took out a

procession and blocked traffic on

the road for an hour. They also held

a rally at Deobogh demanding

immediate arrest of the extortion-

Photogenic Bangladesh 2002 has

been running on an annual basis

since its inception in the nineties

under brand names of the products of

two of the leading business and press

houses of the country, Lever

ducted with the ten chosen finalists

from a total of 7,000 initial candi-

priority to women

This year's pageant was con-

Brothers, and Ananda Dhara.

Dhaka gives

lessly and ransacked his shop.

According to sources, a gang of

a gang of extortionists yesterday.

N'gang traders

peacefully.

DHAKA SUNDAY OCTOBER 13, 2002

AFP, Mumbai

Sectarian violence in India's Solapur city, triggered by a protest over comments by US Baptist minister Jerry Falwell against the Prophet Mohammed, continued early yesterday leaving eight dead and over 90 injured, a police

protest extortion, spokesman said. "Sectarian clashes have been block traffic reported throughout the night in which three more deaths have **OUR CORRESPONDENT,** N'gang been reported as well as several "When we are trying to resolve injured," a police officer from Traders brought out a procession in

Solapur said. The official said of the five killed Friday, four died in police firing and one in mob violence. Police had used gunfire Friday

on crowds of rioters of Muslim youths who clashed with groups of Hindus as the protest against Falwell's remarks turned violent. "The situation at the moment remains tense and curfew has

Meanwhile, six independent been extended 'til noon today. Additional paramilitary forces legislators and two from the have been called as a security Communist Party of India (Marxist) measure," the spokesman added said they had reached a "broad Violence in Solapur had understanding" on whom to support, erupted when a crowd of Muslim youths gathered in the city on One of the independents, former

Friday to protest Falwell's remarks, in which he called Islam's founder "a terrorist". Various Muslim bodies in the city had called for a strike to pro-

Injured trader Ramzan was test these remarks. However, the admitted at a local clinic. strike turned violent when the None was arrested in connection mob clashed with some Hindu with the incident till 5 pm yesterday.

aana

Adore beauty

The Lux-Ananda Dhara Miss

and helped the winners wear the inscribed badges.

Five other finalists of the event were Sazia Afreen, Teresa Mustafiz Chaity, Tanin Tanha Rahman Snigdha, Nila Nazneen and Mumtaz Alia Akbari Protyasha.

FROM PAGE 12

specialties

The evening was further enlivened by the presence of several renowned media personalities and various performances. Afzal Hussain conducted the proceedings through his delightful hosting. Several top cultural artists of the country also entertained the huge audience. Singers Ayub Bacchu, Tapan Chowdhury, Kumar Bishwajeet, Baby Nazneen, Shafin of 'Miles',

issues, UNGA Sumona Haq, Bappa Mazumdar of 'Dalcchut'. Tishma, a teenage percommittee told former, film stars Poppy and Ferdous BSS. New York and others presented some magnificent numbers in their respective

Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhurv. Shamim Ara Nipa and Shibli Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh to the United Nations. has said that Bangladesh accorded top priority to issues concerning

Women.

try through the establishment of a National Security Council. 2 cops killed as van falls into

ditch at Keraniganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT Two policemen were killed and nine others critically injured when their nickup van fell into a roadside ditch at Chunkutia Nazirabad in Keraniganj while speeding towards the Dhaka-Mawa highway yester-

day morning. The dead are Sub-inspector Shahabuddin, 45 and Constable Rafigul Islam, 35.

The police team from Keraniganj thana was rushing towards Rajendrapur where agitated people barricaded the Dhaka-Mawa high-

decide together." Sofi has already announced he and like-minded independents would support any party that works for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute

said.

preed the activists to sit and rise for 50 times holding their ears. The cadres also bound the victims' mouth with cloths and beat up activists mercilessly with iron rods till they got fainted, informed the sources.

Later at around 3.30 am, the three were released with a threat from the ICS cadres that if they inform the incident to the JCD leaders and journalists they will be killed.

A group of JCD workers led by Anwar Hossain Uzzal, the member secretary of the RU unit of JCD, called on the RU Proctor Professor Dr Nurul Absar and Student Advisor Professor Rafigul Islam and lodged a complain with both of them and demanded punishment of the responsible people.

Talking to some journalists stationed at RU, Ahmed Muyeed Shimul, conveynor of the council preparatory committee, requested them not to report on the incident as the JCD leaders were trying to negotiate the issue with the ICS leaders.

RU proctor professor Dr Nurul Absar told journalists that legal action will be taken against the culprits after proper investigation.

Hope to diabetics

the meeting.

reiection.

Kandeel said.

nology at City of Hope

FROM PAGE 12 according to City of Hope.

Experts have been able to coax slet stem cells -- precursors of insulin-producing cells -- to mature. Stem cells are the body's master cells, and the embryonic versions are considered especially powerful.

Stem cell researchers can use adult stem cells found in the blood or other tissue, but they are rare and difficult to work with; they can try to transform normal adult cells; or they can use stem cells from embryos. which have the potential to become any kind of cell in the body at all.

Some groups oppose using this last group of cells on ethical grounds, at least from humans, and the debate is only partly settled in the United States and some other countries.

'One of the critical problems is the islet shortage and the need to explore new sources," said Dr. Craig Smith, associate professor of transplant surgery at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine and associate director of the Southern California Islet Cell Resource Centre.

Ultimately, an individual's own aenes will likely be cloned, inserted into an egg which is then allowed to develop as an early stage embryo, producing the crucial stem cells, said Dr. Fouad Kandeel, director of the department of diabetes and endocri-

A relief train came in for rescue operation shortly after the accident. But, rail-communications on the route, which was snapped after the accident, could not be restored till late afternoon.

With vesterday's derailment, the number of train accidents over the last four days in the eastern zone of railway rose to three, injuring a total of about 90 people. The accidents occurred in Comilla, Gazipur and Mymensingh.

Petty criminals FROM PAGE 12

prisoners in the next meeting of the cabinet committee for taking decision in this regard.

The jails were crammed with as many as 64,890 prisoners against their combined capacity of 24,538 inmates, according to a statistics of 2001. Housing and Public Works

Minister Mirza Abbas, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Muhammad Mujahid, cabinet secretary and other high officials attended

This method would solve the

There are drugs now available to

problem, seen with any transplant of

foreign tissue, of immune system

suppress the immune systems of

organ transplant patients, but they

are expensive and have side effects,

contact with CPA: Morshed

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said Bangladesh as an active member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) maintains close contact with the association in order to benefit from exchange of parliamentary experiences with other member countries.

He was exchanging views with the visiting delegation of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. UK Branch. Led by Thomas Cox, MP, the delegation called on him at his office in the evening.

Welcoming the delegation, Morshed Khan said Bangladesh shared a great part of its history together with the British parliament. Morshed Khan said Bangladesh

would host the 49th conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in 2003 and this demonstrated Bangladesh's sincere commitment to institutionalising the democracy in the country through a solid and efficient parliamentary system.

The leader of the delegation said the British Parliament has relationship of friendship and trust with the Bangladesh Parliament which he mentioned would be further cemented through this visit, said a press release.

Sarbahara Party

dead in Rajbari

A Sarbahara Party leader was

killed by unidentified gunmen in

Goutompur Ghat area in

of village Goutompur in the dis-

sprayed bullet on Haris and fled

the scene. He died on the spot.

leader of the outlawed party.

Police said the gunmen

leader shot

BSS, Rajbari

upazila on Friday.

trict

"There are a multitude of ways to reprogram the immune system to accept a transplant. But we have an existing treatment for this disease -insulin -- that is not toxic and not expensive and a new treatment cannot be more daunting than the existing one," the City of Hope scientists explained.

"This dilemma is forcing scientists to think very hard about strategies for immune tolerance without having to go to the big guns. The multi-centre trial of the islet

cell transplants, sponsored by the NIH Immune Tolerance Network, is currently underway, with enrolment expected to complete this year.

"Our goal is to facilitate the efforts . to provide human islets and figure out the best way to generate functional islets." said Richard Knazek a medical officer at the NIH National Centre for Research Resources.

"Knowing the American mind, they have never allowed fundamentalists to come to power." said Aslam Beg. "But instead of sidelining them, if you bring them in here (Islamabad) there are strong forces who can restrain them.'

If they are excluded "that will be the beginning of a very unstable situation," he said. "Today the whole frontier regions are very volatile... I shudder to think."

General Musharraf took power in a military coup three years ago and has since become a key Western ally in the war on terror ism

But despite promising to hand over executive powers to the prime minister after this election, he retains considerable authority as president. after changing the constitution to give himself the right to dismiss parliament.

He also institutionalised the role of the military in running the counway after a six-year-old boy was crushed by a bus.

As the speeding police vehicle approached the Buriganga Second Bridge on the highway, it skidded off be held again in Ward No 24 the road and fell into a ditch.

People nearby rescued the policemen and took them to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Shahabuddin and Rafigul Islam dead

Critically_injured Sub-inspector Qayum, Probationary Subinspector Forman Ali, constables Afaz. Yaad Ali, Kamrul Islam. Borhan, Nasiruddin, Javed and the vehicle's driver Kamran were admitted to the hospital. Local people said the minor boy,

Ridoy, was run over by a Dhakabound bus --Gungchil -- at about 8:30am. Sources claimed that the police

vehicle met with the accident as its brake did not function properly

Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Haider Ali, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of police Moiammel Haque and SP Dhaka Khoda Box Chowdhury visited the spot.

Litu is evading arrest though he allegedly moves at large. Sources said he maintains a well organised gang of armed criminals and has strongholds in West Baniakhamar area of city and in the Sundarbans.

WASA line FROM PAGE 12

start the repair works." he added.

When asked about the leakage, Wasa Chief Engineer Kazi Mohammad Sheesh said ' I was informed about it one week back and have sent the file to the managing director to be approved"

'I am hoping the repair works will start soon', he added.

This is the second of such leakages to have occurred. The previous one was at the Sayedabad Janapath Sarak in a WASA distribution pipe under Zone-1.

some outstanding dance numbers before the packed gathering women.

Ferdous, Poppy, Mila Hussain the Third (Social) Committee of the and Shuvra Das also performed some entertaining dance sequences. UN General Assembly on Friday on the agenda "Advancement of However, special attraction of the

evening remained in magician Jewel Aich's playing of the flute and a soulful violin performance by Dr. Khusrat Momtaz Ruposhi.

Designer Homaira Khan was in charge of the pageants' costumes while Tupa coordinated choreogra-

'I wish to become a model and actress and this very achievement of mine will help me to a great extent to reach the target', said a beaming Kushum Sikder to the press while briefly elaborating on her future plans.

The guests included among others, top management of Lever Brothers (Bangladesh) Ltd., Editor of Ananda Dhara Shahadat Chowdhury, several celebrities--Alamgir, Asaduzzaman Noor, Runa Laila, Ali Zaker and others. Editors and other top-ranking journalists were also present to grace the occa-

regard and said that Bangladesh was a state party to almost all international instruments relating to women's rights He also pointed to the harmonious partnership between the civil society and the government in Bangladesh

He was speaking at a debate at

Dr Iftekhar referred to the commit-

ment of the government and the

various legislation adopted in this

to further common objectives. He called upon the international community to address with utmost seriousness the many concerns that still remain, such as the various forms of discrimination against women.

"What the world needs is not so much new legislation as a new mind set. It is the role of women in our age that will be the litmus test of how civilisation has evolved in contemporary times," he said.

Khaleda talks tough on crime Nepal to use

FROM PAGE 1

She warned the main opposition that none would be spared if found involved in crime and violence.

In reference to recent attacks on Puja Mandap in some districts. Khaleda said that, as in the past, the AL was behind these incidents. "The AL basically has no respect for any religion. Even when in power, they killed people belonging to the minority communities."

The prime minister also criticised the main opposition for undertaking a number of projects against the interest of the country and its peo-

"These projects have now become a huge burden. The people will have to pay back the loans decade after decade and the government will have to give away crores in subsidy every year if the projects are implemented."

Kalikapur union of Pangsha Khaleda said her government "has cancelled many projects to The victim was identified as save the country from a huge bur-Harris Sheikh. 50, son of Yead Ali den of debts".

> "It is not possible to understand from outside how the AL ruined the country during its five-year rule. They have pushed every sector to the verge of complete breakdown "

Locals said Haris was a local Since assumption of office, the government has been working

relentlessly to strengthen economy, establish rule of law, curb corruption and check crime and violence. "We have achieved significant success in many sectors.'

She listed a number of steps, which she claimed to be the major successes of the government. These include expansion of eduacv.

ment system, reforming the financial sector, increasing foreign exchange reserves and working for welfare of expatriate Bangladeshis.

"The government has taken the responsibility of education of every children and it is the duty of all parents to send their wards to schools," she said.

Khaleda said the government in the last one year has provided electricity connections to 3,000

villages, and installed 13,000kilometre electricity lines and 21 new power sub-centres, enhancing power generation and reducing load outage

The prime minister vowed her government will keep all its promises that ensure its return to power. "The AL must not come back to power if it continues anti-state and anti-government propaganda, and politics of destruction and conspir-

BNP leaders Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Saifur Rahman, Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain. Jamaat leaders Matiur Rahman Nizami, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and ATM Azharul Islam, Bangladesh Jatiya Party leaders Naziur Rahman Maniur, Kazi Firoz Rashid and Saifur Rahman, Islami Oikya Jote leaders Azizul Haq, Fazlul Hag Amini and Abdur Rab Yusufi and city BNP general secretary Abdus Salam addressed the meeting among others. Ministers, MPs and top ranking leaders of the four-party alliance attended the meeting, chaired by Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka, who is also president of the city BNP.

FROM PAGE 1

export-import purposes. "But they could not use the port mainly due to lack of facilities at the Bangla Bandha land port in Panchagarh district," he said.

"They have requested us to expand the facilities at the Mongla Port and build a full- fledged land port at Bangla Bandha for boosting economic ties between the two neighbours," Sohel Ahmed said. Meantime, the government has

> also decided to build infrastructure at the Bangla Bandha to provide the land port facilities both to India and Nepal.

Although the government had decided to provide transit facilities to Nepal through Bangla Bandha long ago, this could not be implemented mainly because of non-cooperation from India, according to sources. But a high official in the shipping

ministry told The Daily Star that India has changed its stance and agreed to co-operate in smooth movement of Nepalese goods through its land.

The Bangla Bandha land port was formally opened in 1997 for providing transit facilities to Nepal. The trade through this point could not take off due to non-cooperation from India and lack of infrastructure. In absence of immigration,

customs and banking facilities at Bangla Bandha, Nepalese goods had to wait long before being cleared through. Customs, immigration and bank officials used to come everyday from Panchagarh, which is around 40 kilometers away, to the

And so, within a short span of time, the port fell into disuse.

"If we can set up the basic facilities at Bangla Bandha, trade between Bangladesh and Nepal would shoot up," the commerce secretary said.

To build port facilities at Bangla Bandha, the government has already acquired 10 acres of land, sources said. It would cost only about Tk 40 lakh to Tk 50 lakh to set up the basic infrastructure there. sources said.

According to the commerce ministry, the annual trade between the two countries account for a piffling \$10 million in favour of Bangladesh.

"If the port facilities are built at Bangla Bandha, it would also be very useful for boosting trade with the seven northeastern states of India." a commerce ministry source said.

cation, improvement in campus situation, empowerment of women, increase in healthcare facilities, removal of traffic jam,

improvement in environment, arranging alternative sources of water in the arsenic-affected areas, generation of power, con-

struction of flats, expansion of telecommunication, closure of the Adamjee Jute Mills, employment generation, manpower export, strengthening of local govern-