BIRDEM Hospital and then to the deceased's Kalabagan residence. His first namaz-e-janaza was held after Esha prayers at Dolphin Mosque in Kalabagan.

President lajuddin Ahmed, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina led a long list of mourners who gave condolence messages at the death of Azad, country's first as well as the immediate-past foreign

Earlier, Azad, who was thought to have died after doctors failed to feel his pulse for seven minutes yesterday morning, was put on a respirator. Alarge number of people gathered in front of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) on the third floor of the BIRDEM Hospital at Shahbagh, as words spread fast that the veteran Awami League (AL) leader had died in the morning.

However, Azizus Samad, the

eldest son of Azad, after discussion with Prof Omar Faruk of the ICU, decided that his father's treatment would continue in line with the doctor's advice.

Finance and Planning Minister
M Saifur Rahman, British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury, Hasina's son Sajib Wazed Joy, AL senior leaders Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Amir Hossain Amu, Abul Mal Abdul Muhith, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, Chief Whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Opposition Chief Whip Abdus Shahid and other leaders and supporters of the Awami League and its front organisations went to the hospital and his Kalabagan residence.

Azad left behind three sons --Azizus Samad Don, Atikus Samad and Toufiq Samad -- and daughter Nafiza Noor Shilpi to mourn him. His wife Noor Nahar Samad died in

Azad, a legend in Bangladesh politics, first suffered major ailment in August last year and was treated in Chennai, India. He was later admitted to Sikdar Medical in Dhaka for a month before he had a medical check-up again in Chennai in November last year. He fell ill upon placing wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar in the early hours of February 21 and since then had been under doctors' care at the BIRDEM Hospital.

Loved and admired by leaders and workers of all parties for his wit and good sense of humour, Azad served his party until the last days of his life. Even when he was in hospital, Azad discharged the responsibilities of acting party chief in absence of AL President Sheikh Hasina, who only recently was away in the US and the Philippines

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil rang up Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury to ask for a helicopter for flying the mortal remains of Azad to his village home in Sunamgani, sources said, Later, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia ordered for a helicopter to carry the body

Party and family sources said the body would be taken to the AL headquarters on Bangabandhu Avenue at 9:00am today to facilitate people to pay their last respect to the leader. A namaz-e-janaza would be held at Paltan Maidan at 10:30am before the body is flown to Sunamganj with a stopover in Sylhet. Azad's body would be flown báck to Dhaka for burial next to his wife's grave at Banani Graveyard. CONDOLENCES

day expressed deep condolences at the death of the former foreign minister and veteran parliamentar

In a condolence message, the president respectfully recalled the contribution of the late leader to the country's democratic movement and to efforts to give parliamentary democracy an institutional shape.

In a separate condolence message, Prime Minister and Leader of the House Khaleda Zia vesterday expressed her deep shock at the death. She recalled the contribution of Azad to the country's independence and democratic movement.

'The nation has lost an experienced leader and parliamentarian following his demise... This loss is irreparable to the nation." observed the prime minister Leader of the Opposition and AL

President Sheikh Hasina last night said the nation lost a glorious son of the soil, an experienced parliamentarian and a symbol of national conscience at his demise.

"And personally I lost my guardian and a far-sighted and trusted colleague." she said in a message

"With his death an era came to an end... an irreparable vacuum has been created in the national

The AL chief said the contribution of Azad as one of the pioneers of Bangalee's national struggle and

movement for vote and food will be written in golden letters in history. Azad had also played a glorious role in reconstruction of the country after independence and giving the

foreign policy of a newborn country foundation under the guidelines of Bangabandhu, Hasina continued "After the killing of Bangabandhu, he played a leading

role in reviving the stream of proliberation fight against the reactionary forces and establishing people's right to vote and food.'

In a separate condolence mes-

sage, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan termed Azad's death a loss of experienced parliamentarian and politician. LIFE SKETCH

Son of late Shariatullah, Azad was born on January 15 in 1926 at Burakhali village of Jagannathpur Upazila of Sunamganj district. After graduating from MC College in Sylhet, he studied law and history

at Dhaka University. In his chequered political life lasting six and a half decades, Azad played a significant role in the struggle for language, democracy and independence and in the

He spent most of his time doing opposition politics and went under ground and to prison to establish people's rights. He won parliament elections in 1970 during the then East Pakistan and in 1973, 1991,

a political advisor to the

Muiibnagar Government in exile in

Bangabandhu government. After

the brutal assassination of

Bangabandhu and most of his family members on August 15,

1975, Azad was arrested and jailed

along with four national leaders. On

his release in 1978, he returned to

President of East Pakistan Jubo League and was AL's Labour

Affairs Secretary between 1955 and 1957. The then Pakistani

Government attached his property

and issued a arrest warrant in 1954. He was also arrested in 1956, 1958

Sunamganj Mahakuma Muslim Chhatra Federation. He was arrested during that time for his involvement in the anti-British

movement. He was elected Sylhet

District Muslim Chhatra Federation

Member of Legislative Assembly on

Jukta Front ticket. Azad was never

defeated in election except in the

1986 polls under the martial law

the movement for neutral caretaker government in 1991 as Deputy

Kuwaiti minister

money from the concerned compa-

nies' bank deposits and pay salaries

within 15 days of receiving a com-

Hajji's comments came after

1,000 Bangladeshi workers, angry

over unpaid wages, stormed their

causing extensive damage and

slightly injuring two people.

The employees of a Kuwaiti

cleaning company protested they

had not received their pay for the

labour affairs Hamad al-Medhadhi

said in statements vesterday that the

company had only failed to pay the

salaries for two months and pledged to

the Gulf state's largest medical

complex began an open strike on

Sunday over non-payment by a

private company on contract with

the health ministry.
Parliament's human rights panel

has summoned Hajji and the acting health minister, Sheikh Ahmed Fahd al-

Sabah, for a meeting next week to discuss the situation of foreign workers.

ter to go to an empty room of the

college at 9:15am when she lost her

she was not finding her exercise

book, the teacher asked her to look

for it in room No. 47. When she went

there, the teacher started touching

different parts of her body," said

Mahmuda, a resident of Lalmohan

advances, the girl ran away to her

of the matter, who discussed it with

her colleagues including the head-

mistress the same day. The head-mistress called the girl to her office

and asked her to submit a written

steps against the teacher. She also

asked her not to disclose the inci-

dent to others, according to the FIR.

she disclosed the incident to me on

Sunday and the incident became an

open secret later," Mahmuda said in

She alleged that several other such

complaints were lodged earlier

against Ruhul Amin, but the authori-

ties never took any steps against

Tata's proposal for a 15-year Tax

Holiday facility and duty exemption

for machinery import as fiscal mea-

sures, and decided that the govern-

ment may not offer any special

package facility to Tata sidelining

the state policy on investment, the

mittee and Bol Executive Chairman

Mahmudur Rahman said the gov-

ernment is working out a roadmap

for speedy implementation of the

over Tata's intention to set the

projects in remote areas of the

country, where any virtual industrial-

isation is yet to take place. "We are

interested to decentralise industrial

as well as infrastructure develop-

ment projects in the country. The

Tata investment may change the

industrial shape of the agrarian

extend a gas pipeline from Iswardi

to Khulna if the gas is supplied for

MW power station, a steel mill with

an annual capacity of 420,000

tonnes and a one million-tonne

fertiliser unit in Bangladesh.

The government may also

Tata intends to set up a 1,000

Bangladesh," Rahman added.

He said the committee is happy

Tata investment proposal.

Member Secretary of the com-

"As the teachers took no step

The headmistress assured her of

complaint, which she did.

the first information report.

Four govt

FROM PAGE 16

sources said.

Alarmed at his indecent

She informed her class teacher

"When my daughter told him that

200 students

FROM PAGE 16

science exercise book.

Shah Street in Narinda.

Another 450 Asian cleaners at

pay all due wages within three days.

But assistant undersecretary for

embassy in Kuwait on Sunday

Leader of the Opposition.

government in 1996.

FROM PAGE 16

plaint, he said.

past five months.

Minister of the Sheikh

He played an important role in

Azad was appointed Foreign

In 1954, he was first elected

President for 1944-48 tenure.

In 1940, he was the President of

In 1953, Azad became acting

active politics.

He became the first Foreign

FROM PAGE 16 killing of our colleagues," COAB 1996 and 2001 after independ-President Anwar Parvez told reporters at a sit-in demonstration in the As a special envoy of city. "I hope that the customers Bangladesh government, Azad travelled across the globe mobiliswould support our protest ing world opinion for the War of Independence in 1971. He was

Satellite

The COAB will also hold a grand rally in the city on May 2 and announce its next protest programme. Meanwhile, law enforcement Minister of Bangladesh and later Agriculture Minister of the

officials said they believe that internal conflicts among cable operators was the reason behind the killing as many want to establish supremacy over a designated area. Three cable traders were killed in

last one year.

There are some 560 cable operators providing satellite television connection to around two lakh

### Murder charge

FROM PAGE 16 All the accused pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court after the charges were read

out to them. The case filed with Kotwali Police Station says a group led by Selim went to the Jubo Dal office at Mitford

Balughat on March 30 last year. Selim rebuked Hannan, who was talking to his party fellows, and shot him in the abdomen, while his men also opened indiscriminate fire, the

case says. Locals rushed the victim to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH), where doctors pronounced him dead.

A mob caught one from the group, Buddhu, and lynched him on the spot. Mohammad Rafigul Islam,

president of Jubo Dal Lalbagh thana unit, filed a murder case against Selim and seven others the next The investigation officer pressed

charges against Selim and others

## Funding terrorism

FROM PAGE 16

regional group comprising Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Nepal and Bhutan that cover a population of nearly 1.3 billion.

The sub-group will discuss the issue of financing terrorism in view of the alarming rise of the malady in the region.

There are allegations that external sources fund insurgents in India. Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar.

The member countries will discuss the current situation, and plan out ways and means on how to cut financing the terrorists, sources

Bangladesh has already approved 11 of the 12 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) conventions complying with a UNSC resolution passed after the September 11 attack on the United States.

The government will soon approve the 12th one relating to the financing of terrorists.

#### Charges pressed in the FIR that on April 21, science teacher Ruhul Amin told her daugh-

FROM PAGE 1 On December 25, 2004, activists of Jamaat-ul Muiaheedina hurled four bombs at an open stage drama conducted by the Sakhina Opera party at Takier bazar under Palashbari upazila. One of the three exploded in the crowd, leaving seven people critically injured.

Badsha Mia, officer-in-charge of the Palashbari police station and the investigation officer of the case. submitted the charge sheet to the Gaibandha Magistrate court.

Police arrested 22 persons in connection with the blast, but the other 17 were exempted from the charge sheet after the investigation found they were not involved in the bomb blast.

Galib is also shown as the main accused in another bomb blast case involving an attack on the Mohimaganj offices of Brac. The case is still under trial.

### Scholarship

disaster management reviewed the implementation of the current budget and the plan for the next.

Earlier in another meeting with a faction of NGOs, the minister agreed to consider NGOs' involvement in the service-delivery system to deliver government support to the poor in remote villages.

'They're interested to help reach services like fertiliser distribution and ensure optimum utilisation of land," he told the journalists after the meeting.

Like others in the series, the minister said, the NGOs also stressed the need for enhanced allocation for agriculture, particularly on agriculture research. The minister invited them to come up with specific areas of agriculture research

Leaders of the Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh (FNB) requested the minister also to involve them in the foreign-aided projects to strengthen supervision in the remote areas using their vast networks, meeting sources said.

They said the NGOs requested an increase in budgetary allocation for fund raising for NGO Foundation, for local government bodies, union parishads, social safety-net programmes, and a special provision for monga-hit areas.

They also sought budgetary measures for containing prices of

essentials at a tolerable limit. Representatives of the foreign and local NGOs present at the meeting included BRAC. Asa. ActionAid, Save the Children, Muslim Aid, Caritas and Dhaka Ahsania Mission.

## Govt fails to bring

Nirapatta Forum, a forum for workers'

government regarding their by the building collapse, which occurred allegedly because of poor construction and left 74 workers dead and more than 200 injured.

president of Karmoiibi Nar. a women's organisation, said. Compensation was a key topic of

due compensation to the families of the dead and injured. Soma Islam, of the Bangladesh Legal Aid and services Trust (BLAST), recommended in her keynote paper that the maximum compensation for the injured workers must continue until they have fully

compensation should be determined according to their working capability-

age." she said. Dr. Hamida Hossain, founder and member of the Ain o Salish Kendra, called upon the country's electronic and print media to play a vital role by pressuring the govern-ment to bring to justice those

responsible for the Savar tragedy. Representatives from different Sramik Nirapatta Forum member organisations, including the Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA), Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Manabadhikar Bastabayan Sangsta, Nejera Kori and Bangladesh Jatya Mahila Ainjibi Samiti also attended the meeting.

The Sramik Nirapatta Forum served a legal notice on three factory owners and government organisations on April 24 on behalf of the dead and injured workers.

#### 7 killed

FROM PAGE 1

injuries soon after admission at the CMCH. Their identities could not be

Those who died on the spot are Shipon Barua, 36, Lucky Akhtar, 24, Md Abdul Kader, 40, Akhtar Hossain, 22, and Kabir Hossain, 22.

## Rajuk reform must

roundtable on necessity of enforcing building and zoning codes, he said real estate business has become more important to Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Raiuk) than monitoring implementation of construction plans.

Institute of Architects Bangladesh (lab), Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Dhanmondi Paribesh Unnyan Jote (DPUJ) jointly organised the discussion at the Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (Bilia). Though designated, it is imprac-

ticable for the capital development agency to examine building designs efficiently as well as ensure implementation of the approved plans, Maniruzzaman Some agency other than Rajuk

has to be tasked with monitoring building construction as per the approved plan and building codes, said Abdul Malek Shikder, a civil President Mubasshar Hussain said, "No where in the world an approving agency also implements the plans.'

Seconding the view. lab

Hussain emphasised strict implementation of the existing building codes and laws to avoid any more disaster like that of the factory building collapse in Savar.

"It's a mindless practice that a building constructed for a certain purpose is being frequently used for other purposes," remarked Muhammed Mohius Sunnah, a lawyer. "We must consider how safe and proper it is to use a residential building suddenly as a factory or a university," he added.

Former justice Kazi Ebadul Haque, Architect Zarina Hossain, Salma Shafi of DUPJ and a number of NGO representatives also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Prof Nazrul Islam of Dhaka

## EC still sits idle

early 2007, the sources said.

According to the 2001 census, 67 constituencies have less than two lakh voters each, 191 constituencies have over two lakh voters and the rest 42 constituencies have more than three lakh to over six lakh

The discrepancies have made a mockery of the ceiling of election expenditure as the ceiling of election expenses is equal for all candidates contesting from small and big constituencies, sources said. They cited the example of India where the ceiling of election expenditure is not

Election Commissioner Munsef Ali however said it is not possible to make equal distribution of voters in all the constituencies.

In accordance with the Delimitation of Constituencies Ordinance, the EC has to delimit the territorial constituencies and publish the list of the demarcated constitu-

In 1995, the EC demarcated the areas of some constituencies and published a list of the 300 constituencies on May 30, 1995 that still stands valid.

When asked. EC officials said they have not taken any initiative for demarcation as they did not receive the census report. "When we will have any report on last census, we will consider demarcation of the parliamentary constituencies." said an official.

The officials said demarcation of all the constituencies is a huge task and it may need at least two years. Moreover, EC has to face political pressures and objections while demarcating any constituency.

The EC spent over one year in 1995 to complete minor demarca-

tions in the parliamentary constituencies against a large number of appeals and objections. The parliamentary constituencies

have wide differences in the number of voters. For example, Dhaka 1 and 2 has less than 2 lakh voters each while Dhaka 4 has about 5 lakh and Dhaka 5 has over 6 lakh voters. Similarly, Mymensingh 1 and 3

has less than two lakh voters while Mymensingh 4 has about 4 lakh voters. Gazipur 3 has 1.5 lakh voters while Gazipur 2 has 5.5 lakh

### SCBA to bovcott

FROM PAGE 1 of the Supreme Court."

Former SCBA presidents Abdul Baset Majumder and Ozair Farooq, SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, SASP Member Secretary Subrata Chowdhury, Shahabuddin Ahmed, Shah M Jahurul Huq, Sirajul Huq, Fazle Rabbi, Nurul Islam Sujan, Mamtajuddin Mehedi and BA Rashid spoke at the meeting.

They alleged that the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has tarnished the image of the Supreme Court by appointing their activists as High Court judges

The SCBA has been boycotting Justice Faizee's bench from October 30 last year.

Bangladesh Bar Council on April 24 cancelled the enrolment certificate of Faizee for taking his certificate by providing false information to the council.

The SCBA observed a half-anhour sit-in yesterday morning in front of Supreme Court Annex Building as part of their protest against Faizee's performing of iudicial tasks.

## 50 die as train rams

hospital in the regior

**BUS DRIVER BLAMED** 

Hospital director Ananda Gunasekera, said 33 bodies were brought to the hospital and two of those injured died later. More bodies were lying at other hospitals, he

At the hospital morgue, relatives wailed over bodies of their loved ones as others lined up to check pictures of the dead stuck on a wall by police. The driver and conductor of the

bus were among the survivors, and were lying on opposite beds in the hospital. The driver had apparently broken an ankle and refused to Police said the two men had

stuck in the bus and people were

screaming for help. The driver of the

been arrested and were being guarded from angry survivors and relatives. "I saw body parts strewn along the track and more bodies were bus should be shot," said K Navaratne, a train passenger. Authorities blamed the crash on

what they said was the negligence of the bus driver. The bus was apparently trying to make its way past the barriers and

cross the tracks when it was hit by

the train, said Gunapala Vitanage, chief train controller in Colombo. Barriers at level-crossings in Sri Lanka stop road traffic on one lane and the opposite lane stays open, allowing many motorists to wind their way around them.

The loss-making, state-run Sri Lanka Railways operates an antiquated network built mostly during British colonial rule and has seen little investment since the island gained independence in 1948. The country's road and rail systems. like most of the rest of its

infrastructure, were further

neglected during two decades of

civil war since the early 1980s when

Tamil Tiger rebels launched a revolt

for a separate ethnic homeland

## against Saber UNB, Dhaka The High Court (HC) yesterday

quashed a graft case against Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to the Awami League (AL) Président Sheikh Hasina.

After hearing from both sides, a division bench comprising justices Sved Mohammad Dastagir Hossain and Mamnun Rahman delivered the

The now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption filed the case in December 2001, accusing former deputy minister for LGRD Saber Hossain Chowdhury of misappropriating 1,18,400 tons of wheat and 30,000 tons of rice allocated for rural during 1999-2000.

Advocate Mahbubey Alam appeared for Chowdhury while Deputy Attorney General Altafur Rahman stood for the government.

#### Khulna journos FROM PAGE 1 outlaws tactfully saving their godfa-

"We demand fresh reinvestigation into both the murder cases to identify the killers as well as the master minds. The motive behind the killing must also be correctly mentioned in the chargesheets after reinvestigation," said the statement.

Humayun's son Asit Kabir has also demanded a fresh probe into the killing of his father.

Editor the local daily Dainik Janmabhumi Humayun was killed in a bomb attack on June 27 last year in front of his residence -cum-office at Haji Ismail road in the city.

Belaluddin, local bureau chief of the Dainik Sangram, was fatally injured in a bomb attack at Khulna Press Club on February 5 and died on February 11 while under treat-ment at the Combined Military

### BSF kills

FROM PAGE 1 44, when a BSF patrol team called him, locals said.

As Rahman did not respond, the BSF troops entered the no-man's land, held and shot him to death, The Indian border guards then

went away leaving the body behind lying on the spot, locals said, adding, after about an hour, at 7:00am, the BSF men returned to the spot and took away the body into India. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) battal-

ion commander Lt Col Munim confirmed the killing, terming it brutal. He said the local BDR company commander has lodged a strong protest with his Indian counterpart against the killing and asked for a flag meeting. But BSF did not respond of returned the body of the hapless

farmer until 5:45pm yesterday. He said soon after the incident BDR troops in Satkhira were put on

high alert. Villagers in the border areas said they are in the grip of fright and tension, as BSF has deployed additional troops at some points including Shoja Danga, Kaijuri, Amudia and Hakimpur.

CARCASS RETURNED

BSS reports from Lalmonirhat: BSF at a company commander level flag meeting near Kaliganj border in the northwestern district returned the body of a Bangladeshi youth to the police yesterday morning.

Uttam Kumar, 25, was abducted and shot dead by BSF troops on Monday noon.

The commanders of the BDR company at Doikhawa and the BSF company at Kaitar Bari started the flag meeting at 11:00am, sources at BDR and police and locals said. BSF handed over Kumar's body

Kaligani Police Station in presence of BDR personnel at the meeting that ended at 11:20am. Later in the afternoon, elder brother of the victim Dilip Kumar

to Sub-Inspector Solaiman Ali of

received the body from police. Earlier on Tuesday, BSF returned another body, that of Ashraful, 25, a Bangladeshi farmer, at a similar flag meeting near Haripur border in Thakurgaon district. BSF troops shot him to death Sunday night while he was working in his Boro field

### Ahmadiyya

FROM PAGE 16

spoke at the function chaired by Maulana Ehsanur Rahman. The IKNMB Satkhira unit also declared a month-long agitation as

part of their campaign against

Ahmadiyya sect. It held a rally and brought out a procession in the district town yesterday morning. The IKNMB leaders at the rally criticised a section of national dailies for running a series of "false' reports on IKNMB. They also threat-

ened journalists of dire consequences for the anti-IKNMB reports. Meanwhile, a new organisation formed by the members of civil "Sampradayik Samprittee Rakkha Committee" [Committee to maintain communal harmony] held a rally and brought out a procession in the town vesterday.

Speakers at the rally criticised the attack on Ahmadiyyas and the fresh threat by the IKNMB. They submitted a memorandum to the prime minister through Satkhira Deputy Commissioner seeking protection of the Ahmadiyyas Religious bigots of IKNMB on

April 17 attacked the Ahmadiyya community, injuring over 50 people including women and children, and looted at least 10 houses at Sundarban Bazar of Shyamnagar upazila.

Two Ahmadivva members on Tuesday filed separate cases in court accusing the IKNMB members

# Dhaka-Delhi ties dip

people are against Bangladesh and they are trying to project Bangladesh as a fundamentalist state, the secretary was quoted as saving at the meeting. Committee member and Awami League lawmaker Syed Ashraful Islam told the meeting that the

> barbed-wire fence on the frontier, he Ashraful suggested trustbuilding steps to improve the relations. He said Dhaka must dispel Delhi's allegations that arms are being smuggled into India using Bangladesh as a

relations with India are now at an all-

time low. Border tension is mounting

as India is determined to build

gents are running operations from Bangladesh. Ashraful pointed out that the prime minister has been delivering public speeches against India which would not help improve the relations

transit and that anti-India insur-

with the country. The sources said the AL lawmaker protested the foreign secretary's remarks against India and said the foreign ministry is guided by a fundamentalists-run newspaper, an allegation that the foreign minis-

ter refuted A BNP lawmaker also told the meeting that the prime minister should not deliver anti-India speech in public meetings, meeting sources

Committee member and former

army chief Mahbubur Rahman expressed concern over the prevailing border tension. He told the meeting that India was not so desperate in the past about barbed-wire encing on the Bangladesh border. Mahbubur, also chairman of the

parliamentary standing committee

on defence ministry, said when he

was the director general of

Bangladesh Rifles, India had

attempted to build barbed-wire India's politicians, media and fence but shelved its plan in the face

of resistance. Meeting sources said BNP lawmaker Redwan Ahmed told the meeting that anti-India campaign is launched before any election and such campaign fuels border ten-sion. "Election is still far away, then

why the tension is increasing," a source quoted him as saying.
The foreign minister, however, told reporters that the meeting did not discuss the border tension. "We just discussed how to strengthen our economic diplomacy with neighbouring countries in the wake of

globalisation." Adviser to the foreign ministry Reaz Rahman told the meeting that the government did not change its foreign policy towards India. "We have not initiated any step to review the Ganges Water Treaty that was signed during the Awami League

"We want good relations with India. We have no alternative but to mprove diplomatic ties with India," he was quoted as saying at the

### Cops beat

FROM PAGE 16

The cab driver handed one of the constables Tk 10 before he left, they added. "As we protested the bribery, the

constable and some other policemen attacked and beat us severely ith batons," said Nazrul. Nazrul suffered injuries in his head and Mehedi in one leg and the left hand. They were taken to a local

clinic and then to the DMCH. "Police and ansar officers are trying to find out why the incident took place," Reena Begum, duty officer of the Airport Police Station, told The Daily Star.

seminar that out of four agreements,

two have been finalised -- one on

customs cooperation and another

He said the new Saarc secretary

general was asked to convene

meetings to finalise the remaining

two agreements on investment and

harmonisation of regional standards

of exportable commodities, multi-

modal transport for intra-regional

trade, formulation of a regional

energy policy and projects, as well

as harmonisation of macro-

economic policy for regional eco-

The foreign minister said despite

identification of some key areas for

cooperation and plans of action on

poverty alleviation, environment,

tion, none has been implemented in

terms of regional projects for lack of

elecommunications and informa-

The foreign minister suggested

on avoidance of double taxation.

## Saarc future depends

arbitration.

nomic integration.

About his meeting with Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the Afro-Asian Summit in Jakarta, Khan said he had requested the current Saarc chair to work out a new schedule to hold the stalled summit. He said Indian Prime Minister

Jakarta that India is willing to participate in the summit in Dhaka "sooner than later.' The foreign minister said collective regional approach is essential to overcome the challenges facing the Saarc nations in poverty alleviation, natural disaster

Manmohan Singh also told him in

post-MFA regime, inadequate FDI and emerging world energy crisis. Chaired by Biiss Director Mufleh R Osmany, the seminar was addressed by first Saarc secretary

general Abul Ahsan and former foreign secretary Shafi Sami. The foreign minister focussed on effective economic cooperation, saving that South Asia must realise a free trade area. Saarc progress will be measured by the timely implementation of Safta, a frame work agreement signed at the 12th

summit in Islamabad in 2003. However, Khan feared that Safta would not be implemented by the targeted date of January 1, 2006 because of slow progress in negotiations on four issuesrules of origin, sensitive lists, revenue loss compensation and technical assistance to Saarc LDCsBangladesh, Bhutan,

Nepal and the Maldives. He noted that Safta agreement alone will not be sufficient to realise a free trade area until non-tariff barriers are removed and trade facilitation measures put in place.

On the agreements to be signed

Depicting a grim picture of South Asian Development Fund, he said \$6million remained unutilised. The proposed Saarc poverty alleviation fund could be established to finance the poverty-related projects. Khan said the 13th summit will

the energy, tourism, health, education, and intra-regional investment. Abul Ahsan focussed on the 13th summit while Shafi Sami spoke of the importance of the Saarc in Bangladesh's perspective.

Some discussants pointed out

past Indo-Pak hostility impeding the

Saarc progress while some pleaded

for amending the charter to stop

frequent postponement of the

provide impetus for cooperation in

## at the 13th summit, Khan told the Ex-Nepal PM held

press freedom.

The king's takeover resulted in the suspension of civil liberties, detention of political leaders and curbs on

Deuba was taken from his home

in Kathmandu after midnight in a police car, officials said. Later, he was driven to the office of the Royal Commission for Corruption Control. "Some members of the family tried to stop the police from arresting

him," a police official said.

party spokesman Minendra Rijal told the news agency that dozens of Deuba's house in the middle of the night, cut off electricity and telephone lines and arrested him. 'This is inhuman." Riial said. Deuba had refused a summons

Nepali Congress (Democratic)

tion of public funds and the choice of contractors for a water project. An official of Deuba's Nepali Congress (Democratic) party said Deuba would not answer questions

from the commission, which wanted

to question him about the distribu

as the commission was unconstitu-INDIA CONCERNED India, Nepal's giant neighbour, expressed concern over Deuba's

detention as well as arrests of other

political leaders and student activ-

"We believe that these developments would further complicate efforts for a reconciliation between political parties and the Constitutional Monarchy in Nepal.' the Indian foreign ministry said in a

ists on Tuesday.

India's reaction came as media eports said New Delhi was planning to withdraw its suspension of arms supplies to Nepal after a meeting between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Gyanendra last week in Indonesia.

India, along with Britain, sus-

pended military aid to protest against the king's power grab.

Deuba's arrest. "The arrest of former prime minister Sher Bahadur Deuba...shows there is no let up on the repression of political activists " said the Asian Centre for Human Rights, a leading Indian rights

Human rights groups criticised

Deuba was placed under house arrest for several weeks following Gvanendra's February 1 move and only released last month. An official said the anti-graft body

wanted to question Deuba about the

alleged distribution of \$55,000 of

state funds to party workers during the Hindu festival of Dasain last October The panel, armed with sweeping powers to jail politicians and bureaucrats found guilty of tax evasion, smuggling and bribery, has

the ousted government facing the same charges. Deuba denies the charges, saving they were aimed at slandering politicals who had opposed Gyanendra's power grab.

already arrested a senior minister of

Gyanendra set up the commission saying he wanted to fight widespread corruption in impoverished Nepal. In new Maoist violence, about 100 rebels raided a state-owned

television station building on Wednesday in Dang, 400 km (250 miles) west of Kathmandu, damaging equipment, police said. Gyanendra, who is visiting Singapore, says the declaration of

emergency was needed to crush the Maoist rebels who want to establish a communist republic in the pictur-

# Samad Azad

**HC** quashes graft case

government yesterday, during a meeting organised by the Sramik

security, at Baily Road in the city. They apprised that they have so far received no response from the demands on behalf of those affected

"We have not received any response from the Prime Minister's office about our demands, including arresting the persons responsible for the garment collapse," Shirin Akhter,

ing the inaction of the concerned bodies for delaying the payment of

the discussion, with speakers blam-

recovered from their injuries and secured other jobs. "In the case of dead workers,