Govt plans to pass

coalition's main election pledges, sources said many top leaders of the BNP are against its implementation. "So, they favour passing the rest of the tenure of this government by dillydallying on this issue," said one source.

"The judiciary cannot be separated overnight; it is a long process. The coalition government is taking the process on," said a government

Since the SC, after rejecting the time petition, fixed February 1 for hearing the contempt of court charges, the government thinks it has got further time in a way, the source mentioned.

The government may file a review petition on the day of the hearing of the contempt charges, showing the progress made towards the separation

of the judiciary. Although the government claims it is working as per the 12-point SC directives, it has so far complied with only one -- formation of the judicial service commission. But there are allegations that the commission has not been formed in accordance with the court directives.

The SC directed formation of the commission with majority members from the judiciary but the government has appointed only two from the judiciary and the rest from the execu-

So, it is clearly contempt of court, several senior lawyers pointed out.

Other rules regarding formation of Bangladesh Judicial Service Pay Commission, Bangladesh Judicial Service (posting, promotion, leave) and Bangladesh Judicial Service (appointment, suspension, removal) and a draft bill for the amendment to

2 JP men killed

Witnesses said unidentified assailants hurled two bombs at the IP activists in front of Akdiarchar Club soon after the

Tariqul Islam, Nazrul's brother, told $reporters\,their\,enemies\,might\,have\,hired$ criminals to kill them over previous feud. brother to confirm his death.

Sources said locals gathered in the scene and tried to demonstrate with the bodies soon after the incident. Police however rushed to the spot and took the bodies to the district police headquar-

Contacted, the superintendent of police said, "I have sent forces to the spot." He however could not give details immediately

A tense situation is prevailing in the

Indo-Bangla

and activities of Indian insurgen groups in Bangladesh which is a major security threat to India and the safety security and stability of Bangladesh itself," an official spokesman of India said yesterday.

The spokesman said India would also suggest the need for convening a meeting of the Joint Boundary Working Group to address the pending issues relating to demarcation of land bound $ary, adverse \,possessions \,and \,enclaves.$

Other issues likely to be raised during the meeting are the cross-border illegal migration, proper implementa-tion and understanding of the 1975 border guidelines to allow border fencing and developmental works to be $under taken\,without\,any\,hindrance.$

India will also push for accords on extradition, mutual legal assistance, ways to combat drug trafficking and consular access during the talks

The Bangladeshi delegation, which arrived in the Indian capital vesterday evening, will meet Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil and External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh during

The last round of home secretarylevel talks between the two countries was held in Dhaka in September last

Arms smuggling and steps to carry out joint patrolling to check transborder crimes will also figure promi(CrPC) are lying with the Prime Minister's Office for her approval. These will be finalised after the presi-

dent approves those. The last caretaker government of 2001 prepared the rules during its tenure, the ruling coalition made changes to those after coming to power through the October 1, 2001 parliamentary election and spent a long time in the process.

When the government submitted those to the SC, it gave detailed guidelines on these and asked the government to prepare the rules in line with

But the government is yet to implement those. Nine bureaucrats now face contempt charges for distortion

of the SC guidelines Senior lawyer Mahmudul Islam, who was attorney general when the SC made the guidelines, said rejection of the time petition means the government has to implement the SC directives immediately. "It is a must now,"

'One contempt charge the court (SC) will hear on February 1 is for the government's past failure to implement its directives. If it fails to comply with those while the court has rejected its time petition, it will be another contempt," the former attorney general told The Daily Star last night.

AF Hassan Ariff, the immediate past attorney general, said, "I get an indication in the Supreme Court's last decision that the government will have to face a contempt hearing if it does not complete separation of the judiciary by February 1. It has got time till that date for implementation.'

ILLEGAL ENTRY

KL won't give transit visa to Bangladeshis

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Malaysian government has stopped issuing transit visa to Bangladeshis to check entry of illegal workers into that country, causing trouble to the businessmen and other travellers from Dhaka.

An official order from the Malaysian government issued on October 11, prohibiting Bangladeshi passport holders to arrive in Malaysia and take transit visas that usually allow them to stay for five days.

The visa rules for other countries including India, remain unchanged, according to a source.

Many businessmen from Bangladesh on their way to other countries via Kuala Lumpur take the opportunity to make a brief stopover in Malaysia for a night or two, but the new measure caused trouble to them.

'It is a government to government matter. I am not going to answer this question as it is a decision of the Malaysian government," Tan Sook King, immigration attaché in the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka told the news agency when asked about the new measure.

Earlier this week, the authorities in $Dubai\, stopped\, is suing\, visit\, visas\, to\, the$ citizens of Bangladesh as well as Somalia, Uzbekistan, Niger, Iraq and

Family visas for the people of the six nations will be issued only after the approval of the director general or the deputy director of the Dubai Naturalisation and Residency Department (DNRD).

However, the Malaysian government is now positively thinking of recruiting Bangladeshi workers as the emands are coming from employers.

The Malaysian home ministry is now carrying out a study on the necessity to recruit Bangladeshi workers following requests from employers, particularly from the manufacturing, services and textile industries, according to a report.

Recruitment of Bangladeshi workers was stopped in 2000 due to several factors, including social problems. The decision was taken following an advice of the police depart-

Maulana Masud

nently during the parleys.

Magistrate Mir Ali Reza allowed Hannan to make his submission without raising political matters.

Hannan told the court he is sick and prayed for treatment in a hospital. The court, however, told him the police will provide him treatment, if need be, during his remand.

Earlier, Hannan was placed on a 10day remand in the Farmgate blast case and five-day and seven-day remands in

the SC blast case MOULANA FARIDUDDIN MASUD

The former Islamic Foundation director, detained for his alleged links to the August 17 blasts, was shown arrested in a money laundering case and remanded

Detectives took Masud, arrested on August 22, and produced him before the

Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Dhaka seeking a five-day remand.

Detective Branch (DB) of police Inspector Sirajul Islam told the court Masud used to run an NGO, Islahul Muslemin Parishad Bangladesh, in

Rampura in the capital.

Masud spent Tk 73.77 lakh earned from different sources legally and illegally and kept it secret. He needs to be guizzed to find out the sources of the money, the DB man said in the forward-

Metropolitan Magistrate Nani Gopal Biswas rejected Masud's bail petition

 $and\,granted\,the\,remand.$ DB Inspector Mohammad Fazlul

Haq filed the case against Masud with

Khilgaon Police Station on October 23. Masud is also an accused in the

August 17 blast case filed with Airpor

MOBILE DETECTED

The ISD GrameenPhone number of Bangla Bhai has been located in Shibgani, reports our Staff Correspondent in Rajshahi. A man yesterday answered the cellphone after repeated attempts and identified himself as Jem from $Dadan chawk\,in\,Shibganj\,in\,Bogra.$

Asked how he got the number, the man turned off the phone. Bangla Bhai and his men snatched about 50 GP Pally Phones in Rajshahi during their anti-outlaw operations last

14 Myanmar

FROM PAGE 16

citizens, told journalists at the DB office that they paid Tk 2 lakh each to one Khairul Bashar, a manpower broker of Al Rahat Travels at Progressive Tower in Agrabad Commercial Area, who had promised to send them to Saudi Arabia.

Earlier on October 14, 25 suspected Rohingya militants were rounded up in Chittagong and later investigators found that they had close links to some local militant groups, including Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh and Ahle Hadith.

IOJ LEADER KILLING

Amini demands arrest of Jamaat leader Rahim

Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) Chairman Maulana Fazlul Haque Amini yester day accused police of trying to protect the Jamaat-e-Islami leaders involved in the murder of former Chittagong OJ president Iqbal bin Yaqub.

He also demanded withdrawal of CMP Assistant Commissioner Mizan Safiur Rahman within 48 hours and to bring Jamaat leader Abdur Rahim under further police remand to unearth the mystery behind the killing of Yaqub.

Amini was addressing a condolence meeting on the slain IOJ leader at the party office in the port city

The IOI chief has also threatened to go for a tougher movement if the authorities fail to ensure impartial inquiry into the killing and holding proper trial of the killers.

Jhenidah outlaw

abducted from Govindapur village by an armed gang around 12:30am yesterday. Later, he was shot dead in nearby Baluhar area, our Magura correspondent reports

Police recovered the body and sent t to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital for autopsy. They suspect his party rivals due to strife within the party might have killed him.

In Kushtia, Afaz Uddin, 36, a farmer of Adabaria village in Daulatpur upazila, was slaughtered at his house allegedly by the members of Janajuddha early yesterday, reports our Kushtia correspondent.

Family members following the Sehri found Afaz's slaughtered body in his Police recovered the body and sent

it to Kushtia General Hospital for The victims' son Alamgir Hossain filed a case with Daulatpur Police

Station accusing unnamed operatives

Flu strain

of the Janajuddha.

A second set of dead swans had been found near to those infected with the virus, but were not being tested as it was thought they came

from the same flock, Savic added. Europe is on maximum alert for the further spread of the H5N1 strain, which has already also been detected in Romania, Russia and Turkey, a westward sweep health experts believe is caused by birds

migrating ahead of the winter. Asia has borne the brunt of the rirus, with China rushing through an emergency response on Wednesday after the country's third confirmed outbreak of the virulent

strain inside a week. Chinese officials mobilised oadside sterilisation stations and inspected markets after 545 chickens and ducks fell ill and died from the H5N1 strain in the central province of Hunan, the Ministry of Agriculture said in a report filed to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

2 lakh govt

will get the increased salaries in two

phases -- from October 24 and from July 1, 2006 -- and no arrears will be

The extra amount required to implement the pay hike has to be arranged from the existing revenue allotment of the project, keeping the capital allotment untouched. But adjustments can be made, if need be, in other revenue subheads to meet the deficiencies.

The development project employees have been grouped in three categories in line with their workplaces with separate gross salaries.

The employees of the same grade of all three areas will get the same pay scale until June 30. But they will get different salaries as they get separate house rents from July 1, 2006 according their workplaces

The gross salary of the employees of the first grade in Dhaka Metropolitan City has been fixed at Tk 35,000 and for the lowest [20th grade] Tk 4,590.

The first grade employees in Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal metropolitan cities and Narayanganj and Tongi municipalities will get Tk 32,700 and the lowest grade Tk 4,320.

Apart from these areas, the first grade employees will get a gross salary of Tk 31,550 and the lowest grade employees Tk 4,250. A finance ministry official said the

new pay scales are not usually made effective for employees under development projects along with those under the revenue budget. A separate circular is issued for

these employees and the new scale is made effective from the day the circular is issued. Explaining the reason behind the

delay in awarding the new scale for under the development project, the official said the ministries took time in sending information relating to their manpower under different

Power disaster due

from the Prime Minister's Office to the energy ministry says, is that the Power Development Board (PDB) is 'not supposed to' implement private power projects, and it is the job of the power cell. The PDB has implemented the Meghnaghat AES project and the Power Cell the AES Haripur project.

After cancellation of the Summit bid, the government again floated tender for the project and cancelled it recently. Now it is floating tender for the third time reportedly to award the contract to a business house close to the ruling BNP. Meanwhile, as load shedding

emerged as a major problem with occasional power shortfalls exceeding 1,000 mw, the government in recent months has resorted to some unrealistic and even murky measures. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO),

overriding the power ministry, first asked the PDB in June to prepare tender documents to set up before the next elections 11 smaller power plants in different parts of the country, with a total production capacity of around 410 These government-funded plants would need at least a Tk 1,200 crore

had earmarked only Tk 300 crore for the power sector for fiscal 2005-06. By August, the government abandoned this plan. At the same time, under pressure from ruling BNP lawmakers and ministers to design a power sector 'business' for them, the PMO spearheaded yet

investment while the finance ministry

Bangladesh had a private power eneration policy from the period of the previous AL government. But that policy demands transparency and bidding process. To ensure business for party men, this government amended

another scheme -- small power pro-

small power plants of up to 50mw

The government in August-September identified more than 45 places in the country where small entrepreneurs can set up power plants. It asked the power utilities to sign a power purchase contract through a simple process with the small power entrepreneurs, who are none other than BNP lawmakers and several ministers. But under a threat from the WB, the government recently stopped

As these bids took the government nowhere, the power ministry has now asked the WB to give it a loan of \$150 million to set up barge-mounted power plants before the next election.

Even if the WB agrees, it takes the WB at least one year to process such a loan, industry insiders say.

Again, even if the WB gives this loan next week, the country is unlikely to have these barge-mounted plants before the next election. Because, first the government must find such plants abroad ready to be mobilised to Bangladesh, settle the price and then move them to certain locations from where power can be supplied to the

There is no record of any kind of ower plant coming into operation in Bangladesh in less than of 18 months.

According to the Power System Master Plan (PSMP), the guidebook of the government's planning for electrification, the country will have a peak demand of 4,500 mw to 5,000 mw next year. This means even if the existing power projects -- Mymensingh 70 mw phase 3 and 250 mw coal-fired Barapukuria plants -- come into operation before the next election, there will be a minimum shortfall of more than

JS body blasts govt

decided to ask the ministries of agriculture, LGRD and cooperatives, commerce, home, industries and food and disaster management, to take coordinated steps to root out Monga.

"We will ask the ministries to initiate

steps in this regard," Committee

Chairman Abdul Mannan told reporters after the meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban. "I'm not satisfied with the steps taken by the agriculture ministry. Mannan pointed out that there is a lack of coordination among the minis-

tries to eliminate the Monga situation that occurs in the northwestern region during September-October every year due to the absence of jobs for the poor. The parliamentary body has been urging the government for the last

measures to combat Monga. The government has allocated Tk 50 crore in this year's national budget but the money is not being used in the absence of proper policy, said a member

couple of years to initiate effective

"People [in the Monga-hit region] are starving. If the situation remains unchanged, the poor will die from hunger," committee member Motahar Hossain, an Awami League lawmaker from northern Lalmonirhat district, told

the meeting. He demanded increased food supply

to the affected people. Senior officials of the agriculture ministry at the meeting suggested undertaking more crop diversification programmes in the region to fight

The BNP members of the committee expressed similar views, but Jativa Party lawmaker and committee member GM Quader said crop diversification programmes will not benefit the farmers unless fair prices of agri-products are

"Rampant extortion in transports by the ruling party men, workers' associations and police has made the agriproducts costly, but farmers are not getting fair prices," the Jativa Party lawmaker from Rangpur told the meet-

The Awami League lawmakers supported his comment. The committee then decided to ask the home minis-

try to take steps to stop extortion.

The meeting was informed that a project of Tk 350 crore for crop diversification is being implemented in 60 upazilas in the Monga-hit region. The committee suggested expansion of the programmes in other areas

India

Prime Minister's Media Adviser Sanjava Baru said briefing on the outcome of yesterday's TERC meeting. On the issue of addressing trade deficit of Bangladesh with India, Manmohan Singh took note of the proposals made by New Delhi that include providing transit rights to Indian vehicles to North East and initiatives in energy

Singh also directed the finance ministry to take a liberal view on the issue of tariff compensation to the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) within Safta ambit besides reducing the number of items on sensitive list.

A proposal on setting up a food products testing lab at Indo-Bangladesh border would also be The committee reviewed the

progress in negotiations for the Bimstec (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Trade and Economic Cooperation). Pointing out that India had trade surplus with its neighbours, Singh emphasised the need to address their

concerns and favoured a more open The committee has given its inprinciple clearance to unilateral tariff concessions to African LDCs to provide market access to products of their

As part of the move, India would reduce tariffs on products of these LDCs' interest on a non-reciprocal basis. A list of the products has been prepared by Unctad which carried out an extensive study on these LDCs and their area of strengths, official sources

monga-afflicted people, he said, adding that 45,000 tonnes of food items have been distributed among the people in greater Rangpur in the

Dr Zaid Bakht, research director of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), said monga occurs due to seasonal unemployment and since the government had already sanctioned a block allocation for monga in the budget, it should have started working on it much earlier.

ministries concerned can also spend from the Tk 75-crore risk reduction fund, created to offset damages caused by natural calamities, for Sources said a delay in deciding

crore fund for fighting monga ultimately deferred the release of the fund. Rehabilitation Directorate said it has already sent a proposal for releasing

people in 12 districts and also worked out a policy regarding how to spend The finance ministry is expected to release the sum by next week, and if it does, the directorate will then distribute it following the policy, the source

According to the policy, a financial

given away to each family so that they can start small businesses like tailoring and poultry or buy rickshaws, vans, etc. and fight the poverty.

Eighty percent of the amount will be considered as loans while 20 percent as aid. Two committees at district and

upazila levels will be formed to select the recipients of the aid. The principal secretary to the prime minister was learnt to have met

affected districts recently to talk on

the monga-related issues.

Explaining the reason behind the spread of monga, Bakht said the scope for the seasonal unemployed to migrate to cities and towns has shrunk, forcing them towards poverty. Besides, the ever-widening disparity between the rich and the poor is also another important rea-

jects are also not being taken in a targeted way," he said, adding that the areas where poverty is more acute and employment opportunities are limited should get priority for these Bakht believes that the govern-

ICD men threaten RU hall provost with death for not paying toll

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A group of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) activists yesterday demanded toll from a hall provost of Rajshahi University (RU) and threatened him with death if he does pay the toll within three days.

Prof Chand Mostafa, the provost of Bangabandhu Hall, complained that the group led by RU JCD Joint Convenor Masudur Rahman Rana and Shafin Ahmed had demanded Tk 10,000 from him for "celebrating Eid". The JCD men brandishing fire-

arms asked him to pay the toll in three

days or face death, the provost said in a complaint filed to Rajshahi University Teachers' Association Later, Ruta at an emergency meeting expressed deep concern over the incident. It demanded stern

and the security of students and However, Rana denied the allegation of extortion and told reporters that they went to the provost to discuss problems of the hall.

action against the JCD extortionists

10 Bangladeshis seek asylum in Kosovo

AFP, Pristina

Thirteen people from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are seeking asylum in the UN protectorate of Kosovo, the UN refugee agency said yesterday.

"Ten people from Bangladesh, two

from India and one from Pakistan arrived on a flight from Istanbul on Monday. They have sought asylum in Kosovo," said Shpend Halili, a spokesman for the UNHCR in Kosovo. "It is an unusual case and a new

experience for Kosovo," which has no

system for dealing with such cases,

Halili told AFP. The United Nations and NATO have run Kosovo since a conflict between Serbian forces and ethnic Albanian separatists was brought to an end by NATO in June 1999. Legally,

the province remains a part of Serbia.

according to our mandate, the UN

"If we define them as refugees

mission (UNMIK) and the government would have to take the case over because it is their responsibility to look after people who come to Kosovo seeking sanctuary," said Halili. On Monday the UN Security

Council approved talks on resolving

Kosovo's future status. Ethnic Albanians, who outnumber Serbs and other minorities in the province by more than nine to one, are seeking nothing short of independence from Serbia, which Belgrade firmly opposes.

No extension

income tax return will be extended again. The NBR, which already had extended the deadline once, from September 30 to October 31 has been September 30 to October 31 has been again. The NBR, which already had receiving frequent enquiries in this

regard, he added. Though the board earlier expressed the hope that the number of income tax returns in the current fiscal year would cross 10 lakh, the frequency of tax return submission so far has been poorer than the last fiscal year. Some 3 lakh taxpayers had submitted tax returns until September 30, forcing the

NBR to go for the deadline deferment. In FY2004-05 over 8.5 lakh out of around 17 lakh people having taxpayer's identification number (TIN) submitted income tax returns.

A revenue expert said some newly introduced conditions, such as attaching photographs and statements on lifestyle, liabilities and wealth with the return, are probably discouraging many a taxpaver from handing in tax returns in time.

rejected the speculation and said people typically wait until the eleventh hour before coming up with their tax returns. The income tax payment system for the government employees has also

been changed from this fiscal year

But a number of NBR officials

requiring them to pay tax like everybody The NBR last fiscal year increased the initial penalty for failure to submit income tax return in time from Tk 500 to Tk 2,500. In case of continued default, a fine of Tk 250 will be added to that amount for every day after the deadline.

Final anti-govt

failed to govern the country, Dr Kamal said, adding, "Before the last general election, BNP and Jamaat-led alliance had pledged to root out corruption but after coming to power, they got involved in corruption and are doing it in a free-style manner." The activities of the Anti-

Those who are responsible for Bangladesh's topping in corruption for five consecutive years will have to be accountable, he added.

Referring to the recent appoint ments of BNP and Jamaat's student wings' leaders as election officials, Dr Kamal said it was a clear attempt to manipulate the next polls. Presided over by Mustafa Mohsin

> several previous attempts to enhance trade in the region had failed. They said since informal trade is

Saarc Summit

of all programmes have started from yesterday, while the dozen subcommittees continued holding regular coordination meetings in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Home, Information and also the Prime Minister's Office.

Talking to diplomatic corps, a high official of the Foreign Ministry yesterday said the authorities concerned in consultation with the SAARC Secretariat, current Chairperson of SAARC Pakistan and all other member states finalised almost all the programmes with a view to making the

event a grand success. The secretariat and current chairperson of the SAARC Pakistan are in touch with host Bangladesh. Matters relating to the twice-postponed 13th summit are being given final touches and member states are looking forward to productive deliberations

during the summit The summit, which is scheduled for November 12-13, will be preceded by the programming committee meeting comprising the senior officials of SAARC nations on November 8-9, the standing committee comprised by the SAARC foreign secretaries due to meet on November 9-10, and finally the foreign ministers level

council of ministers on November 11. On the inaugural day of the summit on November 12, the seven heads of state and government of the SAARC countries will first lay a floral wreath at the National Mausoleum at Savar to pay respect to the Liberation War After visiting Savar, the SAARC

leaders will proceed to Mazar Ziaur Rahman at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar and place a floral wreath to pay their respect to the late President, who took the initiative of the regional association in the early 1980s. The leaders of the seven South Asian nations will then jointly unveil

the place of replica of letters sent by

Ziaur Rahman to the six heads of state

and government proposing to float a regional body for cooperation. Initially the replica structure will be set up at the mazar premises and later be installed permanently at the Zia Museum being constructed at the mazar side.

SAARC leaders will move forward to the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) to attend the inaugural session of the 13th Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who is currently rotating the

SAARC Chair, will formally inaugurate

the summit at BCFCC. The

programme will start with the playing

The mazar programmes over, the

of the national anthem of Bangladesh and recitation from the Holy Quran. Then the SAARC leaders will adopt a condolence motion in memory of the deaths of the January tsunami and October 8 earthquake in India and Pakistan. They will observe a oneminute silence seeking the divine

The summit will then distribute the

SAARC Award 2004, which goes to late

President Ziaur Rahman. The late

blessing of the departed souls.

Award for his outstanding contribution to the initiation of regional cooperation in South Asia. The late President is the first recipient of the prestigious award in South Asia.

declared the winner of the SAARC

of the family members of the late President by the Chairperson of the Twelfth SAARC Summit. Tareque

mously upon the late President was taken at the 25th session of the Council of Ministers in Islamabad held on 20-

Sources said the family members of late Zia decided to donate the US\$ 25,000 to the Ziaur Rahman Foundation. The late President took the initia-

progress and economic development of South Asia. His vision and unremitting efforts at mobilising public opinion in the region in favour of institutionalised

cooperation culminated in the forma-

tion of SAARC in December 1985. The Award aims to encourage individuals and organisations based in South Asia to undertake programmes and activities complementing the efforts of SAARC; encourage individuals and organisations in South Asia contributing to the improvement of the conditions of women and children; and honour outstanding contributions and achievements of individuals and organisations within the region in the fields of peace and development, alleviation of poverty, pro-

tection of environment and regional After the award distribution, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will deliver an

new Chairperson will take the chair. Then the leaders of the SAARC countries will deliver their speeches one after another. The inaugural session will be concluded with a statement by the SAARC Secretary

In the afternoon of the first days of the summit, the SAARC country leaders will call on the new Chairperson of SAARC when they will hold bilateral talks. Prime Minister

Khaleda Zia will host a banquet dinner

the stimulated date," a high official of the foreign ministry told diplomatic

clearance from the member states. The decision to hold the 12th meeting of the CoE on November 29-December 1 has recently been taken by

the Saarc Secretariat in Kathmandu.

CoE held on October18-19 had narrowed down differences on two issues rules of origin and technical assistance to LDCs

Saarc domain -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives. The developing members of Saarc --

The LDC members have urged that the revenue compensation should be made effective from the third year of Safta enforcement till the final year of tariff liberalisation programme. be limited for three years only.

The Award will be presented to one

Rahman, elder son of Ziaur Rahman, will receive the Award on behalf of the The proposal to establish the SAARC Award was initiated by Nepal during the 11th Summit hosted in Kathmandu in January 2002. Then the decision to confer the Award posthu-

The Award carries a purse of US\$ 25,000, a gold medal and a letter of citation. The SAARC Secretary General will read out the citation at the award

tive, in the early 1980s, of setting in motion the process of regional cooperation aimed at promoting overall

inaugural speech and the current chair will then go for election to the new SAARC Chairperson. The Pakistan Prime Minister will then declare the name of Khaleda Zia as new Chairperson of the 13th SAARC and she will then take the chair. A photo session will be held when the

President of Bangladesh has been at the BCFCC in the evening.

that the accord can be enforced from

these issues within a month and finalise them at the 12th meeting with

implemented in phases as sorted out by the experts, so that the Saarc members would be able to begin its implementation on schedule, the official He said the Saarc officials have so far finalised two draft agreements

more deals expected to be signed at the meeting of the Saarc foreign ministers on November 10. The foreign ministry official also expressed his optimism that the agreements on protection and promotion of investment and Saarc Arbitration

However, it is still to make a significant headway on the other two issues -sensitive lists and revenue compensation mechanism for the LDCs in the

India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka -- have agreed on the areas wherein they will pledge technical assistance to the LDC partners for their capacity building. Γhey, however, have not fully endorsed the lists of products on which LDCs have sought special derogation, maintaining the value addition criteria for them at 20 percent.

However, the developing partners, India in particular, have argued that it The officials said the seven South Asian countries are now determined to enforce the Safta as per schedule as

rampant, a significant increase could be witnessed in formal trade if this informal one is brought within the

According to the officials, total

informal trade exceeds \$3 billion,

ambit of the formal trade.

which is almost double the formal trade in the region. one-third of formal one and with

Bhutan, it is three times greater than the

non-tariff barriers in the form of quan-

titative and other restrictions are the

High tariffs and the presence of

principal reasons for avoiding the formal channel of trade in the region.

tion of Safta would lead to a decline in informal trade flows. The sensitive lists refer to the products that would be temporarily exempt from reduction in customs tariffs to be applied across the border for all others products.

products to qualify for application of reduced customs tariffs on export to another Saarc member state. Revenue loss compensation mechanism is an arrangement for LDC member states in the event of revenue loss resulting from lowering of customs

Rules of origin specifies the condi-

tions that would have to be met by

Charge framed FROM PAGE 16

Humayun Kabir Babu The accused include Abdur Rashid Malitha Alias Tapan, founder of the Janajuddho faction of PBCP

death in front of his office in Khulna city on June 27 last year. The case was transferred to the Speedy Trial Tribunal on October 25

Saifuzzaman shoiab alias Ripon

Ahmed, one of the accused, was killed in crossfire in Sep ember this year.

from the District and Sessions Judge's Court, Khulna.

Monga spills over

A finance ministry source said the

A source in the Relief and Tk 15 crore from the fund for distribution among the monga-stricken

which ministries will spend the Tk 50-"The regional development pro-

> concentrate on implementing the programmes as quickly as possible,

ment should take a long-term plan to address the monga issue. For the moment, the government should

FROM PAGE 16 The ruling alliance has completely the district commissioners of the

> Corruption Commission (ACC), which was formed to fight against corruption, have come to a standstill, he said.

Montu, the discussion was also

addressed by Gono Forum leaders Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Pankaj Bhattacharya and Commander Abdur

correspondents vesterday. He said the CoE is likely to resolve

concerning customs management and avoidance of double taxation, while

negotiations are underway on two

Centre will be finalised during the meet. Sources said the 11th meeting of the

Humayun Kabir Balu, editor of the daily Janmabhumi, was bombed to

India's informal trade with Pakistan is almost 10 times greater than that of the formal trade with Nepal, with Bangladesh it is almost as large as the formal trade, with Sri Lanka it is almost The entire Safta accord will be

formal trade.

The unweighted average was highest in India at 39 percent, followed by Pakistan (25 percent), Bangladesh (20 percent) and Sri Lanka (15 percent). Further reduction in tariffs, improvements in the transaction environment of formal trade, simplification of existing complicated procedures, better information dissemination, increased awareness, better

education and above all, implementa-