Effective co-op

economic cooperation more effective among the Saarc countries and said this will not only help enhance intra-regional trade but also contribute to strengthening global integration of Saarc in the medium to long term perspective.

"Although there are several parallel initiatives for greater economic cooperation with participation of South Asian countries, including BIMSTEC and APTA, cooperation under the Saarc should be seen from long-term perspective," he told The Daily Star. "As a matter of fact, the GEP report which was produced under the initiative of an earlier Saarc Summit envisaged cooperation among the Saarc countries as a gradual move towards an economic area, in line with the economic

So, he reasoned, the success of Saarc will primarily depend on the pace dictated by the member countries to move towards such a higher level of economic coopera

"The current negotiations in the Safta will be an acid test of whether the Saarc countries would like to move along that route," he observed. "In order to do that the relatively developed Saarc countries must be ready to take cognisance of the needs of $the \, relatively less \, developed \, countries."$

Dr Mustafiz asserted that in the context of the current negotiations, this has to be reflected in the design of the negative list, formulation of rules of origins, removal of non-tariff barriers and steps to mitigate the potential implications in terms of revenue losses of the major importing countries of the region such as Bangladesh

Indeed, the Safta framework agreement explicitly recognises a two-track approach between the LDCs and non-LDCs of Saarc. This needs to be implemented in letter and spirit. As it appears, the current negotiations as of now have as regards the negative list, rules of origin and revenue compensation mechanism. Identification of non-tariff barriers, institutional measures and trade related capacity building and trade facilitation to foster regional cooperation still remain

the tasks that need to be tackled in the near

An FTA given the current trade pattern among the Saarc countries could only be effective if investment promoting measures are also put in place and supported by conscious government policies. Sourcing of regional inputs, greater movement of services, capital and labour along with flow of goods among the Saarc countries will need to be supported by mindful policy choices.

Poverty remains a major concern in varying degrees in all Saarc countries. Nothing could be more poverty alleviating than creation of employment. Greater economic cooperation targeting the \$1.5 billion strong regional market could be an important avenue in this collective effort. If the cooperation among Saarc countries is to really get a kick-start, a new vision should inform the approach of the

Ctg fire

Due to the raising blaze, cracks developed in the second floor where the Home Textiles of the same group is situated, and the products kept there were also damaged, sources in Saad Musa Group said.

The fire might have originated from electric short-circuits, fire service sources said.

7 still missing

Meanwhile, two persons--Pabitra Nath, a barber, and Nirod Nath, a rickshaw-puller--told journalists at Kumiraghata yesterday morning that seven members of their families, who had boarded the trawler at the Guptachhara Ghat on Sandwip, are

The missing are Pabitra's mother Anjali Nath, 45, sister Napori Nath, 23, niece Lucky Nath, 16, and neighbour Kalpana Nath, 11, and Nirod's sons Ronny Nath, 12, and Ranjit Nath, 09, and daughter Pushpa Rani Nath, 13.

Saarc parliament vital

said all efforts to strengthen the regional cooperation and development could work under the directives of the Saarc parliament.

"The Saarc parliament, if introduced, will be able to address overall aspects of improvement for the people in the region. It can also remove the lingering doubts, suspicions and fears among the Saarc countries and its people," Barrister Zia said in an interview with The Daily Star vesterday at

Also a ruling BNP lawmaker, Zia suggested initiating various steps, including introduction of oneeconomy and security forces to combat terrorism to strengthen Saarc as a regional organisation.

"Act of terrorism can never be tackled unless serious collective efforts are made at the highest level of the Saarc countries to examine the causes and to destabilise terrorism," the parliamentary watchdog body chairman observed. "A Saarc security force should be introduced to tackle terrorism," he added.

To improve the relation among the Saarc countries and its people, all types of exchange visits should be increased, he said, adding, "We should strengthen people-to-people contact

"We are all like a family together. We, all the top leaders and people of the Saarc region, should think ourselves as a block. The Saarc should speak in one way and it should not be confined to generalising treatments; it should spell out the manner and methods by which it can address poverty," he said. India has more to do to strengthen the Saarc as it is the larger partner with a bigger economy and the world's largest democracy, he "The Indian policy towards the

other six states must undergo a change so that we can be equal partners in the organisation," he said, adding that the smaller states should not consider either India or Pakistan as a threat. On expansion of the Saarc

Rahman said there is a new prospect regarding the inclusion of China and Myanmar in the regional organisation.

"It is a welcome idea. If China is included, the Saarc will be the biggest regional force in the world, both

economically and politically," he said. "But there may be someone who is interested to prevent China from being the member of the Saarc," he

Referring to the Saarc Charter, Ziaur Rahman Khan said the member countries should negotiate as a block in any global organisation for better results. "It would be possible if the economy of the Saarc countries is integrated in the near future," he said, adding that economic development is the key to peaceful coexistence.

Zia suggested relaxing the restrictions on manpower movement within the Saarc countries. "If you allow free movement of goods, why not people,' he questioned.

"We have established a policy analysis unit at the central bank so that we can take appropriate decisions at appropriate times and disseminate the information to the people concerned," Dr Saleh pointed out.

According to BB data on September economic indicators, the point-to-point inflation rate was 7.01 percent. In June, it [point-to-point] was 7.35 and in August 7.9. However, according to the average of 12 months indicators, the inflation rate has risen to 6.83 percent. It stood at 6.49 percent in June.

October 6 came down to \$2.5 billion, sliding down by 17 percent or around \$500 million from June. This is a result of higher import growth and

shows that petroleum import alone marked a 45 percent growth, followed by capital machinery import growth

During the July-September period, the remittance grew by 26.96 percent. Expatriates sent home \$1,072 million during this period. In the same period last year, they sent

by 4.77 percent or Tk 1,758 crore during July-August period while the private sector borrowing grew by 1.08 percent or Tk 1,196 crore.

"The government had prepared its budget keeping in mind the World Bank's Development Support Credit (of \$200 million). But that money was not disbursed. Then there has been a new pay scale, which increased the government's expenditure by Tk 3,000 crore. The government has to run the country. This reality is reflected in the increased government borrowing."

"At a point of time all governments have to borrow from the banks. But the central bank is watching carefully this trend and bringing it to the notice of the government," he

But due to increased government

During July-September period period of the previous year.

France declares

Tuesday. He vowed that France will "guarantee public order to all of our

Nationwide, vandals overnight burned 1,173 cars, compared to 1,408 vehicles Sunday to Monday, police said. A total of 330 people were arrested, down from 395 the night before.

The violence erupted on Oct. 27 as a localized riot in a northeast Paris suburb angry over the accidental deaths of two teenagers, of Mauritanian and Tunisian descent. who were electrocuted while hiding from police in a power substation.

It has grown into a nationwide insurrection by disillusioned suburban vouths, many French-born children of immigrants from France's former territories like Algeria. France's suburbs have long been neglected and their youth complain of a lack of jobs and widespread discrimination, some of it

The violence claimed its first victim Monday, with the death of a 61-yearold man beaten into a coma last week Foreign governments have warned tourists to be careful in France. Apparent copycat attacks have spread to Belgium and Germany, where cars were burned. France is using fast-track trials to punish rioters, worrying some human rights campaigners. The resort to curfews drew immedi-

ate criticism from Chirac's political opponents. Former Socialist Prime Minister Laurent Fabius said the emergency measures must be "controlled very, very closely.'

Communist Party leader Marie George Buffet said the decree could enflame rioters. "It could be taken anew as a sort of challenge to carry out more violence "she said

torched another bus in the northeastern Paris suburb of Stains, national police spokesman Patrick Hamon said.

Outside Paris in Sevran, a junior high school was set ablaze, while in the suburb of Vitry-sur-Seine youths threw gasoline bombs at a hospital, Hamon said. Nobody was injured.

Rioters also attacked a police station with gasoline bombs in Chenove, in Burgundy's Cote D'Or, Hamon said, A nursery school in Lille-Fives, in northern France, was set on fire, regional officials said

unrest is France's worst since World War II. Never has rioting struck so many French cities simultaneously, said security expert Sebastian Roche, a director of research at the state-funded

Foreign secys FROM PAGE 1

Foreign ministers of Bhutan and the Maldives Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk and Dr Ahmed Shaheed will also arrive in Dhaka today to attend the 26th Session of the Council of Ministers on November 11.

Foreign m Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka will

Instead of K Natwar Singh, who was recently divested of the external affairs portfolio, State Minister for External Affairs E Ahmed will represent India at the Saarc Council of Ministers' meet-

The Saarc foreign ministers, however, will begin informal meeting on

Meanwhile, the foreign ministers of Bhutan and Maldives will call on Bangladesh Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan today.

LGED asks WB

The letter sent by LGED Chief Netherlands).

"The most common reason for misprocurement, as mentioned in the letter, is 'identical rates quoted by the participating bidders' that tantamount to collusive bidding. The other reason is 'identical handwriting'," the

"We have reviewed your points and found that the issue of 'identical rates and handwriting' was detected by LGED and it was brought to the notice of the World Bank... before the independent audit took place. LGED considered those phenomena as strong evidence of collusion," the letter added.

"Now the unilateral declaration of misprocurement for the eight contract packages of MSP is clearly in conflict with the bank's previous decisions. It is also surprising to us that the bank has not shared the audit observations with the LGD (Local Government Department) or LGED before taking such a major decision," it pointed out.

The LGED letter attached copies of the correspondence between it and the WB on June 11, June 22, June 28 and September 10 of 2003. The first LGED letter told the WB about strong evidence of collusion in these bids while the last WB letter said, "Based on such inference only, it is not possible to take actions against alleged collud-

Hasina pledges

the people in distress.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: Sheikh Hasina demanded that the government disburse fresh agricultural loan for the flood-affected people of Rangpur and other northern districts and write off the existing loans. She also called for adequate relief supplies for those starving for days due to Monga resulted mainly from joblessness.

Addressing a public meeting at the Tukuria High School ground at Pirganj, she criticised the government for its failure to save people from acute food crisis. She said 'sheer incompetence' of the ruling alliance has caused Monga (near famine situation) in Rangpur Gaibandha, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts every year during last four years.

Our Bogra corespondent reports: Addressing a rally at Sherpur Bus Stand, Sheikh Hasina said the reforms in the caretaker government system must be carried out to ensure people's participation in the election. "The countrymen would teach the four-party alliance a lesson, if the next election is held in a free, fair and neutral manner," she

The opposition leader said there was a sufficiency of food when AL was in power. She said it was possible as her government gave the highest subsidy in the agriculture sector.

Our Gaibandha correspondent adds:

Hasina said prices of essentials have already spiralled out of the commoners reach while the rural people are struggling with farming as prices of fertiliser

and diesel also go on rising. She said the prime minister's family has been busy plundering public wealth instead of taking care of the Monga-hit people. Addressing a roadside rally at Chthurang in Gobindaganj upazila, Hasina urged the people to unite in opposition to the 'misrule' of BNP-Iamaat alliance.

Mannan, Mahmudur Rahman Manna Akteruzzaman, Mirza Azam MP Bahauddin Nasim, among others, spoke at the rally Earlier in the morning, Hasina set out

AL leaders Obaidul Quader, Abdul

on the trip to distribute relief among the Monga-affected people in the northern districts from her residence Sudha BDNEWS from Lalmonirhat reports:

A number of 'chocolate' bombs exploded vesterday in front of a school in the town ahead of Sheikh Hasina's visit Sources said a group of unidentified

near Giasuddin High School and made None was injured in the blasts, which caused panic among the locals.

men blasted 20 to 22 crackers in an alley

Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to visit the Monga-hit areas of Lalmonirhat

Superintendent of Police in the district Mejbahuddin told BDNEWS that they are investigating the incident

Economic union

development and economic advancement, only then these countries could be part of the larger Asian development

Meantime, external affairs ministry sources said India would table a slew of new proposals in textile, civil aviation, healthcare and sports sectors to give a new impetus to Saarc at the Dhaka

The proposals would also cover education and handicraft as areas for cooperation among seven members of the regional economic grouping.

Three new trade facilitation accords are expected to be signed at the summit. The accords likely to be firmed up are on establishment of a Saarc Arbitration Council, Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters and a Limited Multilateral Treaty on Avoidance of Double Taxation. India will host the next Saarc Summit in January 2007 and an announcement on this will be made at the Dhaka Summit.

The next meeting of the Committee

for November 28-29. Outstanding issues of Safta are expected to be resolved at this meeting so that the accord comes into force on January 1, 2006. India hopes that Safta would now

consider expansion of its scope to include trade in services. Since poverty alleviation has been identified as the overarching goal of

Saarc, the Dhaka summit is expected to

declare the decade from 2006 to 2015 as the Saarc Decade of Poverty Alleviation. In this regard, the summit would be endorsing the Saarc Development Goals (SDGs) towards implementation of the

states, the external affairs ministry said. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was earlier scheduled to reach Dhaka on November 12, will now reach there a day ahead on November

Saarc Social Charter by the member

Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran will leave for Dhaka tomorrow to attend the two-day meeting of the Saarc Standing Committee of Foreign

Traffic restricted

Nakhalpara from November 7 to

will be allowed to ply on the roads from Hotel Sheraton crossing to Minto Road-8:00am of November 10 to 2:00pm of

Heads of the state and government and their entourage will arrive at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on November 11. During the time of their

It also considered reports on biotechnology, energy and intellectual property rights. The committee made a number of recommendations for further strengthening and broadening regional cooperation in these key areas for next calendar year.

It is the 26th meeting of the Saarc

function of the Saarc Technical Committees and Working Groups for further improving their working methods and effectiveness.

Bangladeshnow poised to take over chair of the forum at the Nov 12-13 summit--also broached a set of guidecentres to infuse greater dynamism in

"The proposals were welcomed by the member-countries," a foreign ministry communiqué said.

The Programming Committee made recommendations on Drug Law Enforcement Mechanism to combat drug trafficking and abuse in the Saarc

documentary entitled " Saarc in the new millenium" and the joint production on TV and radio among the member states on visit "South Asia-2005" in observance of South Asia Tourism Year It encouraged the respective

departments (TV and radio) to use such joint productions as effective promotional tools to project South Asia as a single tourist destination as well as to enhance people-to- people contact within South Asia.

movement both sides of the street from the ZIA to Hotel Sheraton will remain

Tongi Diversion Road, Progoti Sarani Bishwa Road and Rampura Road The DMP has asked those who use Gabtoli-Savar Mausoleum road to use Abdullapur-Ashulia-Bypail-Nabinagai

due to visit the National Mausoleum during that time. Agargaon-Zia Uddyan Crossing-Lake Road will be off-limits to the vehicles from 8:00am to 2:00pm and from 5:00pm to 11:00pm the same day when the Saarc leaders will visit the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman at Zia Uddyan. As an alternative route, DMP has requested the people to use the Agargaon IDB Bhaban-Shyamoli Shishu Mela-Manik

guesthouse Padma on November 13, no vehicles except those bearing Saarc stickers, will be allowed to ply the Old Elephant Road, Monsur Ali Sarani and part of Holy Family Hospital road from 11:00am until the end of the function.

Also, for the programmes at the state guesthouse Jamuna the same day, only the vehicles bearing Saarc stickers will be allowed to move between Minto Road, Hare Road and part of Bailey Road from 8:00am to 1:30pm.

During the programme at Bangladesh-China Friendship Centre on November 13 too, only the Saarc sticker bearing vehicles will have access to the Nakhalpara Road from 11:00am

E Ahamed

for a Kuwaiti transport company.

Natwar Singh was relieved of his portfolio and made a minister with-

out portfolio after the Indian government announced a judicial probe into the allegation of UN-appointed Paul Volcker's report naming Singh as a beneficiary of illegal payoffs made in Oil for Food programme in Iraq under Saddam Hussein's regime in 2001.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will attend the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka beginning on

Jalil gets bail

FROM PAGE 16

residence at CWN(C), 3, 105 Gulshan Avenue, Dhaka, on November 2 and claimed that he had purchased the plot, and its possession would be handed over to him on the day.

"Earlier, a band of terrorists in a microbus came to my house and kidnapped my husband and son tortured them and threatened to kill them if the land is not surrendered. After a few hours at 7:30pm on the day they were released at Sector 7 of Uttara," Mustari Begum alleged. Jalil told the briefing that

Mercantile Bank bought the land [CWN(C), 3, 105 Gulshan Avenue] to build its head office and the bank has all legal documents. "Rajuk gave permission to buy the

land on October 26 and its registration for the Mercantile Bank was done on October 31," he said, adding that real owner of the land Mustari Begum was present at the time of registration at Teigaon land registry office.

"The person who claimed herself as Mustari Begum and filed the case gave false identity," he said. The AL leader said he visited the

plot in the evening of November 2 just to see the land as chairman of the "I saw there some police and Rab

members and they told me that they had come there after hearing a kidnap incident," Jalil said, adding, " requested the law enforcers to take immediate action to rescue the abducted persons.' Meanwhile, the High Court yester-

day granted anticipatory bail to Abdul Jalil in the abduction and land occupation case till reopening of the court after the Eid vacation. After hearing a petition filed by

Abdul Jalil, a vacation bench of the High Court comprising Justice SK Sinha passed the order. Advocate Abdul Baset Majumder

3 charge sheets

moved the bail petition.

FROM PAGE 16

Sub-Inspector Shafiqul Alam of Khulna Police Station, Officer-in-Charge (OC) Abbasuddin of Sonadanga Police Station and Sub-Inspector Sujit Kumar of Daulatpur Police Station submitted the chargesheets to the court

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Batiaghata Police Station Mahbubur Rahman will submit another charge sheet tomorrow in connection with the bomb blasts on Khulna University Campus on August 17 that left two minor boy severely injured. Shahidullah alias Lokman was

arrested in Dhaka on September 8. He

gave a statement to Magistrate Atiqul Haque under Section 164, confessing to his involvement in bomb explosions on the premises of Khulna Judge's Court and the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. Mahbubur Rahman alias Palash arrested in Satkhira on August 19 also

detonating bomb at Dakbanglaw road in Khulna city. Shahidullah and Palash named Shaikh Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai as the masterminds behind the August 17 serial bomb blasts across the country including Khulna,

confessed to his involvement in

Bagerhat and Satkhira districts. BBC to launch

FROM PAGE 16 there will be phone-ins, newspaper articles, radio feature programmes TV reports and events at universities. Channel- I will also broadcast the discussions. The Daily Star has been selected by BBC to be its media partner for this special programme.

Bangladesh Sanglap will consider some of the most important questions faced by the country: how are the institutions of state working? How to tackle corruption? How quality education and health services can be Panellists will be encouraged to

discuss 'Bangladesh Today and

Tomorrow'. It will be a 'national conversation' between rich and poor, between town and rural dwellers. between old and young, between politicians and the people Former Chief Justice Mostafa Kamal and lawyers Sultana Kamal and Abdur Razzaq are also panellists for

 $the \, public \, have \, been \, invited \, to \, submit$ Bangladesh Sanglap has been organised by the BBC World Service Trust and the BBC Bengali Service. The full list of topics are Justice, Corruption, Health, Education, Security and Governance (to be held in Dhaka), Local Government (to be

Chittagong). Bangladesh Sanglap has been preceded by one of the largest surveys ever undertaken in Bangladesh in which thousands of ordinary people in different parts of the country have been questioned on how they view themselves and their country.

key to the overall impact of the project. Two programmes broadcast in January 2006 will have student panel

Regional co-op

progress through a number of phases in economic cooperation before embarking on an 'economic union'. However, emergence of such a regional entity is expected to accelerate the national growth process and promote balanced globalisation of the South Asian econo-

The outcome in economic cooperation in South Asia to date is disappointing, he remarked. In 2004, intra-Saarc trade remained as low as 4.5 percent of the total trade of these countries. Similarly, intra-Saarc investment that year remained less than 1 percent of the total inflow of foreign direct investment o South Asia.

Launching of an economic union is usually preceded by three subsequent monetary policies.

The CPD executive director pointed

He further emphasised that for the economic union to be beneficial to regional countries like Bangladesh, one needs to take into cognisance the differential levels of economic development among these countries. What will be important is to have a built-in structural support mechanism for the low income countries to bring them at par with others so that all members can share the benefits equitably. Such an

approach has been successfully deployed in the European Union. COOPERATION IN FIGHTING

On regional cooperation in fighting poverty, Dr Debapriya maintained that what we have seen till now is the Saarc countries trying to deal with poverty either through national or extraregional (global) strategies. Regional cooperation as an effective tool for

Hajj agencies

FROM PAGE 16 Under the circumstances, the HAAB executive committee last night decided to hold a general meeting at

aviation ministry plea for raising the fare of Hajj flight from \$950 to \$1250 was rejected by the cabinet. HAAB General Secretary Zinnur Ahmed Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night that they took a resolution condemning State Minister for Civil Aviation Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin

"We also set November 15 the deadline for the government to resolve the Hajj flight crises and decided to stop booking tickets and depositing Muallim fees for the 56,000 nonballotee hajis," Chowdhury said.

Meanwhile, amidst the rising anguish over the government's mismanagement in Hajj arrangements, the state minister for civil aviation left Dhaka a day after Eid to Singapore for treatment.

Reacting to the HAAB censure, he said, "Taking resolution condemning

in plane fares for thousands of pil-

ment intervention in the foreign asking for high fares. However, I can

employment is largely missing -- an absence which makes the regional countries unable to create a synergy of their national and global anti-poverty strategies. The South Asian countries have been failing to leverage foreign investment and trade flows because of a work and policy instruments geared

He observed that over the last two decades, overall poverty in South Asia has come down from 51 percent to 31 percent of the regional population. Regrettably, over the same period, income inequality in all the Saarc countries has increased. The income inequality has been further exacerbated by growing disparity in asset base as well as unfavourable access of the poor to public resources. Even Sri Lanka, which boasted of growth with equity, has also undergone the same experience. And today there are about 500 million poor $in \, South \, Asia \, with \, an \, income \, of \, less \, than \,$ \$1 a day. It means one in every three persons in South Asia is poor. This may compare favourably against Sub-Saharan Africa, where every second person is poor, but one has to remember that South Asia remains the most poverty-intensive region. For example, if there are 103 poor per square kilometre in South Asia, the comparable number is only 13 in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Essentially, Dr Debapriya views a

The 13th Saarc Summit in Dhaka has meaningfully and Debapriya urged it also to create a window within the intergovernmental mechanism so that the civil society can directly interact and share its concerns with the regional

5 GIs killed

an intelligence officer and his brother, were reported killed in attacks across

Eleven people, including eight Iragi police officers, were also killed in A meeting to prepare for a broad-

based national dialogue conference aimed at quelling Iraq's insurgency will

more wounded by a makeshift bomb while on patrol near Tikrit on Sunday. Another suicide car bomber killed

Baghdad, last week At least two more Iraqi soldiers were killed and 13 injured when they were hit by a suicide car bomber as they guarded oil pipelines in Thibban north of

The spate of suicide bombs came as US forces were faced with another potentially embarrassing prisoner abuse scandal.

Five US soldiers from the 75th

kicked by the soldiers as they were

In September, US soldier Lynndie England was sentenced to three years' jail after being convicted of abuse, including being photographed point-

global outrage and deepened Iraqi resentment of occupying US troops. More than 13,800 prisoners are being held at several facilities. Iraqi families, human rights groups and

wrongfully detained for too long with-The abuse charges were announced on the same day that President George W. Bush said the United States does not torture suspects as it takes action to

some Iraqi government ministers

Syria, the military said.

Inflation eases

The foreign exchange reserve as of

of 18 percent. home \$883 million, encouraging a 20

The government borrowing rose

Dr Saleh Uddin Ahmed explains

borrowing the private sector borrowing has not been affected as the banks have high level of liquidity, Dr Saleh

the government's tax revenue collection grew by 14.76 percent, which was 12.71 percent in the corresponding

her party to come forward to the aid of

 $After the \, rally, Hasina \, distributed \, 100$ maunds of rice among the people.

Rioters in the southern city of Γoulouse ordered passengers off a bus, then set it on fire and pelted police with gasoline bombs and rocks. Youths also

In terms of material destruction, the

the evening of November 10.

Engineer Shahidul Hassan notes that on November 2, the WB in a letter cancelled a part of the loan amounting to \$500,776 for Municipal Services Project (MSP), based on the findings of an independent auditor (SGS-

LGED said.

Hare Road connecting point from

Programming

Programming Committee, being held with M Ruhul Amin, Director General (Saarc, Bimstec and ACD) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the chair. The Bangladesh delegation proposed two separate guidelines for the

these entities.

The meeting agreed to have a TV

The committee will continue its work today and report to the 31st session of the Standing Committee of foreign secretaries.

The DMP has asked the people to

use the Gabtoli embankment, Ashulia-

or Abdullapur-Gazipur Intersection-Kaliakoir road from 6:00am to 11:00am

on November 12 as Saarc leaders are

Mia Avenue-Farmgate road during that During the programmes at the state

> the first discussion on November 17. The discussion will be chaired by Shakeel Anwar, a producer from the BBC's Bengali Service. Members of

held in Sylhet) and Trade (in

The involvement of universities is

ROAD TOWARDS ECONOMIC UNION 'Indeed, it is even difficult to attribute these humble numbers to Saarc operations," Dr Debapriya expressed. He said, 'Various rounds of negotiations under Safta have yielded very little regional trade-enhancing results. Now Saarc needs a perceptible political push for higher results and it is heartening to see that the leaders of the region are talking of high ambitions, such as creation of a regional economic union. However, chasing such an enticing target will require systematic policy and institutional reforms, brought about by a strong political will."

phases, Debapriya explains. The first is creation of a free trade area (as envisaged under Safta), which means exchanging tariff concessions among the member countries. Once this is implemented, a move has to be taken for establishment of a 'customs union' based on a harmonised regional tariff structure vis-a-vis non-member countries. The next step would be building a 'common market' entailing free flow of investment, finance, services and labour within the region. At the final phase would come the economic union underpinned by coordination of macroeconomic policies and variables including those in the areas of fiscal and

out that the launch of an economic union is a desirable but challenging target, particularly in view of the slow pace of Saarc's evolution. As it took two decades for Saarc to reach a point where it can negotiate the Safta, to think of establishing an economic union within the next 15 to 20 years will be a very farreaching target.

POVERTY, TERRORISM

generating trade, investment and

Hotel Purbani tomorrow for taking up tougher programmes. Earlier on November 2, a civil

State Minister for Religious Affairs Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan for their indifference in resolving the Hajj flight deadlock".

Mosharraf Hossain Shahjahan told The Daily Star last night that "the government can not afford subsidies

me is not justified." On the possibility of any govern-

airliners' inflated fares, the minister said, "The foreign airlines have emerged as a united front and all are not comment now whether or not the government will intervene to break the

lack of adequate institutional frame-

towards regional cooperation.

regional economic cooperation as an effective tool for accelerating national development and a more balanced global integration of the South Asian countries. He maintains that regional economic cooperation is also essential to fight the two-faced dragon currently haunting South Asia. This dragon embodies poverty and terrorism, which remain interrelated. Lack of progress in poverty alleviation is increasing social deprivation -- creating a fertile bed for, inter alia, emergence of terrorism, whereas terrorism on its own is negatively impacting the growth prospect of Saarc countries, leading to perpetuation of poverty.

the country, security sources said.

take place November 19 in Cairo, a top official in Prime Minister Ibrahim The military also confirmed that a US soldier had been killed and two

six Iraqi policemen and three civilians in Baghdad's southern Dora district. police said. That attack was the worst since 29 people died near a Shia mosque in Musayyib, south of

Baghdad, hospital doctor Ibrahim al-Ubaidi said.

Ranger Regiment were charged on Saturday over the alleged abuse of detainees, the military said on Monday. "The allegations stemmed from an incident on September 7 in which three detainees were allegedly punched and

awaiting movement to a detention

facility," the military said in a statement.

ing to the genitals of a naked Iraqi detainee in Abu Ghraib prison. England was the last of a group of US soldiers to be convicted of abuse at Abu Ghraib in a scandal which provoked

complain too many Iragis are being

protect Americans from terrorism. In western Iraq, at least 36 insurgents and one US Marine have been killed in a major offensive that began three days ago near Iraq's border with

marginal export growth. During the July-August period import grew by 15.76 percent and export by 3.44 percent. The data