



PHOTO: AL

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina meets Nepalese King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, *left*, and Bhutanese Prime Minister Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

HASINA MEETS KING GYANENDRA, NGEDUP

Poverty cut, curbing terrorism figure in discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina

held separate meetings with Nepalese King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev and Bhutanese Prime Minister

Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday.

They discussed issues relating to

cooperation among the Saarc countries in different fields, including poverty alleviation and curbing terrorism.

During the half-hour meeting with Gyanendra, the two leaders stressed intra-regional trade for proper utilisation of the region's resources including manpower, the AL chief's Political Secretary Saber Hossain Chowdhury told The Daily Star last night.

Hasina pointed out that there is a massive potential trade market in the region with around 150 crore people.

Saber quoted Hasina as telling Gyanendra, "We want a strong functional democracy in (Nepal) in a real sense as we believe it is a pre-requisite for economic development and poverty alleviation in the region."

The king told the leader of the opposition that democracy would be restored through the next election in his country.

Referring to use of the Mongla Port for the benefit of the Himalayan Kingdom, Hasina stressed efforts to maximise utilisation of the port for increasing trade for the benefit of both the countries.

At the meeting with the Bhutanese premier, the two leaders emphasised food and energy security for the development of the region.

They hoped that a big market would be established if raw materials produced in the Saarc countries are utilised by industries in the region.

On energy security, Hasina said it should be ensured first for the development of the region and that Bhutanese hydroelectric projects could be of great help in this regard.

Lyonpo invited Hasina to visit Bhutan, and she accepted the invitation.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil, Kazi Jafar Ullah and Syed Abul Hossain were also present at the meeting.

1,307 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested 1,307 people on various charges from different parts of the country in the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the period, the law-enforcers also seized five firearms, three other weapons and 8 bullets, says a police headquarters press release.

Among the recovered arms, there are one pistol, one LG, and three guns.

KILLING OF JUDGES

14-party nationwide protests today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine yesterday at a meeting decided to stage demonstrations across the country, including the capital, today to protest the killing of two senior assistant judges in Jhalakathi.

Convenor of the 14-party combine and Awami League General Secretary Abdul Jalil told The Daily Star after the meeting that they held a meeting to make success of the 22 November grand rally a success.

The meeting chaired by the AL Presidium Member Abdur Razzak also

urged the district leaders adjacent to the capital to hold workers' meeting and street rallies to unite people under the slogan 'Lets go to Dhaka' to make the grand rally success.

Addressing the meeting at the AL central office at Bangabandhu Avenue in the city, the district leaders of the 14-party combine told the senior leaders that the government had been torturing, harassing and preventing them from holding processions and rallies.

The leaders at the meeting said it would not be good for the government if it try to foil the November 22 grand

rally at Paltan Maidan in the city.

The leaders, including Abdul Jalil, Hasanul Haque Inu, Bimol Barua, Saifuddin Ahmed Manik, Abdur Razzak, Motia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Obaidul Quader, Mayeen Uddin Badal, attended the meeting.

The AL will stage a demonstration protesting the killing of two judges at the city's Muktangoan at 3:30pm.

Awami Jubo League will also stage a demonstration in the city today in protest of the killing.

Rural Dev Engr Centre opens Nov 22

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the newly constructed Rural Development Engineering Centre (RDEC) of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) at Agargaon in the city on November 22.

Japanese Ambassador in Dhaka Matsushiro Horiguchi is expected to be present at the ceremony. The construction of RDEC building was supported by Japan's ODA loan.