

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Regional Co-operation Is The Basic Issue

by Masud H. Khan

HLD Mahindapala is an editor, a publisher, a one-time radio broadcaster, a poet and a would-be novelist. His visiting card lists as many as 28 dailies, weeklies, eventings, week-enders and annuals, published in Sinhalese, Tamil and English.

A Melbourne University graduate, Mahindapala is also the president of Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association, and lately he was elected the General Secretary of the South Asian Media Association (SAMA). Mahindapala stayed for five days in Dhaka in connection with a workshop on legislative reporting held on December. He joined the workshop as a resource person.

On December 17, Mahindapala briefly visited "The Daily Star" office and discussed issues like separatist campaigns in Sri Lanka and prospects of journalism in the South Asian states.

Mahindapala believes that regional cooperation on the basic issues like security, and development was the only beacon of hope for some 116 crore people of the SAARC countries.

"Separatism, as against regionalism, is posing a threat to the South Asian countries," he said, "Separatist activities in the SAARC countries — a force destroying civilised norms — are threatening not only the old world order but also the new."

The editor of Colombo Observer Mahindapala says that the Tamil guerrilla campaign in Sri Lanka, an instance of destructive force motivated from separatist ideas, resulted into drug trafficking throughout the world and assassination of international figures like Rajiv Gandhi.

Mahindapala, a visitor to Bangladesh for the first time, was all praise of Bangladesh's support to Sri Lanka on various common issues. He says "Bangladesh's support and cooperation to Colombo on many occasions has drawn large appreciation from the Sri Lankans."

"Particularly, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Colombo, during the crisis hours immediately before the last SAARC summit, was praised as a courageous act," he said. "Infact, it is the strength and support of a leader like her that saved SAARC," he added.

A former Sri Lankan ambassador to Australia, Mr. Mahindapala said that it is not enough for the heads of states routinely meet to strengthen cooperation between the SAARC countries. "People to people link," he said, is in great need for installing harmony in the region. "It is like building a bridge of understanding to bring the

people in the SAARC region closer so that they get to know each other, know more about tradition and culture and understand each others problems," he commented.

The newly elected General Secretary of SAMA says that the platform of the South Asian newsmen was floated with the same objective.

He hoped that SAMA would be able to build a network through mediemen of the SAARC region by bringing together the professionals, university teachers, advertisers and even the proprietors of both the print and electronic media.

When asked if the separatist campaign could destabilise democratic atmosphere in Sri Lanka, Mr. Mahindapala said that Sri Lanka, the oldest voting nation in the South Asian region, got universal suffrage in 1931. Since independence in 1948 in Sri Lanka, rival political organisations, ranging from ultra-left to the right wing, took the centre stage and played a dominant role in consolidating the democratic framework of Sri Lanka. He added that there were occasional threats against democratic practices from both the right wing groups of the armed forces and from the ultra-Marxist youth movements. Despite attacks against the parliamentary institutions, from the right and left, democratic institutions in Sri Lanka survived.

Speaking on the problems of downward standard of journalism in Sri Lanka and other SAARC states, Mr Mahindapala said there is a severe problem developing the standard of journalism in Sri Lanka. The talents that used to pour in to the English medium has dried up. Those with excellent language skill now prefer other lucrative jobs. There is an attempt to recruit talents and to give them training. The Sri Lanka Working Journalists Association is working to improve the conditions available for the journalists. It has established a welfare organisation which gives loan to the journalists and promote housing scheme.

"We have a press council which looks into complaints against the media. Errant journalists are often given ramp in the knuckles but some consider the council to be a 'Toothless tiger,'" said Mr. Mahindapala.

"There is a rising debate going on if there is freedom of press or not in Sri Lanka... by and large, the pattern of press freedom in Sri Lanka is that the print media is comparatively free from the government control. But the electronic media are controlled by the state," was the Sri Lankan editor's final observation.

## Steps being taken to make radio, TV programmes lively

Information Minister Nazmul Huda said in Dhaka Sunday, effective measures were being taken to make the radio and television programmes better, more lively and dynamic, reports BSS.

Presiding over the second meeting of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Information, at the Sangsad Bhavan, Huda said, a qualitative change had been brought about in the news and other programmes of the two electronic media, and the people were witnessing those.

He said, the news of the opposition were being aired in

the national news bulletins of the radio and television side by side the news of the party in the government.

The Information Minister said, special programmes were being put up in radio and television on all national and other important days with the participation of leading personalities of the government and opposition.

Measures had already been taken for radio and television coverage of any public representative irrespective of party affiliation in the nation building and country's uplift activities, he said.

Members of the Jatiya Sangsad Ziaur Rahman Khan A T M Wali Ashraf, M Zainul Abedeen Sarkar, Abu Kalam Azad, Golam Rabbani, Begum K J Hamida Khanam and Mufti Moulana Abdus Sattar and Information Secretary Nuruddin al Masud attended the meeting that reviewed different aspects of presentation of national news in the radio and television.

Some proposals were placed in the meeting to make the news and programmes of radio and television further mass-oriented.

## Agri college to be set up at Paba UZ in Rajshahi

RAJSHAHI, Dec 29: State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain Sunday said, the government would set up an Agriculture College at Paba upazila of Rajshahi for facilitating agricultural education in the northern districts, reports BSS.

He was addressing a fresh-

## Six killed, 20 hurt in Ctg bus mishaps

CHITTAGONG, Dec 29: Six people were killed and 15 injured when a minibus hit them and turned turtle on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf highway today, reports UNB.

Police said the six victims were chatting on roadside at Nila Bazar when the bus ran over them, killing five on the spot. Another died on way to Teknaf Hospital.

Four of the dead were identified as Mohammad Ishaq (14), Mohammad Hossain (65), Abu Bakr (64) and Obaidullah (65).

The injured, mostly passengers of the minibus, were rushed to the Teknaf Hospital. Police said the accident occurred at about 11 am after the driver had lost control over the Teknaf-bound bus from Cox's Bazar.

era reception at Naohata Degree College under Paba upazila.

The State Minister said, the BNP government had allocated the ever highest budget for the education sector to spread the light of education in the country. In the meantime, sufficient grant was being provided to the educational institutions to promote education, he added.

He said, the government would follow a principle to nationalise the educational institutions for qualitative development of education.

Recalling the role of the students in the mass upsurge of 1990, the State Minister said, they had to build themselves as worthy citizens to lead the country in future. He said, they should acquire knowledge based on moral values.

Kabir Hossain called upon the students to help maintain congenial atmosphere on the campus avoiding the politics of terrorism and anarchy.

Later, the State Minister visited a number of educational institutions in the area.

## Obituary

S A Reza, Assistant General Manager, Agrani Bank, died of cardiac arrest in the early hours on Sunday at Suhrawardi Hospital. He was 52, says a press release.

## M N Huda's death condoled

Major (ret'd) SR Khan of "Jangalia Navatara Club" has condoled the death of former Vice President and eminent economist Dr M N Huda, reports BSS.

In a statement in Dhaka, he said Dr Huda, who hailed from village "Jangalia" of Tangail was the chief patron of the "Navatara Club" and its life member.

"The nation has lost an able personality in the death of Dr Huda, the statement said.

He expressed deep sympathy for the family members of the deceased.

Monday	
5.00	Opening announcement, Al Quran, Programme summary
5.10	News in Bangla
5.20	Reading from the Goeta
5.30	Cartoon film : The Great Space Conster
6.30	Highlights of important events of 5th SAF Games
7.05	Debate
8.00	News in Bangla
8.30	Jansanat
9.00	Surer Bhubon : Songs programme
10.00	News in English
10.30	Film show : Rescue
11.30	Khabar/The News
11.40	Tuesday's programme
11.45	Closing

## BUET Teachers Assoc executives

A new executive committee of the Engineering University Teachers Association (EUTA) has been elected with Dr Muhammad Ali Murtaza and Dr Ja Naser as President and General Secretary respectively, a press release of EUTA said in Dhaka Sunday, reports BSS.

Dr Muhammad Jazul Bari has been elected Vice President and Dr Muhammad Ali Bhuiyan Treasurer of the association.

A K M Nurul Islam, Dr Shahidul Amin and Muhammad Abdul Karim have been elected Joint Secretary, Journal Secretary and Reaction Secretary respectively.

The elected members of the association are S M Sohel Imtiaz Moazzem Hossain, Dr Sabdar Ali, Dr Humayun Kabir, Dr Muhammad Mojibur Rahman and Dr Muhammad Monwar Hossain.

## Seminar on technology tomorrow

A seminar on "application and extension of the technologies innovated in the country" will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) at 10 am at the auditorium of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar will be the chief guest on the occasion.

## Maudud's mother qulkhwani today

Qulkhwani of Begum Ambia Khatun, wife of late Maulana Mamtaj Uddin Ahmed, will now be held at her son Maudud Ahmed's residence at 15 Gulshan Avenue today at 4 pm, reports BSS.

All relatives and well-wishers have been requested to attend.



Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz speaking at a reception accorded to the ministers state ministers and whips hailing from North Bengal at the National Press Club on Sunday.

## 25,000 held under 'Operation Durbar' Raids in search of banned goods begin Jan 1 : Home Minister

A total of 25 thousand people were arrested in two weeks as part of "Operation Durbar" to curb crimes and terrorism. Six hundred and sixty-eight firearms of different categories and a huge quantity of ammunition were also recovered during the period.

The government has also intensified anti-smuggling drive to give protection to local industries paving the way for generation of employment opportunities.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury stated this in an exclusive interview with BSS at his Secretariat chamber in Dhaka Sunday.

Regarding the background of launching the special drive, "Operation Durbar," on August 17, the minister said terror-

ists, illegal toll collectors, kidnapers and members of so-called Sarbahara Party belonging to both Anwar Kabir and Kamrul Groups, had become very active posing threats to peace and social security.

Expressing his confidence in the success of anti-smuggling drive the Home Minister said the government had sought cooperation of all sections of people including political parties, trade bodies and merchant associations.

"We had meeting with representatives of different trade bodies including leaders of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Dhaka City Market Convening Committee, Bangladesh Textile Mill Owners Association and Islampur Cloth Merchant Association."

Representatives of different trade bodies and merchant associations have expressed their solidarity with the government in the drive against smuggling, the minister said.

## Mofizul Islam's kulkhwani tomorrow

The kulkhwani of veteran politician and former Parliament Member Prof Mofizul Islam will be held tomorrow (Tuesday) after Jogh prayer at his Bakshimul village home under Comilla district, reports BSS.

In this connection a milad mahfil will be held today (Monday) after Asr prayer at his Comilla town residence.

The deceased family members have requested all relatives, friends and admirers to attend the kulkhwani and pray for the peace of the departed soul.

Chowdhury said the government was determined to move ahead with the anti-smuggling campaign as it was eating into the vitals of the national economy. Reiterating the call for cooperation of all the minister said, "the administration had been advised to work without fear or favour."

Describing the adverse effect of smuggling on the overall economy, he said the markets had been flooded with smuggled goods in the past resulting in closure of many local industries. Praising the recent pledge of cooperation by the trading and merchant associations, he said the deadline for disposal of banned goods expires on December 31 after which raids in search of such goods would begin.

## Call to spread spirit of SAARC

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman Saturday reiterated the need for collective self-reliance to raise the living standard of the people of the South Asian countries, reports BSS.

Speaking on the occasion, the Information Secretary urged the film makers to exploit fully the facilities of the new sound complex.

## JSSS leader stabbed

A young man, said to be an activist of ruling BNP's cultural front, was stabbed Sunday at the Stadium Market in the city, reports UNB.

Shaukat Hossain (22), Organising Secretary of Ward number 49 unit of Jatiyatabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha, was knifed allegedly by his cousin when he came to the latter's shop to settle a feud between them.

Shaukat was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

In another incident, a student was injured when a cocktail exploded in front of his house at Khilgaon Sunday morning.

Mohammad Anjum (19), son of Sujat Hossain, Assistant Director of Bangladesh Bank, was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

DMCH sources said, the unidentified body of a man cut by train wheels, was also brought to the morgue Sunday.

## Plea to set up film studios in private sector

The new Sound Complex of Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) was inaugurated in Dhaka Saturday, by Information Secretary Nuruddin al Masud. The new complex, is named after the first operating director of the corporation late Nazir Ahmed, reports BSS.

The Nazir Ahmed Sound Complex built at a cost of Taka six crores, houses two dubbing theatres, two re-recording theatres and one sound recording studio. The complex goes into commercial operation on January 1, 1992.

Presided over by the Managing Director of the BFDC Mostafa Monwar, the inaugural function was attended by noted play wright and former Secretary Sayeed Ahmed as the special guest. President of Film Directors' Association Azharul Islam Khan, President of the Film Producers' Association Azizur Rahman and Director (technical) of the BFDC M Shahabuddin also spoke.

Speaking on the occasion, the Information Secretary urged the film makers to exploit fully the facilities of the new sound complex.

## What's on today . . .

- National Drama Festival**  
The month-long drama festival jointly organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will begin today (Monday) at the auditorium of the Academy.  
Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the festival today (Monday) at 6.30 p m.  
Thirty three drama groups of various districts of the country will participate in the festival.
- Institution of Engineers meeting**  
The 345 meeting of the council of the institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB) will be held today (Monday) at 4:30 p m at the council room of the institution.
- ICMAB annual general meeting**  
The 20th Annual General Meeting of the Institution of Cost and Management Accountants of Bangladesh (ICMAB) will be held today (Monday) at 4 p m at the auditorium of the Institute.
- Rotary Club of Dhaka Central meeting**  
The weekly General meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will be held today (Monday) at 1:30 p m at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.
- Rotary Club of Dhaka North meeting**  
The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka North will be held today (Monday) at 5: 30 p m at Hotel Sonargaon.
- Jatiya Ganotantrik Party**  
Jatiya Ganotantrik Party (JAGPA) has decided to organise a day-long mass- hunger strike today (Monday) in front of the National Press Club in support of its six-point demands.  
It will also hold a rally today at 3:30 p m at the same venue to press home its demands.
- Action Committee to boycott foreign goods**  
A press conference of the Action Committee to boycott foreign goods will be held today (Monday) at 10:30 p m at the Hall room of the National Press Club.
- Anniversary of Moni Singh's death**  
The first death anniversary of Moni Singh, one of the founder of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will be observed today (Monday) by the party through a discussion meeting at 4 p m at the central office of CPB. It will also lay wreaths at cremation site at Postagola.
- Brahmanbaria Zila Samity**  
The Annual General Meeting and the election of the Brahmanbaria Zila Samity will be held today (Monday) at 4 p m at the auditorium of the National Press Club.

## ... and tomorrow

- BIDS Karmi Kalyan Samity**  
The Karmi Kalyan Samity of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) has organised a cultural programme tomorrow (Tuesday) to celebrate the 20 years of independence of Bangladesh.

## Weather

**Night temperature may fall**  
By Staff Correspondent  
Met office forecast on Sunday that cold wave would continue for another 2-3 days over the country.  
Night temperature may fall by 2-3 degree Celsius during next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Sunday over the country except Chittagong region where temperature is likely to fall by 1-2 degree Celsius.  
Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns on Sunday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	20.3	10.9	88	73
Rajshahi	20.8	8.4	83	88
Chittagong	21.3	14.0	79	70
Khulna	21.5	9.5	95	78
Dinajpur	19.0	9.2	97	78
Barisal	21.1	9.2	95	72
Cox's Bazar	22.0	15.0	78	65
Srimangal	20.1	9.5	95	87

The lowest temperature of the day was recorded at Rajshahi. The met office however, could not provide the minimum temperature of Panchagar, Lalmonirhat and Nilphamari.

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