

## Inter-regional action plan for energy uplift suggested

Star Report

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has emphasized on a regional energy action plan to achieve an environmentally sound and sustainable development.

A working paper presented by the ESCAP on the second day yesterday of a four-day workshop on sustainable development at Hotel Sonargaon stated that inter-governmental meetings for the preparation of a regional energy action plan could yield benefits to the working out of a comprehensive regional plan for energy development.

The ESCAP also stressed the need for the preparation of guidelines on energy conservation, energy demand management and mitigation of environmental impacts on energy use.

The ESCAP further suggested selected case studies to seek ways and means to promote energy efficiency options, the implications of fuel switch and the feasibility of large inter-country fuel supply systems, etc.

Dwelling on the strategies for sustainable energy development, S M Al Husainy of Bangladesh said that the Rural Electrification Board (REB) and the Power Development Board (PDB) distribution networks including transmission to the west zone through additional east-west inter-connectors should be developed to make more extensive use of gas-based electricity and substitution of imported fuel.

He said that by increasing storage through raising of the dam height the extra-potentials of the Kaptai Hydroelectric station should be harnessed. To exploit Barapukuria or Pirganj coal with large pithead generation, regional cooperation may be considered, he added.

Similarly, he said that re-

gional inter-connection of power systems may enable economising investments, improving load factors and maximising use of lower cost energy sources for all the cooperating countries, a potential that merits serious considerations.

The experts in the workshop also stressed the need for higher priority to renewable sources of energy like wood, hydropower, solar energy wind power and geothermal energy and to avoid nuclear energy unless there are convincing or compelling reasons for it.

They said that if nuclear energy is unavoidable then all possible safety measures and protocols should be ensured, before launching such a project.

However the experts did not write off the development of nuclear power and suggested for full governmental ratification of the conventions on "early notification of a nuclear accident" and on "assistance in the case of a nuclear accident or radiological emergency".

The experts in the seminar also suggested that Bangladesh could take up measures for substantial augmentation of production and supply of natural gas in the northern zones to replace imported kerosene and to some extent to slow down deforestation.

The experts also suggested that for emergency response there should be a training for accident containment and for decontamination of any radioactive materials in any emergency plant, in case on any accident.

They also stressed the need for agreement on the trans-boundary movement of all radioactive materials, including fuels, spent fuels, and other wastes by land, sea or air and to evolve a code of practice on liability and compensation.



Participants at the Media Round Table on "LDC to NIC : Prospects for Bangladesh" organised by The Daily Star at a local hotel on Tuesday.

## Radical land reforms won't boost agri production

By Staff Correspondent

What Bangladesh needs most today is a strong land management instead of radical land reforms to raise agricultural productivity and boost the rural people's purchasing capacity.

This was observed by two experts, once staunch advocates of land reform, at the Media Round Table on "LDC to NIC - Prospects for Bangladesh" organised by The Daily Star at a local hotel in Dhaka on Tuesday.

The subject of land reforms was raised by Syed Manzoor Elahi, President of Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. According to him, it is one of the basic economic issues that deserves a national consensus.

Referring to the rapid economic growth of South Korea, Elahi said it was possible largely because of sweeping land reforms. "But where is our land reforms? Most of the MPs

(in Bangladesh Parliament), are absentee landlords. Can there be any meaningful land reforms in our country?" This was how the MCCI chief raised the subject.

The first reply came from Dr. Kamal Siddiqui, an expert on land reforms and currently a Secretary to the Prime Minister's Secretariat.

Dr Siddiqui said he was not opposed to the land reforms, but "we don't have at the moment the administrative capability and nor is the international climate suitable for a radical change." "What we can do now ... we can create a climate for the change. For this, some strong land management can be made." He suggested improvement in land administration bringing the all land-related functions under a one-stop service.

Dr Mahub Hossain, Director General at Bangladesh

Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), supported Dr Siddiqui.

He said radical land reforms is not going to raise the income of the farmers greatly. According to him development of human resources is more important than the ownership of land.

He said the current pattern of the ownership of land should not be totally blamed for the inequality in income. The inequality is occurring largely because of the absence of farmers' access to economic activity and education. "Our main resources are our people. We should develop our human resources," said Dr Hossain telling the forum he himself was an admirer of radical land reforms 10 years ago. But he said he does not believe now that radical land reforms is the only answer to the problem of increasing productivity.

## No reason to delay Tinbigha transfer, says Hindustan Times

The daily Hindustan Times has criticised the agitation by some small political parties in West Bengal against the transfer of Tinbigha and said the agitation was a "political gimmickry" which some parties indulge in to get a few votes even at the cost of compromising national honour, reports Reuter.

"The Government of India will be well advised to ignore these so-called popular protests and go ahead with something it ought to have done at least a decade and a half ago," the prominent New Delhi daily commented in an editorial on Saturday.

The paper said the transfer of Tinbigha in exchange of the Berubari enclave was agreed upon between India and Bangladesh during Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's time and added that Bangladesh met its part of commitment but Tinbigha was not transferred to Bangladesh as it got embroiled in litigation.

"After the recent Supreme Court verdict there could be no earthly reason for any responsible political party to organise agitations which have no purpose but to embarrass the government of India," the Hindustan Times remarked.

The Calcutta High Court on Monday dismissed a writ petition challenging the acquisition of three plots by the West Bengal government for construction of a corridor connection for two Bangladesh enclaves, Angarpota and Dahagram.

The decision of the High Court has removed a major legal obstacle towards transfer of Tinbigha to Bangladesh.

## Democracy precondition for uplift : Delwar

By Staff Correspondent

The Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad (parliament) Khandaker Delwar Hossain on Tuesday said that the continuation of democracy is a precondition for the economic development of the country.

Speaking at the Media Round Table on "LDC to NIC - Prospects for Bangladesh", the Chief Whip said there should be a political understanding among the parties before reaching a consensus on major economic issues.

"We were united during anti-autocracy movement, so why we won't be united again for economic development as well as country's development," he said adding there is an idea that the government will solve all the problems of the country.

He assured that there is an honest invitation from this government to the opposition to share opinions on any vital issue.

He also said that so-called political stability in past nine years of autocratic rule failed to show any economic direction for the country which also proved that consensus is a must.

Terming the round table as a good beginning he expressed hope that the government would be benefitted from this discussion although transition from LDC to NIC may take time.

He also stressed on the need of strenuous efforts to achieve the goal.

## PM

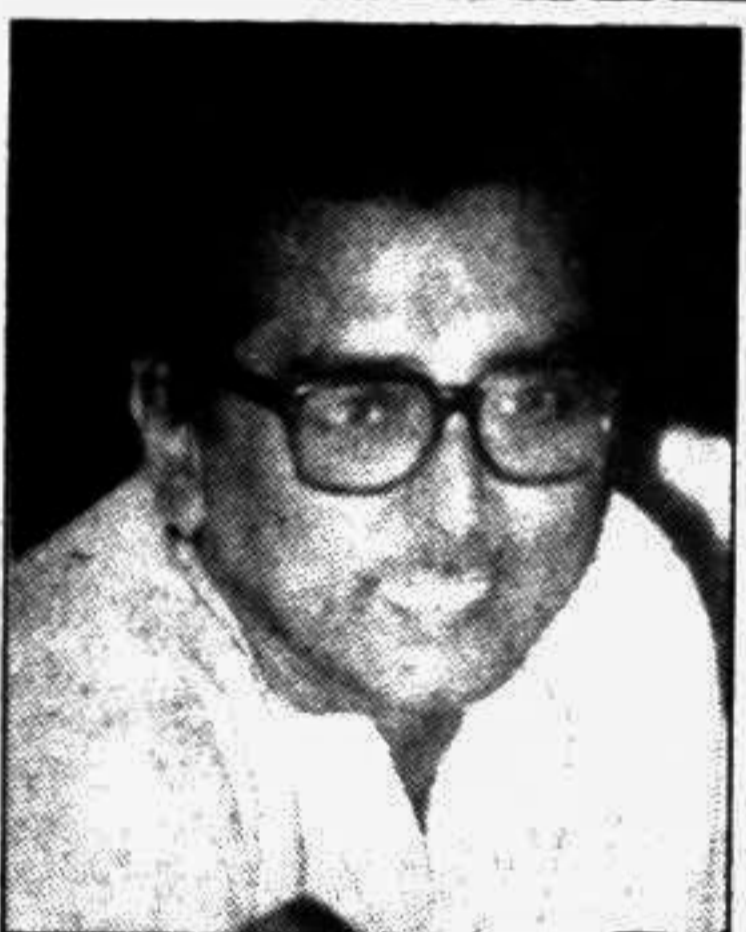
From Page 1 Col. 4

cratic and corrupt rule marked by widespread indiscipline". She warned those still engaged in creating indiscipline in society and asked her party members to remain vigilant against these anti-social elements.

"Anybody indulging in anti-social activities will not be spared", she said. But pointed out that the law enforcing agencies cannot eradicate terrorism, smuggling and other anti-social activities without the help of common people.

Begum Zia said the local industry can flourish by checking smuggling which she added will also help recover the economic base of the country.

There is a lot of scope for creating self-employment opportunities in rural areas, the Prime Minister said



Take people in confidence, says Menon

By Staff Correspondent

Five-party leader Rashed Khan Menon MP, said political will is needed to achieve basic national objective.

"There is no disagreement on the basic economic issues, but the question is whether we have the political will to implement them," he said.

Speaking at the Media Round Table on "LDC to NIC - Prospects for Bangladesh" Tuesday, Menon said "we have not seen any effort so far on the part of the government to take the people and the opposition into confidence."

He said unfortunately opportunities to reach national consensus on certain basic issues of the country could not be achieved for lack of political will.

But we can start the process from now on to create national consensus that would reflect opinions from all segments of the society, he said.

Menon said economic development of the country remained staid due to the past regime's policy of aid dependency, ignoring the need and without considering the aspiration of the people.

He agreed that private sector entrepreneurship could substantially contribute to the national economic growth. But he opposed complete deregulation of the private sector adding that "private looting" should be checked.

Menon, General Secretary of Workers' Party, said that the government's current industrial policy is no way different from the one pursued by the government of Ershad.

Speakers at the rally demanded stern action against those students involved in terrorism.

Later the DSU marched towards the National Press Club protesting the firing incident and the blasting of crackers from Mohsin Hall, and held a brief rally resenting the attack.



Ensure law, order to attract investment, says Tofael

By Staff Correspondent

Tofael Ahmed, a central leader of Awami League and a member of the parliament on Tuesday stressed the need for creating a congenial atmosphere to attract foreign investment.

Speaking at the Round Table on "LDC to NIC - Prospects for Bangladesh," he said the law and order situation in the country should be peaceful enough to attract the foreign investors.

Tofael said there might be some national consensus on some basic principles and issues for the economic prosperity. "Government may come and go but the policies formed on the consensus will remain for the future governments," he observed.

He said there was a consensus among the political parties on some major national policies before the election. However, he added, these could not be implemented afterwards.

Tofael expressed his optimism that if Korea which was even in a worse position than Bangladesh in the 50s could become an industrialised country, Bangladesh would also not lag behind if efforts are put together.

## Gunshots

From Page 1 Col. 7

its demands.

The DSU rally presided over by Rokonuzzaman Rokon, was addressed by Sunil Das, Ziaul Haq Zia, Moshataq Alam Tulu and Udaya Pal.

Speakers at the rally demanded stern action against those students involved in terrorism.

Bus, Army jeep collide : 4 hurt

At least four people were injured when a Gazipur-bound bus collided head on with an army jeep near navy headquarters at Barani Tuesday, police said, reports UNB.

## Front launched

From Page 1 Col. 2

make the front broad-based. The press conference was also attended by among others CPB President Saifuddin Ahmed Manik and its General Secretary Nurul Islam Mehdi, NAP General Secretary Pankaj Bhattacharya and Gana Azadi League President Abdus Samad.

In the political front, PDF demanded trial of all political killings, accountability of the government and its cabinet to parliament and rule of law in the country.

It also demanded repeal of the Special Powers Act and other black laws, including the 8th amendment to the constitution.

## Supportive

From Page 1 Col. 8

Table on "LDC to NIC - Prospects for Bangladesh" organised by The Daily Star. He said that after transition to parliamentary democracy it is time to seek new ways to break out of the image of an "international basket case".

However, he said, the idea of national consensus should not be limited to the government and the opposition parties. "It must pervade the society as a whole including academicians, professionals, business community, civil servants and even the military," the Bangladesh-born ESCAP chief emphasised.

He said, emphasis on certain basic policy issues should be the first priority and once that is achieved, the country can forge ahead towards development. "If only Bangladesh is able to achieve economic stability then that would be good enough to forge ahead," he added.

To make the transition from a Least Developed Country (LDC) to a Newly Industrialised Country (NIC), he pointed out, it is imperative for Bangladesh to arrive at a national consensus on all fundamental issues of national interest.

Noting that most newly industrialised countries of South East and East Asia were no better than Bangladesh even a few decades ago, he said, the reasons behind their success deserves careful attention.

## Proper use

From Page 1 Col. 7

crease rural peoples purchasing power. Growth of domestic industrial sector and the national economy at large would not be possible if vast segment of the population remained poor, he said. The industrial growth should be export-oriented to boost exports. This would remove poverty as well. Talking on free market economy, the Minister said it was instrumental for development.

## Consensus

From Page 1 Col. 7

consensus should be forged before the policies are formulated and not afterwards," he said.

He noted that a policy without a strategy is meaningless. By strategy he meant "identification and understanding of issues as well as consensus design for overall policy formulation and implementation."

The participants noted, a vibrant economy can operate only when there is a stable economic policy framework. "Convergence of opinion on basic policy issues is an imperative need for sustainable development," they observed.

They stressed that it was time for Bangladesh, now after the transition to parliamentary democracy, to seek new ways and means to break out of its "image of an international basket case".

There are countries in the ASEAN region that were no better than Bangladesh even two or three decades earlier. But they have today graduated themselves from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to Newly Industrialising Countries (NICs), they noted.

The participants said that the consensus on national issues facilitated their graduation to higher stages of economic growth. Bangladesh urgently needs such a consensus at this stage to move ahead steadily for sustainable development, they added.

The consensus, the participants said, does not mean merely in understanding between the government and the opposition parties. "It should cover the whole of the society including academicians, civil servants, business community, defence services, trade union leaders and other professional groups," they noted.

The participants lauded the role of The Daily Star in organising the round-table. They expressed the hope that "this process would continue for identifying the problems of national interest and searching solutions to the same".

The discussion in the round-table lasted for three and a half hours.

## The Midnight File

### Shevardnadze reappointed

#### Soviet FM

MOSCOW, Nov 19: President Mikhail Gorbachev today reappointed Eduard Shevardnadze, Foreign Minister who resigned from the post last December, a senior Kremlin official said. Asked about a radio Moscow report that Gorbachev had appointed Shevardnadze by decree, the official replied: "There is no official announcement, but unofficially Moscow radio is correct, reports Reuter."

### 125 killed in Indian floods

NEW DELHI Nov 19: More than 125 people have been killed by floods in south India after incessant rain in the past week, domestic news agencies reported today. The Press Trust of India said at least 98 people had died in Andhra Pradesh state and thousands of hectares (acres) of crops had been inundated. At least 28 more people were killed by house collapses or electrocution in neighbouring Tamil Nadu state and in the union territory of Pondicherry, reports Reuter.

### US House okays \$291 b defence spending

WASHINGTON, Nov 19: The House of Representatives Monday approved a 291-billion-dollar defence spending bill for 1992 that cuts troop levels, boosts funding for the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) and bars production of more B-2 stealth bombers. The House, in a vote of 329-82, approved the compromise measure reached between rival House and Senate versions. The Senate was expected to approve the bill later this week and President George Bush appeared likely to sign it, reports AFP.

### 10 Muslims shot dead in Srinagar

SRINAGAR, Nov 19: Indian border guards shot and killed 10 Muslim militants as they were about to cross into Pakistan, officials in Kashmir said Tuesday. The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the men were killed Monday after an Indian border patrol spotted the group trying to cross into Pakistan, reports AP.

### Bangladeshis lose jobs

From Page 1 Col. 5

Meanwhile, a large number of ethnic Bangladeshis have gone bankrupt. Harsh police measures against tax evasion is forcing even relatively solvent businessmen to go out of business, some ethnic Bangladeshis complained.

A Bangladesh Caterers' Association source told the Daily Star police has started punishing tax evaders with fines ranging from five lakh pounds to 10 lakh pounds. Such huge fines just turn even better off businessmen bankrupt because they have not only to pay the fines but also to go for fresh loans at prohibitive interest rates.

Amin Ali, one of the most prominent Bangladeshis businessmen has recently gone bankrupt after being gheraoed by police. His example could only undermine the prospects of other Bangladeshis in getting loans from banks and other financial institutions in the United Kingdom.

The ethnic Bangladeshis face an unfavourable environment right from the beginning. Banks in UK generally do not favour ethnic minorities by giving them start up capital. So they have to create capital on their own.

They have difficulties also because they concentrate mainly on catering business in London's central area which is also the "high risk area" and

### US 'block list'

From Page 1 Col. 2

government is aware of the problem. All necessary documents required for the withdrawal of block listing have been sent to US authorities, the official added.

USA is the main buyer of Bangladesh frozen food (mainly shrimps). Statistics show that earnings from this item during the July-September quarter this year declined by more than 30 per cent compared to the corresponding period last year.

Because of the block listing, frozen food fetched about 4.5 per cent lower price during the period and exporters had to undergo unnecessary difficulties.

## Parjatan's Special Package to Sundarbans & Sylhet

Guided Package Tour to Sundarbans, the home of the Royal Bengal Tigers and to Sylhet, the tea granary of Bangladesh.

- DHAKA-JESSORE-SUNDARBANS-DHAKA  
3 Days & 2 Nights trip. Visit to Hiron Point and Katka  
Price: Ta. 6,000.00 (US \$170) per person  
inclusive of air, road & river transport, accommodation, food and guide service. Minimum: 10 persons.
- DHAKA-SYLHET-JAFLONG-TAMABEEL-SRIMANGAL-DHAKA  
3 Days trip with night halt at Sylhet & Srimangal  
Price: Ta. 3,500.00 (US \$ 100) per person  
inclusive of road transport, accommodation, food, visit to tea gardens and guide service. Minimum: 10 persons

Packages will preferably be arranged with week-ends.

For booking and other details, please contact :

Tourist Information Centre, Head Office,  
Phone: 327842, 325155-9  
Tourist Information Centre, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel,  
Phone: 509479, 863391  
Parjatan Tours Division, Head Office,  
Phone: 325155-9, 329234

Parjatan cares for quality & novelty

**BANGLADESH PARJATAN CORPORATION**  
National Tourism Organization

Editor : S. M. Ali

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial offices: 28/1, Toynebe Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: Editorial & News: 863036. Commercial: 863035. PABX-246023-4. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257 GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

APR (00) 9358-17/1/91