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#### An Apology

Due to gross negligence and lack of professionalism, an extremely damaging remark was published in The Daily Star yesterday about Maj. Gen. (Retd) Majidul Haq, the Minister for Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control. The original report did not carry the said remark which was added at a later stage.

We disown the remark and categorically state that it is totally unfounded and baseless. We sincerely apologise for any damage caused to the reputation of the minister, whom we hold in high esteem. The management of this paper has taken strict disciplinary actions against the offenders and has done away with their services.

— Editor

#### NEWS BRIEFS

##### Degree exams: 34 expelled

FARIDPUR, Mar 31: A total of 34 examinees were expelled on the first day of Bachelors Degree Examination for the year 1992 from six centres of the district here today. Fifteen examinees were expelled from KMC College, 13 from Bir Shrestha Abdur Rouf College, two from Boalmari Government College, two from Sadarpur Government College, one each from Charvadrashan Government College and Rajendra University College, reports UNB.

### Water talks end without result

## Dhaka expresses 'great disappointment'

Bangladesh-India expert level water talks ended here yesterday without any result, reports BSS.

At the end of the two-day talks, the Indian delegation, led by their Water Resources Secretary Dr C D Thatte, refused to make any comments to the enquiring newsmen.

But the Bangladesh team, led by Irrigation, Water Development and Flood Control Secretary, M Asafuddin, expressed "great disappointment" at the talks which could make no headway whatsoever.

The Bangladesh team leader

said that Bangladesh once again extended and renewed its invitation yesterday morning to the Indian delegation to visit the Hardinge Bridge to see for themselves the extreme hardship being caused to a vast population in Bangladesh by an unprecedented water shortage, caused by the upstream diversion from the Ganges.

He said that the Indian delegation would neither believe the account of Bangladesh team nor pay the visit to see the reality on the ground.

The Bangladesh team said that Bangladesh favours a nego-

tiated solution to the outstanding and vexed issue of the Ganges waters sharing but the talks must make progress.

It was for the first time that not even a joint press release was issued at the end of the talks as was the usual practice.

Bangladesh team sources said that the problem does not affect the two neighbours the same way because while India, being located in the upstream can and does withdraw the waters from the international river Ganges as and when it feels necessary, Bangladesh being in the lower riparian can-

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### N-S gas pipeline project

## Ex-Petrobangla Chairman, 2 others to face action

The three-member probe committee, on alleged corruption in the North-South Gas Pipeline Project, has recommended appropriate actions against a former Petrobangla Chairman and two others for their 'incompetence and ineptness' in handling the compensation matter of Saipem, and Italian firm, reports BSS.

The cabinet in its regular weekly meeting on Monday decided that departmental actions will be taken against the officials found responsible for the lapses.

Headed by Dr Iqbal Mahmood, Professor of the BUET, the three-member inquiry committee was set up on May 6 last year amidst growing suspicion about the justifiability of accepting Saipem's claim

for compensation. Two other members of the committee were the Director General IMED, of the Ministry of Planning, KM Siddiqui, and the Additional Secretary, Prime Minister's office, Hafizuddin Khan.

The Iqbal Mahmood Report said that Messrs Saipem was in contractual defaults and failed to meet various obligations as per contract. In view of the performance of Saipem it should be black listed as the government may ensure that it is not allowed to participate or undertake any development work in Bangladesh, the report observed.

While suggesting actions against former Chairman, the report observed that

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### Agreed minutes with Lanka to promote trade ties signed

COLOMBO, Mar 31: The two-day session of the Bangladesh-Shri Lanka Joint Economic Commission (JEC) ended here today with the signing of agreed minutes between the two sides, reports BSS.

The Bangladesh delegation was led by Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and the Sri Lanka side by Minister for Trade and Commerce A R Munsur.

Both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh observed that the private sector of the two countries can play a useful role in promoting trade and economic cooperation.

The two sides also reiterated the idea of setting up a Bangladesh-Shri Lanka joint chamber of commerce at the earliest.

## Azam did not qualify to be a citizen, says AG

By Staff Correspondent

As citizenship demands absolute loyalty and allegiance to the country Golam Azam did not qualify to be a citizen of Bangladesh because of his continued loyalty towards Pakistan.

This was stated by Attorney General Aminul Haque during his opening arguments at the hearing of the Writ petition challenging the cancellation of the citizenship of Golam Azam in the High Court Division Single-Bench comprising Justice Anwarul Haq Choudhury.

The main dispute arises, the Attorney General noted, out of the special emphasis laid by the Counsel for the petitioner that Article 2 of the Bangladesh Citizenship (Temporary Provisions) Order of 1972 isofact suggests that those who were residents of the erstwhile East Pakistan March 25, 1971 became citizens of Bangladesh on March 26.

"That assumption is not correct, it is a totally erroneous presumption," he said, adding "it is not true for Golam Azam because on that day (March 26) a clog was placed on him as he continued to be a

citizen of Pakistan." Earlier, when the day's hearing began Barrister A R Yusuf, acting on behalf of the petitioner, placed his closing arguments. He argued that the impugne notification violated the principles of natural justice and also took irrelevant considerations into account and that there were no latches on behalf of the petitioner in coming to the court.

The Attorney General went on to point out that although the word allegiance was not available in the Temporary Order, but the word citizenship "connotes unfettered allegiance" of the citizen to the country.

"The concept of citizenship connotes allegiance and loyalty and is an implied pre-condition and allegiance to the sovereignty of the state is a must," he added.

The Attorney General went on to state that it is important to note how the citizenship law was developed in Bangladesh. The Temporary Order came into force on December 15, 1972, one day before the Constitution came into effect, with retrospective effect from

March 26, 1971, the day the Proclamation of Independence was made.

While Article 2(b), disqualifying a person from becoming a citizen if he owes, affirms or acknowledges, expressly or by conduct, allegiance to a foreign country, was incorporated into the Order by Ordinance Number 10 on May 19, 1973.

Again on June 22, 1973, Article 2(b) along with 2(a) were given retrospective effect from March 26, 1971 through Act Number 5.

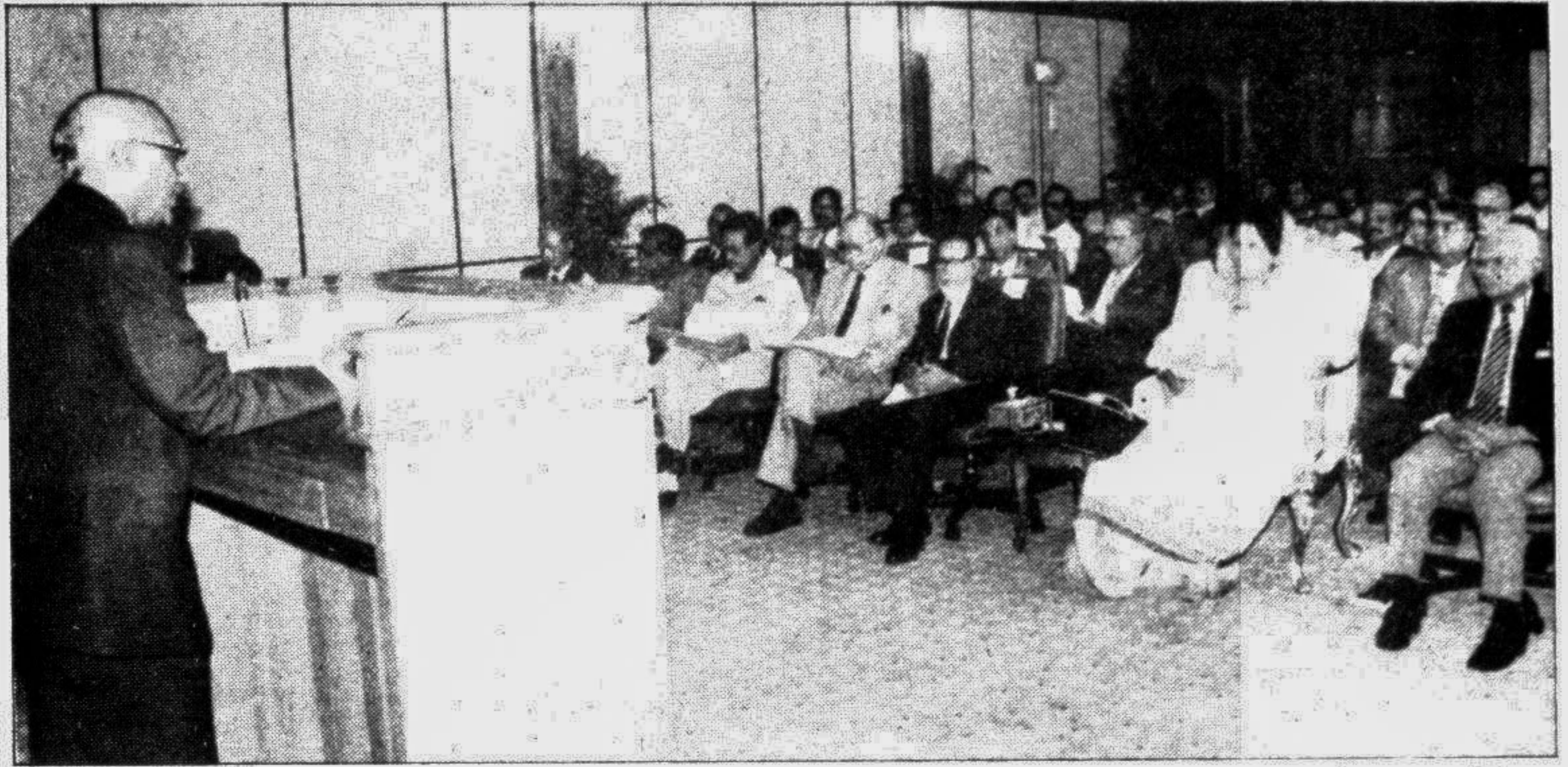
Since Act 5 is a retrospective law, the Attorney General argued, so it shall be deemed that the impugne notification, issued on April 18, 1973, was issued under this law with retrospective effect.

"The notification was deemed to have been issued according to the amended law," he asserted.

Alternatively, he added, the amended retrospective law validates the notification of April 1973 where by Golam Azam was found to be citizen of Pakistan rather than of Bangladesh.

Although the notification

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A member of the Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation explaining and analysing the report of the commission on poverty alleviation to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her cabinet colleagues at the International Conference Centre yesterday.

## 10-yr poverty alleviation plan for SAARC states suggested

The Independent South Asian Commission for Poverty Alleviation has suggested formulation of an integrated 10-year poverty alleviation programme in each member country of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) to rid about 33 to 44 crore poor people of the region of massive poverty, reports BSS.

The objectives of the 10-year programme should be to raise the growth of national income from its present 3 per cent to 9 per cent by the year 2002 and invest 27 per cent of the national income, said the Commission, which was formed during the Sixth SAARC Summit held in Sri Lanka capital Colombo in December 1991.

The Commission said the

programme should integrate the market-oriented and export-oriented structural reforms with the social mobilisation to remove the curse of poverty in the SAARC countries within ten years.

The suggestion came while Dr Sheikh Maksud Ali and Fazle Hossain Abed, two members of the commission, were explaining and analysing the "report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation meeting the challenge" to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her cabinet colleagues at the International Conference Centre (ICC) here yesterday.

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### Fresh blow to Sharif as another

#### minister quits

ISLAMABAD, Mar 31: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif received a further blow as a fourth member of his cabinet resigned today, reports AFP.

Minister of State for Zakat (Islamic Tax) Hafiz Gul Sher Khan Afridi, said he was quitting in protest Sharif's reluctance to support President Ghulam Ishaq Khan for a second term.

The next president is due to be elected in November.

Afridi told a press conference in the northwestern city of Peshawar that the incumbent must be re-elected because the country required the services of a man of his calibre and competence.

Separately 16 members of parliament including Minister of State for Sports Malik Ajmal also announced their support for the president at a press conference in the same city.

### Shantibahiniman killed in gunbattle with security forces

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 31: One Shantibahiniman was shot dead in a gunbattle with the members of the security forces at Lakhichhari thana under Khagrachhari district, official sources said.

The gunbattle began at around 12 noon yesterday at the remote hilly area of Rangamachhara under Lakhichhari thana of Khagrachhari district where the armed Shantibahiniman ambushed and opened fire on a security patrol, sources added.

In the face of counter-attack from the security force the insurgents fled into deep forest after an hour-long battle leaving behind the body of their comrade and arms.

The body of Shantibahiniman and arms were later recovered by the security personnel.

### AL leader shot dead in Jessore

JESSORE, Mar 31: A local Awami League leader was shot dead by unidentified gunmen at a village in Awaynagar thana of the district today (Wednesday), police said, reports UNB.

Ali Akbar Khan (45), former Union Parishad Chairman of Siddirpasha, was attacked by the miscreants numbering 7 to 8 near his house at village Chandrapur at about 8 am.

Police recovered the body and six round of bullets from the spot. The body was sent to Jessore Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy.

### DPRK special envoy arrives

North Korean Vice President Li Jong Ok arrived here yesterday evening to hand over a message from President Kim Il Sung to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gohar Hafez received the special envoy of the North Korean President at Zia International Airport.

### Nirmul body holds public meeting

By Staff Correspondent

The Ekatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Samannaya Committee yesterday held a public meeting in the capital.

The committee was earlier obstructed by the police from organising two other meetings planned for March 26 and 28.

Yesterday's largely-attended meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue strongly condemned government atrocities on those two days, and accused it of violating the Constitution and protecting those opposed to the country's independence.

The Committee leaders and workers participated in the meeting unobstructed by police.

Poet Sufia Kamal chaired the meeting because the Committee convenor Jahanara Imam was advised full rest for her injuries sustained on March 28.

The speakers in the meeting included Abdus Samad Azad, Abdur Razzak, MP, Kader Siddiqui and Mofazzal Hossain Choudhury Maya of Awami League, Kazi Aref Ahmed and Hasanul Haq Inu of the JSD, Pankaj Bhattacharyya of NAP, Mohammad Afzal of Ganatantri Party, Prof Abdul Mannan Choudhury, Lt Col (retd) Abu

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### 4 killed as bomb explodes in Lucknow cinema

LUCKNOW, Mar 31: A bomb exploded in a cinema, killing four people and injuring 40, news reports said Wednesday, reports AP.

The blast occurred late Tuesday night in Gola Gokarnnath, a small town in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh state.

Police are examining the damaged theater to determine what kind of bomb was used and who may have planted it. Press Trust of India reported. Police officers told United

### Turbine in Indian N-power station catches fire

NEW DELHI, Mar 31: A fire in a nuclear power station in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh Wednesday forced authorities to declare an emergency in the entire plant, agency reports said, reports AP.

The fire in the turbine generator of the 235 megawatt unit in Narora, about 200 miles east of New Delhi, has not caused a radiation leak, said a spokesman of the department of atomic energy, which controls the country's nuclear programme.

News of India that terrorists were probably responsible.

Explosions such as this are drawing a lot more attention in India than they once did because of recent terrorist attacks.

On March 12, more than 300 people died when 13 bombs exploded in about two hours around Bombay, seriously damaging the stock exchange, skyscrapers, hotels and apartment buildings.

Five days later, nearly 90 people were killed in central Calcutta when explosions demolished five apartment buildings.

As police were investigating both disasters, the US State Department warned Americans to stay away from India, especially New Delhi in case it became the terrorists' next target.

On Wednesday, the capital's stock exchange was closed for an hour when an anonymous bomb threat forced police and sniffer dogs to search the building. Press Trust of India reported.

Although suspects have been arrested in Bombay and Calcutta, investigators are still trying to determine who planted the explosives in both cities and what motivated them.

### 8 killed in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least eight people were killed and 40 others injured in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Dhaka Wednesday.

Our Narayanganj Correspondent reports: At least five people were killed and 40 others injured, many of them seriously, when two passenger buses collided head-on at Dewanbagh on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at around 2.30 am Wednesday.

Three persons died on the spot while two others succumbed to their injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Of the dead, two were identified as Bashir Ahmed and Musa Mia while three others

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### BDF names preparatory body for grand confce

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Democratic Forum (BDF) leader Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday announced a 62-member preparatory committee for his planned national grand conference aimed at creating a national consensus for resolving basic economic and political issues facing the country.

Hossain made the announcement while addressing a crowded news conference yesterday afternoon at the Engineers Institute, Bangladesh.

Hossain told newsmen that the conference would be held some time in May or June this year.

In a brief speech before the announcement of the names of the committee members, Kamal Hossain said that they were going to initiate a con-

certed political move to identify major problems facing the people of the country and formulate pragmatic policies to solve them.

The Democratic Forum, however, would continue to function as an independent forum of intellectuals, Hossain said.

He said, that the preparatory committee comprising scholars, experts and political personalities would open a national dialogue with different political parties and seek their opinions on how to overcome the existing crises in socio-economic and political areas of the country.

Explaining the justification of his move for the grand conference of 'politically conscious citizens of the country'

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One of the accident victims being rescued by police and local people at Dewanbagh yesterday.

— Star photo