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**Supplement**

Today's 16-page issue of *The Daily Star* contains an eight-page special supplement on 7th SAARC Summit.

**NEWS BRIEFS**

**Hartal observed in Jhenidah**

JHENIDAH, Apr 9: A half-day hartal called by an all-party unity was observed in the town today (Friday) demanding arrest and punishment of the killers of Jatiya Chhatra Dal leader Abdul Quddus Dudu. Quddus was brutally killed by some miscreants on April 7. During the hartal, also enforced to protest deterioration of law and order and corruption in the administration, aggrieved Jatiya Chhatra Dal activists allegedly damaged at least 10 vehicles in the town, reports UNB.

**Hasina calls on Koirala**

Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina called on Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala of Nepal at the residence of Nepalese Ambassador in Dhaka yesterday evening. Poverty and hunger in the seven South Asian countries figured high in the discussion between the two leaders. Awami League said. They also discussed bilateral issues of Bangladesh and Nepal. Both wished success of the Seventh SAARC Summit, reports UNB.

**ALWC meets Apr 12**

Awami League Central Working Committee will meet on April 12 at 3:00 pm at the party office. Party president and leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina will chair the meeting. AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman requested all members of the working committee to attend the meeting in time, reports UNB.

**Minor gill electrocuted**

From Our Correspondent  
SYLHET, Apr 9: One minor girl Sufia, 9, was killed yesterday at midnight when she came in touch with an electric wire fell on a slum at Sheikhhat during a two-hour norwester in the district. About 3000 houses were also damaged by the norwester.



The leaders of the seven South Asian countries (from left) Prime Minister of Nepal Girija Prasad Koirala, King of Bhutan Jigme Singye Wangchuk, Prime Minister of India P V Narasimha Rao, President of Sri Lanka Ranasinghe Premadasa, Prime Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif and President of the Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. All the leaders attended the sixth SAARC Summit in Colombo in 1991. —Star file photo.

## SAARC enters second cycle

Star Report

The heads of state and government from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives open their seventh summit in Dhaka today (Saturday) to renew their commitment to a process of regional cooperation.

With the seventh summit, the forum enters its second cycle since it was initiated in Dhaka eight years ago for regional peace and prosperity.

The leaders — one king, two presidents and four prime ministers — will review the progress they have made in their common fight against poverty, diseases and illiteracy under the framework of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Started in Dhaka in 1985 as the world's newest experi-

ment in regional cooperation the SAARC sought to transform South Asia, the cradle of world's ancient civilisation, into a cradle of conciliation with cooperation focusing on trade, commerce, transport, education, agriculture, health, transportation, science, technology, culture and meteorology.

The Saturday-Sunday summit will not only take a stock of achievements or failures, but also will seek to inject fresh vigour into the forum that has survived despite numerous setbacks.

Economic and trade cooperation remains high on the agenda of the summit leaders who represent one billion people, one fifth of the world's population.

The region stretching from

the peaks of the Himalayas to the coral islands of the Indian ocean, from the Khyber Pass to the mouth of Ganges are often dubbed by outsiders the 'poor man's club' with half of its population living in absolute poverty.

Thus the summit, Dhaka is hosting for the second time, has turned its attention to hardcore economic issues with South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement and a South Asian Development Fund expected to get high consideration.

As Bangladesh spent nearly 8 crore takas to prepare for the summit the leaders, however, missed Dhaka's pleasant winter in December when the meeting was first supposed to be held. Unfortunate events caused by the demolition of

Babri Mosque in India forced the postponement of the summit twice since then.

In spite of the postponement President Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka, the current Chairman of the SAARC and Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan flew to Dhaka in December to express solidarity with Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to whom the Chairmanship of SAARC will be passed on.

Dubbed a mini-summit the December meeting of the leaders from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan contributed a lot to keep the SAARC hopes and dreams alive.

Prime Minister Begum Zia, whose assassinated husband Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman was the initiator of

**Summits at a glance**

By Asiuzzaman  
The seventh SAARC summit in Dhaka beginning today (Saturday) will be the most delayed one among the summits, while the sixth in Colombo was the briefest.

All the six previous summits had been held in the months of November and December but this year the summit was delayed by three months.

The one-day Colombo Summit was held on December 21, 1991 after postponement as the Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk had expressed inability to attend the summit November 7-9 citing domestic preoccupations.

Except for Colombo all See Page 8 Col 7

**Three unresolved issues to be placed before summit leaders**

By Staff Correspondent  
Three areas of the draft declaration of the 7th SAARC summit, relating to the regional trade arrangement, poverty alleviation and holding of the next summit, remained unresolved till yesterday and would be placed before the summit leaders, said a Foreign Office spokesman yesterday.

Foreign Secretary Reaz Rahman, in an evening press briefing at Hotel Sonargaon, said that the issues would be placed before the heads of state and government today for See Page 8 Col 1



The International Conference Centre, venue of the Seventh SAARC Summit in Dhaka. —Star photo

**Khaleda holds informal talks with 4 leaders**

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday received the heads of the states and government of four SAARC countries at her office welcoming their arrival in the Bangladesh capital, which is hosting the Seventh SAARC Summit, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister first received the Sri Lankan President Ranasinghe Premadasa who was followed by Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuk.

The four leaders met Begum Zia separately and had informal talks with her in a cordial and warm atmosphere. The Bangladesh Prime See Page 8 Col 6

**We look forward to a meaningful summit: Sharif**

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif last night said that SAARC has the potential to be very effective for the betterment of the region and added, "we look forward to a very meaningful summit in Dhaka," reports BSS.

Talking to newsmen at Zia International Airport on arrival, he said Pakistan will contribute to making it a more effective and meaningful forum for regional cooperation.

"We are very happy that the summit is taking place in Dhaka although it could not take place earlier," he said when asked to comment on See Page 8 Col 3

**Dhaka has always been playing a vital role: Gayoom**

The Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom yesterday highly praised Dhaka's role in carrying forward the SAARC towards the goal for which it was launched nearly eight years ago, reports UNB.

"Bangladesh has always been playing an important role, a pioneering role in visualizing and conceptualizing the SAARC as well as promoting its objectives, he told newsmen on his arrival here to attend the 7th summit.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman received President Gayoom at the airport.

Two little children pre- See Page 8 Col 6

**Koirala for bilateral solution to Ganges issue**

Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala yesterday suggested that Bangladesh should settle the Ganges water sharing issue with India bilaterally, reports UNB.

"Let India and Bangladesh settle the matter, we have no objection," he said talking to newsmen on his arrival at the Zia International Airport yesterday morning to attend the 7th Summit.

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman greeted him at the Zia International Airport. See Page 8 Col 8

**Wangchuk sees terrorism as major problem**

King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan yesterday expressed the hope that leaders of the South Asian countries at their summit would condemn terrorism which had posed a major problem in the region, reports BSS.

"We hope concrete discussions will also take place at the summit for setting up of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) to facilitate the implementation of SAARC projects in the member countries, the Bhutanese King said while talking to newsmen at the VVIP Terminal of Zia International Airport on his See Page 8 Col 6

## Commentary

### Let's make it a summit of hope

by S M Ali

As leaders of seven member nations of SAARC begin their historic two-day meeting, our plea is, indeed, a straightforward one: Let's make it a Summit of hope.

We believe, it is within the power of heads of government of the alliance to disprove the notion of pessimists that SAARC is in a state of drift and all that we may get out of the twice-postponed conference is a ritual.

However, it should be clear to us all by now that it will be a Summit of hope only if the deliberation among our leaders reflects a shared political will,

backed by a commitment, that we must strive for concrete results in the field of economic cooperation.

The seven-nation alliance has waited for more than a decade to put this cooperation to a test. Now, with the market-oriented economy gaining increasing acceptance throughout the region and the private sector getting the boost it deserves, the opportunity for such collaboration had never been greater than it is today.

While such a positive outcome of the Summit should be the result of collective efforts,

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia must provide it with the stamp of her own leadership in a spirit of moderation, reaching out for mutual confidence and consensus.

Unfortunately, the Summit's efforts to push for an economic agenda remains under the shadow of bilateral problems cutting right across the alliance, between India and Bangladesh, Pakistan and India and even between Bhutan and Nepal.

It is no use playing down these problems. It is also wrong to assume that we can See Page 8 Col 7

**Trust among the SAARC states a must: Hasina**

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday hoped that poverty alleviation and other issues like universal literacy, healthcare and shelter will get priority in the SAARC agenda, reports UNB.

In a statement on the eve of the 7th SAARC summit she said long term regional harmony calls for special attention of the SAARC leaders and hoped that they would take steps to spread the fruits of development and progress equally to all the member countries.

Hasina called for harmonizing narrow national interests with the long term goals of the See Page 8 Col 4

**Hurricane hits West Bengal: 32 killed**

CALCUTTA, Apr 9: A hurricane hit five villages in an eastern state on Friday, killing 32 people and injuring 100 villagers, police said, reports AP.

The hurricane destroyed houses, uprooted trees, overturned buses bent transmission towers out of shape when it hit the villages in Murshidabad district, 180 kilometres (110 miles) north of Calcutta, said S I S Ahmed, a senior police officer.

Rescue teams recovered bodies of 32 people, Ahmed said. United News of India said 100 people were feared killed and 400 injured. It said 150 people were hospitalized.

The speed of the hurricane was not immediately known.

**21 Indian police commandos killed in blast**

BANGALORE (India), Apr 9: Twenty-one police commandos hunting a notorious outlaw were killed today when a powerful landmine blew up their vehicle in a jungle in southern India, police said.

Twenty-eight officers were injured in the blast in the Seivalak region of Karnataka state, the Press Trust of India quoted police as saying.

A Karnataka police spokesman told AFP that most of the dead were commandos from neighbouring Tamil Nadu state who formed part of an inter-state task force set up to capture the bandit Veerappan.

Veerappan, 48, an illiterate whose trademark is a handlebar moustache, is wanted for more than 40 murders, at least 500 cases of killing elephants for their tusks and the illegal felling of thousands of sandalwood trees.

## An Appeal to the SAARC Heads of State and Government

Your Excellencies and Your Majesty,  
We are happy that you are able to visit our capital to attend the SAARC summit scheduled for today and tomorrow (10 and 11 April 1993).

Your presence in our city at a particularly critical moment in the history of the region brings joy and hope to us. We extend to you a most cordial welcome. We firmly believe that your combined wisdom will be directed to all the pressing problems of the region which call for a concerted effort to solve them.

The SAARC was born in Dhaka with great potentials much of which remains untapped and unrealized. If a perceptible improvement in the quality of life of our peoples was the dream of the founders of SAARC, that dream is still to come true. Some of the core problems commonly shared — poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and population growth — call for tackling with a fresh sense of urgency.

Whatever SAARC has achieved so far, cannot obscure the fact that, when compared with the performance of similar bodies like EEC, ASEAN, SAARC's progress towards ameliorating the conditions of our masses, has been tardy, and much below the expectations reposed in it. What is more, the very foundation of SAARC, the spirit of co-operation, is now threatened by an emerging trend of communal, sometimes ethnic, intolerance pointing to the rise of potentially fascist forces in our countries. The demolition, by some fanatic groups, of the historic Babri mosque, and the train of tragic consequences that followed in its wake within and beyond the borders of India has caused utmost concern to us, indeed to all democratically-minded people across the region. Members of the minority communities feel their existence threatened — in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh — and their minds are gripped with a sense of insecurity. All this, and more, do not bode well for the future of democracy in the SAARC countries, and to SAARC itself, which we look upon as a bulwark of secularism and democracy.

Excellencies, and Your Majesty, we expect the summit to give this problem your urgent consideration, and we fervently hope that you will not fail in generating mutual trust and amity for realizing the objectives for which SAARC was formed. We would look up to you for a firm and unambiguous declaration in support of secularism and democracy, and an unequivocal stand against the politics which thrives on fundamentalism, terrorism and exploitation of the religious sentiments of our peoples. We would ask for a declaration banning politics based on religion, intolerance and terror to ensure the future of liberty in our region, and the dignity of our citizens irrespective of caste, creed and ethnicity.

Thanking you  
Respectfully yours  
On behalf of  
**Bangladesh Citizens' Committee**

Prof Khan Sarwar Murshid Former Vice-Chancellor and Ambassador, Justice Devesh Chandra Bhattacharya, Former Justice of Supreme Court, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui Former Vice-Chancellor, Justice KM Sobhan Former Ambassador, Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Anisur Rahman Former Member of Planning Com., Mrs. Nurjahan Murshid Former Minister, Architect Muzharul Islam, Mr. Muyeedul Hasan Author of Muldhara Ekattor, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Mr. Nurur Rahman President, Bangladesh Khet Majur Samity, Prof Salahuddin Ahmed, Engr S. M. Shaheedullah, Mr Ajoy Roy Economist Dr. Sayeedur Rahman Eye Specialist.