

**Bangladeshis
abroad remit
Tk 8,90,82,430
in Dec '93**

During the month of December 1993 Bangladeshis living abroad remitted through foreign money orders Tk eight crore 90 lakh 82 thousand 430 only, according to official handout Thursday, reports BSS.

The breakup in foreign currency is as follows pound 13,84,256.02 against 6,422 foreign money orders and dollar 2,007,41.50 against 820 foreign money orders.

The amount was paid to payees dependents living in different parts of the country. Total remittances received during the current financial year from July to December 93 a sum of pound 95,52,430.40 and dollar 17,78,010.00 against 51,316 foreign money orders.

The exchange value of these money orders is Tk 67,34,85,905.85 in local currency, the handout added.

**Asia-Pacific
economic boom
putting strain
on environment**

TOKYO, Jan 28: The Asia-Pacific region's economic boom is putting a strain on the environment and countries in the area could help ease the problem by adopting better resource management policies, an Asian Development Bank official said Friday, reports AP.

Bong-Suh Lee, the bank's vice president for projects, made the statement during a symposium in Tokyo sponsored by Japan's Export-Import Bank.

"The well-being of our planet tomorrow depends on how well we manage our collective resources today," Lee said. "The wisdom of cooperation in managing the environment is obvious."

Lee said many countries in the region are facing the dilemma of balancing the increasing demand for investment in infrastructure and the higher expectation for a safer environment.

"Explosive economic growth in the region is placing heavy pressure on natural environments and only sound national policies and better resource management will ease the strain," Lee said.

Lee said the Manila-based financial institution has been promoting and environment-friendly development programme. He said that the bank has a commitment that at least half of its projects must have social or environmental objectives.

However, he added that the bank only serves as a catalyst and the main responsibility of protecting the environment is still on the countries themselves.

"Some developing countries believe that the quickest way to improve the environment is to prosper first and clean up later," Lee said. "But donor countries and most most developing ones find this approach unacceptable and believe that growth that addresses economic and environmental issues together pays off better in the long run."

**Investors warned
to stop using
S'pore's bourse
as casinos**

SINGAPORE, Jan 28: Singapore's mob of novice stock exchange dabblers have been given yet another warning to stop using the share market for high-risk gambling, reports AP.

"Investors should not treat the stock market as casinos, buying and selling on rumours and hoping to make a quick profit," Finance Minister Richard Hu said Monday.

"They should familiarize themselves with the companies they intend to invest in, and invest only in the shares of companies and in economies with sound fundamentals," Hu told a business conference.

"Hu's comments were the latest in a series of warnings by senior officials in Singapore and neighbouring Malaysia. Authorities in Malaysia said Monday that tighter precautions could be taken against efforts to rig the market. An investigation is underway of claims that certain shares on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange might have been manipulated during a recent bull market."

"We will continue to monitor and if additional measures are required, we will not hesitate to impose them," Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim told reporters.

**US Senate recommends lifting
of trade bans on Vietnam**

WASHINGTON, Jan 28: The Senate has recommended lifting trade sanctions against Vietnam, 20 years after the last American soldier left the south eastern Asian country, reports AP.

It's time to "put the war behind us," said Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., a Vietnam veteran who was wounded three times. Better relations will enhance the search for MIAs, said Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., a former POW who spoke of going to sleep every night in prison camp "memorizing the names of those who were with us" so they would not be left behind.

Thursday's 62-38 vote urging the administration to lift the trade embargo "expeditiously" was not binding, but it provides considerable impetus for the administration as it moves toward normalizing relations with the former enemy.

White House spokeswoman

Dee Dee Myers said President Clinton has not decided whether to lift the trade sanctions, but "we certainly welcome the Senate's sentiment on that."

"Progress has been made, but the overall issue is still under review. We don't have a firm time line" for a decision on the sanctions, she said.

The administration has pledged that it will not lift trade sanctions, or take the further step of normalizing diplomatic relations, until it is assured Vietnam is cooperating in accounting for the 2,238 Americans still missing from Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

Veterans' groups, most strongly against relaxing restrictions on Vietnam until there is a full accounting of Americans still missing from the war, were angered by the vote.

"We were somewhat stunned that they didn't listen to the veterans and families"

who feel Vietnam is still not forthcoming on the POW-MIA issue, said Phil Budahn, spokesman for the American Legion.

Yet it was the Vietnam veterans in the Senate — led by Kerry and McCain — who were the most eloquent in urging an end to the enmity and the beginning of trade relations.

"If you want to serve the families you will vote to lift the embargo. If you want to put the war behind us and act in a statesmanlike fashion and move to the future and protect the interests of this nation you will vote to lift the embargo," Kerry said.

Six of the eight senators who served in Vietnam approved the legislation, including Sen. Bob Kerrey, D-Nebr., a Congressional Medal of Honour winner who lost part of his leg in Vietnam.

"I understand there is still a considerable amount of fear," Kerry said. But he said he be-

lieved strongly that lifting the embargo was in the best interests of the families and the country.

The legislation, written as an amendment to the State Department authorization bill, includes a provision that Vietnam must do more to improve its human rights record. Kerry said this must not be ignored.

Senate is expected to vote on the State Department authorization bill Friday. The House has already passed its version of the bill.

Le Van Bang, the Vietnamese ambassador to the United Nations, said he expects the trade embargo to be lifted soon — within "weeks or months."

The ambassador, in Chicago for a gathering of US and Vietnamese business officials discussing future investment and trade relations, said: "If the embargo is lifted and relations normalize, then we can be in trust."

**BIBM course
on 'credit
management'
concludes**

The two-week training course on "Credit management" organised by Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management (BIBM) concluded here Thursday, reports BSS.

The objectives of the course were to develop knowledge on credit planning and monitoring mechanism at the branch and corporate levels and to acquaint the participants with modern techniques of supervision, follow-up and recovery of credit.

Some 38 officers from different banks and financial institutions attended training course which concentrated on various aspects of credit management in banks and financial institutions.

The BIBM Director General AHM Nurul Islam gave away certificates to the participants of the course at the concluding session Thursday.

BIBM faculty members Mahmud Ahmed and Nurul Islam were the coordinators of the course.

**Moscow determined to
pursue reform policies**

FRANKFURT, Jan 28: Germany's Deutsche Bank AG said yesterday Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin was determined to pursue his government's reform policies and that Russian wanted a speedy resolution to its debt problems, reports Reuter.

Deutsche Bank Chairs a committee of bank creditors owed money by Russia.

The committee's Chairman, Christian Vontz, had held talks in Moscow on Wednesday with Deputy Russian Finance Minister Andrei Vavilov. Chernomyrdin had also been present, Deutsche Bank said in a statement.

The premier stressed that the reforms started by his government would be continued unchanged, the fight against inflation had a particularly high priority, it added.

Chernomyrdin had also said that even if it was going to be difficult for the Russians, Moscow would continue to honour its debt commitments to both official government and bank creditors.

Deutsche added that there was a clear will on the Russian side to push the debt negotiations forward. There was agreement to resume talks as soon as possible and bring them to a successful conclusion.

Talks aimed at rescheduling 26 billion US dollars of bank debt owed by the former Soviet Union have been held up since last year because of legal problems.

The banks want Russia to waive its sovereign immunity as part of any debt deal, thus giving the banks the right to seize state assets if Russia defaults.

Russia has so far refused to give up this sovereignty. There is also legal uncertainty about who exactly is the debtor in regard to the debt of the former Soviet Union.

It is not clear whether the debtor is the Russian government or the Russian federation or another legal entity.

The conditions of the rescheduling itself have been broadly clear since last year.

**EC needs to
limit supply of
beef, butter**

BRUSSELS, Jan 28: The European Community warned here yesterday that surpluses of beef and butter need to be curbed in order to prevent an over-supply crisis, reports AP.

EC Agriculture Commissioner Rene Steichen, presenting proposal for farm support prices in 1994-95 said incentives for cattle farmers needed to be cut.

"It is imperative that we act on this rapidly to prevent a crisis, otherwise in one or two years we will be struggling to resolve one," he said.

Steichen proposed several moves to stop the rise of beef production including a change in the reference year for calculating subsidies. He said 1989, 1990 or 1991 could be used but no longer 1992.

**White House warns Russia of
stopping Western aid**

WASHINGTON, Jan 28: The White House warned Thursday that Western aid to Russia and Belarus could dry up if their economic reforms get off track, reports AP.

"The future of Russia is in the hands of the Russians, and I think you're going to find such assistance as we give, and the multinational development banks give... will keep pace with reforms in Russia," said Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen.

US officials have voiced concern about both Russia where the last of the key economic reformers, Boris Yegorov resigned Wednesday, and Belarus, where parliament chairman Stanislav

"It is an absolute imperative that they curb inflation," said Bentsen, warning that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other lending organizations would be reluctant to extend credit without guarantees of continued reform.

The IMF issued first instalment of 1.5 billion dollars last year but has suspended a 1.5 billion dollars instalment for this year.

**Kohl backs
Russia**

Another report adds: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl has made a strong appeal for Western support of Russia's embattled reformers and

backed permanent membership for Moscow in the Group of Seven industrial powers (G-7).

Speaking at the opening of the world economic forum here yesterday Kohl sought to overcome Western misgivings about Moscow's new conservative cabinet and a feared drift away from its commitment to market reforms.

The alternative is whether we give our support to those who support reform, not knowing whether they will succeed or not, or sit in our historical corner knowing the failure will be disastrous, he said.

**Saifur attends
WB body meet**

PARIS, Jan 28: The joint procedures committee meeting on remuneration of the executive directors and their alternates of World Bank was concluded yesterday, reports BSS.

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, who is currently the Chairman of the Board of Governors of World Bank and IMF, presided over the meeting.

It is decided at the meeting that the next joint procedures committee meeting of the World Bank would be held in the middle of May this year in Washington.

The meeting was attended, among others, by Al-Haj-Abu Bakar and Sir Jeremy Morse, both members of the committee and Alessandro Leopold, Assistant Secretary of the IMF. The Finance Minister Left Davos, Switzerland this morning to attend the world economic summit.

**Training course on digital
telephone ends at Gazipur**

GAZIPUR, Jan 28: Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam said here Thursday telecommunications demand special priority for expanding regional co-operation among the SAARC countries to bring people of this region closer, reports BSS.

The minister was addressing as chief guest a certificate awarding ceremony of two-week training course on 'digital telephone exchange' at Telecom Staff College.

The minister said telecommunications was playing an important role in maintaining effective and fruitful communications in the modern world. He said Bangladesh was also giving importance on regional co-operation for telecommunications.

Islam expressed his optimism that the knowledge ac-

quired by the participants will go a long way in improving the standard of telecommunications service in this region and help develop and expand telecommunications by switching over to modern system.

State Minister for Science and Technology Prof M A Mannan was the special guest at the ceremony presided over by Fazlur Rahman, Chairman BTB, the function was also addressed by AKM Badrul Alam, DG of the Staff College.

Sixteen engineers from India, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and host country Bangladesh took part in the training course organised as part of recommendations of SAARC technical committee.

Later, the minister distributed certificates among the participants.

**Rupali Insurance
earns Tk 13cr
as collected
premium**

The sixth annual conference of the officers of Rupali Insurance Company Ltd was held at a city hotel on Thursday, says a press release.

It was presided over by Mostafa Golam Kuddus, Chairman of the Board of Directors. The company's Management and Finance Consultant former Deputy Prime Minister Jamal Uddin Ahmed was present as the special guest. He distributed prizes among the highest premium earners of the company.

Jamal Uddin also announced a package of benefits including new service rules, provident fund, gratuity, group insurance etc for the officers and employees of the company.

The company earned over Taka 13 crore as collected premium for the last year and fixed up a target of Taka 16.50 crore for the current year.

Industrialists, bankers, traders and journalists were present at the annual conference.

**China's move to
teach nation about
new tax laws**

HONG KONG, Jan 28: China is mobilizing one million people to teach the nation about its new tax laws, China's chief tax man was quoted Monday as saying, reports AP.

Jin Xin, head of the State Administration of Taxation, cited widespread misunderstanding about the taxes that took effect January 1, said Ta Kung Pao, a Beijing-funded Hong Kong newspaper.

Speaking during a publicity drive Sunday in Wangfujing, Beijing's main shopping street, Jin said tax officials and local government and civic leaders would hit the streets to educate the public about the laws, the newspaper reported.

The new taxes, including consumption and value-added levies, are designed to enlarge the central government's share of revenues and advance senior leader Deng Xiaoping's goal of shifting Communist China to a market-style economy.

Meanwhile, Chinese media and publishing officials have gathered in Beijing for China's first national propaganda meeting in 37 years, said Wen Wei Po, another Beijing-funded Hong Kong newspaper.

Asian stock markets close mixed

HONG KONG, Jan 28: Asian stock markets closed generally mixed Friday, with prices falling in Tokyo for the second straight day because of Japan's political turmoil, reports AP.

Tokyo's 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average lost 133.91 points, or 0.71 per cent, ending the week at 18,757.88 points. On Thursday, the average shed 246.42 points, or 1.29 per cent.

The Tokyo Stock Price Index of all issues listed on the first section fell 8.68 points, or 0.56 per cent, to 1,527.82.

Prices dropped as many investors avoided major moves while waiting to see whether the key political reform package on which Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa has staked his political career will pass, traders said.

Hosokawa's reformist coalition government has one day left to salvage the reform bills, which have been holding up government measures to boost the economy.

In Hong Kong, share prices fell sharply lower in moderate trading. The Hang Seng Index, the market's key indicator of blue chips, fell 92.59 points, or 0.8 per cent, closing at 11,377.83. On Thursday, the index surged 230 points.

Brokers attributed the drop to rumours that major Hong Kong banks would tighten mortgage lending policies, which would hurt property

stocks. WELLINGTON: New Zealand share prices closed higher in reaction to positive sentiment in world markets. The NZSE-40 Capital Index rose 29.86 points, or 1.3 per cent, to 2,338.28.

TAIPEI: Share prices closed slightly lower in moderate trading following Thursday's sharp gains. The market's Weighted Index fell 6.31 points to 6,016.08 after Tuesday's 176-point surge.

MANILA: Share prices closed lower in moderate trading on news of an increase in local oil prices. The Manila composite index of 31 selected issues fell 73.35 points to 2,929.50.

SYDNEY: Australian share prices closed mostly higher but gold stocks and some metals fell because of weaker gold prices. The All Ordinaries index of share prices rose 9.2 points to 2,259.9.

SEOUL: Share prices closed higher in active trading. The Korea Composite Stock Price Index rose 19.31 points to 926.75, its highest level in four years.

SINGAPORE: Share prices closed higher in slow trading. The 30-share Straits Times Industrials Index rose 13.79 points to 2,300.07.

BANGKOK: Thai share prices closed slightly higher in choppy trading despite some profit-taking. The Stock Exchange of Thailand index

rose 9.26 points to 1,507.35.

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian share prices closed higher, with brokers expecting to see a further rise in prices on Monday. The Composite Index rose 15.82 points to 1,090.06.

JAKARTA: The stock exchange's Composite Index rose 2.177 points, closing at 592.646.

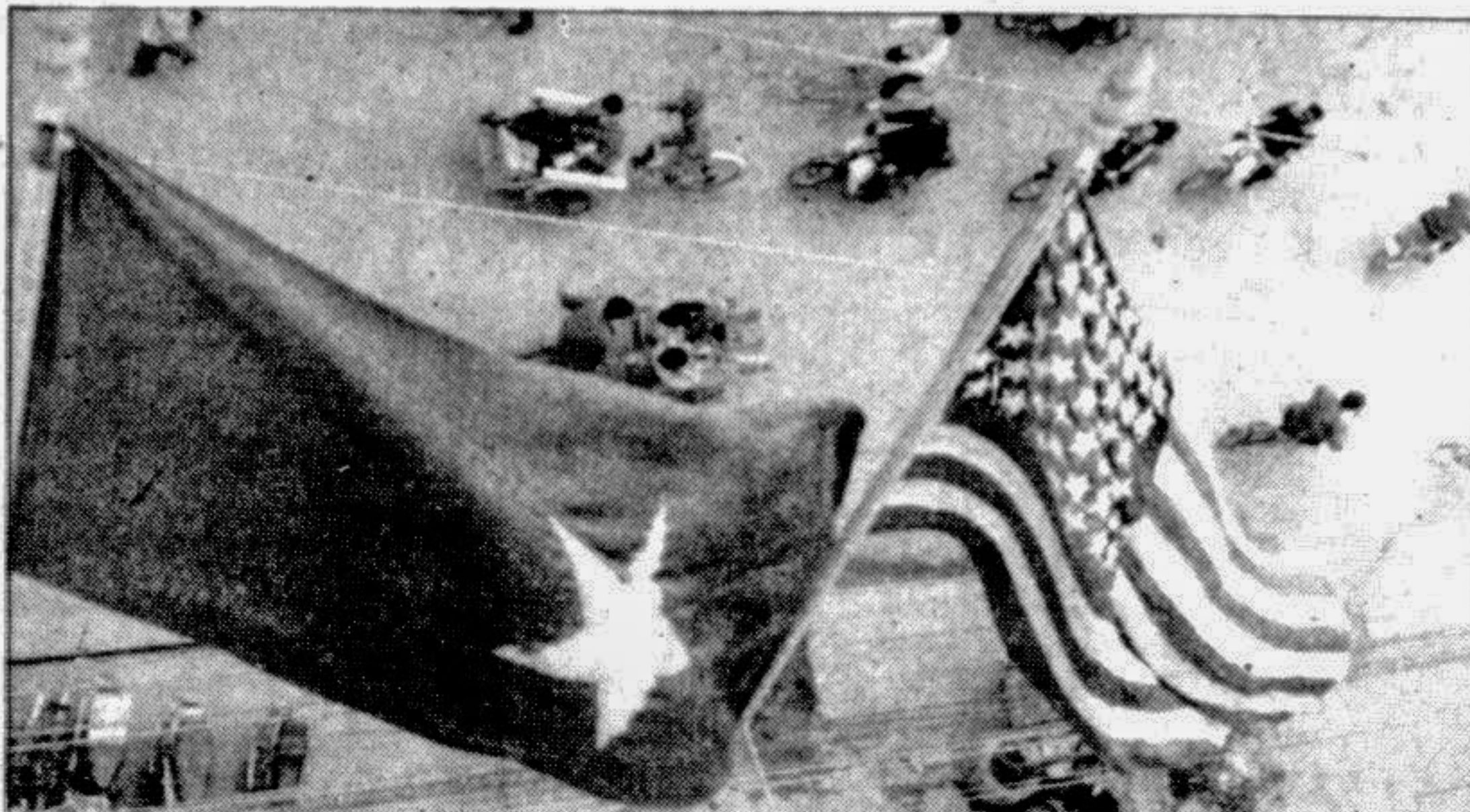
**Japanese steel mills
end talks with
Aussie, Canadian
coal producers**

TOKYO, Jan 25: Japanese steel mills wound up talks with Australian and Canadian coal producers Monday, settling on benchmark prices around eight per cent lower for deliveries in the upcoming year, industry sources said, reports AP.

Australia's Broken Hill Proprietary Co Ltd (BHP) has also agreed to cut export tonnage to Japan from 7.9 million tonnes in the current year to seven million tonnes in the new year starting in April, a senior BHP official said.

The officials said benchmark prices for hard coking coal were down 7.8 per cent at 45.45 dollars a tonne for the year to March 1995 while prices for soft coking coal were down 8.2 per cent at 31.80 dollars a tonne.

The Japanese steel mills are believed to have imposed volume cuts averaging up to 10 per cent.



Street traffic passes under US and Vietnamese flags flying yesterday at the Office of Vatico, an American consulting service company which is among dozens of US companies who have opened representative offices in Vietnam. The US senate also voted yesterday in favour of the lifting of the 19-year-old trade embargo slapped on Vietnam. — AFP photo



Mostafa Golam Kuddus (3rd-R), Chairman, Board of Directors of Rupali Insurance Company Ltd, addressing the sixth annual conference of officers of the company at Sonargaon Hotel on Thursday. Jamal Uddin Ahmed (2nd-R), former Deputy Prime Minister and Management and Finance Consultant of the company, is also seen.