

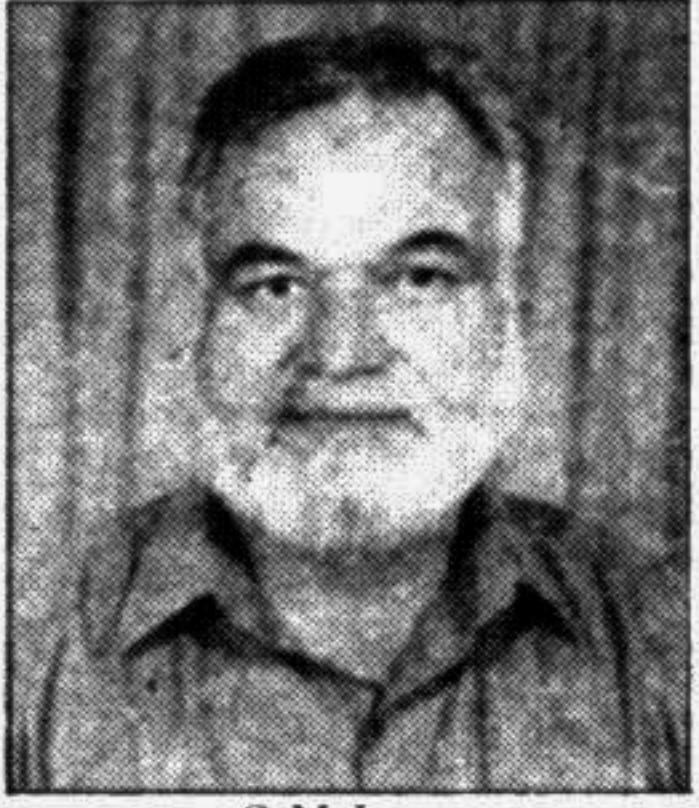
## Expanded trade to cut imbalances: Inam

By Sohel Manzur

President of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) S M Inam Monday said the enormous trade imbalances among the South Asian countries could be reduced significantly by expanding their trade.

All the tariff and non-tariff barriers would have to be removed to make the region a potential market for the 1200 million people of the seven SAARC countries, he said.

In an exclusive interview



S M Inam with The Daily Star at Hotel Sonargaon yesterday evening. S M Inam said, certain frameworks were being used to help develop economic cooperation among the SAARC countries.

Terming the SAARC Chamber as a very important forum for developing trade and commerce in South Asia, Inam said the countries of the region should work to establish a

## SAARC Chamber

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would generate new employment and assist in the alleviation of poverty among the member states.

The Foreign Minister hoped that the SAARC Chamber would help generate people to people contacts cross national frontiers in South Asia. It would also bring the general people into the SAARC process making them aware of the benefits of regional cooperation, he pointed out.

The SAARC Secretary General Yadav Silwal described SAPTA and the SAARC Chamber as two extremely significant developments for the SAARC region when intra-regional trade in the SAARC countries was quite dismal, amounting to 2 to 3 per cent of the region's total trade.

The SAARC Chamber will no doubt be a dynamic instrument for promotion of intra-SAARC trade to bring tangible benefit to the people of South Asia," he hoped.

The SAARC Chamber President S M Inam said ample opportunities are existing in the SAARC region with various fiscal and other incentives for attracting foreign investment to establish joint ventures.

Inam expressed his optimism about the great future of the SAARC Chamber and said it would succeed in its efforts to make this region a strong economic factor and a better place to live in.

Mahbubur Rahman, FBCCI President and also the Vice-President of the SAARC Chamber, said a host of economic imperatives made the formation of SAARC trading bloc and urgent necessity.

"We are home to nearly half of the world's poor and in such a scenario our united efforts to rapidly secure a sustainable share of the trade can make a singular impact in alleviating the poverty," the chairman of the organising committee of the SAARC founding conference observed.

**Crisis over judges defused**

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Chief Justice that it is important to let the people know that effective consultation had taken place, a member of the delegation said.

We emphasised on the appropriateness and correctness of effective consultation, but conveyed to the Chief Justice that it is up to him to take a decision on the issue."

A similar delegation led by Barrister Syed Ishaque Ahmed later called on the Prime Minister at her Parliament chamber in the evening.

"We are hopeful that the Prime Minister will take appropriate steps to resolve the issue," a member of the delegation said. "We were assured that the consultation process will be revised and will be carried out in the future."

He requested the Prime Minister to continue the convention set by Shehade Zia.

Begum Zia gave a patient hearing to the members of the delegation and assured them that the convention set by Zia would continue.

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Published by Mediaworld Ltd. 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed at City Publishing House Ltd. 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhammandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). Fax No: 88-02-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.



The heads of the United Nations Joint Consultative Group on Policies (UN-JCGP) called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday. UNDP Administrator James G Speth, UNICEF Executive Director James P Grant, UNFPA Executive Director Nafis Sadik and IFAD President Fawzi H Al-Sultan are seen on her right.

— PID photo

## Norway praises economic growth

By Staff Correspondent

Norwegian Minister of Development Cooperation Karl Nordheim-Larsen yesterday said Norway would continue bilateral assistance to Bangladesh but it would phase out support from India and Pakistan.

The Norwegian Minister was addressing a press conference in the city yesterday evening before leaving for home at the end of a six-day visit to Bangladesh.

The 4.7 per cent economic growth achieved by Bangladesh last year is very significant and we are optimistic about the future of this country, she said.

About trade with Bangladesh, the minister said Norway would continue encouraging the export of textile goods from Bangladesh.

Head of Asia and Latin America of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway, Berit Fladby, Assistant Secretary General, Foreign Affairs, Torild Skard and Tore Torengi of Norway's Dhaka chancery were present at the press conference.

Among the South Asian countries, Bangladesh received most of the bilateral assistance from Norway, she said.

Last year the total Norwegian aid to Bangladesh was Norwegian Kroner 235 million, equivalent to Tk 1036 crore.

The Norwegian minister said, the aid given by her country to Bangladesh was being used satisfactorily.

The economic growth rate of Bangladesh is exceeding the population growth. But at the micro-economic level, the country is facing some difficulties which, I hope, it would overcome in the near future."

## Dhaka seeks more aid from UN agencies

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday sought increased assistance from the UN agencies for implementation of development programmes, reports UNB.

She made the plea when heads of five UN agencies composing the UN-Joint Consultative Group on Policies (UN-JCGP) called on the Prime Minister at her office in the afternoon.

Led by UN-JCGP Chairman and UNICEF Chief James P Grant, the group included Administrator of UNDP James G Speth, Executive Director of UNFPA Dr Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of WFP Catherine Bertini and President of IFAD Fawzi H Al-Sultan.

During the meeting, Begum Zia welcomed the group for holding the UN-JCGP meeting outside UN headquarters and for selecting Dhaka as its venue.

Besides attending a four-day meeting in Dhaka, which began on Sunday, the heads of the UN agencies made field trips to adjacent districts to see for themselves some ongoing socio-economic development projects of the government as well as different NGOs.

The Group lauded the government's efforts in improving the socio-economic condition of the people and said they were impressed to see the progress, particularly in education, population control, health and poverty alleviation.

Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) James P Grant said the government laid stress on education and development of the agriculture and health sectors. "All programmes are aimed at overall development of human resources," she added.

Begum Zia informed the Group that there was enough enthusiasm among the people in the education programmes but poverty was a hindrance in the way of their implementation.

She called upon the World Food Programme to assist the 'Food for Education' programme initiated by the present government. "Education is imperative for implementing all development programmes," she pointed out.



Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman (R) receiving party chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina on her arrival from the United States at the Zia International Airport yesterday.

— Star photo

## Hasina

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During the meetings, Hasina exchanged views with them on bilateral and international issues, said a party press release. She also attended Congressional Lunch and Friendship Dinner.

On February 4, the Awami League president visited a mosque in Washington DC and prayed for those killed in post-election violence at Lalbagh. She also joined a US branch Awami League programme condoning the death of the innocent people.

Hasina exchanged pleasantries with Bangladeshis living in America.

The Opposition leader made a stopover in London on her way back home. She addressed a spontaneous gathering of expatriate Bangladeshis at Bricklane.

On her return home, Hasina was received by her younger sister Sheikh Rehana and party's central leaders and Parliament members at the Zia International Airport.

Those present at the airport included Abdus Samad Azad, Abdul Mannan, Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed, Abdul Momin, Abdul Jallil, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Obaidul Qader, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Ashiqur Rahman, Ivy Rahman, Abdul Mannan and K M Jahangir.

## Int'l security seminar

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Pakistan had sought to compensate for its loss of US patronage by trying to establish strategic depth with allies in the north and the west.

Dhruba Kumar of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies of the Tribhuvan University, said that any confidence-building measure would be futile unless these correspond to the security needs, as the Indian and Pakistani thinkings are increasingly conditioned by the nuclear weapons imperative.

Dr Shireen M. Mazari, visiting Professor of the National Defence College, Pakistan pointed out that the problems of South Asia could not be overcome without framing effective confidence-building measures.

Jasit Singh, Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, India in his paper on "Small Arms and Minor Weapons in Southern Asia: Security Implications and Need for Cooperation," said that little attention has been focused on the 'cancerous proliferation' of small arms, which have become powerful tools of violence in the hands of terrorists, militant and insurgent groups.

He said that at the close of 1993, as many as 36 wars were going on in the world.

Authorities withheld the results of 19 affiliated colleges of the university for adopting unfair means in the examinations. He suggested immediate

trans-national cooperation to contain the small weapons proliferation and a UN expert body to chart plans against the spread.

## RU B Sc, B Com results

RAJSHAHI, Feb 7: The results of BSc and BCom examinations-1992 held under the Rajshahi University was announced today, reports UNB.

The percentage of pass in BSc is 51.49 and in BCom 43.40, official sources said.

A total of 1,489 candidates out of 2,892 came out successful in the BSc examinations and 1,976 students out of 4,564 in BCom examinations.

Three students secured first class in the BSc examinations while 404 got second class and 1,082 third class.

The candidates who secured first class are Kalachand Singh of Khulna City College, Mursheed Akhter and Munmun Sultan of Bogra Afazul Haq Government College.

Only one student, Ahmed Mostafa Kamal of Magura Adarsha College, got first class in BCom examination while 313 candidates secured second class and 1,662 third class.

Authorities withheld the results of 19 affiliated colleges of the university for adopting unfair means in the examinations.

## Myanmar Minister arrives

A four-member Myanmar delegation, led by Rail and Transportation Minister U Win Sein, arrived here yesterday on a four-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB.

Communications Minister Oli Ahmed received the delegation at Zia International Airport. Senior officials of the Railway Division and Myanmar Ambassador in Dhaka U HLA Myint were also present.

Welcoming the Myanmar Minister, Oli Ahmed recalled the excellent relationship between the two countries. We are brothers across the borders, he added.

He said the neighbours should join hands for regional progress and prosperity and help each other to make up their deficiencies in different fields.

Reciprocating the sentiment, Myanmar minister said his government had been always pursuing the policy of peaceful co-existence.

## Pakistan bans public hangings

ISLAMABAD, Feb 6: Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government has banned public hangings introduced by the late military president Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, the Supreme Court was told on Sunday, reports Reuter.

Court officials quoted the government's deputy attorney general Mumtaz Mirza as telling the court that a policy decision had been made by Bhutto's three-month-old government not to hold any public hangings in future.

The Prime Minister said her government laid stress on education and development of the agriculture and health sectors. "All programmes are aimed at overall development of human resources," she added.

Begum Zia informed the Group that there was enough enthusiasm among the people in the education programmes but poverty was a hindrance in the way of their implementation.

She called upon the World Food Programme to assist the 'Food for Education' programme initiated by the present government. "Education is imperative for implementing all development programmes," she pointed out.

The source pointed to the recent measures in the Chittagong city unit as the beginning of the changed attitude of the high command. The Standing Committee, in an emergency meeting last Saturday, dissolved the Chittagong city unit of the BNP and expelled six mid-ranking leaders from the party.

The source pointed to the recent measures in the Chittagong city unit as the beginning of the changed attitude of the high command. The Standing Committee, in an emergency meeting last Saturday, dissolved the Chittagong city unit of the BNP and expelled six mid-ranking leaders from the party.

The Standing Committee will discuss the issue of the Dhaka city unit shortly and is likely to take similar steps against some of the leaders in the capital already accused of inaction and feuding.

The source did not rule out a possible reshuffle in the

## The Midnight File

### EU backs air strike in Bosnia

BRUSSELS, Feb 7: The European Union backed the air power today to lift the siege of Sarajevo, according to a draft statement seen by Reuters. Diplomats said the statement was agreed by senior officials from the 12 EU nations at a meeting of foreign ministers in Brussels although it had not yet been formally approved by the ministers.

### Arafat in Cairo for talks with Peres

CAIRO, Feb 7: PLO chairman Yasser Arafat arrived in Cairo today for talks with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the delay in implementing Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. Peres is expected to arrive in Cairo within hours and to meet Arafat, reports Reuter.

### Angolan govt bombs UNITA HQ

LISBON, Feb 7: The government lashed out at rebels in central Angola Monday, bombing their headquarters and key positions. The fighting also strained UN-sponsored peace talks. The planes hit the stronghold of the UNITA rebel movement at Huambo and its positions in and around neighbouring Kuito, a Western diplomat said, reports AP.

### Stormy session of BNPPP

From Page 1 Col 3 rather than expected co-existence," one senior BNP leader told The Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

The present Secretary General and most of the members of the high-powered Standing Committee have been retaining the posts for about seven years during when no major changes took place in front or mid-level leaderships. Even three posts of the 15-member committee have remained vacant for a long time.

The party high command is now determined to make changes in both the party and the cabinet, he said.

Meanwhile, the parliamentary party of BNP yesterday decided that selected leaders will counter Opposition attacks in the House, while the party will take a firm stand to try the culprits involved in Lalbagh carnage on the day following the city polls in which six people were killed.

The three-hour meeting was later adjourned indefinitely.

BNP chief and Prime Minister Begum Zia listened to the discussions but did not make any comments. She suggested further discussions.

### Indian diplomat

From Page 1 Col 5 first working session on the second day of the seminar.

In her paper, Nahid Islam outlined the Indian withdrawal of Ganges water at Farakka and its adverse impact on Bangladesh's socio-economic condition, the agrarian system and the ecological balance.

"Nahid Islam expressed concern over the situation arising out of the Indian withdrawal of water that had alarmingly reduced the surface and ground water levels in Bangladesh. Outlining some suggestions for augmentation of the dry season flow of the international river, she referred to the Indus Basin Treaty, US-Canada Boundary Water Treaty, US-Mexico Treaty and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, all signed under international rules.

### Mahbub

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movial of Attorney General Aminul Huq. The meeting was held with Forum convenor Justice T H Khan in the chair.

Advocate Mahbub accused the Additional Attorney General of instigating the problems for the government to satisfy his lust to become Attorney General himself.

"I, like other members of the bar, did not like the appointment of Khandaker as Additional Attorney General and registered our resentment with the appropriate authority," he said, adding "This