

Collective wisdom

From Page 1 Col 4
 were provided police escort to reach the conference centre.
 At the council meeting, India delegation was led by State Minister for External Affairs R L Bhatia, Pakistan's delegation by Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, Sri Lanka's delegation by Foreign Minister ACS Hameed, Maldives by Foreign Minister Fattullah Jameel while Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering and Nepalese Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Ram Hori Joshi led their country's delegation. Bangladesh side was led by Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman.
 Underlining the need for building a consensus among the member states on a common destiny, the SAARC Chairperson said "in the SAARC family we have been able to look beyond bilateral problems and discover common interest in regional confidence building."
 "We have accommodated individual difficulties of member states in the past. We have succeeded in our efforts to evolve a broad consensus on sensitive issues. I am confident we would succeed in sustaining this excellent practice in the collective activities we have agreed upon," Begum Zia said.
 She said encouraging work has been done by the three SAARC ministerial conferences during the past eight months. In this connection, she mentioned that the two conferences on the Disabled and the

Youth in our region, made commendable contributions towards the realisation of SAARC social goals.
 Begum Zia expressed the hope that the recommendations made by these two important conferences would merit special attention during the current session of the Council of Ministers.
 Recalling the contribution of late President Ziaur Rahman, Begum Zia said "his vision of SAARC was shared by the leadership of South Asia. We are here today to carry that dream forward."
 The SAARC Chairperson expressed her optimism about the progress of implementation of SAPTA and the Integrated Programme of Action (IPA). She said the economic opportunities offered by SAPTA need to be collectively explored for the benefit of the people of this region. She mentioned that the regional economic and trade cooperation in other parts of the world "have proved to be very beneficial."

Begum Zia observed that the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round talks and the creation of International Trade Organisation are significant events of our time. This should be taken into consideration in designing the programme for implementation under SAPTA and the Integrated Programme of Action, she added.
 After the SAARC Chairperson's inaugural address, Indian State Minister for External Affairs RL Bhatia gave a vote of thanks on behalf of the participating delegates. She paid tributes to Begum Zia's "deep personal commitment to SAARC."
 At the beginning of the inaugural programme Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman called for strengthening cooperation among the SAARC countries and called for increasing involvement of the commonman in the SAARC process.
 Immediately after the inaugural session, the foreign ministers and their delegations went into a closed door business session chaired by Mostafizur Rahman, who is Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

11 injured as JCD rivals at RMC clash: 11 held
From Our Correspondent
 RAJSHAH, July 30: Eleven persons were injured in a two rival groups of the Jatiyatadri Chhatra Dal clashed at Pinku Hostel of Rajshahi Medical College last night.
 Four seriously injured students were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.
 Police later raided the hostel, arrested 11 JCD activists and recovered arms and ammunition. These included 21 rounds of bullets of SMG, 10 hand-made bombs, a bullet of shot gun and a huge quantity of bomb-making materials.
 The arrested persons are: Kamruzzaman, Zafar Iqbal, Atiqur Rahman, Asaduzzaman, Halim, Saifuddin Khaled, Amirul Islam, Sharif Mahmud, Zahid Sarwar, Mannan and Chanchol.

SAARC FMs meet PM
 The foreign ministers now attending the 14th meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers called on Prime Minister and SAARC Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at the International Conference Centre in Dhaka before the beginning of the plenary session yesterday morning, reports BSS.
 The ministers, who were accompanied by their spouses, apprised the SAARC Chairperson of the peoples' perception and optimism about SAARC, the regional grouping of over one billion population of seven member countries of South Asia and said the people of the region would be able to end poverty and attain economic prosperity through the SAARC.
 The SAARC Chairperson expressed her satisfaction at the progress of the SAARC and underscored the need for making this regional grouping more strengthened and effective one for the uplift of the people of South Asia.

Bhatia
 From Page 1 Col 5
 and like those emerging in the region and added that sustained economic growth is an essential component of the liberalised policies that have been put in place.
 Stressing the need for greater economic cooperation in the South Asia for the benefits of the vast multitude living in the region, the Indian minister said it is necessary that meaningful cooperation must herald in the region for collective welfare.
 "If we can shake off our doubts and face the future with confidence in ourselves and in our commitment to enter into substantial and meaningful cooperation, this would help speed up the process of turning our economies around and help to ensure that poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, lack of shelter and sanitation, for large sections of our population, becomes a distant memory," he observed.
 The Indian minister referred to the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and said "Our commitment to the SAPTA reflects our desire to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, to improve the quality of life and to accelerate economic growth and social progress on our common objectives."
 He mentioned the rapid changes that are taking place in the global economy and said greater economic interactions in the South Asian region are necessary at this stage. "We cannot overstate the urgency of operationalising the SAPTA and moving ahead," Bhatia said and urged all members of the SAARC to cooperate in true spirit of the SAARC and fulfil their commitments in this regard.
 The Indian minister referred to many other SAARC programmes in social sectors like on children, the disabled, women, youth and others and said his country fully supports all these measures and has also taken steps at national level to attain the programmes.
 He laid particular stress on the disadvantages of girl child and called for special protection for vulnerable girl children in difficult circumstances and belonging to special groups, who are economically and socially deprived or disabled physically or mentally.
 Bhatia spoke of the effects of natural disasters in the region and called for coordinating expertise and experiences of the member states of the SAARC in facing the consequences of such disasters. He lauded the collective position of the SAARC countries at the world conference on natural disaster reduction in Japan, in May, this year.
 The Indian minister reiterated his country's commitment to regional cooperation in the South Asia and said in the spirit of the SAARC, regional cooperation must be the common endeavour of all and cooperation must increase particularly in the core areas.

CHT: So far, so good
 From Page 1 Col 4
 last.
 There are also other wheels in the wheel, too. One source hinted that Upendra Lal Chakma, who became the president of the refugee welfare association in Tripura, nurtures political ambitions and would like to contest the next general elections with the help of the returnees.
 He was elected an MP in 1986 and was even nominated a special adviser to the then president HM Ershad, but surprisingly left the country ahead of the 1988 Upazila Parishad polls, citing a lack of security. He has close links with the Shantibahini leaders, an allegation he has been denying repeatedly.
 Shantu Larma, who heads the political wing of the Shantibahini, the Jana Sanghati Samity (JSS), has been insisting on the segregation of the Bengali settlers and the tribals. During the talks with the Parliamentary Committee headed by Communications Minister Oli Ahmed, Shantu Larma reportedly suggested that there should be a hiatus of five miles between the tribal villages and Bengali resettlement.
 Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, the sitting Awami League MP from Khagrachhari, supported the idea.
 The five major demands of the JSS are a constitutional guarantee as minority tribals, declaration of the CHT as a separately administered area,



A group of hartal supporters ransacked the room of the Bangla Academy press manager for defying the hartal call yesterday. —Star photo

SAARC FMs meet PM

The foreign ministers now attending the 14th meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers called on Prime Minister and SAARC Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia at the International Conference Centre in Dhaka before the beginning of the plenary session yesterday morning, reports BSS.
 The ministers, who were accompanied by their spouses, apprised the SAARC Chairperson of the peoples' perception and optimism about SAARC, the regional grouping of over one billion population of seven member countries of South Asia and said the people of the region would be able to end poverty and attain economic prosperity through the SAARC.
 The SAARC Chairperson expressed her satisfaction at the progress of the SAARC and underscored the need for making this regional grouping more strengthened and effective one for the uplift of the people of South Asia.

Bhatia
 From Page 1 Col 5
 and like those emerging in the region and added that sustained economic growth is an essential component of the liberalised policies that have been put in place.
 Stressing the need for greater economic cooperation in the South Asia for the benefits of the vast multitude living in the region, the Indian minister said it is necessary that meaningful cooperation must herald in the region for collective welfare.
 "If we can shake off our doubts and face the future with confidence in ourselves and in our commitment to enter into substantial and meaningful cooperation, this would help speed up the process of turning our economies around and help to ensure that poverty, hunger, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy, lack of shelter and sanitation, for large sections of our population, becomes a distant memory," he observed.
 The Indian minister referred to the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and said "Our commitment to the SAPTA reflects our desire to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, to improve the quality of life and to accelerate economic growth and social progress on our common objectives."
 He mentioned the rapid changes that are taking place in the global economy and said greater economic interactions in the South Asian region are necessary at this stage. "We cannot overstate the urgency of operationalising the SAPTA and moving ahead," Bhatia said and urged all members of the SAARC to cooperate in true spirit of the SAARC and fulfil their commitments in this regard.
 The Indian minister referred to many other SAARC programmes in social sectors like on children, the disabled, women, youth and others and said his country fully supports all these measures and has also taken steps at national level to attain the programmes.
 He laid particular stress on the disadvantages of girl child and called for special protection for vulnerable girl children in difficult circumstances and belonging to special groups, who are economically and socially deprived or disabled physically or mentally.
 Bhatia spoke of the effects of natural disasters in the region and called for coordinating expertise and experiences of the member states of the SAARC in facing the consequences of such disasters. He lauded the collective position of the SAARC countries at the world conference on natural disaster reduction in Japan, in May, this year.
 The Indian minister reiterated his country's commitment to regional cooperation in the South Asia and said in the spirit of the SAARC, regional cooperation must be the common endeavour of all and cooperation must increase particularly in the core areas.

Injured constable still in critical condition at CMH
By Staff Correspondent
 Police constable Nizamuddin, who was injured in a bomb blast in the city Friday, was in a critical condition until 11 last night.
 He underwent an operation at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) yesterday morning.
 A police spokesman said the operation was successful but Nizamuddin was not out of danger. He was in the intensive care unit, the spokesman added.

16 cops killed in Indian blast
 NEW DELHI, July 30: Sixteen policemen were killed in central India today when Maoist guerrillas blew up a vehicle in which they were travelling with a land mine, the Press Trust of India (PTI) reported, says AFP.
 A police officer who survived the blast was shot and injured by the rebels near a tribal-dominated village in the state of Madhya Pradesh, the news agency said.
 The deadmen belonged to the special armed force posted in the area to fight the Maoists, who are known in India as Naxalites.

Hartal observed

From Page 1 Col 8
 AL leaders spoke at the rally. The Chhatra Samaj and several left-leaning political parties also held separate rallies in the city.
 Our Narayanganj Correspondent adds: At least 10 persons were injured when a procession brought out by school students in support of the hartal was attacked by some armed young men yesterday noon.
 The procession brought out by the students of Gothain High School and Chittaranjan Cotton Mills High School, and was attacked allegedly by the BNP and Jamaat activists when it was getting into the Laxmi Narayan Cotton Mill.
 Hartal was observed elsewhere in the district peacefully.
 Plying of vehicles remained suspended during the hartal period but trains operated as usual. A few launches also left Narayanganj terminal during the period.
 Adamjee Jute Mills and Laxmi Narayan Cotton Mill operated as usual, but the others did not.
 Our JU Correspondent adds, the students of Jahangirnagar University assaulted two suspected Islam Chhatra Shibir activists when they were crossing the university area in a micro-bus yesterday.
 The students also damaged the micro-bus. Police, however, managed to rescue them from the agitated students.
 The two activists, Faruq and Hafiz Kamal, were returning to Khulna after attending the rally at Manik Mia Avenue in Dhaka on Friday.
 Our Staff Correspondent reports from Chittagong: Life came to a standstill in this port city and sporadic blasts of

Gas pilferage
 From Page 1 Col 8
 were preparing for investigation at other factories in various industrial belts.
 They also did not rule out the possibility of involvement of a section of unscrupulous employees of the Titas Gas Company in such thefts.
 The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd yesterday sued five persons, including the owner of the two industries belonging to the same group, but police said the accused were all absconding.
 According to police, the industries, situated at the Kuripara Bandar area, took unauthorised gas connections from a bypass line last October. Preliminary estimates say the stolen gas could be worth at least Tk 1 crore.
 The pilferage came to light on Friday following a spot investigation by a police team led by a magistrate.
 When contacted, engineer M Kamaluddin, deputy manager of Titas, confirmed the case.

Two hospitals to check up workers for Malaysia
Star Report
 The medical examinations of the workers recruited for employment in Malaysia will be conducted from today (Sunday) at two hospitals — the BIRDEM and the Holy Family Hospital — in the city.
 A spokesman of the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka told The Daily Star last night that the decision has been taken to facilitate continued movement of Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia.
 The two hospitals will conduct physical check-up and laboratory tests for issuing medical certificates to the workers selected by the Malaysian employers, said the spokesman.
 "These hospitals have been recommended by the Government of Bangladesh which was also approved by Malaysian authorities," he said adding, "this is an interim measure until further arrangement."

Khaleda invited to Egypt
 Egyptian Ambassador in Bangladesh Mohammed Kamal Elmiligy yesterday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office and handed over a letter from Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak inviting her to visit Cairo to attend the United Nations sponsored nine-day international conference on population and development beginning there on September 5, reports BSS.
 The Egyptian President in his letter highly acclaimed Bangladesh's role and concern for population, sustained economic growth and development — the theme of the forthcoming UN conference — and said he was looking forward to welcoming her in Egypt and hoped to discuss bilateral matters with the Bangladesh Prime Minister.
Gas pilferage
 From Page 1 Col 8
 were preparing for investigation at other factories in various industrial belts.
 They also did not rule out the possibility of involvement of a section of unscrupulous employees of the Titas Gas Company in such thefts.
 The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd yesterday sued five persons, including the owner of the two industries belonging to the same group, but police said the accused were all absconding.
 According to police, the industries, situated at the Kuripara Bandar area, took unauthorised gas connections from a bypass line last October. Preliminary estimates say the stolen gas could be worth at least Tk 1 crore.
 The pilferage came to light on Friday following a spot investigation by a police team led by a magistrate.
 When contacted, engineer M Kamaluddin, deputy manager of Titas, confirmed the case.

Accelerate growth rate

From Page 1 Col 5
 SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement).
 "The SAARC, during its second cycle of summitry, is happily addressing core economic issues of which SAPTA is a vital element," said Mostafiz, the current chairman of the Council of Ministers.
 Referring to the recently held SAARC Finance-Planning ministers' meeting, he was optimistic that the recommendations made by the meeting to fight against poverty would be supported by the Council.
 He also underlined the need for monitoring the effects of the GATT agreement on the countries of South Asia as the world trade regime is expected to be much more dynamic with the signing of the agreement.
 "Our nascent industries and our fragile economies would need careful management."
 The Foreign Minister also spoke in favour of strong political commitment to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty from the region, preferably by the year 2000.
 He stressed the need for paying more attention to regional cooperation and said unilateralism in SAARC matters may convey unhelpful messages. "Bilateral problems may need to be kept outside the SAARC interactions for more years to come," he said, adding: "We have to build on what we have already agreed upon despite our domestic difficulties."
 The Foreign Minister said Bangladesh is ready to further strengthen the SAARC mandate, intensify SAARC interaction and hold meeting regularly as per the charter.
 Mostafiz stressed the need for taking strides in the areas of youth and the disabled and women and family welfare, on which two separate ministerial conferences have been held.
 "South Asia, which is the home of largest number of poor and disadvantaged in the world, should not be left behind by history," he said.
 In his speech, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister mentioned the formation of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the SAARC

Reported remarks of Baitul Mukarram Khatib protested
By DU Correspondent
 Teachers of the Dhaka University yesterday strongly protested and condemned the statements of the Khatib of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Maulana Obaidul Huq in which he reportedly said that some people educated in the West had betrayed and broken up Pakistan.
 The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA), in a statement, demanded the government take legal action against Maulana Huq immediately for his reported remarks at the Manik Mia Avenue rally Friday.
 The teachers also urged the Khatib to withdraw his remarks and called upon him to seek an 'unconditional apology'.
 JSD presidium member Kazi Aref Ahmed and general secretary Hasanul Huq Inu, in a statement yesterday, strongly condemned the statement of Maulana Obaidul Huq.
 The leaders said the Maulana's remarks have undermined the spirit of the Liberation War and the war itself.
 Convenor of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) Khaleduzzaman, in a statement yesterday, also criticised the 'audacious' remarks of Maulana Obaidul Huq.

Ram Hari Joshi
 From Page 1 Col 5
 Ministers' meeting at the International Conference Centre (ICC) he said, "We all must be guided by a larger vision in charting our course and should make every effort to see to it that such vision is translated into reality."
 Joshi said the long-term process of economic development in the region was bound to be dependent upon the progress that SAARC could achieve in confronting the persistence of widespread poverty. Moreover, the success or failure of the programmes for eradicating poverty would not only have its reflections on economic development but also on socio-economic stability, he added.
 The minister said Nepal was the first country to ratify SAPTA and it believed firmly it would substantially enrich the content of regional cooperation.
 He expressed the hope that the process of negotiating the trade concessions would be finalised at the next meeting of the Inter-Government Group (IGG).
 Joshi said that in Nepal a national committee for the welfare of the disabled had been established. The committee has dedicated itself to the cause of the disabled and has resolved to take different actions in line with the Islamabad Resolution.
 The Nepalese minister said youths constituted the major population of South Asia and observed that the menace of drugs and AIDS crippled their potentialities, the harsh economic realities causing a feeling of dejection and deprivation.
 Therefore, he said, it was imperative to 'consciously direct them to the mainstream of the society'.
 Joshi lauded the deep personal commitment of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the cause of SAARC.

Draft
 From Page 1 Col 3
 cooperative forum added impetus in forging cooperation within South Asia.
 They reviewed the following actions regarding the consensus on eradication of poverty from South Asia, the status of implementation of earlier decisions taken by the SAARC Council of Ministers, as well as cooperation with international, regional and other organisations, the SAARC visa exemption scheme. They also considered inclusion of new categories.
 The recommendations of the standing committee on the establishment of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) were also considered.
 The foreign ministers also reviewed the decisions of previous SAARC summits on the disabled, on the youth of the region and on establishment of networking arrangements in the fields of biotechnology and genetic engineering, energy modelling techniques and other identified areas of cooperation in science and technology.
 They also reviewed the status of implementation of the relevant year's part of the plan of action for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991 to 2000).
 They discussed the date and venue for the next SAARC summit and the next SAARC Council of Ministers meeting and also the question of holding of South Asian festivals on a regular basis.
 Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman is chairing the two-day conference being participated by Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, the Indian State Minister for External Affairs R L Bhatia, Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister ACS Hameed, the Maldives Foreign Minister Fattullah Jameel and the Nepalese Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Ram Hari Joshi.

The Midnight File

Decision to step up sanction on former Yugoslavia
 ZAGREB, July 30: Top brass from NATO and Unprofor met in Zagreb today in the wake of the five-nation contact group's decision to step up sanctions on former Yugoslavia. General Joe Ashy, commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's southern European forces met UN protection force overall commander General Bertrand Lapresle, his deputy general Ray Crabbe and General Michael Rose, the Unprofor commander in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reports AFP.

OIC throws weight behind PLO
 JEDDAH, July 30: The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) today threw its weight behind the PLO, following its row with Israel and Jordan over the disputed city of Jerusalem. "The definitive status of Jerusalem should be defined according to the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian accord," the Organisation's Secretary General, Hamid Algabid, told an OIC session in this Saudi city, reports AFP.

Accelerate growth rate
 From Page 1 Col 5
 SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement).
 "The SAARC, during its second cycle of summitry, is happily addressing core economic issues of which SAPTA is a vital element," said Mostafiz, the current chairman of the Council of Ministers.
 Referring to the recently held SAARC Finance-Planning ministers' meeting, he was optimistic that the recommendations made by the meeting to fight against poverty would be supported by the Council.
 He also underlined the need for monitoring the effects of the GATT agreement on the countries of South Asia as the world trade regime is expected to be much more dynamic with the signing of the agreement.
 "Our nascent industries and our fragile economies would need careful management."
 The Foreign Minister also spoke in favour of strong political commitment to achieve the goal of eradicating poverty from the region, preferably by the year 2000.
 He stressed the need for paying more attention to regional cooperation and said unilateralism in SAARC matters may convey unhelpful messages. "Bilateral problems may need to be kept outside the SAARC interactions for more years to come," he said, adding: "We have to build on what we have already agreed upon despite our domestic difficulties."
 The Foreign Minister said Bangladesh is ready to further strengthen the SAARC mandate, intensify SAARC interaction and hold meeting regularly as per the charter.
 Mostafiz stressed the need for taking strides in the areas of youth and the disabled and women and family welfare, on which two separate ministerial conferences have been held.
 "South Asia, which is the home of largest number of poor and disadvantaged in the world, should not be left behind by history," he said.
 In his speech, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister mentioned the formation of the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the SAARC

Two hospitals to check up workers for Malaysia
Star Report
 The medical examinations of the workers recruited for employment in Malaysia will be conducted from today (Sunday) at two hospitals — the BIRDEM and the Holy Family Hospital — in the city.
 A spokesman of the Malaysian High Commission in Dhaka told The Daily Star last night that the decision has been taken to facilitate continued movement of Bangladeshi workers to Malaysia.
 The two hospitals will conduct physical check-up and laboratory tests for issuing medical certificates to the workers selected by the Malaysian employers, said the spokesman.
 "These hospitals have been recommended by the Government of Bangladesh which was also approved by Malaysian authorities," he said adding, "this is an interim measure until further arrangement."

Khaleda invited to Egypt
 Egyptian Ambassador in Bangladesh Mohammed Kamal Elmiligy yesterday called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office and handed over a letter from Egyptian President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak inviting her to visit Cairo to attend the United Nations sponsored nine-day international conference on population and development beginning there on September 5, reports BSS.
 The Egyptian President in his letter highly acclaimed Bangladesh's role and concern for population, sustained economic growth and development — the theme of the forthcoming UN conference — and said he was looking forward to welcoming her in Egypt and hoped to discuss bilateral matters with the Bangladesh Prime Minister.

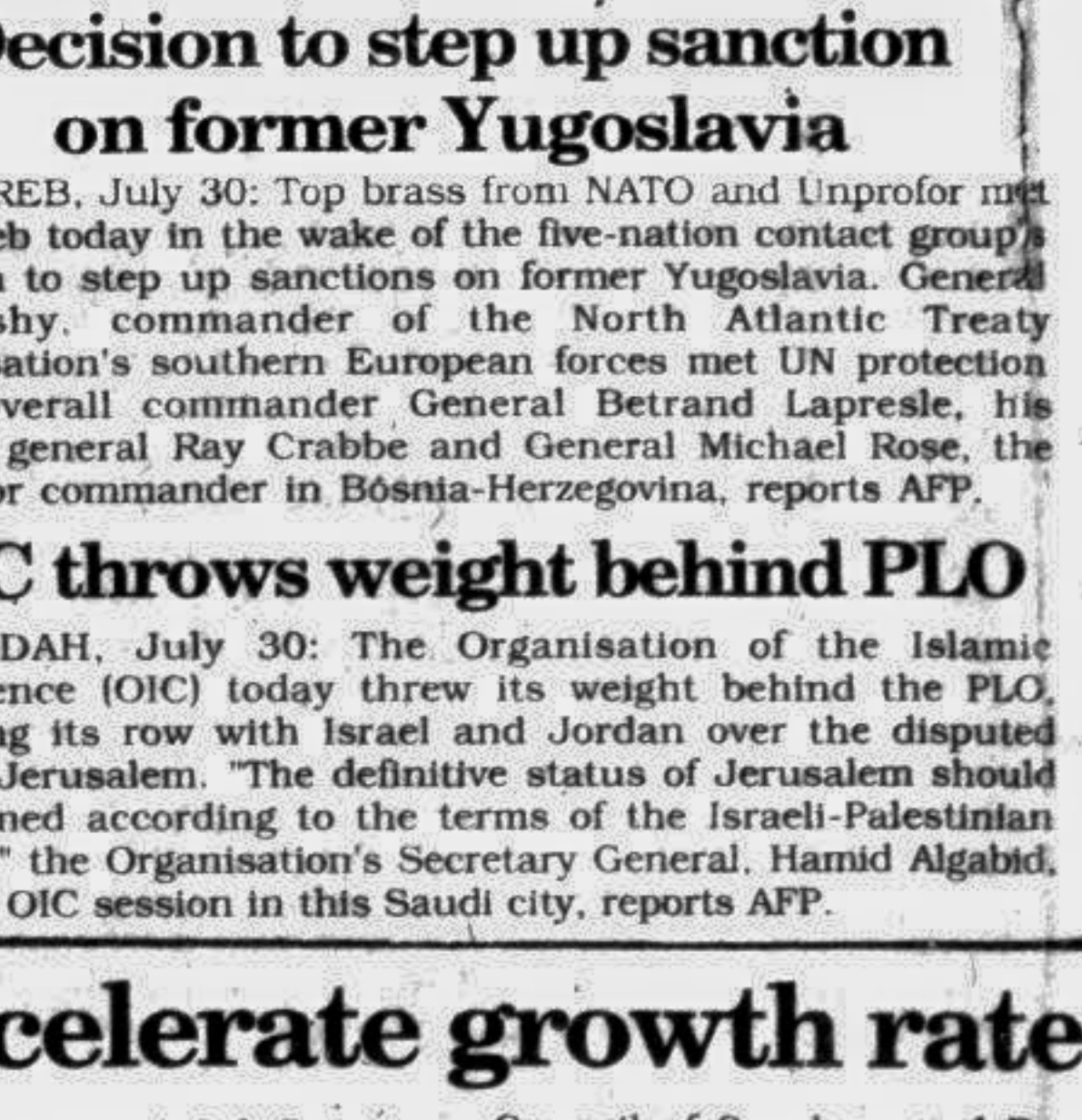
Gas pilferage
 From Page 1 Col 8
 were preparing for investigation at other factories in various industrial belts.
 They also did not rule out the possibility of involvement of a section of unscrupulous employees of the Titas Gas Company in such thefts.
 The Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd yesterday sued five persons, including the owner of the two industries belonging to the same group, but police said the accused were all absconding.
 According to police, the industries, situated at the Kuripara Bandar area, took unauthorised gas connections from a bypass line last October. Preliminary estimates say the stolen gas could be worth at least Tk 1 crore.
 The pilferage came to light on Friday following a spot investigation by a police team led by a magistrate.
 When contacted, engineer M Kamaluddin, deputy manager of Titas, confirmed the case.

Reported remarks of Baitul Mukarram Khatib protested
By DU Correspondent
 Teachers of the Dhaka University yesterday strongly protested and condemned the statements of the Khatib of the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque Maulana Obaidul Huq in which he reportedly said that some people educated in the West had betrayed and broken up Pakistan.
 The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA), in a statement, demanded the government take legal action against Maulana Huq immediately for his reported remarks at the Manik Mia Avenue rally Friday.
 The teachers also urged the Khatib to withdraw his remarks and called upon him to seek an 'unconditional apology'.
 JSD presidium member Kazi Aref Ahmed and general secretary Hasanul Huq Inu, in a statement yesterday, strongly condemned the statement of Maulana Obaidul Huq.
 The leaders said the Maulana's remarks have undermined the spirit of the Liberation War and the war itself.
 Convenor of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) Khaleduzzaman, in a statement yesterday, also criticised the 'audacious' remarks of Maulana Obaidul Huq.

Ram Hari Joshi
 From Page 1 Col 5
 Ministers' meeting at the International Conference Centre (ICC) he said, "We all must be guided by a larger vision in charting our course and should make every effort to see to it that such vision is translated into reality."
 Joshi said the long-term process of economic development in the region was bound to be dependent upon the progress that SAARC could achieve in confronting the persistence of widespread poverty. Moreover, the success or failure of the programmes for eradicating poverty would not only have its reflections on economic development but also on socio-economic stability, he added.
 The minister said Nepal was the first country to ratify SAPTA and it believed firmly it would substantially enrich the content of regional cooperation.
 He expressed the hope that the process of negotiating the trade concessions would be finalised at the next meeting of the Inter-Government Group (IGG).
 Joshi said that in Nepal a national committee for the welfare of the disabled had been established. The committee has dedicated itself to the cause of the disabled and has resolved to take different actions in line with the Islamabad Resolution.
 The Nepalese minister said youths constituted the major population of South Asia and observed that the menace of drugs and AIDS crippled their potentialities, the harsh economic realities causing a feeling of dejection and deprivation.
 Therefore, he said, it was imperative to 'consciously direct them to the mainstream of the society'.
 Joshi lauded the deep personal commitment of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the cause of SAARC.

Draft
 From Page 1 Col 3
 cooperative forum added impetus in forging cooperation within South Asia.
 They reviewed the following actions regarding the consensus on eradication of poverty from South Asia, the status of implementation of earlier decisions taken by the SAARC Council of Ministers, as well as cooperation with international, regional and other organisations, the SAARC visa exemption scheme. They also considered inclusion of new categories.
 The recommendations of the standing committee on the establishment of the South Asian Development Fund (SADF) were also considered.
 The foreign ministers also reviewed the decisions of previous SAARC summits on the disabled, on the youth of the region and on establishment of networking arrangements in the fields of biotechnology and genetic engineering, energy modelling techniques and other identified areas of cooperation in science and technology.
 They also reviewed the status of implementation of the relevant year's part of the plan of action for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991 to 2000).
 They discussed the date and venue for the next SAARC summit and the next SAARC Council of Ministers meeting and also the question of holding of South Asian festivals on a regular basis.
 Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman is chairing the two-day conference being participated by Pakistan Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali, the Indian State Minister for External Affairs R L Bhatia, Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, the Sri Lankan Foreign Minister ACS Hameed, the Maldives Foreign Minister Fattullah Jameel and the Nepalese Minister for Tourism and Civil Aviation Ram Hari Joshi.

BACK FROM THE DEAD



BACK FROM THE DEAD: A Zairan volunteer helps a Rwandan refugee child out of a truck bringing corpses of cholera victims to be buried in a mass grave north of Goma Tuesday. The boy was discovered among the dead as the bodies were about to be dumped into the grave. Cholera has claimed up to 14000 lives in camps around Goma. —AFP photo

Editor: Mahfuz Anam
 Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrai, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-963035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.