

## Saifur tells regional seminar Political commitment must for cooperation

By Staff Correspondent

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said no efforts for regional cooperation can succeed unless those are supported by political commitment and open-heartedness of the leadership.

"I am disheartened by the narrowness of the political leaders in South Asian region, who cannot see anything beyond their national interest," Saifur Rahman said, describing the state of cooperation in the region as "quite discouraging".

The finance minister was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day regional workshop on "Payments and monetary cooperation in the South Asian region."

The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), a private sector thinktank, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), a German research organisation, jointly organised the workshop at a local hotel.

The minister pointed out "very little progress" in implementing the South Asian Preferential Trade Arrangement (SAPTA) and said leaders of the SAARC countries will have to shun their "conservative approach" if they really want cooperation in the region.

"Leaders of the South Asian nations would have to understand that collective endeavour is much better than individual efforts," Saifur said and added that they would also have to understand that reciprocity is another important factor for any cooperative efforts.

"There are several conflicting and conflicting interests in the region. But despite this, cooperation is essential," the minister said. For this, irritants within the region should be uprooted through the process of cooperation, he said.

## Bangla Academy celebrates founding anniversary

Bangla Academy yesterday celebrated its 39th founding anniversary with festivity through a day-long programme arranged at the academy premises, reports BSS.

Director General of the

## AL, BNP clash in Jamalpur:

From Our Correspondent

JAMALPUR, Dec 3: The Awami League and the BNP supporters clashed in the town for the third day today leaving at least 15 people injured.

The clash began when an Awami League rally came under BNP attack at the local Shaheed Minar premises in the evening.

District Awami League organised the rally to protest the attack on its workers, ransacking of the local AL office and setting fire to Sraniak League office allegedly by BNP supporters on Thursday-Friday.

## 20000 mothers die a year

From Page 1 Col 4  
population had been well documented and internationally recognised.

"I am impressed by the sustained progress of population activities in this country and Bangladesh programme on improving family planning information and service is entirely correct," she said praising the programmes as "bold initiatives and innovative schemes."

In Bangladesh, the UNFPA chief executive noted, most young women who become pregnant are married. But "that does not reduce the risks, they run without safeguards, marriage itself must be considered high risk behaviour for women under 18."

She said despite a 30 per cent fall in the number of teenage pregnancies and a rise in the average at marriage from 16 to 18, the birth rate among women aged 15-19 in Bangladesh today is still four or five times higher than in Europe or North America.

Nafis Sadik observed the interval between marriage and first pregnancy had actually become shorter in Bangladesh, but child marriage is still common and girls are still pressured to marry and have children as soon as possible.

Referring to the discrimination between boy and girl, she said, "In our region girls have traditionally been treated from birth as second-rate people. Girls are poorly nourished compared with boys."

They are more likely to fall ill than boys, and less likely to

receive proper medical treatment when they do. They are less likely to go to school than boys, and they leave school earlier. Women do lower-status jobs for less pay than men, they rarely make up the leap to higher reaches of the professions, politics or business."

Speaking on the occasion Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said because of too early, too many and too frequent pregnancies mothers suffer from chronic ill-health, remain debilitated, suffer from morbidity and die at a rate that is not acceptable to society.

He said for ensuring safe delivery, the government had so far provided training to 30,000 people on Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA) on safer delivery methods. It is also planning to provide 64,000 people with training on TBA by the end of 1996.

The function was also addressed by Deputy Minister for Health and Family Welfare Sirajul Haq, Director General of Health Prof Mohammad Nurun Nabi, Director General of Family Planning Directorate Khairuzzaman Chowdhury and Additional Secretary of the Health Ministry Muhammad Fazur Rahman.

The inaugural function was attended by ministers, MPs, diplomats, representatives from development partners and NGO activists.

Participants from Nepal, Bhutan and host Bangladesh are participating in the conference.

## Degree exam dates shifted

The degree pass and subsidiary examination 1994 under the National University scheduled to be held on December 7 and 8 have been shifted, reports UNB.

The examinations of third paper of Political Science, Political Science course-305, third paper of Rajnitibigyan and Soil Science will now be held on January 24, 1995.

The examination of first paper of Geography, English Literature, Accountancy and Bina will be held on January 25, 1994, the handout said.

The dates and schedules of other examinations will remain unchanged.

## 122 DU teachers protest DUTA statement

By DU Correspondent

Some 122 teachers of the Dhaka University yesterday protested the statement of the Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) in which it condemned a recent comment of the Prime Minister.

Two executive members of the DUTA also disagreed with the statement of the DUTA which was published in some national dailies on December 1.

The joint statement of the DU teachers also stated that the DUTA statement was served without considering the teachers' opinion.

The teachers' statement was signed, among others by Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Prof Anwarullah Chowdhury, Prof Abul Kalam, Prof M Ershadul Bari, Prof Anwar Begum, Dr Anwarul Islam, M Shajahan Mina and Dr Moslehuddin Ahmed.

The two executive members who disown the DUTA statement are Prof Z N Tahmid, Begum and Prof Yusuf Haider.

## Opposition MPs

From Page 1 Col 8

the Opposition Mohammad Nasim said.

According to Nasim, the opposition parties would give an ultimatum to the government on December 6 about its demand for holding next general elections under a non-partisan caretaker government.

"If the ruling party fails to meet the deadline set by the Opposition, we shall resign immediately," the Opposition chief whip added.

Another AL leader told The Daily Star that the deadline should not cross 31st December this year.

Meanwhile, a non-Awami League leader of the Opposition camp told this correspondent yesterday, on condition of anonymity, "although we are firm to resign to press home the demand for a caretaker administration, it is yet to be decided concretely whether December 6 is the most suitable date for making the announcement of the deadline."

The Opposition leaders would seriously examine the pros and cons of the date tomorrow evening, the leader added.

## Ansars Academy

From Page 1 Col 7

Gazipur police control room sources told UNB that BDR men who were put on alert at the Gazipur district headquarters moved to Shafipur yesterday afternoon.

Till the writing of this report at 8:30pm, no action had been taken against the rebellious Ansars, also blocking traffic on the Dhaka-Tangail highway since Thursday noon to press their demands for regularisation of jobs of the battalion Ansars besides pay hike.

There are about 3,000 Ansars at the academy. Authorities, however, disarmed them Thursday evening after they rose in a revolt against their officers and regular staffers.

In the capital, the agitating Ansars also remained entrenched in their headquarters at Khilgaon for the third day of their revolt.

Our Staff Correspondent adds: In the city, the Ansars personnel were seen announcing over microphones "We will accept assurance only from the Prime Minister herself."

They were seen guarding their Khilgaon headquarters in the city carrying rifles. Since the Ansars force was raised in 1976, by the then president Ziaur Rahman it was their first agitation for 'job confirmation', said a battalion commander adding, "Though they have been asking for it for a long time."

Several contingents of police were patrolling the Khilgaon area to avert any violence.

Meanwhile, the Ansars personnel at their headquarters premises yesterday formed a movement committee comprising 20 Ansars men. But they refused to disclose the names of the Ansars in the committee.



A wheel-chair rally was arranged in the city yesterday by the Ministry of Social Welfare on the occasion of the International Day of the Disabled.

## Help the disabled: Khaleda

From Page 1 Col 5

per cent of the total population of Asia-Pacific region are disabled.

She was addressing a function in observance of the "International Day of the Disabled," organised by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Bangladesh Disabled Welfare Association at the Osmani Memorial auditorium in the afternoon.

The Prime Minister declared that unlike non-government primary school teachers, Tk 500 will be provided as monthly salary grant from the government to the teachers of private schools for the disabled.

On arrival at the venue, Begum Zia was greeted by scores of handicapped children and youths waving ribbons and holding placards.

Changing the lot of the disabled, Begum Zia said, is part of the development endeavour and many programmes have been taken for upgrading the living standard of the disabled.

The Prime Minister mentioned the setting up of a trust for the disabled with an annual allocation of Tk 5 million and the formation of a national co-ordination committee with representatives from the public and private organisations who employ disabled people.

Formulation of a national policy for the disabled is also at the final stage, she told the function.

The Prime Minister later inaugurated an exhibition of handicraft made by the disabled of different organisations. Begum Zia went round the 16 stalls.

## MIGA plans to promote

From Page 1 Col 4

— for investments from developed countries to the developing nations or even for investments from one member developing country to another, as a move to promote South-South cooperation in investments, he added.

The MIGA provides three types of non-commercial risk coverage: protection against government action of expropriation, which may reduce ownership rights and which also includes "creeping expropriation" — series of acts which may result in expropriation over a period of time.

The other type provides coverage against war and civil disturbances, which also provides protection against physical damage to assets and for business interruptions.

The third type of coverage that MIGA provides involves currency convertibility and remittances. "We provide long-term political risk coverage for 15 to 20 years in duration. Once the contract is signed, MIGA cannot terminate it but

the client can do it during annual renewals," Yusuf said. The premium rate depends on a project to project basis, he said, and there are no separate country rates. There is a 50 million dollar coverage limit per project and a 150-million dollar country ceiling, which was recently raised to 175 million dollars.

"Having MIGA involved in a project provides confidence to the investors and we use out limited capacity for key projects," he added.

During his stay in the capital, he is scheduled to hold meetings with government officials, private sector representatives and foreign investors.

"I will try to make them aware that there is an agency called MIGA that provides investment guarantee for political risks and will promote foreign investments into Bangladesh," he said about the agenda of his visit. "We hope to work as a catalyst for the flow of FDI into the country."

## UNFPA chief for SAARC meet

From Page 1 Col 5

of the SAARC Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia today to utilise the strength of regional cooperation by holding the conference.

She noted that while the SAARC countries shared common problems in the health, education, family planning and other social sectors individual countries also had success stories in their development programmes which could be successfully shared.

"The SAARC summit will also help create consensus on the outcome of the Cairo conference and frame guidelines on empowerment of women, placing population programmes as development issues and promoting peoples' participation in the population programmes," she said.

She described the regional approach to population programmes as an effective mea-

## Majed, Shahid elected BMA president, secy

By SSMCH Correspondent

Prof. M. A. Majed and Qazi Shahidul Alam have been elected unofficially the president and the secretary general respectively of the Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA).

Prof. M. A. Majed and Dr. Qazi Shahidul Alam contested the December 1 BMA polls from two separate panels.

The final results from all 67 centres are expected today.

## Jute mills workers urged to call off strike

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Jute Mills Association (BJMA), has expressed dismay over the recent trend of work abstention by private jute mills workers to press for higher wages from the government.

A statement of the BJMA issued last night said the private mills were only responsible to a forum of the private sector jute mills, pay the wages of their workers and the government bore no responsibility for them. The recent Wages Commission awards were meant only for the public sector enterprises and that too for those units which could afford. It said the private jute mills were trying their best to reduce costs and improve their overall efficiency to meet the goals of the World Bank supported programme and attain competitiveness in the new global scenario of open market economy. There is no scope to increase costs by enhancing wages beyond that justified by productivity increases, the association categorically said.

It also called upon the trade unions of the private jute mills not to destroy their livelihood and greater interest of the nation by disrupting production.

## Heroin worth Tk 2cr seized: 3 held in city

By Staff Correspondent

Police seized two kilograms of heroin valued at Taka two crore from the city's Mohammadpur area and arrested three persons in this connection yesterday.

They also recovered Tk 60,000 from Abdul Quayum, one of the arrested who is allegedly a heroin dealer, during a raid on an apartment at the Pisciculture Housing Society at Mohammadpur around 2:30 pm.

The money is believed to be the sale proceeds of heroin, according to police.

The two other arrested persons were identified as Abul Kalam Azad and Nuru Gazi.

They were arrested from the same area following a confidential statement by Quayum. The police raided the area acting on a tip-off.

Police say, all three persons are the members of an international heroin-racket.

"We have recovered bank documents that show transaction of a huge amount of money," said a police officer.

Police also recovered two walkie-talkie sets and other valuables from their possession.

All arrested persons were detained in the Mohammadpur police custody.

## Petition against PM

From Page 1 Col 8

appeared on behalf of the complainant.

In his petition, Islam quoted certain remarks Begum Zia had made at a rally of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal at the Shapla Chatter in the capital on November 28.

Hinting at the Opposition's current agitation, BNP Chairperson Prime Minister Begum Zia was reported as having said, that the BNP was, not needed, her student friends were enough to halt the opposition's activities.

The petitioner said the Prime Minister, through her statement, had subtly provoked the workers of her party's student front. As a result, the Chhatra Dal workers may become involved in rioting at any time and opposition leaders and workers may come under physical attack.

He feared that such provocation would result in disruption in normal public life and lead to a law and order situation.

Islam appealed for issuing warrant of arrest against the accused under Section 153/153B of the Penal code.

CMM Shahiduddin Ahmed said the petition does not contain the full text of the speech and "only some sporadic lines have been quoted which do not create any cause of action for institution of a criminal prosecution."

He dismissed the petition, saying no prima facie case was made out against the person concerned.

## The Midnight File

### Corruption case against Nawaz Sharif soon

ISLAMABAD, Dec 3: Corruption cases will soon be filed against Pakistan's Opposition leader and former premier Nawaz Sharif, a spokesman for the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) parliamentary group said today. Izhar Amrohi said in a statement carried by the official Associated Press of Pakistan that investigation agencies "have almost completed their probe into the plunder of national resources" allegedly carried out by Sharif during his time as prime minister, reports AFP.

### Russia amasses troops to end Chechnya crisis

MOSCOW, Dec 3: Russia said today it had amassed a powerful military force to eliminate "bandits" in the rebel region of Chechnya, but would only use them when all peaceful means to end fighting there had been exhausted. "A large number of Russian troops, units and detachments" is amassing in the north Caucasus to carry out a possible operation to eliminate bandit groups, said Sergei Gryanov, the specially appointed government spokesman on the Chechen province, 1,000 km south of Moscow, reports Reuters.

## Jahan Ara refutes corruption charge

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahan Ara Begum refuted the "corruption and nepotism" charges brought against her by some of her former party colleagues of Rajbari district, reports UNB.

"I am shocked and astonished that some false and baseless charges have been brought against me," she told newsmen at a press conference at her ministry.

Prof Jahan Ara said a few ousted members of the BNP of her home-district called a hartal on November 26 against her and some newspapers covered the issue to defame the minister.

She said there was no specific allegation against her excepting some unspecified charges. There was no interpretation as to how the internal party conflict was created or how I have committed corruption and nepotism.

The hartal was called on some non-issues that only increased the sufferings of the people. But it was published in the newspapers that "an about hartal was observed in Rajbari against me."

"It was not difficult to understand whose interest the hartal served and who were working behind it," Prof Jahan Ara said.

## Lankan FM

From Page 1 Col 8

Besides, he will hold wide-ranging talks with his Bangladesh counterpart ASM Mostafizur Rahman, which will cover the entire gamut of the bilateral relations, regional and international issues of common concern.

Expansion of trade and economic cooperation and introduction of direct air-services between Dhaka and Colombo will figure prominently in discussion.

Established in 1985, the Bangladesh-Sri Lanka Joint Economic Commission (JEC) had so far held three meetings. The new Lankan FM, leading a three-member delegation including Foreign Secretary Rodney Vandregard during the visit, will also call on Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni.

He is scheduled to call on Commerce Minister Shamsul Islam, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman and State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan.

He said that the issue of changing the format for the meeting was not even raised at the EC meeting held last Friday.

## FBCCI chief blames govt

From Page 1 Col 4

ure of the FBCCI initiative for reneging on an earlier pledge and the entire national political leadership for the present political crisis in the country.

"We (the business community) are the worst sufferers of the crisis and it is very very tragic that (the FBCCI initiative) has not materialised," he added.

When his attention was drawn to the government position, as reported in Saturday's issue of The Daily Star, that the FBCCI should go and talk to the opposition since they are the ones undertaking political actions detrimental to the national economy, the federation president noted that both sides had been approached separately many times in the past, but the meetings failed to produce any results.

The ruling party and the Opposition, during those meetings, told the business delegations that they were unable to do anything about their problems and asked them to talk to the other side. "We have been treated like a Ping-pong ball by the two sides," Salman said.

Explaining the reasons for the fresh FBCCI initiative, he said, the national economy is faced with the greatest challenge because it is being held hostage in the prevailing political impasse.

"The upswing in the economy and the macro stability is being dislocated by the nine-month long political crisis." The FBCCI has been under

Membership of nine Rajbari BNP leaders were cancelled during last few months, the minister informed. They are Vice Presidents ATM Abdur Razzak and Lutfor Rahman Khan, Advocate Abdul Khaleq, Mosharraf Hossain Sumon, Hassan Habib, Nawim Ansary, Ataur Rahman Ata and Gobinda Ghosh.

General Secretary Rokan Chowdhury submitted his resignation and it was accepted.

There was an allegation of misappropriation of the money of "Nari Adhikar Bastabayan Sangstha," but Prof Jahan Ara clarified, "how it was possible for a person to misappropriate her own money."

There was no intraparty conflict in Rajbari, she categorically said.

## BNP's objection

From Page 1 Col 5

On November 28 an FBCCI letter inviting the BNP to participate in the meeting was sent, the commerce minister said. The purpose of that meeting was to "appraise the politicians about the impact of the continuing political impasse on the national economy."

The BNP had initially agreed to participate in the proposed meeting on this agenda, he added. "Then, we received a second letter on December 2 asking us to name the BNP participants in the meeting. In this letter we saw a change of the purpose of the meeting."

"The letter said that the meeting will be held between representatives of the ruling party, the opposition parties and the federation, making it a tripartite discussion meeting," the minister explained.

One executive committee member of the federation, when contacted, expressed surprise at the change of the format of the proposed meeting.

"I am surprised. The FBCCI president did not inform us about this second letter and about the change in the format. I contacted several other EC members and they were also equally surprised," said A Ghafur, a member of the newly-elected FBCCI executive committee.

He said that the issue of changing the format for the meeting was not even raised at the EC meeting held last Friday.

"Intense" pressure from its constituents to apprise the political leadership of the 'disastrous' consequences of the stand-off on the economy and hence the executive committee had decided to invite both sides to a meeting, which was to take place today, he said.

Initially, he said, positive response was received from both sides. The Opposition sent a letter on November 30 confirming its participation and on the same night, he said, a senior cabinet minister had informed him of the government's intention to participate over telephone.

"Subsequently on December 1, 1994 the Prime Minister's office reconfirmed and expressed the government's intention to be represented at the meeting at an appropriate level," Salman pointed out.

Asked what would be the next move for the FBCCI, he said that would be decided by the executive committee.

Responding to another question, the FBCCI chief said that the initiative for the proposed meeting was taken 'not to hold a dialogue, not to mediate — as businessmen we are neutral — but just to present our problems, seeking relief.'

He added that the initiative was taken to impress upon the leaders on both sides of the political divide that it was their duty to resolve the crisis. "We believe that both sides have ample scope to do something about our genuine and serious problems," Salman concluded.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, 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: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.