

## 2 UK charities slam Summit agenda

Two British charities Sunday attacked the basic tenets of development aid to the Third World and to children, on the eve of the opening of the UN development summit in Copenhagen, report agencies.

The UK-based Save the Children Fund (SCF) warned that any abrupt attempt to ban child labour would impact negatively in the societies and the economies of the developing as well as the developed nations. "Abrupt attempt to ban child labour on the assumption that this will be good for children may be a major mistake if children's work is essential to family income, or if children are gaining a positive feeling of value and productivity," said SCF in a statement issued in London.

Director General-designate of the SCF and currently Overseas Director of the organisation, Mike Aaronson, issued the note of warning at a press conference on Sunday, a day ahead of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen which takes up the child labour issue.

The humanitarian organisation's Dhaka office, in a press release yesterday quoted Aaronson as having said that the Copenhagen summit, which began yesterday, would fail to find a successful new formula for social development because it ignores children's active role in society.

In the world meet, the developed nations will put pressure for adopting a resolution banning child labour and for compulsory registration of trade unions.

But the developing countries have said the measures would put heavy strains on their economies and hinder development.

Against this backdrop, the SCF said, "Policy-makers of the summit remain ignorant of children's real lives and therefore unable to invest effectively in the people on whom social advancement depends — the rising generation."

Another British charity,

Christian Aid, criticised the World Bank for "persisting with discredited policies" that were "failing Africa's poor."

"The World Bank understands that it has gone wrong but seems reluctant to ensure that past mistakes are properly corrected. In effect, the bank is not practising what it preaches," Christian Aid said in its statement, adding that the policies were "hurting."

"Economic assistance needs to be born again in a way that will genuinely work for the poor," it said.

### 'Cancel Third World debt, increase aid'

COPENHAGEN, Mar 6: Developing countries attending the UN social summit here today set out a radical list of demands including a cancellation of Third World debt and a big increase in aid, reports AFP.

The so-called Group of 77, which has grown to include 131 countries, also called for the creation of a new International Bank for Social Development.

"We must work to expand our needs, and we call on (developed nations) to cancel the debt and devote 0.7 per cent of their GDP to aid," G 77 chairman and Filipino Minister for Socio-economic Planning, Celso Habito, told delegates at the opening ceremony of the summit.

According to World Bank figures, Third World debt approached 1.945 billion dollars in 1994.

More than a quarter of this — 546.9 billion dollars — was in Latin America, and another 415.2 billion in East Asia. Former communist countries owed 402.5 billion dollars, and sub-Saharan Africa 210.6 billion. Countries in North Africa and the Middle East had debts of 213.3 billion, which South Asia owed 155.8 billion.

By far the largest part is in the form of private debts, which have grown enormously over the past six years.

## Copenhagen summit

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He recalled that 1.3 billion people currently live in poverty, and that 1.5 billion do not have access to the most basic health care services.

"And we know that women are the first to fall victim to poverty, since more than 70 per cent of the deprived in the world today are women," he said.

There was, he said, an "indissoluble link" between social development and human rights, and he stated that real economic progress is impossible without progress in the social sphere.

"A dynamic social environment is... a clear prerequisite for political stability," he said.

"A state which does not permit satisfactory social integration and which fosters massive exclusion will be a prey to unforeseen social outbursts," he underlined.

Boutros-Ghali underlined the need to fight against greed and indifference, and the need for tolerance, through solidarity and action.

He also told a packed hall that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) must play a strong role in eradicating poverty, creating jobs and integrating societies, the three main goals of the summit.

"I am counting on the Bretton Woods institutions to participate fully in the social action that we are in the process of redefining and reinventing here," he said.

AP adds: Three years in the planning, the summit has encountered withering criticism even before its opening for mustering only vague, watered-down plans for tackling apocalyptic problems.

The United Nations hopes delegates will compare social programmes, learn from each other's experiences and sign documents which groups can use to pressure their national leaders.

Although calling on the support of non-governmental organizations and private enterprise, Boutros-Ghali emphasized the summit theme that the ultimate responsibility for fighting poverty lies with individual countries.

"States are primarily responsible for setting in motion dynamic social policies." In his speech, Boutros-Ghali didn't refer to the stickiest issues of foreign aid and debt relief. Many countries, including the United States, already have said they won't make any promises on those points.

On the eve of the summit,

delegates from the developing nations met behind closed doors for hours discussing the most contentious proposals, including a US-backed call for them to commit 20 per cent of domestic spending on social welfare.

The proposals will be included in a 10-point final declaration and 65-page programme of action to be signed next Sunday by nearly 120 national leaders, including German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Chinese Premier Li Peng and French President Francois Mitterrand.

Most of the texts have already been approved in preparatory meetings — the last of them held in New York in January — and UN officials expect few hitches before the heads of state or government arrive to formally adopt them.

The 10 points include commitments by governments to eradicate the poverty, to reduce unemployment, and to combat social disintegration.

In draft texts of the final declaration and programme of action, unresolved questions are printed in bold (as opposed to plain type) and include:

- Workers' rights, foreshadowing a possible clash between western nations and developing countries, notably India, China and Indonesia, over a commitment to "respect fully relevant conventions of the International Labour Organisation."

- A proposal that developed and developing countries agree to allocate 20 per cent of official aid and 20 per cent of their national budgets respectively to social development.

- Proposals to improve the conditions of women in Third World countries. Speaking to journalists here Sunday, senior UN officials said, however, that a greater degree of consensus existed than at any time since the UN was set up fifty years ago.

Chilean ambassador to the UN Juan Somavia, who chaired the preparatory meetings, described the summit as "the formal end of the cold war," saying it "would not have been possible even 10 years ago because it would have meant an ideological debate."

Some heads of state have pulled out of the conference at the last minute. Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo, facing mounting political chaos at home, reversed his plans to attend. The presidents of Brazil and Venezuela also pulled out, their delegations giving no reason.



Princess Anne of Great Britain called on President Abdul Rahman Biswas and Begum Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday soon after her arrival on a four-day visit. —PID photo

### SKOP ultimatum to govt Meet demands by Mar 15 or face agitation

Industrial workers are preparing for a fresh agitation programme to press the government to realise their demands, reports UNB.

Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP) from its convention on February 18 gave an ultimatum to the government to realise its amended 8-point demand by March 15. The demands include implementation of Wages Commission Award in all sectors, 20 per cent increase in basic pay and 30 per cent dearness allowance.

Meanwhile, a leader of the Jute and Textile Mill Workers Action Committee said they would sit with the SKOP on March 11 or 12 to chalk out fresh action programme to press the government to accept their demands.

Shah Alam could not say whether the Jute and Textile Mills Workers Action Committee would announce fresh action programme, but said a joint action programme with SKOP is likely to be launched to realise the demands.

The workers will realise their just demands at any cost, Shah Alam said.

### Princess Anne arrives

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BRAI projects at Gobindapur and a lamb hospital at Parbatpur.

Her busy schedule also includes a visit to the SCF's Phulky Day Care Centre in Kalachandpur in the capital today. Later she will visit another Phulky Centre at Gulshan.

She will also visit Jessore and Khulna before leaving for Colombo Thursday.

Meets Biswas

Another UNB report adds: Princess Anne called on President Abdul Rahman Biswas and Begum Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday afternoon immediately after her arrival.

Welcoming the princess, President Biswas said Bangladesh has been maintaining excellent relations with the United Kingdom, an important development partner.

He told Princess Anne that Bangladesh had endorsed the convention on children's rights adopted by the UN General Assembly and attached priority to ensuring basic nutrition for the poor including children.

President Biswas also informed the royal guest that a large number of women had been engaged in the garments industries and agro-based activities following special measures to bring women into the mainstream of development

activities. He said the current visit would provide Princess Anne with an opportunity to see the progress achieved in various development programmes launched by the present democratic government.

The President conveyed his best wishes to Her Majesty the Queen.

During the meeting, Princess Anne said that the SCF's Khulna project which had been completed, would be handed over to the government.

The Princess thanked President Biswas for the grand hospitality being extended to her during the current visit.

### Six shot dead in Pak Punjab

MULTAN, Mar 6: Unidentified gunmen shot dead six people, including a former provincial deputy, in the Punjab town of Jhang, police here said today, reports AFP.

Police suspecting long-standing enmity behind the slaying, said Sheikh Mohammed Iqbal was returning from the funeral of a friend late Sunday when the two assailants opened fire.

Six people died on the spot while two others injured in the attack were hospitalised, the sources said.



Attendance at the Bangladesh Secretariat remained poor even yesterday — two days after the Eid-ul-Fitr vacation. — Star photo

### Historic Mar 7

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for struggle of independence on the day to materialise the long-charished dream of the nation.

A non-cooperation movement began against the military rulers of the then Pakistan from March 1 under the leadership of Bangabandhu, Hasina said.

Hasina said responding to the call of Bangabandhu people from all walks of life became united and started the Liberation War.

The AL chief said the Bangalee nation finally won the independence of the country and sovereign Bangladesh emerged in the world map.

She expressed her gratitude to those who had embraced martyrdom for the cause of the motherland and prayed for the salvation of their departed souls.

In observance of the day, the Awami League will hoist national and party flags at its central office as well as in offices of the AL units at 6:00 am.

At 7:30 am, the leaders and workers of the party and its front organisations will assemble at Bangabandhu Bhaban at Dhanmondi and place wreaths on the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

A discussion meeting will be held at the Awami League central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 4:00 pm on the significance of the day.

The AL programmes also include the playing of the recorded speech of Bangabandhu in all city wards.

### One killed, 4 injured in incidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least one person was killed and four others were injured in separate incidents in the city and in Narayanganj yesterday.

A minor boy was killed when a speeding auto-rickshaw ran over him at Manikpura Bishwa Road under Demra police station in the morning.

The seriously injured victim, Munnu, 12, was sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead.

Police seized the auto-rickshaw and arrested its driver, Mohammad Ahsanullah, 28.

A case was lodged with Demra police station.

Mohammad Jahangir Alam Khan Sobel, 25, was severely assaulted by a group of unidentified persons near the TV centre at Rampura around 7 pm.

The victim was admitted to the DMCH in an unconscious condition.

The relatives said Jahangir, a resident of 424 West Rampura, was attacked due to prior enmity.

In another incident, an SSC candidate, Shahir, 16, was stabbed at Adamjee Nagar, Narayanganj yesterday afternoon.

A student of Adamjee Nagar High School Shahin was admitted to the DMCH.

Shahin alleged that he had an altercation with a person over buying a cinema ticket

### DPRK team in city to discuss Rupsa bridge financing

A seven-member North Korean delegation arrived in the city yesterday to discuss with Bangladesh leaders Pyongyang's financial assistance for construction of the Rupsa Bridge, reports UNB.

The delegation, led by Chairman of the DPRK's State Commission for External Economic Affairs Ri Song Dai, is expected to call on President Abul Rahman Biswas during its 4-day visit, official sources said.

### Opposition takes ROK Speaker hostage

SEOUL, Mar 6: South Korea's opposition lawmakers barricaded themselves in the National Assembly building here today to prevent the ruling camp from tampering with rules for crucial local elections in June, politicians said, reports AFP.

In a parallel move, the main opposition Democratic Party (DP) held both the National Assembly Speaker and Vice Speaker at their homes, blocking them from presiding over the assembly, a DP spokesman said.

### Barings

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Napoleonic wars and the expansion of British colonialism. Ironically, Barings was brought down in a former colony, Singapore, where Leeson lost a bundle wrongly betting that Tokyo stock prices would rise last month.

After Barings fell, Leeson spent a week on the lam but is now held in jail in Germany, fighting extradition to Singapore on forgery charges.

Although Barings portrayed Leeson as a rogue trader whose dealings caught management off guard, a number of documents and news reports have strongly suggested over the weekend that Barings executives knew for months or years that they had a problem on their hands yet failed to act.

Barings has repeatedly refused to discuss this. ING chairman Aad Jacobs said his group had moved quickly as possible "in order to protect the interests of customers and employees and the continuity of the Barings name and business."

"We give it our full support and will work wholeheartedly with ING to develop the combined business," said Barings chairman Peter Baring.

ING plans to take over the three main branches of Barings, an asset management firm that handles 28 billion pounds in clients' funds, a corporate finance arm and a securities brokerage with expertise in the developing markets of Latin America and Asia.

ING said it will place Barings under the overall control of Hessel Lindenberg, a member of ING's executive board, but will let the Barings group operate independently of ING. The Dutch group has agreed to retain the Barings work force of 4,000.

### Andhra polls

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gional political party. The body of a slain independent candidate was found by police, PTI said.

But the people ignored an election boycott call given by the Naxalites, a Communist group fighting for landless people and bonded labourers in the state, and nearly 70 per cent of voters cast their ballots.

PTI quoted officials as saying that the Naxalites shot and killed a policeman near a polling booth in Medak district of the state.

### Hasina

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conventions and abusing power to hang on to power," the opposition leader alleged. Despite resignation of half of Parliament members, the ruling party is hatching conspiracies one after another for party interest.

She said: "This failed, corrupt and vote dacoit government should be forced to step down to salvage the country. We must move ahead unitedly to change the destiny of the people and the nation."

Presided over by Dhaka City AL President and Mayor Mohammad Hanif, the meeting was also addressed by Mohammad Nasim and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya.

### Dhaka Bar

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petitioner would be facing irrecoverable losses. Alam, a presidential candidate in the polls, also accused the incumbent office bearers of the association of being involved in making the 'illegal' announcement.

March 16 has been fixed as the next date for hearing of the case.

## The Midnight File

### Rebels attack town in Colombia

BOGOTA, Colombia, Mar 6: Hundreds of guerrillas attacked a town in northwestern Colombia with grenades and rockets, killing at least 14 people in one of the largest rebel attacks in years, residents said Monday. The guerrillas killed eight policemen and three residents and demolished the police station in the overnight attack on Ituango, located 220 miles (350 kilometres) northwest of Bogota, reports AP.

### Fighting in Bihac

SARAJEVO, Mar 6: Fighting flared today in the Bihac enclave of northwest Bosnia where rebel Muslim forces were capturing ground from Bosnian government troops, a United Nations spokesman said. Rebel Muslims, backed up by Serb forces from neighbouring Croatia, appeared to have gained territory south and east of Velika Kladusa. Major Herve Gourmelon said, reports Reuter.

## Foodgrain supply

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reassuringly, that things would improve shortly following a number of steps taken by his ministry to stop hoarding.

In this regard, Mannan Bhuiyan referred to the fact that the government had already withdrawn import tax on rice and decreased the tax on wheat by 50 per cent.

"This time, we are importing rice only from Asian countries to avert radiation test so that the cereal can be brought in quickly," said the minister, explaining that import of rice from outside Asia required time-consuming radiation tests.

To ensure prompt shipment all concerned authorities have been instructed to give priority to unloading of foodgrain cargo from ships at the country's sea ports. Trucks loaded with rice would also get priority on the ferries.

The Food Minister said private importers have been given the option to sell rice either in open markets or to the government and already some 2,000 letters of credit (L/Cs) have been opened for importing 3.68 lakh tons of rice and 92,000 tons of wheat under private sector initiatives.

When reminded about his recent statement that an anti-hoarding act might be enforced, the minister made it clear that the time is not ripe enough to go for such an action. "But, definitely, we shall think about it if it becomes absolutely necessary."

In this context, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan referred to the open market policy being pursued by the present government and said, "Let's give the market forces a chance to determine the supply and price phenomenon."

There have been no foodgrain licensing system or anti-hoarding laws in the country since 1987.

About the open market sale (OMS) programme, the minister said OMS would continue until the prices stabilised. Allocations of rice and wheat for OMS have been increased by 25 per cent from March 1, he added.

The current rate of per day OMS distribution is as follows: Dhaka — 78 tons; Chittagong — 12; Khulna — 14; Rajshahi and Barisal — 5 tons each; in other

### College teachers

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quota, bringing the Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor in scales keeping in line with other cadre jobs.

Bangladesh Government College Professors Association (BGCPA) and Lecturers Association (BGCLA) served sixth notice on February 12 to the government demanding fulfilment of their 'just' demands by March 6.

### Tongi poura polls

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delimitation of constituencies, was later chosen as the urban site for polls using modern methods.

In the planned 'model' elections, the local people will play the key roles in conducting the polls, instead of government officials and agencies, said an official of the EC.

A 56-member steering committee has been formed comprising representatives of different political parties and the local elite to help conduct the elections, he said.

The main purpose of the 'model' polls is to ensure active popular participation in the election process and thereby prevent any attempt at rigging and manipulation, he added.

### Rajuk

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Ahsan Manzil in the capital and transferred it to the National Museum.

Repair and reconstruction of such other buildings would also be taken up in phases.

The Sonargaon Fort and Panam Nagar, in Sonargaon thana of Narayanganj district are two important historic places which can attract both local and foreign tourists. These places are only some 16 kilometres from the capital.

Rajuk is yet to estimate the cost for the projects, a top official said, adding that funds for those would be earmarked in the Rajuk's annual budget for the coming fiscal year.

parts of the country — half to two tons in every thana.

When his attention was drawn to the changed procedure of the OMS, the Food Minister said: "Taking lesson from past experience, this time we are operating the OMS from trucks stationed at different points under supervision of our own staff. In the past, when the dealers used to operate the sale, there were many allegations that the OMS rice was sold instead in the wholesale markets."

According to the government projection, 187.91 lakh tons of foodgrain would be produced during the current financial year. Out of that, the net production was calculated at 169.12 lakh tons. The per capita foodgrain intake is estimated at 16 ounces. Therefore, the country requires 194.37 lakh tons of foodgrain to feed her 117.4 million population.

Food reserves in the government's stock was five lakh tons at the beginning of the 1994-95 fiscal, which now stands at seven lakh tons, said Bhuiyan, adding that till date 7.34 lakh tons of wheat have reached the country as food aid, while the government has imported 1.04 lakh tons of rice and wheat.

Another 2.31 lakh tons of wheat and 1.24 lakh tons of rice have already been imported by the private sector, he added.

The Food Minister further added that the government would import five lakh tons of foodgrain by June this year and another instalment of 2.38 lakh tons would reach as food aid.

Summing up the two-hour long interview, Bhuiyan, a tested minister of the Begum Zia's cabinet known for his managerial skills, dismissed any suggestion of a possible famine.

Rather, he appeared quite relaxed despite the embarrassing food situation, especially at this juncture when the next general elections are just a door

### Cabinet

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Besides, the Cabinet approved proposals for amending the Chittagong Port Authority Ordinance of 1976, the Companies Profits (Workers' Participation) Act 1968 and the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Authority Ordinance 1995.

It also approved the draft of the Bangladesh National Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre (BANSDOC) Ordinance 1995.

Ministers and State Ministers in charge of different ministries and divisions attended the meeting. Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary of the Prime Minister and concerned secretaries were present.

### BSRS set

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paid up capital Tk 70 crore and the reserve fund is Tk 40 crore. Besides, the Sangtha has Tk 110 crore as cash in hand.

According to sources concerned, the BSRS is going for commercial banking as part of a plan to "reactivate the dormant industrial project financing institution". It has remained almost idle since March last after the Asian Development Bank (ADB) had asked the BSRS to stop financing new projects because of its huge non-performing loans.

Later in 1990, the ADB, in response to a government request, offered some preconditions for the lifting of the embargo, which included privatisation of at least 51 per cent shares of the BSRS and allowing it to start commercial banking.

The move to privatise the BSRS was, however, resisted by some entrepreneurs through submission of an appeal to the petition committee of the Jatiya Sangsda. They alleged that the Sangsda was being handed over to private hands for a price far below the actual value.

According to sources, the authorities have finally dropped the idea of privatisation of the BSRS.

The number of non-performing projects of the BSRS is 109, of which 42 are now closed. The number of performing projects is 39 while the performance of 45 others has been irregular.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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