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## \$213m IDA loan for Dhaka WASA, rural development

Bangladesh will get 213 million dollars from the World Bank's concessional lending window IDA (International Development Association) for two projects to boost rural employment and income and to provide safe water and sanitation to Dhaka City Dwellers, reports BSS.

Ambassador of Bangladesh to USA KM Shehabuddin signed two agreements with the IDA for concessional assistance in Washington Wednesday last. Acting vice president of World Bank MS Meiko Nishimizu signed the agreement on behalf of the IDA, said a press release of the External Publicity Wing of the Information Ministry.

Under the second rural roads and markets improvement and maintenance project undertaken by the government of Bangladesh at a cost of 192.36 million dollars, 6000 culverts and small bridges will be constructed and 10,500 kilometer of rural roads usable round the year would be built.

A number of rural markets and ghats will be improved under the project. It will help the

northwest region of Bangladesh to exploit the economic opportunities to be provided on the completion of the Jamuna Bridge.

Beneficiaries of the project including poor workers and destitute women will have a significant say in selection, design and implementation of project activities.

The IDA will provide concessional lending of 133 million US dollars to complete the project.

The Swiss development co-operation will jointly finance the project, said the press release.

Under the fourth Dhaka WASA project, for which the IDA will provide concessional assistance of 80.3 million dollars, a water treatment plant will be set up in Dhaka and the efficiency and reliability of the water supply and sanitation service will be improved in the city.

The 175.80 million dollar project to improve water supply and sanitation in Dhaka will be co-financed by France and Japan.

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Visiting British Prime Minister John Major called on his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. — Star photo

## Major tells business leaders

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would like to increase our investment in Bangladesh.

But, he said, without stable political background, scope of investment reduces, domestic investment lacks security and overseas capital shies away.

Major said the existing 47 British businesses in Bangladesh are already seeking to expand their presence. "But it is still too low and I am convinced that we can and should do more. For our part, we shall be taking active steps to do so, and I am delighted to be accompanied here by a number of leading British businessmen who have precisely that aim in mind."

"Bangladesh and the United Kingdom have a solid foundation on which to build. As governments and as business parties, we can look forward to an exciting future and to a long and mutually beneficial cooperation," he said.

He lauded Bangladesh's efforts to provide a good base for future development like provisions for 100 per cent foreign ownership, repatriation of capital gains, tax holidays and low duties on the import of capital machinery have all evidently weighed with foreign investors. "But he said, difficulties like multiple permissions required for new investment can lead to bureaucratic delay and consequent discouragement.

Major expressed his firm belief in free trade and liberalisation and said the most effective way for the European Union to encourage democracy and prosperity is to keep its markets open to the products and investments of developing countries.

"So we shall continue to lead the way within the EU in arguing for it to be generous and open to the products of developing countries," he said.

He noted that the UK is the second largest investor in Bangladesh with over 300 million US dollars of direct investment registered. "That figure, I know for a fact, is about to increase further," he said.

He hoped that following yesterday's 150 million dollar gas production sharing contract between Britain's Cairn Energy and Petrobranga, final agreement for Midlands Power Generation Plant can be reached soon to give both a much-needed boost to power supplies and the clearest possible signal of encouragement to foreign investors.

## Gas purchase

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Bangladesh. "If (the agreement) is poised to make a tremendous progress in the field of gas exploration."

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her satisfaction at the signing of the agreement and said it displayed increased confidence of foreign investors in Bangladesh.

Later briefing newsmen at the Prime Minister's office, Energy secretary Dr A Samad said the Sangu project will open the prospects for both boosting production and export of gas.

Bangladesh, he said, has now become the "number one sought after country" for gas exploration and several international companies are showing keen interest. He said more blocks will shortly be offered for international bidding.

Bangladesh's gas reserves in the Bay of Bengal and Chittagong Hill Tracts region were estimated at 80 trillion cubic feet making it the largest reserve in the Asia-Pacific region, Samad said. The current domestic consumption of natural gas is 742 million cubic feet daily now.

Responding to a question about the purchase price of gas from the foreign prospectors, he said, the price will be determined against 75 percent of prevailing price of high speed sulphur oil prevailing in Singapore market, "plus some mark up."

The Energy Secretary said there would be guaranteed purchase for 15 years by the government. The projected life of the Sangu project has been estimated to be 30 years.

## Dhaka, London

From Page 1  
by the Bangladeshi community in Britain and requested Major to take

steps for expediting the process, particularly for shortening the period of getting divided families reunited.

The Bangladesh Prime Minister noted the development programmes undertaken by her government in the last six months, specially for attracting foreign investment. She also spoke of the Ganges water-sharing agreement signed with India.

The British Prime Minister referred to the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh, UK, in October and hoped that the presence of the Bangladesh Prime Minister there would lead to "cross-fertilisation" of ideas.

Sheikh Hasina hoped that she would be able to attend the summit and mentioned that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had attended two Commonwealth summits at Ottawa and Kingston.

John Major expressed his happiness that he was the first Premier to visit Bangladesh after James Callaghan, bridging a gap of highest level contact, after nearly 19 years.

Tofael Ahmed made a special reference at the official talks about the problems regarding access of Bangladeshi readymade garments to European markets.

President of FBCCI Yussuf Abdullah Harun requested for a British consulate at Sylhet to serve the non-resident people from the district, processing their papers for visit to the UK. He also requested for Britain's support for Bangladesh's garment industry in getting certain favourable decisions from the EU.

## Ershad goes to Sylhet today

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Party chief H M Ershad flies to Sylhet today to offer *fateha* at the *mazar* of Hazrat Shahjalal, party sources said.

As per an earlier programme Ershad is likely to go to Rangpur, his home district, on January 16 and address a public meeting there the next day.

Meanwhile, Ershad spent yesterday, the third day of his freedom, at his Gulshan residence, meeting party leaders and receiving visitors.

The sources said that Ershad has summoned senior party leaders to Dhaka for a meeting of the JP Working Committee on January 14.

As regards government's claim of attempting to resolve the stalemate in parliament, he said, "Other than making calls to return to parliament, through statements at public rallies or giving proposals for talks in different ways, no effective step has yet been taken. Rather, the government continues to issue provocative statements to worsen the situation. The threat of by-polls is the latest example of this."

The BNP leader claimed that his party did deviate even an inch from the conviction that parliament would be focal point of all national activities and that his party made its best efforts in that direction. But he added, the AL turned the House into its party forum by making 'public meeting style statements' there violating parliamentary practices and rules.

He said ICC has decided to globalise the game and not keep it restricted to only the nine Test playing nations. Having felt the cricket atmosphere in Bangladesh over the last two days, Bacher was confident that Bangladesh would soon be included in the genre of Test-playing nations.

He said that his committee will prepare a primary report next month after visiting Malaysia in which it will recommend the name of the countries to be awarded ODI status. After the forthcoming ICC trophy, a final report will be made in April basing on which ICC will give its final decision in June.

When asked about the number of countries being considered for ODI status and from when it will take effect, Bacher informed that three countries were likely to be granted the ODI status with effect from coming July.

He assured that from his standpoint even if a single country was awarded ODI status it would be Bangladesh.

Bacher's observation was that Bangladesh had everything — such as facilities, grounds,

## Continued British aid

From Page 1  
excellent bilateral relations. "We share similar views on major international issues."

She mentioned the role of the two countries, working together in the United Nations and the Commonwealth for promotion of peace and stability, human rights, democratic institutions and good governance across the world.

Referring to the historic association between the two countries, Hasina stated: "We, in Bangladesh, consider the United Kingdom as one of our most dependable friends and valued partners in development."

Focusing on bilateral relation in different fields, particularly in trade, investment and economic cooperation, Sheikh Hasina said bilateral trade between the two countries has made remarkable strides over the last few years.

She went on saying that Britain is, currently, the second largest export destination of Bangladesh goods.

She referred to the present investment in Bangladesh by

## 5 shops gutted

By Staff Correspondent

Five shops were completely gutted in a fire at Konapara Bazar under Demra Thana in the city early yesterday.

According to fire service sources, two book shops, a pharmacy and a hardware store and a grocery shop were gutted in the fire which originated from an electric short circuit at around 1.50 am yesterday.

Two fire brigade units from Demra Fire Station rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

## Trade ties can be widened

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prosperity, he said adding that a stable political system is essential for attracting foreign investment in Bangladesh.

Referring to the trade facilities of his country and the European Union, Major said tariff and non-tariff barriers should be dismantled as comprehensively and speedily as possible.

"I believe it is immoral on one hand for the relatively powerful and rich western states to provide aids, on the other hand, close down market to whom they are providing helps," he said.

The British Prime Minister said genuine help should be provided to all to enter the open market. Free trade should be freed for the products of the developing countries, he added.

He described the gas exploration accord signed between Britain and Bangladesh as an important contract.

Referring to the visit to Britain of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman just after independence, he said an excellent relation has been existing between the two countries for last 25 years.

Laying importance on greater regional cooperation under the umbrella of the SAARC, Major said it is necessary for the development of the region.

Referring to the long-term

Indo-Bangla Ganges water sharing treaty, he said it will help strengthen relations between the two neighbouring countries.

"Trade, investment and co-operative relations with the neighbouring states are the pre-conditions for prosperity... They travel side by side with other preconditions like a stable political background and encouraging investors abroad."

Mentioning the role of Bangladesh army in the UN peace keeping force, he said the armed forces of Britain and Bangladesh fought for peace in different parts of the world.

Major invited Hasina to join the Commonwealth summit in Edinburgh, which will take decisions on some important issues. The visit will be a catalyst for intensifying the existing relations between Britain and Bangladesh, he said.

The Commonwealth summit, he said, does not take decisions about problems but it takes action very relevant to the issues important to many of the member countries.

The British premier hoped that the future of Bangladesh would be future of improvement and democratisation.

He visualised that the country would change its features with the changing of time and enter into the 21st century with a capable stability to face the new century.



BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad Begum Khaleda Zia made a courtesy call on visiting British Prime Minister John Major at the British High Commission in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Khaleda urges Major

From Page 1

The Opposition leader sought greater cooperation from Britain to boost trade and investment in Bangladesh and pledged all possible cooperation from her side in this regard.

She recalled that British investment had been initiated in the field of oil and gas exploration in Bangladesh during the BNP regime. She expressed her happiness at Britain's increasing interest in expanding cooperation in this field.

The BNP Chairperson urged the British Prime Minister to take steps for further simplifying the immigration procedure in order to shorten the waiting period for entry into the UK of the wives, children and dependents of Bangladeshi immigrants working there.

The British Prime Minister assured the Opposition leader of looking into her proposals sympathetically.

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, M Moshad Khan MP, former Ambassador MM Rezaul Karim and British High Commissioner David C Walker were present during the meeting.

## Strike continues at RU

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Jan 11: No classes and examinations were held and all offices of the Rajshahi University remained closed for the second day today.

RUTA and All-Party Students Unity (AFSU) continued strike demanding removal of the VC Prof M Yousuf Ali.

In the morning, several time to time.

Kawser Ali was given the charge of Director, Physical

## 50 administrative posts

From Page 1

Reproduction officer, Assistant Reproduction officer, Section officer (library), Assistant Instrument Engineer, Instrument Engineer, Administrative Officer (Fine Arts Institution), Librarian-cum Museum Officer (Business Studies Faculty), Demonstrator (Dramatics) and University Photographer.

Registrar of the university Abu Zaed Shukdar had retired from service 5 years ago but he was reappointed. He has also been holding the post of Director of Planning and Development for the last three years against which he is drawing charge allowance. The sources said.

Shah Habibur Rahman was reappointed Controller of Examinations after his retirement two years ago.

The post of Director, Student Counsellor has been lying vacant for more than seven years. Prof Hamida Akhter of the Department of Psychology has been given the charge.

Deputy Librarian Sirajul Islam has been given the charge of Librarian.

The post of Director, Grantha Sangstha fell vacant two years back. Prof Abul Kalam Fazlul Haq was given charge.

Arshad Ali was temporarily given the charge of the post of Inspector of College when it fell vacant 9 years ago. He is still holding the charge.

Nurul Islam was appointed Public Relations Officer in 1978 on contract basis. Since then his contract has been renewed time to time.

All the officials holding additional charges are getting charge allowance, the sources said.

According to rules, charge allowance can be given against a vacant post for maximum six months, the sources said. If the vacant posts are not filled up within six months, the post will stand abolished automatically, the sources added.

## ODI & Test status for Bangladesh

From Page 1

full membership of ICC. The press was informed that the ICC has decided to first award the ODI status as a process to accord full membership to any associate member.

Bangladesh has got every possibility to achieve that in the ICC meeting in June.

Bacher also said that the committee was now fully aware that cricket in Bangladesh is a culture and it has a long history of playing the game which cannot be said about several countries which have already participated in the World Cup.

He said ICC has decided to globalise the game and not keep it restricted to only the nine Test playing nations. Having felt the cricket atmosphere in Bangladesh over the last two days, Bacher was confident that Bangladesh would soon be included in the genre of Test-playing nations.

He said that his committee will prepare a primary report next month after visiting Malaysia in which it will recommend the name of the countries to be awarded ODI status. After the forthcoming ICC trophy, a final report will be made in April basing on which ICC will give its final decision in June.

When asked about the number of countries being considered for ODI status and from when it will take effect, Bacher informed that three countries were likely to be granted the ODI status with effect from coming July.

He assured that from his standpoint even if a single country was awarded ODI status it would be Bangladesh.

Bacher's observation was that Bangladesh had everything — such as facilities, grounds,

sponsorships, media, crowd support and government backing. It would be staggering if Bangladesh did not attain ODI status by June, said Bacher.

Finally, he was full of praise for the Bangladesh government, specially the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who have shown immense interest for the betterment of cricket which, Bacher said, was one of the most important pre-requisites



Dr Ali Bacher (L), chairman of the ICC Development Committee, addressing the press at the Sonargaon Hotel yesterday. — Star photo

for improving cricket in a country.

Answering to another question, the South African cricket boss said that he was personally convinced of not using astro turf in the ICC trophy, but as it was the decision of the associate members, it has to be reviewed again.

Majid Khan, the former Pak-

istan skipper who has played Test matches in Dhaka, said that club-level cricket in Bangladesh was more popular than in any other country in the sub-continent and that is important in considering Bangladesh's case for Test status.

He said that initially a few countries would be given ODI status and they would be gradually turned into Test playing nations. He said that from now on ICC would plan to send 'A' teams of the Test-playing nations to the associate member countries to improve cricket there.

He also said that Bangladesh would get all the assistance it needs of the ICC Technical Committee in connection with improving its cricket infrastructure, umpiring and other facilities. He said that in future junior cricketers of Bangladesh will be sent to different Cricket Academies of the world to learn more about the game.

He wished the Bangladesh government and the BCB would give their best to achieve a place in the world of cricket.

Earlier yesterday, the ICC development team had a busy schedule including audiences with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain, Home Minister Rafiqul Islam BU, and State Minister for Youth and Sports Obaidul Quader.

The team deliberated with the Prime Minister and the ministers, and were assured their full co-operation for the advancement of cricket in Bangladesh.

The two cricket legends also witnessed the Premier Division cricket league match between Abahani and Kalabagan Krira Chakra at the Dhaka Stadium yesterday afternoon.

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প্রতি ট্যাবলেটে ০.৭৫ মিলিগ্রাম দিভোনরজেস্ট্রেট।

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সহবাসের অব্যবহিত পরে একমাত্রায় ০.৭৫ মিলিগ্রাম দিভোনরজেস্ট্রেট গ্রহণে গর্ভসংক্রান্ত প্রতিরোধ করে।

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