



The Daily Star

Pioneer
HI-FI
RANGS GROUP

VOL. IX NO. 43 REGD. NO. DA 781

INTERNET: <http://www.dailystarnews.com>

FALGOON 18, 1405 BS

DHAKA TUESDAY MARCH 2, 1999

ZILQUAD 13, 1419 HIJRI

16 PAGES : PRICE TAKA 6.00

No alternative to cooperation, President tells D-8 guests

President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed has said that in this increasingly interdependent world there is no rational alternative to mutually beneficial cooperation, reports UNB.

"The interests of nations and peoples are, in the ultimate analysis, complementary and intertwined," he said in a banquet speech at Bangabhaban last night.

The Bangladesh President hosted the banquet in honour of the heads of delegations attending the Second D-8 summit, and their spouses.

President Shahabuddin said the member countries have attached importance to D-8 as a "forum of cooperation for economic development."

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Malaysia keen to invest more in Bangladesh

Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir, here to attend the D-8 summit, showed keen interest to invest more capital in Bangladesh in sectors like telecommunications and gas exploration, reports UNB.

"Malaysia is interested to invest in labour-intensive projects in Bangladesh," he said talking to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during a call on her in her suite at Sheraton Hotel yesterday afternoon.

The Malaysian premier expressed satisfaction over his country's investment already made here.

"It's quite good," he said, adding there is a great scope for expansion of cooperation in various fields of trade and economy between the two friendly countries.

Mahathir again invited Hasina to visit his country.

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4 get life term for killing AL leader in Khulna

From Staff Correspondent KHULNA, Mar 1: Additional District Judge-1, Khulna today awarded life term to four persons for their involvement in the murder of Awami League leader and ward commissioner Moslemuddin Khan on February 25, 1995 near Power House Road under Sonadanga thana.

The convicted accused are Nazim Sarder, 45, Babul, 34, Hazrat Ali, 40 and Karam Sarder, 50.

Thirteen others acquitted in the murder case include KCC commissioner elected from ward no-21 Ershad Shikdar who is now on bail in two other murder cases.

Ershad Shikdar joined Awami League from BNP in 1997 with 23 criminal cases pending against him.

All the accused convicted and acquitted belong to the ruling party.

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Prayer Timings

March 2		
Azan	5:29	Jamaat
Fajr	5:29	5:34
Johr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:30	4:35
Maghrib	6:05	6:08
Esha	7:25	7:30

Source: Islamic Foundation

New agenda dawns on D-8

By Staff Correspondent

The heads of delegations of the eight member countries at the opening session of the D-8 Summit in the city yesterday pledged to take up meaningful schemes for expansion of economic cooperation and trade.

Steps should be initiated for more interaction between private sectors of the member countries, the leaders stressed.

They felt that the new grouping comprising the eight most populous Muslim countries could cooperate in minimising the effects of the global financial crisis and contribute to efforts aimed at reforms in the international financial systems.

The alliance leaders spoke of a common bond of Islamic culture and heritage and felt that they should work "together and in consonance" to achieve economic emancipation of their people by harnessing their own natural resources and exploiting their potential to face challenges of the next millennium.

The two-day second Summit of the Developing Eight, popularly known as the D-8, was inaugurated by Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the newly-built Sheraton conference centre.

The heads of delegations who represented their countries are Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad of

Malaysia, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan, First Vice President of Indonesia Dr Hassan Habib, Foreign Minister of Egypt Amre M. Moussa, Minister of People's Welfare and Poverty Eradication Haryono Suyono of Indonesia and Minister-Plenipotentiary of Nigeria A A Isa besides Sheikh Hasina.

The Summit began a few minutes after 3 in the afternoon with recitation from the holy Quran. Outgoing D-8 Chairman Suleyman Demirel then delivered a brief speech. As Bangladesh took over the chairmanship of D-8, the Turkish president exchanged seat with the Bangladesh prime minister.

Sheikh Hasina, in her speech as new chairman, said the promotion of trade among the D-8 countries 'is the most promising area of cooperation.'

The private sector must be integrated with the D-8 process and a Business Forum involving entrepreneurs of the member states should be set up, she said.

During the one and a half years of its existence, Hasina said, the D-8 has made strides in several sectors. In some selected areas, projects have been initiated and Bangladesh as the coordinating country for rural development has taken up a

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina speaks at the opening session of the D-8 Summit yesterday.

— Star photo by AKM Mohsin

33-point draft declaration

The draft Dhaka Declaration of D-8 summit expressed concern over the lack of progress in reform and strengthening the international financial systems to protect the interest of the developing countries, reports UNB.

The 33-point draft declaration, approved by the council of ministers, acknowledged the benefits of globalisation, but recognised its accompanying risks of destabilisation and increased inequality between developed and developing countries.

It said the severity of the crisis in Asia has highlighted the weaknesses in the global economic and financial system.

The draft likely to be adopted on conclusion of the D-8 Summit today is as follows. 1. We the Heads of State and Government of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan

and Turkey met in Dhaka on 1-2 March, 1999 for the Second D-8 Summit.

2. We reaffirmed our commitment to the principles, purposes and objectives of D-8 and pledged to continue to work towards achieving them through the implementation of projects and other programmes of cooperation that are of vital interest to our peoples.

3. We reaffirm that the D-8 forum will be consistent with the relevant resolutions of the UN General Assembly, on Economic and Technical Cooperation among developing countries, and on strengthening of South-South Cooperation. The D-8 is a forum of functional cooperation, which would exploit the elements of comparative advantage complementarily, economies of scale and a commonality of interest so that real benefits can accrue to our peoples.

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Hasina 'Forge unity of Ummah'

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for the Islamic world to forge a better understanding and harness the resources treasured in its domain to improve economic condition of the people, reports UNB.

"I call for unity of the Muslim Ummah... We would seek a better destiny of our people by harnessing our resources and exploiting our potential," she told the inaugural session of the D-8 summit.

Hasina said the Developing-8 member states have common bond of Islamic culture and heritage and unity of the Muslim Ummah could promote economic emancipation of their peoples and enable them to face the emerging challenges of the next millennium.

Terminology of trade as the most promising area in the forum countries the Bangladesh Prime Minister, See Page 12 Col 1

Mahathir 'All is not lost yet'

Malaysian Prime Minister Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad, addressing the inaugural session of the D-8 summit, underscored the need for joint use of natural resources and assets for the betterment of member countries, reports UNB.

"All is not lost yet. We do have assets and intrinsic strength. We need to recognise and utilise them. And thus we should work out how we can put them to joint use," he said yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said: "There is only one reason for us to be together, to talk to each other — and that is because we see benefit in working together, in helping each other, in recognising our mutual responsibility."

There was a great deal of wealth and potential among the Islamic nations but they have not contributed to the well-being or the progress of most of these nations, he reminded.

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Demirel 'Business is the key'

Turkish President Suleyman Demirel yesterday called for formation of a forum to act as a business advisory council to the D-8 and bring "our businessmen together" for greater economic cooperation in private sector, reports UNB.

"I personally attach great importance to the formation of a Business Forum to act as a kind of Business Advisory Council to D-8 bringing our businessmen together," he told the inaugural session of the two-day summit of the D-8 in the city in the afternoon.

The Turkish President said the efforts of D-8 will not be successful without effective support of the business community and called for creating an environment in which the private sectors of the respective countries can interact and cooperate.

Stressing cooperation in trade within the D-8 by increasing

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Sharif 'Progress flows from peace'

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed his country's commitment to forge a broad-ranging cooperation based on strong partnership for economic development of the D-8 states and urged peace for this, reports UNB.

"... progress flows from peace. Without peace and stability the hope of growth and development will continue to be as illusory as a mirage in the desert," he told the D-8 summit yesterday.

Sharif stressed promoting the active involvement of private enterprise in trade and investment among the member countries of the group of 8 OIC states. "Private sector is the flagship of economic growth. It must be fully involved with our development efforts."

He suggested D-8 should establish cooperation with other organisations, especially the OIC and ECO to benefit from their experiences on the economic, social and technological fronts.

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Hearing of HC rule regarding hartal adjourned till Mar 8

By SC Correspondent

The hearing on the suo moto rule regarding the pro-hartal and anti-hartal activities has been deferred to March 8.

The hearing was adjourned after the Attorney General prayed yesterday for time to file affidavit on facts.

Earlier Additional Attorney General Mahbub-e-Alam on behalf of Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman, Deputy Attorney General M Faruqur for the secretaries, Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and subsequently Barrister Maudud Ahmed for BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan submitted their respective vakalatnamas.

On February 15, 1999 the division bench of the HC comprising Justice Md Golam Rabbani and Justice Md Latifur Rahman issued the suo moto rule on AL, BNP, and the government to show cause as to why the pro-hartal and anti-hartal activities should not be declared a cognizable offence and the criminal courts and the police not be directed to take action accordingly.

Shell-Cairn awarded Block 10

By Staff Correspondent

Oil giant Shell Oil and its British partner Cairn were finally awarded block 10 under the second round block bidding on Sunday.

Cairn officially said yesterday that the joint venture now started negotiations with Petrobangla for Production Sharing Contracts on block 5 and 10.

The two blocks were first offered to Cairn-Shell by the government when negotiations for various blocks started in October '97.

But late in '98, the government moved from its position and decided to shelve any decision on block 10. It then issued Letter of Intent (LOI) to various oil companies awarding five blocks. Cairn-Shell were awarded only block 5.

While Shell remained firm that it would not continue negotiations if it was not awarded block 10, US company Unocal, which is now seeking an unsolicited contract on Shahbazpur gasfield situated in the same block, had unofficially said it would be awarded the block.

Following this, Shell had created international pressure on Unocal to stop pursuing this block.

Meanwhile, the oil companies

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Repolling in 12 centres in Sherpur today

SHERPUR, Mar 1: Repolling in 12 centres in Sherpur pourashava will be held tomorrow, reports UNB.

The District Returning Officer suspended polling in 12, out of 23 centres, of the pourashava on February 23 following snatching of ballot boxes and stuffing of ballots by the rival candidates, and other sorts of irregularity.

The centres where re-polling will be held are: Sheikhhatti Government Primary School, Sherpur Government Girls High School, Damdama-Kaliganj Government Primary School, Kosba Katgar Government Primary School, Sherpur High School, Kharampur Government Primary School, GK Pilot High School, Dhakalhati Government Primary School, Adarshya Bidyapith, Government Victoria Academy and Rajballyapur Government Primary School.

Returning Officer and Additional Deputy Commissioner of the district said all preparations have been completed to hold the polls peacefully.

Kazi Aref murder One arrested in city

By Staff Correspondent

Special Branch (SB) of police yesterday arrested one person in connection with the killings of Kazi Aref Ahmed and five other leaders. The man nabbed from the city's Gulshan area was a fugitive, awarded with 86 years of imprisonment in five cases.

Kazi Aref along with five other JSD leaders were shot dead at a public meeting at Daulatpur in Kushtia on February 16.

SB officials said they arrested Siddique Molla, 34, as a suspect in the murder case of the JSD leaders from Road No 10 in Gulshan Section No 1 at about 5:30 pm.

SB interrogated Siddique last night but he did not confess to any linkage with the killing of six JSD leaders. But Police

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Heavy borrowing as revenue target remains elusive

By Monjur Mahmud

Dampened by prolonged floods, the economy has failed to generate the targeted revenue in the first seven months of the current fiscal year. The collection has fallen some 10 per cent short of the target, Tk 8,425.92 crore, till January this year.

The poor revenue collection has forced the government to borrow heavily from the banking system.

The seven months fetched only Tk 7,621.86 crore to the state coffers, falling 9.54 per cent or Tk 804 crore behind the goal.

"The target could not be achieved as business activities were heavily hampered due to countryside prolonged floods last year," said an official of National Board of Revenue (NBR).

The collection, however, is Tk 292.20 crore higher than the corresponding period of the last fiscal in the first seven months of 1997-98 fiscal year. NBR's revenue collection stood at Tk 7,329.66 crore.

The outlook for February has been far worse. The revenue will be even lower than that in the previous months because the 28-day month had only 13

working days. Apart from the weekly public holidays, the opposition-sponsored consecutive hartals halted most businesses and economic activities across the country during the month.

"If working days are ham-

Hearing on share scam cases Mar 14

By Staff Correspondent

After almost two months, hearing on charge-framing against the accused in the 1996 share scam cases will begin on March 14.

All the share scam cases have been transferred to the new-born Metropolitan Sessions Court, Dhaka. The court of First Additional (metropolitan) Sessions Judge would start hearing on charge-framing against Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Shineeupur Holdings and Doha Securities on the day.

Hearing on charge-framing against the accused had begun on January 3 in the court of the

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pered by hartals or any other means, it might have a negative impact on revenue earnings although officially we have to continue our work as usual," the official said, observing that the shortfall might exceed Tk 1,000 crore by the end of the year.

For the 1998-99 financial year, the government targeted Tk 15,700 crore.

As revenue collection has slowed, the pace of government borrowing is up.

In the first five months of the current fiscal (July to November, '98), the government's net borrowings from the banking sector increased by Tk 740 crore, up from Tk 121 crore of the corresponding period of the previous fiscal and Tk 523 crore in 1996.

Meanwhile, making the situation worse for the policy planners, current expenditures have increased due to sharp rise in its establishment costs, wage bills of public sector enterprises, high interest payment and a rise in subsidies.

NBR officials say they are putting in special efforts to increase revenue earnings in the remaining months.

Exclusive interview to The Daily Star Mahathir sees D-8 strength in its being goal-oriented

By M Anwarul Haq



Mahathir bin Mohamad

Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir bin Mohamad has said the potential for success of the D-8 is manifested in its focus on specific areas and projects.

"We are trying to make a smaller club with the intention of harnessing our own indigenous resources."

In an interview with The Daily Star at his hotel suite in the city yesterday, the visiting leader said, "Our thrust is on particular projects and specific areas. For instance, Turkey is manufacturing small aircraft for agricultural purposes, Bangladesh is making a model of rural development while Malaysia can share its experience in Islamic insurance."

Mahathir regretted that the wealth and potential of the Islamic and developing nations "have not contributed to the welfare or the progress of most of us."

He said, "None of us can lay claim to be a force of consequence in the international arena today."

They should provide each other with their list of areas of support "so that we can enhance cooperation".

On media, the Malaysian premier felt that the developing countries are heavily dependent on the western media for dissemination of information which is "heavily tilted and give distorted news about the developing countries."

"We can make efforts to make a news agency of our own that could reflect our point of view and our angle," Mahathir said.

Dwelling on western influence on developing nations, he said: "The West is trying to impose conditions on us because we are weak. They also try to interfere in our internal affairs because of our weakness. Their control over the World Bank, IMF and other international organisations enables them to twist the arms of the developing countries and gives them the

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FPHP gets the thumbs down from World Bank

By Naimul Haq

The US\$755 million Fourth Population and Health Project (FFHP) of the government completed in June last year has been evaluated as 'unsuccessful in terms of institutional sustainability' and unable to reach the targeted 'real poor' or effectively address the gender issue.

The World Bank reviewed the seven-year FFHP and submitted its report to the government and the donor consortium recently. The review was made from November 15 to December 14 last by a WB-appointed team consisting of international and national consultants.

The evaluation report said,

"Due to centralised vertical approach in management, the health and family planning services have been supply-oriented with little attention to developing effective community participation."

It further said, "Little institutional strengthening took place at the central level. Unfortunately, the desired integration of the two service systems was not in progress during the project period. The resources wasted during the period could have been avoided with better management and coordination and more value for money could have been obtained if the indi-

vidual components of FPHP had been more efficiently designed and implemented."

Many of the components did not achieve their targets at all despite huge amounts of money spent on them. The WB consortium funded a total of 66 components.

In an earlier review made from June 2 to 15 last year, a WB mission said that many of the components had failed to take off while others suffered delays due to administrative indecision. Many other components failed to produce any impact at the policy level.

The latest WB report said total cost of the FPHP as part of national health expenditures has been slightly over Tk 50 per capita per year. Without a substantial increase in the national health budget as well as in donor contributions, it remains questionable whether an appropriate Essential Services Package, to be implemented during the current Health and Population Sector Programme (HPSPP), can be adequately financed, it added.

Talking about attaining an effective healthcare service delivery system in the country, an expert said, "Government must

focus on raising the budget for health sector from the existing \$7 per capita per annum to \$12 (including donor contribution). Over the years it must aim at spending at least \$15 per capita per annum."

The WB said assistance for improving health status of the poor is 'unfavourable as a whole'. The government "appears to lack strategies as well as actions" directed at improving health services for the very poor households.

Extremely poor households, about one quarter of the population, get only around six per cent of the annual development

assistance while higher income groups get progressively more. About 45 per cent of the non-poor population receive about 54 per cent of the total aid

The government has given 'little attention to curative services' despite the growing demand for those. Curative services for the rural people were insignificant — only 12 per cent of them seek treatment at the public health facilities. The 'very poor' either do not seek treatment or go to government facilities only when forced by circumstances, the report mentioned.