

DCC's obsession

FROM PAGE 1
Sources said that the former DCC secretary, Habibullah, had allocated hundreds of spaces for commercial hoarding in the city, which not only created a "vision pollution" but also caused obstruction to traffic at many places. Moreover, thousands of unauthorised advertisements on trees, electric poles, makeshift overhead structures contributed to the ever-worsening look of the city.

Habibullah was later transferred to the Ministry of Establishment as officer on special duty (OSD). Allegations of massive irregularities were levelled against him during his tenure as the DCC secretary.

Hundreds of such electrically illuminated advertisement boards have recently been set up on the entire stretch of Satmasjid Road. Residents of Rayer Bazar, Hazaribagh and Dhanmondi said that they felt that the electric hoarding were nothing but a mockery with people constantly subjected to load shedding.

Moreover, in the last twelve months, Habibullah, who was chairman of a committee for allocation of advertisement spaces, sold hundreds of spaces to individuals

related to him. In one single meeting the Secretary awarded 65 spaces at different places of the city. Within the last one year 17 major thoroughfares in the city, demarcated as ad-free zones, have been 'decorated' with massive advertisements.

The DCC has a flat annual rate of Tk 30 per square feet of advertisement space. However, advertisement firms, which benefit from the DCC allocation, increase the charge several thousand times. For instance, per square feet of advertisement space at the Sonargaon Road could cost as much as Tk 4,000 per square feet annually.

Rafiqul Alam, an official of DCC's Revenue Department, told The Daily Star they had never thought of the energy problem while allocating spaces to advertisers. He said they thought that by allocating electrically illuminated hoarding, they were contributing to the beautification of the city.

With the rapid growth of the city and its economy demand for advertisement spaces have grown manifold. However, there are only two people working in DCC's Revenue Department, who looks after allocation of spaces for advertisement.

Stirring the hornet's nest

FROM PAGE 1
Immediately started building markets and turned the area into a criminals' den," said a leader of a traders' association.

The gangs now feel that eviction of the illegal shops would deprive them of regular tolls. They are also fighting among themselves due to old enmity. Manik, a terrorist, was gunned down in Karwan Bazar last week after he was suspected of leaking to detectives a robbery plan by Mitford Sagar. Two armed persons including Mitford Sagar were caught by the detectives after a shootout on Thursday.

"We the tax-paying businessmen and traders moved to all quarters including the Mayor and the Home Minister but the situation has not improved in Karwan Bazar. Now we fear for our lives," said another leader of a traders' association.

Several sources said they have seen 'some most wanted armed criminals' roaming in the market areas for the last few days. These hardcore criminals come from Tejaon Truck Stand, Purba Rajabazar, West Rajabazar, Testuripara, Station Road, Farm

Gate, Awlad Hossain Market, Begunbari, Mughbazar and Tejgunipara.

"These people can never operate in the area without direct help of Tejaon thana, which is also a part of the entire network for toll connection and share," said a trader.

A high official of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (West) said they are in an awkward position regarding maintaining law and order in Karwan Bazar. He said the biggest problem there is illegal toll collection.

"A dishonest section of the 'genuine' traders and businessmen is also encouraging the musclemen in extortion. We are looking into the matter seriously," he said.

When contacted, acting Mayor of DCC, Ward Commissioner Moklesur Rahman, admitted that the situation in Karwan Bazar was undesirable. Mayor Mohammad Hanif is now in Brussels.

On the eviction programme of May 22, the acting mayor said, "We will try to clean the mess and ensure sustainability".

Hazari won't take on Khaleda

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candidate.

Hazari had earlier announced that he would take on Khaleda, in Feni-1 constituency comprising two bordering upazilas Chhagolnaiya and Parshuram from which the former prime minister was elected in the past two elections.

Hazari, an alleged godfather in Feni, said that he was getting prepared to contest from all three Feni constituencies.

"I disclosed my latest plan at a recent meeting of district Awami League," Hazari said. "Now I plan to contest from Feni-2 (that I hold now) only."

Hazari had been organising local AL workers as well as his armed cadres to prepare for the polls due before October, according to local sources.

"As Hazari has a strong group of armed cadres throughout the district and also control over the local administration, he can influence the voters," a local told this correspondent during his recent visit to Feni. "The people in Feni are scared of the Hazari Bahini."

According to sources, the Feni AL and its front organisations have

nearly 28,000 activists.

Apart from this organised force, Hazari also has absolute command over the armed cadres locally known as the 'Class Committee'. This force is used to encounter his rivals and maintain AL's control in the district, local people informed. Hazari preaches his armed followers every Friday.

Wall writings seeking vote for Hazari as the Awami League candidate were seen throughout the district including areas under Khaleda's constituency.

In 1996 election, the BNP chairperson defeated Principal M Waziullah Bhuiyan of Awami League by a 40,948 votes from Feni-1 constituency. She secured a total of 55,086 votes against 24,138 bagged by her rival.

She also won Bogra-6, Bogra-7, Laxmipur-2 and Chittagong-1 constituencies defeating her near-rievals by big margins.

Hazari contested from two constituencies Feni-2 and Feni-3 but only won in Feni-2 by a margin of 5,921 votes. Md Mosharraf Hossain, a BNP candidate, won the Feni-3 seat securing 16,257 votes more than Hazari.

Jamuna bridge: Costly deal

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Meantime, ERD in a note addressed to the Communications Secretary (Railway Division) asked for procurement of the railway tracks from the same Spanish company or any other company under the existing soft loan agreement—Bangladesh-Spain Financial Cooperation Programme.

According to the agreement, Bangladesh is entitled to get US\$ 85 million soft-term credit. Spain agreed to provide US\$ 75.7 million for six different projects. ERD proposed utilisation of the rest US\$ 9.3 million to procure the railway tracks.

However, the Bangladesh Railway said that they had other plans to utilise the credit. It also said it would be time consuming to go for any other option that might have a negative impact as regards completion of the project.

According to sources, BR has already taken tracks from its two other projects as loan to complete the BB railway project. In this context, the Planning Commission thought that it was not necessary to procure the rail tracks in haste. Rather, it suggested open bidding that would give a chance for a better price and interest rate.

Earlier, a procurement drive was made in June 1999. The government had approved procurement of tracks for the project from Sydney Steel Corporation under a Canadian ECD loan. But the company became bankrupt.

Since then the BR was quite. All of a sudden, BR has now become 'over active' to finalise the deal with a particular company, the sources said.

"If the procurement was that urgent, Bangladesh Railway had

plenty of time to go for open bidding. Instead, it kept quite for almost two years. That's why its recent drive raised question," said a source.

Examinees

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Meanwhile, most of the 23 DESA officials, who were served with show cause notices last month asking them why they would not be dismissed, are yet to reply to the authorities, sources said.

Seven DESA officials including its Superintendent Engineer of Postogola Circle were dismissed on April 12 and 23 others were served with show cause notices on the same day for corruption.

Termination of seven officials at a time was the first such step by DESA, which never earned profit since it was set up in 1991. DESA's net loss is between Tk 20 and 30 crore per month, the sources said.

The termination followed an investigation report which detected massive corruption by a section of DESA personnel in implementing its projects. The report said that the 30 DESA personnel were responsible for the existing mismanagement in power supply in the capital.

When asked, a top official of DESA said, "Only one or two of them have so far replied and most of them have sought extension of time". As per the extended time, all of them have to reply within this month, he said.

"The seven were sacked after charges of massive corruption were proved against them through investigation" said another high official of DESA.

Parliament to complete full term for the first time

PM tells Bangladesh community in Brussels

UNB, Brussels

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the general election will be held in late September or early October and the current Parliament is going to complete its full term, first time in national history, as the opposition turned down her offer to hold early polls.

"The opposition leader, by not accepting my offer to hold early election, has virtually created the scope for me to complete my tenure," she told a meeting of Bangladesh community at the VUB University Hall here on Monday evening.

Hasina said the next session of Parliament beginning on June 6 would be the last session of the 7th parliament when the government would place the national budget as well as complete its full term, creating a new history.

In the last four years and 10 months, she said, her government has done a lot of development work, but the opposition leader did not like

it as she along with deposed autocrat Ershad and Razakar Golem Azam continued their movement against the government.

"The main objective of their movement was to protect the killers, but finally they ended up in frustration getting no response from the people," she observed.

Hasina said the trial of the killers of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman took place in the country and the killers would be punished according to the court verdict.

A large number of expatriate Bangladeshis and members of Awami League from European countries joined the meeting with Sheikh Hasina who is here to lead Bangladesh to the 3rd LDC conference.

The Prime Minister said that the opposition parties also tried to create a law and order situation by killing people in the name of hartal after their movement failed.

Referring to the Roumari border clashes, Hasina said her govern-

ment does not have any conflict with neighbours and resolved all problems successfully by initiating quick actions and through diplomatic efforts.

Belgium Awami League leaders Shahidul Islam, Monir Hossain, Jasimuddin, Golem Sarwar and Nasiruddin Pinu also addressed the meeting, chaired by Belgium Awami League president Rezaul Karim Panna.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil, Dhaka City Mayor Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Europe Awami League leader Anil Das Gupta, Shamsuddin Khan, Abul Hasem, Anwarul Karim Ratan, Fariduddin Ahmed, Abdul Gani, Sultan Mohammad Sharif, Mahtab Hossain, Henry De Costa, Benajir Ahmed, Abdullah Baki, Mohammad Shamu, Rafiqullah and Nilratan Guha were present on the occasion.



Bangla Academy officials placed a wreath at the grave of litterateur Shawkat Osman and offered prayers yesterday to mark his third death anniversary.

VDP commander

FROM PAGE 1
Osman Ghani was attacked by tribal terrorists when he was returning from upazila sadar by bus with the money.

The gunmen, sitting in the bus in guise of passengers, shot Ghani and took away the money when most of the passengers had got down. Ghani was shot in the head and succumbed to his injuries on way to hospital.

Police raided Mohajan Para area soon after the incident and arrested Babui Chakma, 25, and Chira Shanti Chakma, 24, in this connection.

4 murdered

FROM PAGE 12
On May 9, Nazrul Islam, 38, owner of a shrimp farm, was murdered by some activists of outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party (PBCP). His body was recovered from his farm at Rampal upazila the same night. Police said PBCP activists killed him failing to get tolls.

A young boy Badsha, 17, was murdered also in Rampal upazila in the early morning of May 9 allegedly by some enemies of his father, police said.

On May 12, bank officer Amol Mondol was severely injured in armed attack by some miscreants for not paying Tk one lakh as toll. On the same day, Achnintya Kumar Sardar, lecturer of Fakirhat College, was severely injured by miscreants. Both are now undergoing treatment at Khulna General Hospital.

Police are yet to arrest any of the culprits or make headway in investigating the murder cases and armed attacks.

No action against Dipu

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action in this regard.

On Monday afternoon, Dipu Chowdhury, son of State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, made an attempt to shoot a retired Lt. Colonel. Following the incident Dipu was confined to his office at the DOHS for about two hours.

The incident took place as Dipu tried to drive his car through

Mahakhali-DOHS link road to reach Banani. Later he was allowed to go following assurance of his landlord and intervention from the high-ups.

The on-duty security personnel at DOHS stopped Dipu, saying it was only for the vehicles of defence forces and ex-army personnel.

Identified himself as son of a state minister, Dipu started hurling abusive language at the security personnel. Moreover, he said that he was not bound to follow their rules.

Being informed the general secretary of the DOHS steering committee, Lt. Colonel (ret'd.) Mohammad Shajahan went to the spot and informed him of the rules but Dipu misbehaved with him, too.

At one stage the security guards of the area asked Dipu to leave the area but he pulled out his gun and made an attempt to shoot the retired Lt. Colonel. At this point, a vehicle of Military Police reached the spot. Seeing the vehicle, Dipu took U-turn and left the spot.

Later security personnel asked all entry gates to stop the car. The car was found in front of House No. 436 at Road No. 30, where Dipu owned a garment-buying house. Officials informed the landlord, Kader, who himself is a retired colonel, of the incident.

After two hours of confinement, Dipu was allowed to go. Being informed sub-inspector Lokman went there and later filed a GD with Katriul thana in this regard. Despite several attempts Dipu could not be available for comments.

EC to consider

FROM PAGE 12
She also pointed to the increase of ODA and foreign direct investment in Bangladesh where an excellent investment climate is existing. Hasina also mentioned her social sector programme, which ensured economic uplift of the people and narrated the concept of caretaker government.

She said before introduction of caretaker government system in Bangladesh the elections were rigged and the people were not allowed to cast their votes. "Now election will not be rigged," she added.

The prime minister also mentioned the achievement of Bangladesh in attaining self-sufficiency in food.

Finance Minister Shah AMS Kibria, Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury were present at the meeting.

Experts fear a severe outbreak

FROM PAGE 1
Aedes mosquitoes that carry the deadly virus.

But despite warnings, the agencies concerned have not yet issued any warning against a possible dengue epidemic in the city, they said.

In retrospect, when some cases of dengue were reported in the city's Hatirpool, Mirpur and Jhikatola areas in 1999, health directorate officials brushed it aside as 'scattered incidents posing no threat to the population.'

Expert like Touhid Uddin Ahmed, former chief scientific officer of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) had then warned the government of possible dengue infection in Bangladesh considering its existence in neighbouring countries.

About a year later in July 2000, when Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever (DHF) started claiming lives, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Mohammad Hanif still believed that the dengue virus was 'being imported' from neighbouring countries.

Last year, 93 people died out of

over 5500 infected, mostly in municipal areas across the country, according to official statistics.

Due to lack of diagnostic facilities, a large number of dengue fever cases in the country went undetected in the past, experts said. In fact, many people who were earlier said to have died from common viral infection are now believed to have died from DHF that leads to bleeding.

Studies by IEDCR and Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences concluded last year that mixed infection in the blood of two or more of the four types of dengue viruses caused DHF.

A WHO report on dengue situation since 1995 said that a high percentage of population in Dhaka and Chittagong has antibodies in their blood to fight dengue infection type - 3 and to a lesser extent, types 1 and 2.

The report also said that in 1996 in Myanmar, 2,243 out of 83,381 recorded cases of dengue infection were fatal. In the same year in India, a fifth of more than 9,000 infected people died.

The growth of Aedes mosquito population is measured by the percentage of containers placed in houses that are found with Aedes larvae. This measurement is known as the Breteau index and an index of up to 18 is considered normal.

A 1997 survey showed that the index had reached 30 in the city. It rose further to 160 in 1999 and to a shocking 254 in June 2000. But the DCC and the health ministry ignored experts' warnings about a dengue outbreak.

WHO currently estimates the annual global incidence of the disease to be 50 million. An estimated 2500 million people in the world, two-fifths of its population, are at risk of dengue infection.

Before 1970, cases of DHF were reported in nine countries only. The number increased by four times by 1995.

In 1998 alone, there were more than 616,000 cases in the Americas, mostly children under fifteen, of which 11,000 were cases of DHF.

The latest WHO report on 'Dengue and Dengue Haemorrhagic Fever' also said, not only the number of cases are increasing as the

2 girls drown in Rajshahi

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two minor girls drowned in a pond near Godagari municipality office at about 11.30 am in Rajshahi yesterday.

They were identified as Sweet, 5, and Shaheen, 6.

Local people recovered the bodies from the pond.

Good sense

FROM PAGE 12
Azharul Islam echoed Mollah's view. About Jamaat's demand for seats in BNP strongholds Bogra, Jhenaidah and other places where the main opposition has its sitting MPs, he said those were scattered demands made by some local leaders and not by central leaders.

"Our priority is to win the polls, so we will forego our demand for a seat if candidates from any other parties of the alliance have better chances to win," Azhar added.

Jatiya Party (M-N) presidium member Kazi Firoz Rashid said that JP has already prepared a list of 50 seats it wishes to bargain for, mainly in Comilla, Khulna, Sathkira, Sylhet and Rajbari districts. "We have very promising candidates in those districts," he said.

He said they have decided to contest the polls with BNP's election symbol "sheaf of paddy" as there is no chance of getting JP's original symbol of "Plough" by any of the three JP factions.

Firoz admitted that many JP MPs now want to run for office on BNP tickets. "This is the current problem with us and we have requested BNP not to encourage JP MPs to join BNP as we have already decided to contest the election with BNP's symbol."

The JP leader said BNP leadership has assured its alliance partners that it would not frustrate anyone and distribute seats reasonably.

Another JP leader requesting anonymity said JP would be more than happy to get allocation for 30 seats, hinting that JP and Jamaat might get 30 seats each and IOJ and other candidates, 10 seats in total.

Acting secretary general of IOJ Ahmed Abdu Qader said his party has started discussing the seat allocation issue and stressed the need for its early settlement. He also expressed his optimism about a happy outcome.

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AL leader

FROM PAGE 1
been killed by his business rivals.

Sources said that day before yesterday, he went to Mirpur PWD office to submit a tender of Tk one crore. Two groups belonging to Kamal and Kochi also went there. Faiz belonged to Kamal group. Both the groups were locked into an altercation over submitting tender. At one stage Kochi group threatened to kill Faiz.

A case was filed with Pallabi thana in this connection.

Police recovered bodies of two young men from a paddy field at Dharmikpara in the city's Demra area yesterday.

Identity of the young men could not be known.

There were marks of injuries in the bodies. Police suspected that they might have been killed by miscreants at least five days ago.

Police sent the bodies to Mitford hospital morgue for autopsy.

PSA violates

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he said.

Barrister Razzak argued before the Division Bench comprising Justice MA Aziz and Justice Mohammad Shamsul Huda on the first writ petition challenging validity of the PSA.

He reiterated his argument that the Speaker had violated the Constitution by sending the PSA bill to the President as a finance bill for his assent.

Even the Home Minister tabled it as a finance bill in violation of Article 127 of the Rules of Procedure of Jatiya Sangsad, he added. Razzak will continue his argument today.

Yasmeen murder

FROM PAGE 12
his submission.

Refuting the defence arguments, the DAG said that a section of police officials led by the then SP of Dinajpur A Moteleb had deliberately sent Yasmeen's body to a child specialist at Dinajpur for autopsy although there was no shortage of doctors specialised in forensic and gynaecology in the town.

They sent it to Dr Mohsin hoping that a "tutored" autopsy report would be available from him. In his report Dr Mohsin had said that the nature of injury on Yasmin's body was "consistent with rape injury" although he did not say it was rape, Manik said.

The DAG said that Dr Mohsin found an injury in the perineum (which stands between the vagina and the anus) of the victim. Such an injury, according to medical jurists, can only occur in a forceful rape or gang rape, he said citing medical jurisprudence.

The state prosecutor further said that the first autopsy does not help the defence. He said it was also on record that the culprit police officers destroyed Yasmin's clothing to avoid detection of sperm in chemical examination and SP Moteleb and some other officers were charged for that.

The DAG further said that the second autopsy was by far superior to the first one as it was done by three doctors at Rangpur, who were specialists in forensic and gynaecology. As the doctors were based at

Rangpur, their report was evidently impartial.

Manik pleaded that the court should give due cognizance to the second report which showed that Yasmeen was raped and throttled to death.

Road accidents

FROM PAGE 12
district yesterday evening.

One of the dead was identified as Manik Chand, 45.

The accident occurred when a Rajshahi-bound truck collided head-on with a Naogaon-bound bus, killing the two on the spot.

Of the injured, four were admitted to Naogaon Hospital while the rest to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

In another accident, a minor girl Tuktki, 4 was killed on the spot when a speedy truck hit her at Kamalpara under Godagari upazila of Rajshahi district at about 1.30 pm yesterday.

Protesting the accident, local people put up a barricade on the Rajshahi-Chapainawabgonj road disrupting traffic for about an hour from 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm. Police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control.

A case was recorded with Godagari thana in this connection.

AL plans big showdown

FROM PAGE 1
the May 17 reception programme a success by ensuring convergence of two to three lakh people at Paltan Maidan.

Ending her six-year exile abroad, Hasina returned home on May 17, 1981, to take charge of the then largest opposition party that was in all sorts of trouble following several splits.

Unlike in previous years, her homecoming day is being marked very ceremoniously this year keeping the upcoming parliamentary polls in mind.

Central AL leaders would visit the prime minister tomorrow morning at her official residence, Ganobhavan, present her with a bouquet and wish her a successful political career in days to come. The reception would be arranged at 3 o' clock in the afternoon.

A high-level preparatory meeting, held at the party headquarters at Bangabandhu Avenue last evening, was of the view that the Paltan Maidan would be too small a venue for such a big reception where hundreds of thousands of people are expected to converge.

The meeting also observed that National Parade Ground would have been a better choice, but then it was too late now to shift the venue from Paltan Maidan.

An AL central committee leader

present at the meeting later said that Paltan Maidan has a crowd capacity of up to 70,000, and there were apprehensions that roads adjacent to it would be crammed with people coming from across the country, leading to a traffic snarl-up.

Acting president of AL and Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad presided over the preparatory meeting yesterday, which was attended by a number of ministers, central AL leaders, leaders of different front organisations and representatives from several party units from Dhaka and its adjacent districts.

Samad Azad urged the leaders and activists to work for a 'historic victory' in the upcoming general elections and carry forward the welfare activities undertaken by the AL government.

State Minister for Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs Obaidul Kader, State Minister for Shipping Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, central AL leaders including Abdul Mannan, Prof. Fazlul Haq, Mukul Bose, Akhtaruzzaman, MP, Prof. Khaleda Khanam, MP, Dr. Mostafa Jamal Mohiuddin, AL lawmakers from different constituencies of Dhaka and Narayanganj, leaders of the city unit of AL and those of BCL and Jubo League were present at the meeting.

Mamata at crossroads

FROM PAGE 12
been taken more out of impulse than considered pros and cons. Mamata's own temperamental and unpredictable functioning has been questioned by a section of Trinamool leaders and activists.

Adding to Mamata's worries are the rebels in the party, including veteran leader and former federal minister Ajit Kumar Panja. They are reportedly toying with the idea of quitting Trinamool and returning to the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

The questions now being asked in political as well as Trinamool circles is: did Mamata err in snapping ties with India's ruling coalition? Was it wrong on her part to firm up an alliance with the Congress barely two weeks before the assembly elections after having accused the party for so long as a "B" team of the Marxists?

Mamata, by all accounts, has done little to shed the image of being a rabble-rouser and street agitationist and rise as a responsible leader. Her frequent resignation and then withdrawing it as the railway minister in the Vajpayee cabinet has not helped enhance her credibility either.

Observers say Mamata's election campaign was negative more due to her failure to articulate any

alternative set of policies or programmes than her attack on the Left Front.

Trinamool's electoral tie-up with the Congress carried little conviction with not only the anti-left or the undecided voters but also within its own rank and file. After all, it was only four years ago that Mamata quit Congress and formed Trinamool primarily because of her disenchantment with its "hobnobbing" with the Marxists. She never explained how almost overnight the Congress had become acceptable to her.

Mamata quit the Vajpayee government in the wake of the news portal's expose but ironically, the issue had never figured in the election campaign in West Bengal. Secondly, the pre-pol assessment in the party that snapping ties with the BJP-led alliance would garner a sizeable chunk of Muslim votes to Trinamool did not prove right.

Where does Mamata go from here? She has ruled out returning to the BJP-led alliance, even though the alliance convener, George Fernandes said that NDA "doors are always open for her return". Today, she is just an ordinary member of Lok Sabha without any clout either in central or state. The stormy petrel of West Bengal politics is at the crossroads of her political career.

LDCs need more investment

FROM PAGE 1
besides its success in becoming self-sufficient in food, lowering population growth, improving human development indicators and enhancing women's status and power.

Prudent fiscal management, he said, has brought macroeconomic stability, kept budget deficit within safe limit and inflation low.

Reform of trade and investment policy has attracted more foreign investment while exports also grew substantially, the minister said, briefly stating Bangladesh's economic performance in the last decade.

Commerce Minister Abdul Jalil said developed countries and multi-lateral agencies must come up with concerted and practical efforts to make the third UN conference on LDCs effective, as two previous conferences proved futile.

Most of the development

agenda, promised in the first and second conferences in '80s and '90s, were not implemented, he pointed out, speaking at the breakfast meet hosted in honour of LDC ministers by WTO Director General Mike Moor at EU Parliament Building.

Open access to developed markets is very important for LDCs, Jalil said and called for removing all tariff and non-tariff barriers to help the poorer countries expand their exports.

He appreciated the steps taken by EU and Japan in offering LDCs market access and sought the same from the USA, Canada and other rich nations.

Besides, he felt, LDCs must get technical and other assistance from developed countries and international agencies to enhance their (LDC) capacity to make best use of open market access.