

11-pt suggestion to boost regional cooperation

Third meeting of BCIM Forum concludes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The third meeting of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar (BCIM) Regional Economic Forum has laid emphasis on bolstering economic cooperation among the countries.

The forum on its concluding day yesterday adopted an eleven-point statement to foster cooperation in the BCIM region.

The fourth meeting of the BCIM forum will be held in Yangon, Myanmar, in 2003.

The vast natural resources of the region should be utilised for collective benefits, the forum suggested.

It further emphasised improved transport connectivity for efficient movement of goods and people to promote tourism and better understanding among people.

The forum recommended that the cooperating institutions and organisations endeavour to generate broad-based support for the BCIM idea.

In continuation of the Track II initiative, the forum called upon business leaders in the region to establish a focal point to identify constraints and opportunities of trade and investments and formulate action programmes before the end of 2002.

Pilgrims groan

FROM PAGE 12

during the air travel from Dhaka. Two teams are to work round-the-clock at Bangladesh Hajj Camps in Makkah and Madina.

According to reports received at the religious affairs ministry, none of the doctors is at Jeddah Airport while most of the others are absent from Makkah and Madina camps.

Officials in Dhaka said two pilgrims suddenly fell sick a few days back but there was not a single doctor for his treatment. The doctors concerned could not be contacted even till yesterday.

The pilgrims and Hajj officials then had to call in doctors from nearby Pakistani and Indian camps

They should list specific trade and investment facilitation measures, which may then be presented to their respective governments for necessary action, the forum suggested.

It urged various chambers of commerce in the region to hold and participate in exhibitions, which could be a practical means of creating awareness about trade and investment opportunities.

It favoured periodic meetings to provide opportunities for dialogues, exploration of new opportunities and modalities to strengthen regional cooperation. The meetings will be held in rotation.

The forum advocated research studies to identify specific areas for joint ventures conducive to cooperation.

The Track II institutions will require an appropriate funding for the necessary studies and surveys as well as continuation of the current series of dialogues, the forum recognised.

The delegates appreciated the participation of high-level representatives of Bangladesh.

The visiting participants expressed their gratitude to the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) and all other host institutions and individuals in Dhaka for their general

ous hospitality and meticulousness in making the meeting a success.

As decided by the forum, Bangladesh's focal point will be the CPD for contact, communication and liaison; Myanmar's focal point will be its commerce ministry; and Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences and Institutions of Science and Technology of Yunnan government will be the focal point of China. However, India refrained from mentioning its focal point and will inform the forum about it later.

The Chinese delegation has expressed willingness to hold a car rally from Kunming of China to Kolkata of India to create a positive response to the BCIM forum.

Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director of the CPD read out the "Dhaka Statement", while Dr. Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the CPD, chaired the session.

Dr. Rehman in his presidential speech expressed his optimism that the BCIM forum would help the countries in the region have an economic growth through multilateral trade and investment.

He underscored mutual cooperation among the participating countries to push ahead with the forum to obtain optimum benefits.

Abduction case: 17 jailed in Sherpur

UNB, Sherpur

A court here yesterday sentenced 17 people to five years rigorous imprisonment in an abduction case.

The convicts are Suruj Ali, Shafiqul Islam, Momin, Boyej, A Karim, Aka, Khokan, Kadir, Joynal, Hial, Ashraf Ali, Rahim, Babul, Jamshed, A Salam, Hanif and Khorshed of Nakla upazila.

The court also fined them Tk 1,500 each, in default to suffer one year more R.I.

According to prosecution, the convicts ransacked the house of Ashraf Ali of Jalalpur village of the upazila at about 1:30 am on Jan 4, 1995 and kidnapped his son Abdul Aziz, 8, at gunpoint. They later sent a letter to him demanding a ransom of Tk 5 lakh.

After examining the records and witnesses, the court handed down the verdict.

As Morshed Khan

FROM PAGE 1

Khan was speaking at a seminar on SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) at the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) yesterday.

The foreign minister did not name Hasina but said "the leader of the opposition was causing considerable damage to the image of Bangladesh".

He said during her recent tours abroad and in her public comments, Hasina has been saying to the world with considerable enthusiasm, "Look, we are Taliban. Bangladesh is a Taliban country."

"No Bangladeshi citizen could expect of the leader of the opposition to carry out such a trade against Bangladesh".

"I do not think any members of her party are at all to blame for this. It is she alone. She is working as a one-man demolition squad against Bangladesh," the foreign minister said.

He added: "This they appeared to be willing to do."

Bondevik said the Sri Lankan government must in return do a "great deal of work" to achieve equal conditions for minority Tamils.

The rally was organised to hammer on the eight-point demands, including withdrawal of a ban on movement of rickshaws on a number of city roads and an end to police harassment.

The rally observed that authorities should take steps to ban movement of unlicensed rickshaws on the city roads. But they asked the authorities not to ban movement of rickshaws on any more city roads.

With all these complications, we have not been able to restore the roads to their previous conditions, but hopefully within the next two months we shall repair all the roads," said the engineer.

As per regulations, an organisation has to apply to the DCC with detailed work specification for permission to dig city roads. The DCC then assesses the work and charges the organisation Tk 875 per square meter of road digging. This money is spent on carpeting the mutilated roads.

The organisation has to properly compact the dug-up area and hand it over to the DCC. In many cases, the compaction is often left undone due to pressure from the public and the traffic department to complete the work quickly. In developed countries, steel sheets are used to cover up the dug-up roads so that traffic movement is not hindered.

should possess integrity, business and financial acumen, management skills and leadership qualities.

The Outstanding Woman in Business award will be given to someone in business or profession who has made an outstanding contribution to her company or profession and can be considered as an inspiring model for other women entrepreneurs.

The Enterprise of the Year award will be given to a company that has distinguished itself through entrepreneurial spirit and a record of innovation.

Last year Samson H Chowdhury, Chairman of Square Group, won the "Business Person of the Year" award. Salina Akther, Proprietor of Aakor, a handicraft and boutique shop, was awarded in the category "Outstanding Woman in Business".

In "Enterprise of the Year" category, two enterprises Concord Engineers and Construction Ltd and Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Ltd. shared the award.

The Daily Star and the DHL sought nominations from members of the public to identify the deserving candidates for the prestigious awards. The Daily Star team toiled to prepare background paper on the nominees. A panel of judges comprising top economists, businessmen, bankers, lawyers, chartered accountants and journalists finally assessed the contribution of the candidates and chose one winner from each category.

The Business Person of the Year award will be presented to the most deserving individual for outstanding corporate success. The candidate

would be relocated and thoroughfares made free of encroachment, he had said. At least four major thoroughfares would be made horn-free zones, Islam also said.

Choking dust

FROM PAGE 1

A fraction of the work could be done before the contractors were required to quickly fill up the trench to make it "passable" for the rush-hour traffic," Razzak said, adding that such night-time work has lingered the scheme for nearly two years.

Moreover, the engineers often have to re-excavate the filled-up roads to test the newly installed lines. It is also time consuming to connect the old water lines with the new ones.

With all these complications, we have not been able to restore the roads to their previous conditions, but hopefully within the next two months we shall repair all the roads," said the engineer.

As per regulations, an organisation has to apply to the DCC with detailed work specification for permission to dig city roads. The DCC then assesses the work and charges the organisation Tk 875 per square meter of road digging. This money is spent on carpeting the mutilated roads.

The organisation has to properly compact the dug-up area and hand it over to the DCC. In many cases, the compaction is often left undone due to pressure from the public and the traffic department to complete the work quickly. In developed countries, steel sheets are used to cover up the dug-up roads so that traffic movement is not hindered.

He announced a series of programmes in which vehicles gushing out black smoke would be prosecuted or impounded. Even police vehicles would not be spared, Abu Musa had said.

All illegal and unplanned bus sheds, and bus and truck terminals

would be relocated and thoroughfares made free of encroachment, he had said. At least four major thoroughfares would be made horn-free zones, Islam also said.

Rickshaws

FROM PAGE 12

some city points yesterday, including Dainik Bangla and Science Laboratory crossings.

Sources said the rickshaw-pullers also damaged a number of motor vehicles after attending a rally at the Osmani Udyan in the afternoon.

Police, however, could not confirm any incident of damage of motor vehicles last night.

The rally was organised to hammer on the eight-point demands, including withdrawal of a ban on movement of rickshaws on a number of city roads and an end to police harassment.

The rally observed that authorities should take steps to ban movement of unlicensed rickshaws on the city roads. But they asked the authorities not to ban movement of rickshaws on any more city roads.

With all these complications, we have not been able to restore the roads to their previous conditions, but hopefully within the next two months we shall repair all the roads," said the engineer.

As per regulations, an organisation has to apply to the DCC with detailed work specification for permission to dig city roads. The DCC then assesses the work and charges the organisation Tk 875 per square meter of road digging. This money is spent on carpeting the mutilated roads.

The organisation has to properly compact the dug-up area and hand it over to the DCC. In many cases, the compaction is often left undone due to pressure from the public and the traffic department to complete the work quickly. In developed countries, steel sheets are used to cover up the dug-up roads so that traffic movement is not hindered.

He announced a series of programmes in which vehicles gushing out black smoke would be prosecuted or impounded. Even police vehicles would not be spared, Abu Musa had said.

All illegal and unplanned bus

sheds, and bus and truck terminals



PHOTO: STAR
Artistes of Tarunya Natyagoshthi perform at the Pathanatty Utsab 2002, the street drama festival organised on the occasion of the upcoming golden jubilee of the 1952 Language Movement.

HIV-AIDS spreads along Asia's drug routes

REUTERS, Sydney

Increasing drug use in Asia is accelerating the spread of HIV-AIDS along drug trafficking routes from the so-called Golden Triangle to nations like Indonesia and governments are doing too little to combat it, a report says.

The report on 22 Asian countries, as well as Hong Kong and Macau, said Asian governments were working against the sexual transmission of HIV but they were not doing enough to prevent the virus spreading among injecting drug users.

"Without such action, Asia will continue to be home to what threatens to be amongst the worst regional AIDS epidemics on Earth," said the report by The Centre For Harm Reduction, one of Asia's foremost health and medical research bodies.

Seven million people in Asia live with AIDS or HIV (human immunodeficiency virus), which causes the disease.

The report said Asia had few HIV-AIDS prevention programmes for drug users, such as needle exchanges, and that many drug users shared needles, cleaned simply by cold water, not the recommended boiling water or bleach.

"Drug use has become one of the major accelerants of the HIV epidemic in the Asian region," said the report available at the centre's Web

site (<http://www.chr.asn.au>). The centre first issued an Asian HIV-AIDS report in 1997.

"Populations of drug users develop rapidly along trafficking routes, creating new drug markets and HIV threat in host countries," it said.

Indonesia at risk

The report said Indonesia was one of the most at risk with HIV infection due to drug injections rising to 19 per cent of the total number of people infected from less than one per cent before 2000.

It said by September 2001, there were 2,313 cases of HIV in Indonesia, of which 449 were injecting drug users, adding there were some two million drug users, half of which injected.

The report found injecting drug users made up 70 per cent of HIV infections in China in 2001 compared with 66 per cent in 1997.

It said specific HIV subtypes now appearing in previously HIV-free areas of China could be linked to specific drug trafficking routes to the "Golden Triangle", the so-called heroin producing region of Myanmar, Laos and Thailand.

China puts its number of confirmed HIV-AIDS cases at 28,133, but health officials say the real figures could be above 600,000. The United Nations says China could have 10 million HIV-AIDS sufferers by 2010 unless it acts

decisively.

The Australian report found 75 per cent of those infected with HIV in Iran were injecting drug users, 65 per cent in Vietnam and 54 per cent in Thailand.

It said the Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Macau, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh also faced potential HIV epidemics among injecting drug users.

The report noted an increasing number of Asian women injecting drugs, particularly in the sex industry.

"In some parts of Asia, an increasing crossover is being observed between injecting drug use and commercial sex work, with all the implications this has for further rapid spread of HIV infection from injecting drug users," it said.

The report was critical of Asian governments increased incarceration of drug users, which it said increases the risk of transmitting HIV.

"In many countries in the region, incarceration of drug users ... not only continues, it is being increased," it said.

"This is despite the fact that there is mounting evidence from the Asian region ... that incarceration not only does not help drug dependent people cease drug use but hugely increase risk for HIV transmission among and from these populations."

UNB, Pabna

Khaleda: Campuses

FROM PAGE 1

The delegation included VCs of Dhaka University Prof Arunawar Chowdhury, Rajshahi University Prof Faisal Islam Faruqui, BAU Prof Mustafizur Rahman, Buet Prof Nur Uddin Ahmed, Chittagong University AJS Nur Uddin Chowdhury, JU Prof Jasim Uddin Ahmed, Islamic University Prof Mustafizur Rahman, Khulna University MA Kader Bhuiyan, BB Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Krishi University A Halim Khan, National University Abdul Momin Chowdhury, Acting VC of BOU Dr RI Sharif and Acting VC of Shahjalal University Prof AAZiz.

Assuring all out cooperation of her government in restoring discipline in the country's education sector, Khaleda sought assistance from the vice-chancellors for implementing the programmes of her government.

She said despite resource constraints, her government was pledge-bound to ensure proper education for building a better future of the country.

The prime minister told the heads of the country's universities that she does not want to read any news of students being involved in extortion, kidnapping or any other illegal activities. She asserted that the present government would not tolerate any such acts.

She mentioned government programmes for promoting education, including stipend for students at primary level and free education for girls up to higher secondary level.

The vice-chancellors, during the meeting, pointed a grim picture of

the situation prevailing in the universities. They informed the Prime Minister of "irregularities, anarchy and indiscipline" embedded in the institutions during the five years of Awami League rule.

They urged the Prime Minister to form of a high