# METROPOLITAN/NEWS

## 13th summit gives big boost to Saarc

#### Diplomats, think tanks tell roundtable

A panel of diplomats and think tanks vesterday said that despite weakness, skepticism and slow progress, seven South Asian leaders' firm commitment  $made\,through\,the\,13th\,Saarc\,Summit\,to$ poverty alleviation and economic cooperation proved that the forum is moving in the right direction.

Diplomats from Saarc countries and eminent members of the civil society made the observations at a roundtable on the outcome of the 13th Saarc summit in Dhaka. Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) organised the postsummit talk at its office.

BEI President Farooq Sobhan presided over the roundtable.

Foreign Affairs Advisor Reaz Rahman presented the keynote paper on the topic while Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and immediatepast Saarc secretary general QAMA Rahim took part in the discussion.

Besides, Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri, Nepalese Ambassador Bhagirat Basnet and Sri Lankan High Commissioner Gamini Sarath Munasinghe made their observations about the summit, seen as a turning point in the regional forum that expanded its domain co-opting Afghanistan as a new member and making China and Japan observers in the grouping.

Reaz Rahman in his paper said despite various criticisms against the outcome of the 13th summit, it has been proved that Saarc is indispensable and it has no substitute for effective regional cooperation in ensuring economic progress by combating poverty and terrorism

Admitting the fact that there is a lack of trust among the member states as well as the presence of three bombs-communal bomb--in the region, he said the 13th summit made some important achievements in bringing dynamism to

He said the Saarc leaders during the retreat felt the need for more dialogue on political issues and combating terrorism, which is important for achieving desired economic goal. The

Condition of

Shahadat Chy

The condition of Shahadat Chowdhury

editor of the Saptahik 2000, who was

admitted to the Cardiac Centre of

Birdem Hospital with respiratory

problems on Wednesday, has

drawn yesterday noon and he can now

breathe normally, said a family source.

ally and he will soon be released from

the hospital, said his brother Morshed

Chowdhury quoting the doctors.

CT scan," he added.

His life-support system was with-

His condition is improving gradu-

"Nothing wrong was found during a

When he was having a meal on

Tuesday night, food grains might have

entered his respiratory system, causing

the respiratory problems, Morshed said

improves

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Affairs Advisor Reaz Rahman speaks at a roundtable on 'Outcome of the 13th Saarc Summit' at the BEI conference room in the city yesterday. On his right is Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and on his left are BEI President Faroog Sobhan and BEI project coordinator M Shafiullah.

leaders also stressed the need for mechanism to mobilise adequate funds as no project at regional level was implemented due to lack of fund

Reaz said the Saarc leaders also made strong commitment to implement SAFTA from January 1 next year and gave the necessary guidelines to Committee of Experts meeting in Kathmandu on November 29 to resolve the differences relating to the umbrella He said three regional trade-

facilitation agreements relating to avoidance of double taxation, cooperation in customs administration and establishment of arbitration centre were struck, which are important for execution of the SAFTA. The Advisor also mentioned that the

ratification of the Additional Protocol designed to stop financing terrorism by member-states is a significant development toward combating the menace. On top of all was the decision of

granting membership to Afghanistan and Observer status to China and Japan--the most significant success of the

Dr Debapriya said implementation

of SAFTA would be the trigger to ultimate vision of establishing economic union in South Asia. He hoped that unresolved issues about sensitive list, rules of origin and revenue compensation would be resolved at the next Kathmandu meeting of Saarc expert committee in the context of political directions given by the leaders at the

Ambassador OAMA Rahim said the ummit leaders recognised the need for resources to implement projects at regional level and agreed to mobilise funds from outside Saarc. He, however, stressed that outside donor funds must be meant for implementation of Saarc projects, not new donors' projects.

Rahim suggested strengthening the Saarc Secretariat to implement the forum's agenda. A seven-member expert committee would be formed in next three months to make recommendation in this respect.

Mahfuz Anam said after twice postponement, the holding of the 13th summit and presence of seven South Asian leaders are itself a success. Mentioning his conversations during interviews with the Prime Ministers of

India and Pakistan, he was convinced that both the major players of Saarc are committed to the advancement of the forum so it could deliver

He said the Indian and the Pakistani prime ministers in their statements at the inaugural session made a number of specific suggestions for cooperation in trade, economy and social sectors which are all encouraging. He said the momentum has been

regenerated and it is the responsibility

of Bangladesh holding the chair to make Saarc move forward. It is important how much time and energy she (Khaleda Zia) as new chairperson would be able to give to steer the Saarc "If Bangladesh tries sincerely, I don't

see any reason why we won't move," Mahfuz Anam said, adding that despite ups and downs, relevance of Saarc is

He was critical of the host government for not holding briefing for Bangladesh media at the media centre when even the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan briefed their respective media more than once during the

Corporation's (BRTC) Divisional Depot

and Training Centre at Alampur area in

Addressing the function as chief

guest, he said the BRTC had been a losing

concern for long, but it has now turned

into a viable organisation. He said the

total transport sector had a big change

with the construction of new roads and

highways throughout the country during

potentiality by competing with the

and print media could play a great role in

reducing the number of road accidents

The BRTC will now have to prove its

The minister said both the electronic

Farid Uddin Chowdhury MP, BRTC

Khandaker, Sylhet Divisional

Commissioner Abdul Hakim Mondal,

DIG of police Syed Shah Zamal Raj and

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Sylhet

unit Chairman Ariful Haque Chowhdury

The Tk 5 crore project is being set up

the last decade.

private sector, he added.

through motivation.

Chairman Taimur Alam

also spoke on the occasion.

arrested in

### Expulsion of unfortunate. says Hamid

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Deputy Leader of the Opposition and former speaker Abdul Hamid Advocate yesterday said the expulsion of Abu Hena MP from the ruling BNP is 'un-

In an instant reaction, he said, "Abu Hena lost membership from his party for speaking against fundamentalists and extremism. It is very unfortunate.'

It reflects the real stance of the gov ernment, which has been backing and nourishing the Islamic militancy, the veteran parliamentarian from

#### Rajshahi BNP welcomes expulsion

BDNEWS, Rajshahi

Leaders of Rajshahi BNP yesterday welcomed the expulsion of Abu Hena MP from the party.

In an instant reaction, Rajshahi city Mayor and ruling party lawmaker Mizanur Rahman Minu told Bdnews: "It was a right decision to expel him after he made statements to the media violating party discipline."

Nadim Mustafa, a BNP lawmaker from Rajshahi-4 (Puthia-Durgapur), welcomed the decision and said those engaged in anti-party activities should be expelled.

 $Ruling \, party \, leaders \, and \, activists \, in \,$ Abu Hena's constituency in Baghmara-Mohanpur brought out processions to celebrate his expulsion.

Local BNP leaders also reportedly distributed sweetmeats among the people on hearing the news

#### Obituary

Salema Zoha, wife of Shamsuzzoha, passed away due to cancer and heart aliments at Millenium Heart Hospital in the city vesterday.

A philanthropist and social worker. Salema Zoha was chairperson of Zoha Group of Companies

She left behind her husband, three sons and one daughter.

Her qulkhwani will be held or Sunday after Asr prayers at her resi dence at 82/A Indira Road in the city. Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the

#### Nazimuddin Ahmed



Nazimuddin tant general Labelle Garments passed away due to a cardiac

arrest at the Apollo Hospitals in Dhaka on Wednesday at the age of 62, says a press release.

Ahmed, who also served as production manager of Kohinoor Chemicals from 1968 to 2003, was a son of late Advocate Azizuddin Ahmed, a minister in the then East Pakistan cabinet, and brother of late Nooruddin-al-Masood, a secretary.

He left behind his wife Latifa Helen and only son Shadman Ahmed, an 'A' Level candidate, and a host of relatives to mourn his death.

Ahmed, who was also an Awami League activist of Uttara Sector-4 and Purana Paltan, was laid to rest at Uttara graveyard.

His Qulkhwani will be held at Uttara Sector-4 Jame Mosque after Asr prayers on Saturday.



Parul Alam,

Cardiovascular Institute in Dhaka yesterday at the age of 67, says a press release. Wife of late Dr Shamsul Alam,

daughter and a host of relatives. She was also an advisor to

Mathbaria thana Awami League.

#### Shamsher Mahmood Abi



Mahmood Abi s o n Mahmudul Alam, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on November 22 at the age of 27, says

a press release.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at

held at his residence in Gulshan at 6:00pm

## Honesty, neutrality a must for PSC officials: PM

#### Foundation stone of PSC Bhaban laid

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said that honesty, efficiency, intelligence and neutrality are imperative for all officials and employees of the Public Service Commission (PSC) to fairly perform the important respon-

"The role of the PSC is very important in our state functioning. Its main iob is to verify and conduct examinations to screen and nominate appropriate persons for appointment to various posts of the republic," she said at the foundation laying ceremony of the PSC Bhaban.

She asked the officials and employees to work with good conscience, highest wisdom and responsibility at all stages of recruiting officers to make sure that the republic can get services from highly meritorious and better qualified persons.

The prime minister said there were incidents of unwanted interference in the PSC activities in the past. On various occasions, influential people had gained petty interests at the cost of the institution, who cared little about its image, she added.

"We have stopped that trend and ensured that no-one can illegally use his or her influence in the PSC activities being encouraged at the previous had instances," she said.

PSC has now regained its dignity as an independent constitutional institution in its all activities, including recruitment and promotion, said the prime minister.

The number of members of this institution has also been increased and responsibilities have been given to professionals who have reputation in their respective professions, she

"Now the nation expects the maximum service from the PSC guided by their good thoughts."

To build a developed Bangladesh, qualified, talented, honest and skilled persons would have to be gathered everywhere, Khaleda said.

"There will be dynamism in all activities if brilliant people can be assembled at different tiers of state functioning, and then we will be able

to steer the country towards that desired goal of prosperity," she said.

The Public Service Commission does not have its own Bhaban and it had to shift its office to many rented houses to carry out its important

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia formally laid the foundation stone of 11storied PSC Bhaban to be constructed on nearly 2.90 acres at Agargaon in the

The project, involving Tk 36 crore, will be funded by the government. In the first phase, basement with two floors will be constructed at a cost Tk 15.10 crore while the remaining nine floors would be constructed in the second phase, involving Tk 20.90

The project is expected to be completed within three years.

Telecommunications Minister Aminul Huq and State Minister for Public Works and Housing Alamgir Kabir also addressed the function. presided over by PSC chairman Prof Dr ZN Tahmida Begum.



A delegation of Orbis International calls on President lajuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban yesterday.

## Five killed in road accidents

Three people were killed and two others severely injured when a truck bound for Swarankhola upazila of Bagerhat district dashed a roadside tree at Noapara under Fakirhat upazila at about 5.00 am yesterday.

The dead were identified as truck helper Jewel Talukder, 27, vegetable trader Hafez Nurul Islam Howlader, 50, and Shahidul Howlader, 32. The bodies were lying at the morgue

of Bagerhat Sadar Hospital after The injured driver Faruque Hossain,

48, and vegetable trader Delwar Hossain, 34, were admitted to Khulna Medical College and Hospital. Eyewitnesses said the truck laden

with vegetables hit the tree when its one The truck was seized

A case was filed with Fakirhat Police

#### Pro-Huda JAF Eid reunion postponed

The Eid reunion of pro-Huda Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JAF), scheduled scheduled to be held today on the Supreme Court precinct, has been postponed due to unavoidable circum-

December 1 at the Winter Garden of Meanwhile, the JAF faction led by

The reunion will be held on

senior advocate TH Khan, has called an extended meeting of its working committee on the Supreme Court premises

Our Dinajpur Correspondent adds: At least two people were killed and four others injured in a road accident on Wednesday night. The dead are Dh

Shahabul Miah, both from Kochubari village under Thakurgaon Sadar upazila. The injured are Samad, 50, and

Belal, 55, of Panchagarh, Prem Hari, 40, of Thakurgaon and Sattar, 45, of Birganj. They are under going treatment at

Dinajpur Medical College and Hospital. Birganj police quoting locals said the Panchagarh-bound paddy loaded truck fell into a ditch when the driver

#### Man resembling Bangla Bhai arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Police arrested a man resembling the Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) operations commander Siddiqul Islam alias Bangla Bhai.

Police at the Sudharam Police Station said they arrested the man yesterday morning at a hotel adjacent to the district Jame mosque. As the news of the arrest spread,

locals rushed to the police station to have a glance of the arrestee who identified himself as Belal Hossain, 42, of Madaripur. Belal claimed he is the driver of

Abdur Rahman, vice president of Exim The police were interrogating the

arrestee till late in the evening.

#### Patuakhali Polytech rooms ransacked

(JCD), student wing of ruling BNP, ransacked six rooms of the Patuakhali Polytechnic Institute demanding cancellation of the transfer order of a Witnesses and sources said a

section of students led by JCD cadres hovcotted classes and brought out a procession on the campus demanding cancellation of the transfer order of Reazul Bahar, an instructor of civil faculty, to Khulna Polytechnic

Police brought the situation under

control. Additional forces were deployed on the campus to avoid further untoward incident. Dr Khan Rezaul Karim, principal of the

institute, said the directorate of higher education at Dhaka has ordered the

ransacking and unruly activities of a Rezaul Bahar was not available for

#### Orbis team calls on President

President Iajuddin Ahmed has stressed the need for a social movement to create mass awareness about

views with a six-member delegation of visiting Orbis International (a flying eye hospital) at Bangabhaban yester-Welcoming the delegation,

The President was exchanging

Iajuddin said Orbis International is playing a pioneering role in serving and restoring sights of the visually impaired people across the globe. Appreciating their humanitarian

International would expand their activities in Bangladesh. The delegation members apprised the President of the functions of Orbis International in Bangladesh and sought his cooperation. They emphasised increasing donations of

services, he hoped that Orbis

cornea for the visually impaired peo-The President assured that all possible cooperation would be provided to Orbis International in their

onerous task. The delegation included Orbis International country director Dr Mohammad Khairul Islam, Dr Clifford L Salinger (America) and Dr Drew

#### Chehlum

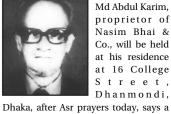


wife of Alhaj Khandaker Maqbul Haq, will be held Baitul Haq Jame Masjid at Sheikhhati, Sherpur, after Juma prayers today, says a press release.

Her eldest son Dr KH Haq, managing director of Zebel-e-Noor General Hospital, has requested relatives and

well-wishers to attend the chehlum.

#### Alhaj Md Abdul Karim Chehlum of Alhai



press release.

Street, Dhanmondi, Author of 'Sonali Ansher Sonali Atit Ebong Ami', Md Abdul Karim passed

Relatives, friends and well-wishers

have been requested to attend the

#### protested **RU CORRESPONDENT** The Rajshahi Union of Journalists (RUJ)

Attack on media

BNP law makers in parliament on Tuesday.They also demanded stern action against the policemen involved in the attack on Channel-i journalist Mahbub Matin.

vesterday expressed deep concern over a

blistering attack on the media and provoc-

ative comments by some ministers and

The RUJ members took out a procession, which paraded through different streets of the city, and held a rally at Shaheb Bazer to protest the repression

and killing of journalists. Speaking at the rally, the RUJ leaders said the attacks on newsman and the media are a threat to the freedom of press.

They said the provocative comments

made by the government high-ups also

encourage the party leaders and workers

at the field level to resort to repression of

They also said the journalist community will never accept any new act aimed to control the media.

Presided over by RUJ President Mustafizur Rahman Khan, the rally was addressed by Editor of the Sonali Sangbad Liakot Ali, Metropolitan Press Club General Secretary Anisuzzman, Rajshahi Photo Journalists' Association President Asaduzzman, General Secretary Jabid Apu and RUJ General Secretary Jamilur Rahman Dulal.

## Expats urged to set up hospital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday called upon the rich people, especially the expatriates, to come forward in establishing healthcare

ensure everything in all sectors, he said, adding that the affluent sections of the society should also extend their hands to different social initiatives.

 $institutions\,under\,private\,initiatives.$ 

He said the number of cardiac patients in the country is on increase, but the treatment facilities are too meagre to

Heart Foundation Hospital in Sylhet in

face the situation.

Saifur said the government had provided lands and other facilities for hospital, he added.

Heart Foundation, Brigadier (Retired) already become a demand of the time.

proposed cardiac hospital in Sylhet, he Heart Foundation Sylhet unit, said the life members of the foundation had extended their financial assistance for

Dr Aminur Rahman Lashkar, general secretary of the foundation, said work has already started for establishing a 200-

BRTCTRAINING CENTRE minister laid the foundation of

Bangladesh Road Transport

Now modern equipment would be WEATHER TO DAY

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the

Dry weather likely

major cities and towns yesterday were:

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period, Met Office said in a forecast. Highest temperature 30.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 14.1 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm and rises at 6:21am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

City/Town	Temperature		Humidityin	
	in Celsius		percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.8	18.8	84	81
Chittagong	30.3	17.8	71	71
Rajshahi	27.4	14.8	94	86
Khulna	29.4	18.5	95	73
Barisal	29.0	16.5	91	91
Sylhet	28.0	17.3	76	76
Cox's Bazar	30.0	16.7	71	74

## SYLHET HEART FOUNDATION HOSPITAL

Saifur was speaking at the inaugural function of the outdoor department of

The government alone cannot

four hospitals of the Heart Foundation throughout the country. For Sylhet also, one acre of land had

been given for establishing the hospital.

brought for making it a full-fledged

Secretary General of the National Prof M A Malik said expansion of treatment facilities for heart patients has

There should be an all out effort to

complete the establishment of the Prof MA Raquib, president of the

the construction of the building and started the outdoor treatment for the

bed hospital for heart patients. Later in the afternoon, the finance

> on a 1.5 acre of land. The minister also formally inaugurated BRTC's service on Sylhet-Brahmanbaria route. 'Bomber' Taleb

Khulna STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested 'bomber' Abu Taleb on Wednesday night from Jaipur at Rupsha upazila of the district and recovered a live hand bomb and many bomb making materials from his possession.

The arrestee confessed to Rab

during interrogation that he had

planted two bombs in a passenger bus

at Rupsha bus stand on October 26. But

Rab had recovered the bombs before

those exploded. According to a Rab press release, Taleb is a potential bomber, who learnt it from a cadre of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP) in 1998. Rab quoted the arrestee as saying that bombs made by him were used for carrying out destructive missions.

# Parul Alam

chairman of Gulishakhali Union Parishad in Mathbaria, Pirojpur, passed away at the National

Parul left behind her three sons, one

Gulshan Mosque in Gulshan-1 after Juma pravers today.

A doa mahfil for the deceased will be

#### OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal The ICD cadres ransacked six rooms of the Institute at about 10-30am. Cadres of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal

transfer and local authorities have nothing He expressed his indignation at the

section of students.