

Rise above geographical boundaries for regional development

Speakers urge South Asian countries

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The South Asian countries need to rise above geographical boundaries and cooperate with each other for lifting the under-developed neighbours to ensure a balanced regional development, said the speakers at a discussion yesterday.

Citing regional cooperation that helped many European countries reach peak of development, they noted that small South Asian countries cannot develop much without the help of their big neighbours.

The discussion was organised by Sammilito Samajik Andolon at the

desired goal. Had the two countries built infrastructures jointly to flush out water, then flooding could be checked to a great extent," he added.

Dr Atiur said adequate preparation for disaster management could be taken if the two countries can work out a system of exchanging weather forecast and prior information about flood by developing geographic information system.

"It will help reduce damage in life and property during flooding every year and the governments won't need to ask for foreign aid for rehabilitation after flood," he said.

Dr Atiur laid strong emphasis on

China would have been included in the international rivers water distribution talks.

But the agreements were done bilaterally and all countries were not included, he noted.

Dr Atiur lamented that the South Asian countries could not use \$300 million of South Asian Development Fund as well as the money of Food Fund during the floods.

The IMF and World Bank prescriptions are not appropriate for countries like Bangladesh and their prescribed globalisation have instilled a strong tendency of consumerism among people without

contributing much to their "real development," he observed.

Prof Syed Anwar Hossain, banker Ibrahim Khaled and journalist Syed Abul Moksud took part in the discussion.

The speakers noted that while breach was created in regional cooperation during geographical division in South Asia, growing economic integration in Europe despite geographical division is helping development of the whole region there.

"China is helping Singapore, Thailand ... but we cannot even take advantage of technology hub in

Kolkata," they said.

While Asean countries have 30 percent intra-trade, South Asian countries do only five percent trade among them, they added.

The speakers said Saarc countries, especially India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, need to come forward to create export-friendly environment, increase internal and foreign investment and develop political relations.

The discussion was presided over by Sammilito Samajik Andolon President Ajoy Roy.

CA greets Saudi king, DPM

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed greeted the king and the deputy prime minister of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of the national day of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia today.

In a message to King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, Fakhruddin said, "I sincerely believe that the bonds of friendship and fraternity that so happily exist between our two countries would continue to grow in their manifold dimensions to the mutual benefits of our two peoples in the days ahead".

In another message to Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, the chief adviser said, "It is my firm conviction that the existing bonds of friendly relations between our two fraternal countries will be consolidated and further strengthened in the years to come".



Economist Dr Atiur Rahman speaks at a discussion at the Liberation War Museum in the city yesterday. On his right is Ajoy Roy.

Liberation War Museum in the city.

Noted economist Dr Atiur Rahman presented a keynote paper on 'Bangladesh Development Perspective: Regional Cooperation-Flood Control and Water Management' at the discussion.

He said local and regional development is not possible with the help of distant international bodies like International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank while keeping the neighbours away from each other.

"Bangladesh and India had spent hundreds of thousands of dollar separately in last 40/50 years in building infrastructures to control the floods, but could not achieve the

cooperation between the South and South Asian countries where the major rivers originate and pass through for flood control.

"While only eight percent catchment area of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna is in Bangladesh, it is 62 percent in India, 18 percent in China, eight percent in Nepal and four percent in Bhutan. This means 12 times water of the capacity of Bangladesh rivers flows over the country," he added.

"Agreements on water distribution of these rivers are limited only to India, Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh," he said, adding that Bangladesh could be benefited if

JP discusses reforms in party constitution today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A 16-member reform committee of the Jatiya Party (JP) will meet at its Banani office in the city today to discuss reforms in the party constitution.

This was stated by acting chairman of the party Barrister Anisul Islam Mahmud yesterday while announcing the formation of the

committee with party Secretary General Ruhul Amin Hawlader as its member-secretary.

Other members of the committee are Dr TIM Fazle Rabbi Chowdhury, GM Qader, Zia Uddin Bablu, MA Sattar, Mojibur Rahman, Nasim Osman, MA Hannan, Sayed Abu Hossein Babla, Golam Habib Dulal, Prof Delwar Hossain Khan, Brig Gen (retd) Kazi Mahmud Hasan, Abu Sufiyan, Mostafa Jamal Haider and Fakir Ashraf.

The committee will prepare reform proposals which will be placed before the party presidium.

After getting the approval of the presidium, the reform proposals will then be placed before the party council for its consideration.

Earlier on June 30, HM Ershad quitted the post of JP chairman and appointed presidium member Anisul to deputise for him until the council elects a new chief of the party.

Ershad also appointed Anisul as the convener of the reform committee.