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Near East & South Asia

BANGLADESH

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CONTENTS

19 March 1992

POLITICAL

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

EC Delegation Leader Meets With Zia [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 29 Jan]	1
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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Papers Report Water Talks, Problems With India	1
Talks in Dhaka [THE NEW NATION 3 Feb]	1
No Progress Seen [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 4 Feb]	2
Need for Solution [THE NEW NATION 4 Feb]	3
Economy in Danger [THE NEW NATION 5 Feb]	3
Analyst Views New Equations in Regional Relationships [SANGBAD 27 Jan]	4
Foreign Minister on Relations With Burma [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 4 Feb]	6
Bhutanese Foreign Minister Meets Dhaka Press [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 28 Jan]	6

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Government Seen Insensitive to Nation's Woes [BANGLAR BANI 17 Jan]	7
Awami League Executive Meets, Adopts Resolutions [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 3 Feb] ..	9
Upazila Parishad Repeal Bill Passed [THE NEW NATION 27 Jan]	10
Agency Results of Union Parishad Polls [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 7 Feb]	10

ECONOMIC

Minister Answers Questions on Foreign Trade [THE NEW NATION 27 Jan]	11
Asian Development Bank Reports Loans for 1992-95	11
Protocol for 1992 Signed [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 29 Jan]	11
Credits for 1993-95 [THE NEW NATION 9 Feb]	11
Finance Minister Tells Extent of Foreign Loans [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 24 Jan]	12
Bangladesh Bank Issues 1990-91 Annual Report [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 3 Feb]	13

SOCIAL

More Rohingya Muslims Arrive Fleeing Burma [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 12 Feb]	14
Biharis Said Eager To Return to Pakistan [THE NEW NATION 29 Jan]	14
Ershad Sentenced for Illegal Gains [THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER 4 Feb]	15

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

EC Delegation Leader Meets With Zia

92AS0678A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 29 Jan 92 p 1

[Text] The head of delegation of the Commission of the European Communities Ambassador Jacques Bailly on Tuesday assured that the European Community (EC) would provide increased assistance to Bangladesh in the fields of food, agriculture, science and technology, reports BSS.

The Ambassador said this when he called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her office on Tuesday.

He pointed out that Bangladesh was receiving 50 percent of the total aid being provided by the EC to the Asian region for its development in the food, agriculture, education, health and family planning sectors.

The Prime Minister thanked EC for extending support and assistance to Bangladesh in its development efforts. She assured the Ambassador that the aid provided by the EC was being properly utilised for the improvement of the downtrodden population of the country.

Begum Zia hoped that the EC would increase the quantum of its aid to Bangladesh as democracy and human rights had been ensured in the country.

The Prime Minister listed some of the priority programmes of the government including attainment of self-reliance in food and improvement in the education, health and family planning and setting up of small and cottage industries for the industrialisation of the country.

Begum Zia said a national forum was being created for motivating the people particularly the women community for increasing the rate of adoption of family planning methods. "We are trying to motivate our women community through education and training as we feel that if they were engaged in different work it would have positive impact in the family planning sector," she said.

The Prime Minister requested Mr. Bailly to increase the EC scholarships and fellowships to Bangladeshi students for their higher training in the fields of science and technology.

Begum Zia referred to on-going canal digging programme in the country and said the programmes had been taken up for increasing the food production by providing irrigation facilities to the farmers.

Mr. Bailly also assured the Prime Minister of EC cooperation in the implementation of rural electrification programme in the country. He also hoped that Bangladesh Government would be more successful involving the target group in its family planning programme.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Papers Report Water Talks, Problems With India

Talks in Dhaka

92AS0687A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
3 Feb 92 pp 1, 8

[Article by Jehangir Hussain: "Ganges Eludes Solution"]

[Text] A one-day official level Bangladesh-India talks on sharing common river waters ended in Dhaka yesterday with no hint of finding a solution to the ticklish Ganges sharing, although yet another dry season has set in. They would resume the talks in New Delhi next month.

At the talks the two sides, however, agreed on the collection and exchange of data on the dry season flows of two new rivers the Brahmaputra and the Meghna.

At the end of the day-long talks, the two delegation leaders, Bangladesh Irrigation Secretary M. Asafuddaulah and Indian Water Resources Secretary M.A. Chitale jointly briefed the newsmen, at a city hotel, the venue of the meeting.

Before the start of the meeting the Indian delegation accompanied by their Bangladesh counterparts called on the Agriculture and Irrigation Minister Majedul Huq.

M. Asafuddaulah told newsmen, the two sides at the talks discussed a wide range of issues on common rivers in a "cordial atmosphere" making clear each other's positions.

The Bangladesh delegation leader said, "We did communicate our problems and we are happy to report that they listened to us."

He said, "the Indian delegation sounded quite keen to eliminate the distress that has been caused."

The question of distress relates to the difficulties and problems created in lower riparian Bangladesh by the diversion of Ganges waters from the upstream by India in the absence of any sharing agreement.

Dr. Chitale, the Indian delegation leader, in his briefing concentrating on collection and exchange of data on the flows of the rivers Meghna and Brahmaputra.

He said that there could be discrepancies on the available data on the dry season flows of the Meghna and Brahmaputra but that there was no confusion or discrepancies on the data of the dry season flows of the Ganges and the Teesta.

He said that the two sides agreed to collect separately the data of the flows in the Meghna and Brahmaputra every day and exchange them every ten days, cross check the data, and every year prepare an annual report.

The two sides, he said, also agreed to set up an additional flow monitoring station on the Teesta close to the border. Bangladesh, he said, would have easy access to the station so that there was no misunderstanding.

But there was no progress in making water available for Bangladesh's Teesta irrigation barrage. The Indian delegation leader said, "We would be pursuing the agreed things at the next meeting in Delhi." He told a questioner that the meeting would be held in Delhi next month. "We made mechanism to remove misunderstanding and to remove the barriers that stand on the way of solution," Dr Chitale said. He said replying to a question he was satisfied with the progress at the talks.

Asked why the Indian delegation delayed the resumption of the scheduled talks (which took place yesterday), for which yet another dry season began on January 1 without a sharing agreement, Dr Chitale said, "we were in touch." To another question whether India repeatedly delayed because it (India) did not experience the problem of the withdrawal of waters from the upstream as Bangladesh faced, Dr Chitale said, "Among our 54 common rivers four, the Ganges, the Meghna, the Teesta and the Brahmaputra, we identified for sharing." Dr Chitale said, "The approach is to take a common approach for sharing." The Indian delegation leader said that studying the various alternatives could take time say 15 to 20 years. "There is the question of accommodating each other's requirements," he added.

The Indian delegation leader, however, did not answer to the question, "Don't you feel it would be fair to both lower riparian Bangladesh and the upper riparian India, which is systematically withdrawing the waters from the upstream, to first share the available waters and then continue with the highly time-consuming studies?"

But to a separate question, "Whether a Ganges sharing solution would be found before the current dry season ran out?" he replied, "a solution may not emerge in one month. We, both the sides, are aware of the peculiarities that may be caused." The Indian delegation leader seemed to be appreciative of the difficulties that have been caused in the lower riparian Bangladesh due to the repeated unilateral intervention by his country from the upstream to divert the waters of the Ganges to its (India's) advantage.

Replying to an Indian newsman's question, "What was your proposal?" the Bangladesh delegation leader only gave "an outline" refusing to share the proposal.

"Bangladesh has not done anything which could cause any difficulty to any neighbour," M. Asafuddaulah said when pressed further. "Whatever has been done, has been done upstream with or without our consent. No lower riparian would be comfortable at this situation," he said. "Teesta remains uncovered without any agreement. This is not a desirable situation," he said.

A solution, he said, would require political will from the country which intervened with the traditional and historic flows of the rivers including the Ganges.

The Bangladesh delegation leader said that he told his Indian counterpart, "we are hurt so we are shouting."

"He appreciates," Asafuddaulah said. "Bangladesh cannot plan or carry out the projects unless it gets the

waters. The projects are expensive. We are poor. What happens when we don't get the water after implementing a project," Asafuddaulah asked, particularly with the experience of the Teesta irrigation project in the mind. "On the Brahmaputra we want a system to narrow down the discrepancies, on the Meghna, too, Bangladesh is willing to discuss," he said. "But what's the benefit to Bangladesh. Nothing," he said, adding, "the benefits accrued only to the country which has withdrawn the waters."

"It has been unilateral. It caused sufferings for Bangladesh. We have not been compensated. We got no benefits," he said.

The Bangladesh Irrigation Secretary said, "We are agreeable to discuss all the four rivers, but step by step."

"The whole world knows we are very friendly countries, both are members of the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], no nothing should be done which hurts us."

The actions, he said, basically lie with the country which intervened.

"A process has to begin to make a fresh chapter of solving the water problem. Otherwise," he said, "the world would blame us for the failure."

No Progress Seen

92AS0687B Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 4 Feb 92 p 5

[Editorial: "Indo-Bangladesh Water Issue"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] They sat down by the waters of Babylon and wept. For us it is Bangladesh and the waters are the Ganges.

Yet another Secretary-level talk, the sixth in the series, has reportedly brought not only no solution but also seems to have introduced into the water-sharing issue fresh complications to be tackled at higher bilateral administrative level.

The discussion in Dhaka between Indian and Bangladesh delegations were carried on on the four common rivers—the Ganges, Tista, Meghna and Brahmaputra—for more than four hours and in a cordial atmosphere with 'appreciation' of each other's points of view. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in New Delhi next month. The two delegations parted having agreed on the need for 'exchange of information and data,' obviously to be scrutinised at a higher level before further progress could happen.

It is about the same sort of note on which all previous Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) meetings closed. The needed study of data and information seems to be proceeding at less than a snail's pace—or not proceeding at all. Neither is it easy to see why what is geographically, bilaterally and internationally so lucid an issue should be beset with complications that should take almost more than half a century to unravel.

The snag seems to be the inadequacy of the will to see the problem through. Certainly the political will bar which in modern times political or other disputes do hardly get solved. [sentence as published] Incidentally, the water dispute between Bangladesh and India over a set of common rivers is not a unique Indo-Bangladesh issue. Around the world such issues do exist and have existed and a bilateral solution through understanding and goodwill has been made possible. For instance, between the United States and Mexico the dispute over the Colorado River has been resolved; America doing its generous best and sharing even the expenses involved in constructing flood control devices to help its neighbour Mexico.

In the Indian subcontinent also a good example set by India herself is the Indus basin barrage with the needed goodwill between Pakistan and India. Disputes involving rivers shared in common by two or more countries are a common geographical phenomenon. Politics has divided land and population as well as rivers—though not as yet the seas and oceans. Wars have been fought on territorial grounds but not yet on water or aquatic grounds. But we, in this part of the world, seem to have been locked in a water-war of sorts—a cold one, though.

India is the subcontinental superpower, without exaggeration. It has its neighbours, all of them pigmies before the India giant. Bangladesh is the most populous and the poorest of its neighbours—as well as the closest sharing the same borders on almost on its three sides—east, west and north. And as a lower riparian country, topographically speaking, it is at the disadvantage of being the run-off route for almost all the rivers issuing from the Himalayas.

India with its bigger economic and technological, not to mention other, powers, can turn as it has already turned by erecting dams the flow of the rivers to its advantage. But good relations and interterritorial justice would require India to undertake any river control scheme without injustice done to its neighbours.

Unfortunately in regard to Bangladesh India is yet to do this justice. Hence the insistent demand by the former that India do so, over the last three decades or so.

India's Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao, is one of the oldest of the surviving old guard of Indian National Congress. In some of his gestures and actions since his assumption of power as India's Prime Minister we have noticed, with great delight, his humanity, magnanimity and sense of justice which we still associate with the history of the Indian National Congress of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru.

May we expect him to rise above the inhibitions from which his predecessors seem to have suffered?

Need for Solution

92AS0687C Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
4 Feb 92 p 5

[Editorial: "Water Sharing Talks"]

[Text] The secretary level water sharing talks held in Dhaka have ended without any tangible progress. This

was the 6th secretary level meeting on this issue since the expiry of the last Memorandum of Understanding in December 1988. Earlier, an agreement was signed between the two countries in 1977 which stipulated 60 percent of the available dry season flow of the Ganges at Farakka to Bangladesh, subject to a minimum of 34,000 cusecs, the quantum varying on the basis of each 10 days. After the expiry of this agreement two successive memoranda of understanding were signed without the guarantee clause. Since the expiry of the latest memorandum, there exists no agreement between the two countries and India is going on withdrawing water at Farakka point creating serious problems for Bangladesh. The Padma and its branches are drying up during the lean months, so much so that they can be negotiated by cart or on foot during this period. The navigational, agricultural and ecological impact of this on Bangladesh can better be imagined than described.

Quite reasonably Bangladesh laid emphasis on the immediate problem of sharing available waters of the Ganges. But the Indian sides shifted emphasis on the augmentation part of the problem under a long-term perspective plan. It has talked of four more dams in India and the bizarre idea of a link canal across Bangladesh territory to divert the water of the Brahmaputra to Farakka. And all these in the name of augmenting the dry season flow of the Ganges, the Brahmaputra, the Teesta and the Meghna.

It baffles one's imagination how the water of the Brahmaputra can be diverted if the flow of the river itself is inadequate. Besides, it looks like measuring the length of a monkey by its tail. India is dallying on this strange proposition along with proposals of construction of four more dams in India and Nepal sidetracking the Bangladesh proposal for building reservoirs in the catchment areas of the Ganges with the active participation of Nepal. Although Nepal is not grudging such participation India is persistently refusing to include Nepal in the talks while she is holding bilateral talks with Nepal on water resources. Such an attitude seems enigmatic as trilateralism is only one line away from bilateralism and the atmosphere for trilateralism is quite congenial.

Be that as it may, being the lower riparian Bangladesh cannot wait indefinitely for sharing of the Ganges water. It is badly in need of an immediate agreement on sharing the Ganges water on the lines of the 1977 agreement pending the augmentation of the flow. It is a life and death question to this country and as such must be solved without any further dilly-dallying. It must be remembered that there are occasions when what is sport to one may be death to the other.

Economy in Danger

92AS0687D Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
5 Feb 92 pp 1, 8

[Article by A.Z.M. Haider: "Indian Obstinacy on Ganges Will Cripple Bangladesh Economy"]

[Text] Despite three formal summits, bilateral talks at all SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summits without exception, 31 ministerial and 14 Secretary level meetings, more than 40 JRC [Joint Rivers Commission] conferences and innumerable technical committee meetings so far held the problem of sharing the Ganges waters between India and Bangladesh has [thus] far eluded solution.

The failure to hammer out an agreed solution of the problem is learnt to be attributed to intractable position taken by Delhi with regard to apportionment of the Ganges waters.

A competent source confided in THE NEW NATION that it was because of the unilateral withdrawal of water from the Ganges at the upper reaches the dry month flow of the Ganges which stood at 65,000 cusecs in 1975 slid [as published] down to only 15,000 cusecs only at Hardinge Bridge point in the current dry season.

In a river of one and a half mile wide a narrow stream of 15,000 cusecs is flowing like a tiny brook leaving the rest of the river bed as dry, parched sandy shoals to enable buses and bullockcarts to pass through.

In the one day Secretary level meet held in Dhaka early this week, the Indian delegation reportedly paid no heed to the critical condition of Bangladesh due to unilateral withdrawal of the Ganges flow at the upper reaches. On the contrary they did not mince matters to tell Bangladesh, which is a lower riparian, that she should forget about the Ganges and Teesta and instead agree to discuss the Brahmaputra, Meghna/Barak, indicating there by a discussion on the link canal proposal rejected by Bangladesh long ago. In so many words, the Indians have made it clear that Bangladesh has no right to Ganges waters.

The Ershad Administration did not press for agreement of any kind or Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] with Delhi for apportionment of the Ganges and the Teesta. In the absence of any agreement or MOU during the past several years the Indians kept withdrawing the Ganges flow in clear contravention of all recognised norms of water management of international rivers.

If India continues with her present uncompromising attitude with no regard to the requirements of her lower riparian partner, Bangladesh, the next meeting due to be held in Delhi is certain to yield no result. That would be an exercise in futility, the source observed.

The source went on to add Bangladesh economy is so fragile that it cannot take the adverse impact of the unilateral withdrawals by India which by such intransigent step aims at destroying Bangladesh economy. The result of this wanton withdrawal of the Ganges flow at the upper reaches will without any shadow of doubt lead to unacceptable socio-political destabilization the effects of which are certain to recoil on the whole region. Sources feel that India which is the largest country in South Asia should take note of the disastrous consequences of her unimaginative steps specially considering

the existing simmering discontent between its own states over the withdrawal of waters.

Analyst Views New Equations in Regional Relationships

92AS0580A Dhaka SANGBAD in Bengali 27 Jan 92 p 4

[Article by Ajoy Roy: "The Shifting Equations of Power in the Subcontinent and Bangladesh"]

[Text] Mr. Moynihan, the former U.S. ambassador to India and at present a member of the U.S. Senate, said that India should be given a permanent seat in the Security Council of the United Nations as it is the largest democratic country in the world. Before that, Senator Pressler, after concluding his tour to India, declared that there is no evidence that India has manufactured a nuclear bomb. On the other hand, following his tour to Pakistan, Pressler said that Pakistan has manufactured nuclear bombs. All these events are signs of the growing warm relations between India and the United States.

It is true that there were some important persons in the United States who have always advocated for close U.S. relations with India in South Asia. For example, we can give the names of Chester Bowles and J. K. Galbraith in this respect. Their main argument was that America should maintain good relations with India as both nations are democratic countries. They argued that by keeping not-so-warm relations with India, United States indirectly would force India to move toward the former Soviet Union. But these kinds of arguments did not gain acceptance by the foreign policy officials in the U.S. State Department. The main objective in the U.S. foreign policy at that time was to fight against the former Soviet Union and socialism, and in this respect, Pakistan was a supporter of U.S. policy including joining the military pact. Naturally, America chose Pakistan as her main ally in South Asia. As Pakistan's location was close to the former Soviet Union and the Middle East, it gain more importance for America from the geopolitical perspective. On the other hand, India's policy of neutrality resulted in its cool relations with America. During the 70's when the Soviet army went into Afghanistan, the importance of Pakistan increased considerably for America. America started to intervene militarily in Afghanistan indirectly through the 'Mujahedins' by basing its whole operation in Pakistan. Pakistan welcomed this new opportunity. As a result, Pakistan increased its own military strength and revamped its economy with the American aid. With the increased American assistance, the Pakistani rulers and the military junta were given the opportunity to consolidate their power. In fact, Pakistan initiated the nuclear weapons project at this time and began to build up her military power against India. In spite of knowing all of this, America did not object to that.

The international situation started to change rapidly with the events of East Europe and specially with the recent events in the former Soviet Union. Before that, the U.S.-Soviet treaty was signed with the objective to limit the nuclear weapons and to end the Cold War. As a

result, the Cold War ended. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the situation was further changed. As a result, the preoccupation of U.S. foreign policy has also changed. The emergence of Japan as an economic superpower in the Far East, and on the other hand, the new momentum in the process of the European unification and the emergence of Germany as an economic power in Europe brought on a new situation for the United States. The growing importance of economic power over military strength has further complicated the situation. In fact, both centers (Japan in the Far East and Germany in Europe) appeared to be stiff competitors of the United States, with the latter now facing a grave situation in the economic field. It should also be remembered that American relations with the ASEAN countries are not smooth. The ASEAN countries are progressing rapidly in the economic field and they are not happy with the American presence in that region. The American efforts to establish close ties with the ASEAN countries have yet to be successful. If we keep in mind that in the near future, the economic importance of the Pacific Ocean region would increase considerably, we can understand why America is so interested in having a presence in this region. Because of that and especially after the end of the Cold War, America is eager to establish a warm relation with India. India's domestic market is also a factor. Though a large portion of the people of India (over 40 percent) live below the poverty level, but there are up to a 100 million (200 million by different estimates) middle class people who are enjoying all the amenities of modern-day life. This middle class group is financially well-off. Whatever their number might be 100 or 200 million, it is nevertheless a fairly large market. Besides that, after 45 years since independence, India achieved dramatic progress in all aspects and many heavy and modern industries have established there. For all of these reasons, America, after the end of the Cold War, has become more interested in establishing close relations with India. And this is perfectly normal.

On the other hand, India's problems have exacerbated after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. Since independence, India has gradually developed a sort of special relation with the former Soviet Union which reached its climax with the signing of the Indo-Soviet declaration of New Delhi. The warm Indo-Soviet relationship was not limited to the establishment of industry, trade, and commerce, it was extended to the field of armed forces. The former Soviet Union occupied a very important place as a supplier of military equipment to India. Besides, the Soviet market was very important to India's export business. After the breakage of the Soviet Union, problems appeared in these two areas. Now, it is clear to India that despite maintaining friendly relations with the newly formed commonwealth, the problems will not be completely resolved. And this is a cause of anxiety for India. As a result, India is equally interested in establishing good relations with the United States. In fact, from India's standpoint, better relations with America is very important for economic and political reasons. India is eager to obtain modern technology.

The recent economic steps, which India has taken to stabilize her economy, would help to establish good relations with America. Consequently, a new balance of power is emerging in this subcontinent.

I am trying to focus on the new emerging balance of power in this subcontinent in the changed world situation. Whether these changes are desirable or not, that question is out of the scope of this article. Other changes are also taking place. The process of normalization of Indo-Chinese relations began from the time of late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi. Both powers are interested in developing their relations. Recently, India has stated categorically that the Tibet issue is the domestic affair of China. In the changed world situation and especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both India and China wanted to consolidate their respective positions in the emerging new balance of power through the normalization of their mutual relations.

The remainder countries of this subcontinent have to take this new situation into consideration. In this context, Pakistan has adopted its own position. Pakistan wants to consolidate its position against India by forming a group with some Muslim fundamentalist countries of the Middle East. There is no sure guarantee that everything would turn out like this. You cannot reject the possibility that the situation may turn in a different way following the currents and cross-currents of yet unknown events. However deep the Indo-U.S. relations might be, it would be unwise to think that there would be no friction between them. It must be kept in mind that even a much weaker country than India will not remain as a client state in the present world. Moreover, having good relations with the United States does not mean the end of independent foreign policy. The tilt of Pakistan toward the Muslim fundamentalist countries is not seen favorably by America. In fact, after the experience of Iran in the Middle East, America is concerned about the rise of any fundamentalist power.

On the other hand, it can be said following the current events that India's relations with Nepal and Sri Lanka will be closer.

Under these circumstances, we must take into consideration the changing political situation of the subcontinent. By this, I mean that we must take our steps after taking a realistic look at the situation and ensuring that our national interests are completely safeguarded. We have some unresolved problems with India. One of the major problems is the question of distribution of the river water. There is the problem of Tin Bigha. We must give priority to the resolution of those issues. At the same time, we must make it clear that the position that Pakistan has taken in the perspective of new balance of power, is unwise and unacceptable in the interest of our country. There are some powers within the country who want to push the nation in that direction. We have to develop a close relationship with all the nations of the subcontinent. We have to accomplish this without forgetting our unresolved issues with India and Pakistan (Pakistan still owes us money; and the question of the

repatriation of the Pakistanis living in Bangladesh). As one of the countries of this subcontinent and having a special geopolitical location, we must give the appropriate importance to this matter. We must also analyze the steps that have been taken in the past years regarding this matter. At the same time, efforts should be made in our own national interest to develop good relations with the powerful countries of the world. If we can do this, we would have more maneuvering power. Let me end this article with a question: Was the declared objective about a joint military demonstration with America real, or, was it something else?

Foreign Minister on Relations With Burma

92AS0713A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 4 Feb 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Bangladesh is ever ready to face any situation to protect the country's integrity and national sovereignty, Foreign Minister A.S.M. Mostafizur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

Winding up four hour long general discussion on Bangladesh-Myanmar border situation the Foreign Minister said the present elected government together with the 330 parliament members and the entire nation was determined to fight to the last to protect the country's interest.

Expressing his optimism of negotiated settlement of the issue between the two neighbours, he reminded the House that a peaceful solution of international disputes was one of the basic principles of the country's foreign policy. He said the Government was still pursuing the policy in the same spirit, which had brought success. The Government was still hopeful of negotiated solution to the problem, he said.

He said there were four alternatives before the Government following the Khejupara incident on December 21. The alternatives are peaceful negotiation, internationalisation, confrontation and war, he said. In this connection he said the first flag meeting between the two countries was held on December 31 at Mongdu town in Myanmar. The border tensions had been largely defused following the third flag meeting held on January 28 last, he said.

Quoting the figures of refugees gathered by the Ministry of Home, the Foreign Minister said between 42 and 45 thousand refugees had crossed into Bangladesh. The process of preparation of list of refugees was still in progress and steps had already been taken for providing food and other relief materials to them, he said.

He said a check post had been opened at Ukhiya so that refugees could not move into interior areas.

He said in the first instalment a list of 4,612 refugees had been handed over to Ambassador of Myanmar in Bangladesh on Sunday.

Referring to efforts of negotiated settlement of the issue he said two flag meetings were simultaneously being held

in Lembachari and Gundum borders in Bangladesh. He firmly said the situation in the border was fully under control and peaceful.

He said though the refugees were still coming in but the flow of refugees had become diminished.

Referring to the negotiated settlement of refugee issue with Myanmar, he said in 1978 about three lakh refugees had crossed into Bangladesh, following citizenship verification there. He said all the refugees had been taken back following peaceful negotiation on November 30, 1979. Though there was 176-mile border with Myanmar, there had been no disputes or tension between the two neighbours since liberation till the end of 1991 excepting the Rohingya refugees in 1978, the Minister recalled.

In his statement on the issue, the Minister said Muslim refugees had started arriving from the beginning of last year and their number had gone up in November last year. In this connection he recalled his visit to Myanmar for talks with his counterpart there so that the refugees were taken back. He said the Myanmar Government had agreed to take back the refugees and had requested "us give them a list of refugees."

When the work on collection of information on refugees was in progress, the said incident of border attack at Khejupara took place, he said. In the attack Lance Naik Mosharraf Hossain was killed and six others injured.

The Foreign Minister said the Ambassador of Myanmar in Bangladesh had been summoned the following day to hand over a letter of protest. He said the Government had requested the Myanmar Government in the letter to defuse border tensions through negotiation and expressed its deep concern. The Bangladesh Charge D'affaires was also asked to send similar letter of protest to Myanmar government, he said. The Myanmar Ambassador in Bangladesh had also been requested to visit the place of occurrence by helicopter.

In this connection, he said the democratically elected government of Bangladesh had been trying to develop good relationship with neighbouring countries on the basis of the foreign policy as has been described in the constitution.

Earlier the Minister dismissed the speculation of providing any training by any NGO [nongovernmental organization] to foreign nationals inside Bangladesh territory. He said there were border disputes also in other countries but all such disputes were neither being internationalised nor pushed into confrontation between the countries.

Bhutanese Foreign Minister Meets Dhaka Press

92AS0679A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 28 Jan 92 p 10

[Text] There are tremendous potentialities for the development of trade between Bangladesh and Bhutan and the volume of trade between the two countries will get boost in the coming days hoped Mr. Dawa Tsering, Foreign Minister of Bhutan in Dhaka on Monday.

Talking to newsmen at the residence of the Ambassador of Bhutan in Bangladesh, the Bhutanese Foreign Minister said that Bhutan was looking forward to use the Bangladesh ports, specially Mongla for transit facilities. Bhutan, he said, would in future use the Mongla port for its export and import trade. The tiny Himalayan Kingdom is now using the Calcutta port for the transit of its external trade. Like Nepal, Bhutan is a landlocked country having no port facilities.

The Bhutanese Foreign Minister who arrived in Dhaka on Saturday on private visit had an informal meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mustafizur Rahman. He had extended an invitation to Bangladesh Foreign Minister to visit Bhutan. According to Bhutanese Foreign Minister, the Bangladesh Foreign Minister has accepted the invitation.

Replying to a question, Mr. Dawa Tsering said the trade turnover between Bangladesh and Bhutan amounted to six million dollar annually. He hoped that the volume of trade between the two countries would grow further in future.

Identifying the areas of trade, the Bhutanese Foreign Minister said his country was exporting fruits to Bangladesh and hoped that more items like stones, boulders, limestone and timbers could be exported to Bangladesh. Bhutan on the other hand, was importing jute bags, textiles, and dry fish. There is a tremendous demand for Bangladesh assembled jeeps and cars in Bhutan, he added.

The Bhutanese Foreign Minister said that there existed an extremely good bilateral relations between Bangladesh and Bhutan which was further cemented during the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit in the Sri Lankan capital Colombo when the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, and the King of Bhutan Jigme Singe Wangchuk had a meeting there.

The Bhutanese Foreign Minister paying rich tribute to the memory of late President Ziaur Rahman, said it was President Ziaur Rahman who initiated the concept of SAARC for the mutual benefit of the countries of the South Asian region. Reposing his confidence in the SAARC, the Bhutanese Foreign Minister said it would get further boost when Bangladesh would host the seventh SAARC summit by the end of the current year. He said it was the turn of Bhutan to host the seventh summit of SAARC. But he regretted that Bhutan lacked infrastructure to host such a big gathering of the delegations of the SAARC countries. The facilities in Bhutan were meagre to accommodate the delegation members from the seven countries. Bhutan had no first class hotel and VIP guest house at the moment, he said.

Mr. Dawa Tsering said Dhaka is becoming a very important place for trade with Bhutan. Speaking on the relations between Bangladesh and Bhutan, he said many Bhutanese students were studying in the Medical Colleges and Engineering University of Bangladesh. It may

be mentioned here that there is no medical college and engineering college in Bhutan.

Turning to the countries of South Asian region, he hoped that they could constitute an economic and trading block. The Colombo Summit, he said, made an important breakthrough in liberalising trade among the member countries of the SAARC. The external trade of the SAARC countries constituted only three percent within the SAARC members. He hoped that the SAARC countries could do a lot of trade within themselves. He appreciated the proposal of 'Dal Bhat' initiated by Begum Khaleda Zia in the Colombo Summit for the people of the South Asian region. [quotation marks as published]

Replying to a question, the Bhutanese Foreign Minister accused some leftist forces of India and Nepal of arming terrorist to destabilise peace in the tiny Himalayan Kingdom. He ruled out any movement in Bhutan to overthrow the present monarchy. He said the present monarch of Bhutan had given democratic freedom to the people by decentralising the administration. He said the people of Bhutan were less interested in politics.

The Ambassador of Bhutan in Bangladesh Mr. Karma Dorjee, was present during the Press briefing.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Government Seen Insensitive to Nation's Woes

92AS0523A Dhaka BANGLAR BANI in Bengali
17 Jan 92 p 4

[Article by Obaidul Kader: "Politics Dependent on Economics and Arms and the Government's Authority"]

[Text] All bad news comes one after another—news of deaths, news of sorrow, news of frustration, news of restlessness.

Grief follows grief. Danger follows danger. Accident follows accident. Before the fading of the mark of blood in the ground, again bleeding begins from the heart of mother Bengal. Before the drying up of tears in the eyes, again tears start to flow from the eyes.

The unfortunate mother Bengal continuously cries. The golden Bengal of Rabindranath cries. Nazrul's beloved Bangladesh cries. The beautiful Bengal of Jibanananda cries. The eyes of independent Bangladesh, which was the golden product of the lifelong endeavor of Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman), are still full of tears.

The air is full of the smell of danger, conspiracy, and gunpowder. The air of Bengal gets heavy with the grief of mothers who lost their children, the cries of the wives who lost their husbands and with the mourning of the sisters who lost their brothers. Every step here is still full of horror of death. Every moment here is still full of danger.

Here, death beckons constantly with one hand, and constantly, one is followed by a bullet. Constantly, the

killers lie in ambush by the side of the roads. Days pass in fear. Nights pass in agony. Mornings come with frustration.

The present is at stake. The future is uncertain. There is no hope, no light, no affection, no love. There is no sense of values. Friend shoots a friend. Brother kills his own brother. Terror snatches children from their mothers' arms and empties their hearts. Now in Bangladesh, nobody has neither security of life nor certainty. It is not there—either in or outside of the home.

Arms are the source of power and money is the source of status. It seems as if there is nothing in between. There is no dignity or respect for a good person who is not rich. There is no valuing one's great heart if he does not have wealth. Self-respect, self-dignity, popularity, fame—everything has to be bought with money. If some one is wealthier, he earns more fame and more respect. If money is distributed in someone's name, he gets the fame as a great donor. Everything could be bought with black money—houses, cars, votes, and even good-looking women. Academic success has no meaning without money. Wealth is the best pedigree, it is the highest aristocrat. Money can buy arms and armed gangsters. One could have any person killed by a hired gangster and thus any political enemy could be wiped out forever.

What I am thinking is what would be the condition of innocent gentry in the present, sick political atmosphere of Bangladesh, which is fully dependent on money and arms. Would it be possible for someone to live here holding the flag of a sense of values and depend on honesty and moral ethics? Is it possible to participate in politics in Bangladesh without raising contributions and sycophancy?

Is it possible to succeed here in politics without plenty of wealth? Would it be possible to come to power without the blessings of the agents of the foreign or domestic powerful groups? Is there any value to academic qualifications or talents? Is it possible to float in the rough rivers of Bangladesh with the sail made of rationalism in the midst of existing poverty, illiteracy, and chaos?

Although the autocratic rule has ended after the continuous struggle and movement of one and one-half decades, has autocracy really ended in this country? After one year of the second victory, is the infant democracy safe? Is the infant not still prey to threats and terror? It is parliamentary democracy in name only, and in reality, does this parliament have any active role to play? Theoretically, democracy exists. But does it really exist in practice? Where is the cultivation of democracy in the walks of everyday life?

By its activities, the elected government has already turned out to be a "paper tiger." The bureaucrats do not obey the ministers. The government employees do not come to work on time, and if some of them do, they do not work. The labor force is not attentive toward production. The borrowers do not pay back their loans to

the banks. The rowdies are not afraid of the administration. The donation collectors [as published] do not care about the authority. The street snatchers do not care about the police. The robbers and the looters carry on their business openly.

The corrupted conduct their businesses without any restraint. The smugglers are active in their own trade. The profiteers are making more profit. The hoarders are creating an artificial crisis by hoarding supplies. The students do not respect their teachers. The terrorists created their own kingdoms on the college campuses. The criminals are committing crimes without fear. Nobody is eager to obey the authority of the elected government and none is afraid of the power of the administration.

The general confidence of the people has been damaged to a large extent. Rational people do not believe that this government can successfully handle the situation. The once-spirited supporters are becoming disillusioned daily. Some of them are tremendously frustrated. This strong sense of dissatisfaction has resulted in developing in the minds of a group of people a kind of sympathy for the deposed leader of the last autocratic rule. It is, no doubt, sad news for the existence of democracy. "[The] Ershad government was better than this government"—such a whisper is nothing but a tragedy for democracy. Raushan Ershad is released on bail. Is it a fact that people are getting indifferent and callous toward the politics of General Ershad? The "minus points" of the BNP [Bharatiya Janata Party] are not turning into "plus points" for others. Annoyed and frustrated people are considering any other political party as an alternative to BNP. Until now, the main opposition party, Awami League, failed to create an image of meaningful opposition. Under these circumstances, the most unsuccessful government in the history of Bangladesh is still in power without a possible threat of ouster. As a result, the Zamayat parties are continuously reaping political successes. The leftist parties are still trying to overcome their virtual separation from the people.

All of this means that the nation's politics have reached to a very bad condition. Here politics means quarrelling, fighting, and mud slinging. There is rivalry among the parties and inside of the parties. There is no need for an outside enemy to ruin a party, the enemies inside are powerful enough to do that. In the present politics of the country, it is extremely difficult to ascertain who is the friend of whom or who is the enemy of whom. It is much easier to defeat a political opponent with the help of his own people than by any other means. The lives of the gentle, innocent, and educated-class of people are facing a helpless situation in the middle of this kind of nasty political atmosphere.

We are used to seeing people respect and love politicians. Now, they might be afraid of them, but surely, they do not either love or respect them. Some of them even hate the politicians from the inner corner of their hearts. Some even ridicule them. In the ideas of many, the

politicians are meant to be the leaders of the donation collectors, hooligans, and armed rowdies.

As a result, the good people are getting lost in the field of politics. The value of genuines is not identifiable in the crowd of fakes. Nowadays, successful are those politicians whose pictures, interviews, and speeches are published in newspapers in large numbers. Those politicians get success who pose brightly in front of cameras are successful. The ones who do not have money to maintain good house, cars, and a large cadres, cannot participate in politics in this country. Anyone who wants to be a politician must have either money, the quality of being a sycophant, or the capability to become a street rowdy. These are the real qualities of a successful politician of today.

There is continual conflict between democracy versus democracy, nationalism versus nationalism, independence versus independence, victory versus victory; and it has become almost impossible to identify which is truth and which is not. In the endless current of opportunism, real courage and honesty are suffering most. Complete separation has been established between the ideals of freedom and the politics of power and the values of the freedom movement have gone to a faraway place. It is a kind of unnecessary "identity crisis" in an independent country. The common people had not yet tasted independence. Dark pictures are surrounding the whole country. You can smell gunpowder on the banks of Nafnadi, and on the Burmese border, there is a war situation. The election propaganda is full of excitement viewing the results of the election in the U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] state of India. Dangers are coming from everywhere—within and outside of the country. All of the signs are not good for the country. Dense fog has covered up the whole of Bangladesh. The field of politics has already become dark. If we cannot come out of this darkness, the infant democracy will not live. If democracy does not succeed, can Bangladesh succeed as a nation?

Awami League Executive Meets, Adopts Resolutions

92AS0688A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Feb 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Bangladesh Awami League will launch a mass movement in the country to press the demand for the repeal of the Indemnity Ordinance which has already been placed in the Jatiya Sangsad.

Adopting resolutions at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee held on Sunday at the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament at Mintoo road, the Bangladesh Awami League said that there had been public demands against the 'notorious' Indemnity Ordinance which had prevented the trial of the killing of the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. [quotation marks as published]

The meeting held under the chairmanship of Mr. Abdus Samad Azad, Acting President of the party expressed its anger and concern at the delaying tactics of the Government in taking a concrete decision in repealing the Indemnity Ordinance. The meeting said that the Government must repeal the Indemnity Ordinance as a precondition to establishment of democracy which it termed went against humanity. The demand for repealing the Indemnity Ordinance had now become a national demand. The meeting said that the Bangladesh Awami League had helped passage the Twelfth Amendment Bill in spite of many odds to establish democracy in the country. But it regretted that the Government had resorted to delaying tactics to repeal the Ordinance which had been placed before the Jatiya Sangsad on August 8 in the form of a bill. The passage of the Indemnity Ordinance Repeal Bill was needed to end the politics of killing, coups and conspiracies and to establish rule of law in the country, the Awami League meeting observed.

In another resolution the meeting urged all the pro-liberation forces to build resistance against anti-liberation forces and their present ally BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party]. Resenting the election of Prof. Golam Azam as Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Awami League said there was no instance in any part of the world for an alien citizen to participate in the national politics either directly or indirectly. Demanding trial of Golam Azam as a war criminal, the meeting alleged that he was involved in the killing of three million people of Bangladesh during the war of liberation in 1971. The Bangladesh Awami League accused late president Ziaur Rahman of sheltering Golam Azam in the country and rehabilitating the anti-liberation forces in the national politics. Though the Home Minister made a statement in the Jatiya Sangsad, denying the restoration of the citizenship of Golam Azam, the government had not taken any action against him. It was due to the appeasement policy of the ruling Bangladesh National Party towards the anti-liberation forces, the Jamaat-e-Islami had shown the audacity of electing a Pakistani citizen Golam Azam as its chief.

In another resolution, the Awami League expressed concern over the continuous strike of the teachers of the non-government schools, colleges and madrasahs and said it had created a serious stalemate in the educational arena of the country. Condemning the Government silence in the problem of the teachers, the Bangladesh Awami League said that the remark of the Government had further aggravated the situation. The meeting urged the Government to accept the demands of the striking teachers through a peaceful negotiation instead of behaving like the autocratic Ershad regime.

The Bangladesh Awami League also expressed concern over the deteriorating of law and order situation in the country. The law and order situation had come to such a stage that the people were not getting guarantee of natural death, it observed. It also alleged that the ruling Bangladesh National Party had resorted to repressive

measures on its political rivals including the Bangladesh Awami League and arrested a member of Awami League workers.

The meeting criticised the Government for its failure to arrest spiralling price and running the country as per dictation of the donor agencies and countries.

Upazila Parishad Repeal Bill Passed

92AS0686A Dhaka *THE NEW NATION* in English
27 Jan 92 pp 1, 8

[Text] Minister for Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives [LGRDC] Barrister Abdus Salam Talukder last night described the ordinance repealing the upazila parishads as "constitutional, democratic and orderly" reports BSS.

Winding up the discussion on "the local Government, Upazila Parishads and Upazila Administration Reorganisation (Repeal) Bill, 1992" Mr. Talukder dismissed various arguments given by the opposition parties against repeal of the bill. He observed that the matter (bill) was small and simple and it did not warrant participation of 25 members in the discussion.

Barrister Talukder said a provision of promulgation of Ordinance is very much there in the original constitution of 1972. He said since the promulgation of ordinances during the first parliamentary system of government was constitutional there should not be any fuss about the promulgation of the ordinance on upazilas. The constitution made provisions for promulgation of ordinances whenever it was necessary, he added.

About the accusation that the ordinance was promulgated with partisan outlook, the LGRD Minister asked the opposition to cite an example of partisan. As for bypassing the parliament, the Minister said that it as an accepted norm to have an ordinance when the parliament is not in session.

The bill was later passed by voice vote. Opposition Awami League staged walk-out before the bill was placed for passage.

Earlier Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad was bitterly critical of the government for promulgation of the ordinance ignoring the Jatiya Sangsad. The dignity and honour of the sovereign Sangsad has been curbed by this "autocratic act" of the democratic government, he said.

Agency Results of Union Parishad Polls

92AS0684A Dhaka *THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER*
in English 7 Feb 92 p 1

[Text] At least 15 people were killed and as many as 2,000 injured during the 16-day staggered polls for the country's 3,899 Union Parishads which concludes Thursday reports UNB.

The polls began on January 22 and had two days recess on Fridays.

The hustings, marred by scattered violence here and there, also saw the abduction of two chairmen in Chittagong Hill Tracts by outlawed Shanti Bahini members.

A total of 17,444 candidates contested for 3,899 posts of chairman while 1,06,9643 [as published] ran for 34,801 seats of members in the 5th election for Union Parishads. Some 46 chairmen and 290 members were elected unopposed.

Violence around the polling booths forced the authorities to postpone votings at least 202 centres of 148 unions till February 5, according to official sources.

Police had to resort to firing blank shots at many places to disperse unruly supporters of different candidates who clashed and tried to snatch ballot boxes and papers.

A report says about 7,000 female voters of a union at Kishoreganj district were barred from voting by the village matabbars.

The Election Commission is likely to take decision on fixing dates for re-polling will be scheduled simultaneously at all postponed centres on same day.

BSS adds: Union Parishad elections ended Thursday with the holding of polls in the remaining 329 unions.

On the concluding day on Thursday polling was held throughout the country by and large peaceful atmosphere excepting some sporadic incidents, according to Election Commission sources.

Polls were adjourned on Thursday in two centres of two unions under Raipura Upazila of Narshingdi District and one centre under Sadar Upazila of Khagrachhari district due to reasons beyond the control of the concerned presiding officers, the sources said.

Polls were taken in a total of 19,653 polling centres of 3,895 unions during the 14-day election. These polls were adjourned in 211 polling centres, the sources added.

The Chief Election Commissioner, Justice Mohammad Abdur Rouf, on Thursday visited some polling stations of different unions under Gafargaon Upazila of Mymensingh district.

The Chief Election Commissioner expressed his satisfaction at the peaceful and congenial atmosphere in the polling stations.

A large number of voters were waiting in the polling stations to exercise their right of franchise.

The Chief Election Commissioner talked to the voters and exchanged views with them on various aspects. Justice Rouf also observed the polling arrangements and talked to the polling personnel, members of the law enforcing agencies, the contesting candidates and their polling agents.

Minister Answers Questions on Foreign Trade

92AS0680A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
27 Jan 92 pp 1, 8

[Figures as published]

[Text] Bangladesh has plans to sign bilateral trade agreements with a number of countries including the Central Asian republics which came out of now defunct Soviet Union, Commerce Minister M.K. Anwar told Parliament yesterday.

During the question-answer hour, the Commerce Minister was replying to a written question of Mr. Mohammad Latifur Rahman from Nawabganj-3. He said the government has plans to sign trade accords with Saudi Arabia, Australia, Russia and newly independent Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

The Commerce Minister said Bangladesh has already got trade accords with 38 countries of the world and they are—Afghanistan, Algeria, Bhutan, Brazil, Burma, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, South Korea, Libya, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Zambia, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Zimbabwe, Kenya, now defunct Soviet Union, China, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, North Korea, Poland, Vietnam and Albania.

Replying to another written question of Mr Mohammad Mozahar Hossain from Panchagar-2, the Commerce Minister said Bangladesh had a general trade agreement with the now defunct Soviet Union and under that accord, both barter and cash-trade used to continue with that country. [sentence as published]

In reply to another question of Mr Azizur Rahman from Maulavi Bazar-3, Mr M.K. Anwar said Bangladesh had earned a total of Taka 5,955.94 crore and spent Taka 12,284.18 crore in the trade sector during the fiscal 1990-91 year.

The Commerce Minister told Sardar Shakawat Hossain Bakul from Narsingdi-4 that Bangladesh earned 1.718 million US dollars from export during the 1990-91 fiscal year against its set target of 1,734 million US dollars for the year.

He said Bangladesh earned 394.59 million dollars from export of jute and jute goods during the period against its target of 476 million US dollars, 134.29 million US dollars from leather and leather products against the target of 171 million US dollars, 735.62 million US dollars from readymade garments against the target of 771 million US dollars and 127.97 million US dollars from frozen shrimps against the target of 135 million US dollars.

Asian Development Bank Reports Loans for 1992-95

Protocol for 1992 Signed

92AS0682A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 29 Jan 92 p 10

[Text] Bangladesh will receive 423 million U.S. dollars from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in the current year for executing different projects and programmes, reports BSS.

This is the highest ever allocation committed by the ADB for operation in a year in any country, an official handout said in Dhaka on Tuesday.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has recently been signed to this effect in Manila between Bangladesh and the ADB.

A three-member Bangladesh delegation led by Economic Relations Divisions (ERD) Secretary Enam Ahmed Chowdhury attended the fourth Round Table of Development Strategies (RTDS) of the ADB's fifth meeting of the development aid coordination (MAC-5) of Asia and the Pacific held in Manila from January 20-23. Other members of the delegation were Planning Secretary Syed Ahmed, Additional Industries Secretary Afzalur Rahman.

ADB has been organising the RTDS on yearly basis since 1989 to discuss and deliberate important issues on the development member countries (DMCS). The current year's deliberation focused on the role of public enterprises in the economy of the DMCS, their performance and need for reform including privatisation.

The four-day meeting was inaugurated by the Philippine President, Corazon Aquino. The MAC-5 was attended by 25 national development coordinators of Asia and the Pacific, eleven representatives of bilateral and donor countries, Saudi Arabia, Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, USA, the senior officials of 27 UN and multinational agencies.

The Bangladesh delegation leader Enam Ahmed Chowdhury, in his deliberation, underscored that alleviation of poverty was not possible unless there were changes in economic policies. He said, there was a strong need for donor countries and recipients to work together especially in areas of environmental protection and foreign investment.

The Bangladesh leader put forward a number of potential inter-country programmes located in Bangladesh in basic education, health, environment, water resources and flood control, water transport and economic management.

Credits for 1993-95

92AS0682B Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English
9 Feb 92 pp 1, 8

[Article by A.Z.M. Haider]

[Text] The Country Programme Mission of the Asian Development Bank which came to Dhaka to undertake

critical study and appraisal of the status of the economy of Bangladesh before its departure last Thursday pledged about 479 million dollars for the current year and about 1500 million dollars for the years 1993-95.

The Bank's lending programme for the year 1992 including projects including one programme loan and a technical assistance programme consisting of 26 TAs [expansion not given]. The envisaged 1993-95 lending programme will average about 500 million dollars for each year and incorporates certain important sectoral shifts.

The Bank mission in its critical review of the status of the country's economy did not mince matters to express its complete disenchantment with the poor fiscal management of the Government of Bangladesh (GOB). Observers believe if GOB could convince the Bank by its performance in the financial sector particularly in the light of strict financial discipline recommended by the donor countries and agencies, the Bank would certainly have stepped up its lending level to Bangladesh for the years mentioned above.

For the year 1992 the Bank has selected nine projects for its fresh lending operation. The projects include Second Bhola Irrigation, Second Rural Infrastructure, Second Pabna Irrigation and Rural Development and Rural Poor Cooperative Development. For these four projects the Bank has allocated 199.8 million dollars.

For the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge the Bank has committed 150 million dollars.

For the development of social infrastructure the country mission of the Bank has set aside 34.3 million dollars to help establish an open university, 40 million dollars for Secondary Towns Integrated Flood Protection and 15 million dollars for rehabilitation of education facilities. Besides, the Bank has also committed 40 million dollars for the capital market development programme loan. There is also 75 million dollars in the pipeline for Railway Recovery Programme. This amount was committed in 1990, but remained unutilized so long.

The Bank Mission, however, pledged nothing by way of fresh credit for the energy sector as well as for Industry and Non-Fuel Minerals.

For the 26 Technical Assistance Programme for the year the Bank has pledged over 13,606 dollars.

The Bank has pledged 540 million dollars for the year 1993. The striking feature of the Bank's commitment this year is 225 million dollars in the energy sector. Of this amount 175 million dollars will be utilized as 9th power (sector) loan and the rest 50 million for the Third Natural Gas. It has also earmarked 15 million for geological mapping for mineral exploration, 50 million for secondary education sector and 35 million for urban-poor infrastructure development.

The Bank's lending for 1994 stands at 490 million dollars which include 100 million for energy sector, 20 million for limestone development and 30 million for

industrial pollution control, 100 million for second road improvement and 35 million for non-formal education.

The Bank's lending for the year 1995 totals 480 million dollars. The notable feature of this year's lending operation includes 100 million dollars for the energy sector, 50 million for telecommunications, 50 million for the industrial programme loan III, 30 million for crop diversification, 50 million for South West Regional Water Resources II, 30 million for Rural Services Centre Flood Protection, 20 million each for post harvest facilities and for Rural Women Employment Promotion II.

The notable feature of the Bank's lending operation in Bangladesh is to give emphasis to step up the role of the private sector. Its lending programme incorporates necessary technical support to bring about necessary changes in the existing regulations and legislation for promoting private sector involvement.

Finance Minister Tells Extent of Foreign Loans

92AS0681A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 24 Jan 92 p 1

[Figures as published]

[Text] The total amount of foreign loans to Bangladesh since independence till June 30, 1991 stood at 11527.277 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 28163.10 crore, Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad on Thursday, reports BSS.

Replying to a question from Mr. Mansur Ahmed (BNP-Satkira [Bangladesh Nationalist Party]), the Finance Minister said amount to foreign loans to Bangladesh till June 30, 1975 stood at 859.569 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 729.43 crore (at the prevailing exchange rate).

Giving a year-wise break up of foreign loans, the Finance Minister pointed out that the highest amount of 1043.675 US million dollars equivalent to Taka 3435.78 crore was received in 1989-90, followed by 901.128 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 3215.22 crore in 1990-91.

Replying to another question from Mr. Nazir Hussain (CPB-Sunamganj [Communist Party of Bangladesh]), the Finance Minister said Bangladesh received foreign loans amounting to 212.689 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 7,97.58 crore so far during the current fiscal year (1991-92) the loan giving countries and agencies including Japan, Saudi Arabia, China, Asian Development Bank, International Development Association and Islamic Development Bank.

The amount of grants in 1991-92 till November 1991 stood at 220.052 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 525.20 crore. The donor countries and agencies were France, Japan, the USA, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, the EEC, the World Food Organisation and the UNICEF.

Replying to another question from Mr. Mashiur Rahman (BNP-Jhenidah), the Finance Minister said the country had received exemption of its foreign loans and the United States exempted 291.6 million US dollars equivalent to Taka 1093.50 crore emerging as the largest loan exempting country.

Bangladesh Bank Issues 1990-91 Annual Report

92AS0689A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 3 Feb 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] The growth rate in the country's agriculture, industrial and energy sectors significantly fell short of the target during the past (1990-91) fiscal year.

The Annual Report (1990-91) of the Bangladesh Bank revealed that the growth rate in the agriculture sector came down to 2-4 percent in 1990-91 from 5-6 percent in previous year. In the industrial sector the growth rate was 7.9 percent as against 8.4 percent in 1989-90 while in the energy sector the growth rate sharply fell to 5.7 percent from what was 16.7 percent in the previous fiscal year.

The growth rate in the country's GDP [gross domestic product] also showed a downward trend at 3.6 percent in the last fiscal year comparing to 5.8 percent in 1989-90.

Though the food production in the last fiscal year increased by four percent reaching the figure of 188.04 lakh metric tons from 180.74 lakh tons of 1989-90, the internal food procurement fell short of the target with net procurement of 7.83 lakh tons against the target of 9 lakh tons. The food stock came down to 10.40 lakh tons in June last year from 11.48 lakh tons during the corresponding period.

The foreign aid commitment during the last fiscal year amounted to 1,371 million dollars which was 36.1 percent less than the figure of 2,144 million dollars in 1989-90. Of the total foreign aid commitment during 1990-91 about 486 million dollars were grant and 885 million dollars credit.

The Bangladesh Bank report disclosed that the total foreign aid commitment during the last 20 years till June

last since the liberation of the country amounted to 27,463 million dollars of which 12,629 million dollars (46 percent) were grant.

Bangladesh Bank issued bank notes of Taka 4,103.32 crore by June 30, 1991 comparing to the figure of Taka 3,566.72 crore during the same period in 1990.

Though the export earnings recorded an increase mainly due to flexible exchange rate policy and introduction of a number of export incentives, the total import payments declined because of sluggishness in the country's economy during the last financial year. However, the trade deficit narrowed down during the year. In the last fiscal year, the export earnings increased by 183 million dollars to a total 1,669 million dollars while import payments declined by 289 million dollars to 3,470 million dollars. The deficit in the trade balance declined by 472 million dollars to 1,801 million dollars during 1990-91 from 2,273 million dollars in the preceding year. Due to increase in export earnings and a decline in import payments, the foreign exchange reserves recorded an increase of 360 million dollars to 880 million dollars at the end of June, 1991 from 520 million dollars in June, 1990.

The exchange rate of taka against the US dollar was refixed thrice during the last fiscal year indicating depreciation of taka to the extent of 2.5 percent over the year.

Bangladesh Bank report revealed that due to slackness in the country's economy the broad money expanded at a much lower rate of 12.1 percent to Taka 25,004.30 crore during 1990-91 as against the projected growth of 16.5 percent. On the other hand, Reserve Money or "High Powered Money" expanded by 3.3 percent to Taka 6,526.70 crore comparing to the increase of 15.5 percent in the preceding year.

The total domestic credit which was projected to increase by 16.7 percent during 1990-91 could not achieve the target as it fell short of 6.6 percent. The total domestic credit during the last fiscal year was Taka 2,335.60 crore which was 18.9 percent lower than the figure during the preceding year.

More Rohingya Muslims Arrive Fleeing Burma

92AS0683A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 12 Feb 92 pp 1, 10

[Text] Cox's Bazar, Feb. 11—About 45,760 Rohingya refugees have so far been enlisted in Cox's Bazar and Bandarban districts, according to official sources here, reports BSS.

Enlistment of Rohingya Muslims crossing into Bangladesh started a month ago and is continuing with the fresh arrival every day.

The sources said of the total enlisted Rohingya Muslims 30,760 are in Cox's Bazar and the rest in Naikongchari areas of Bandarban district, there are 11,780 Rohingyas at Ramu, 8,750 at Teknaf, 3,640 at Cox's Bazar Sadar and 1,830 at Chakoria, 15,000 Rohingyas are spread over Naikongchari areas.

Meanwhile 3,000 Rohingya Muslims crossed into Bangladesh during the past three days through different border areas and according to local people 1,000 to 1,500 Rohingyas are entering Bangladesh daily.

The Government has sanctioned taka eight lakh, 400 metric tons of rice, 200 metric tons of wheat and 1,650 bundles of CI sheets for the Rohingya refugees. One hundred rolls of polythene have also been allotted for raising sheds for the refugees.

Myanmar Return Arms

More report from Chittagong adds: Myanmar has returned 32 arms and some ammunition to Bangladesh during the fourth flag meeting of the two countries in Arakan state held at Mangdu, yesterday.

According to an official source here today, the arms and ammunition included 27 rifles, two SMG, two SMC, one MG and 64 ammunition.

The arms and ammunition were looted by Lunthin (border security force of Myanmar) in a raid on Bangladesh border security camp in December last.

At the fourth flag meeting 15-member Myanmar side was led by Lunthin battalion commander Lt. Col. San Lu while 13-member Bangladesh team was led by BDR battalion Commander Major M.A. Khaleque.

Biharis Said Eager To Return to Pakistan

92AS0692A Dhaka THE NEW NATION in English 29 Jan 92 pp 1, 8

[Article by Mohammad Abdul Hamid]

[Excerpt] Fresh enthusiasm has been created among the stranded Pakistanis, eagerly awaiting repatriation to the land of their dream, Pakistan for the last 21 years.

The stranded Pakistanis, also known as Biharis, migrated from India being victims of communal violence since 1947 when both Pakistan and India won independence from British colonial rule.

After emergence of independent Bangladesh through the War of Liberation the Biharis opted for Pakistan and over 250,000 of them were taken to Pakistan in early 1970s by the then Pakistan People's Party government of the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Out of the remaining Biharis some trekked their way to Pakistan as officially successive Pakistan governments failed to take them back in spite of their strict loyalty to Pakistan.

The recent decision by the Pakistan government to take the remaining stranded Pakistanis has created great enthusiasm among them.

"We are anxious and keen to go back to Pakistan right now. We would not like to wait for a minute more here," said several stranded Pakistanis yesterday during interviews with THE NEW NATION at the Geneva Camp, in the city, where the largest number of the Biharis have been living for the past 21 years in hardship.

"We don't want any facilities in Bangladesh. We simply want to go to Pakistan," they all said.

They also became enthusiastic about the enumeration for the repatriation as had been recently decided by the government of Bangladesh following the decision of Pakistan government to take them back.

But till yesterday the enumeration did not begin.

The Stranded Pakistanis' General Repatriation Committee SPGRC, however, offered its cooperation in enumerating the Stranded Pakistanis so that they could correctly identify those living in 66 camps in 12 districts of Bangladesh for the last 21 years.

The SPGRC representatives said that there could be some fresh arrivals from India due to the continuing communal violence. Besides, they said, some of the Stranded Pakistanis had gone to Pakistan on their own outside the process of repatriation and subsequently came back to be duly repatriated.

The representatives said that the SPGRC wanted those living in the camps for past 21 years to be repatriated. They also feared that some Indian infiltrators also might have come to take advantage of the repatriation for "some ulterior motives." They said that they would help identify those living in the camps right from the beginning.

The SPGRC said that according to an enumeration of 1984 about 258,028 Stranded Pakistanis were still in Bangladesh.

The SPGRC said that some of the stranded people had gone to Pakistan after the 1984 survey and hence the number of the remaining Stranded Pakistanis came down.

The SPGRC said that out of 66 camps all over Bangladesh in which they lived 17 were in Dhaka while the rest were in the districts of Syedpur, Dinajpur, Bogra, Narayanganj, Pabna, Jessore, Khulna, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Rajshahi and Rangpur.

The SPGRC said that it had already applied to the Home Ministry to take its help in conducting the survey in all the camps.

The stranded Pakistanis also appealed to the government of Bangladesh to put pressure on the government of Pakistan so that the repatriation was expedited.

They said the agreement between Pakistan government and Jeddah based Rabita should be implemented forthwith.

The stranded Pakistanis also called for settling them all in the Pakistan province of the Punjab, as had been pledged by the Pakistan government.

Mrs Amena Khatun, 45, a widow said she eagerly awaited repatriation with her five children and three brothers and sisters. She said that the nine of them had been living in a single room for years now. She said once in Pakistan her children would be able to have education. At the Geneva Camp at Mohammadpur, she said, there was only one high school with 1,500 students enrolled from class one to ten. She said that the school had only ten teachers. She said that if they had to live in Bangladesh any longer the children were likely to be spoilt without getting the facilities of education. "We all are keen to go to Pakistan right this moment," she added. [passage omitted]

Ershad Sentenced for Illegal Gains

92AS0685A Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER
in English 4 Feb 92 p 1

[Figures as published]

[Text] Former President H.M. Ershad was convicted and sentenced today three years simple imprisonment under the Prevention of Corruption Act for amassing wealth beyond his known source of income, reports BSS.

Divisional Special Judge Mohammad Ali Khan in the court of Divisional Special Judge in the Special Case 7 of 1991 State versus Lt. Gen (retd) Hussain Mohammad Ershad ordered that the seized money Taka 1,90,81,565 and the Toyota Land Cruiser jeep (found at Senabhaban) be confiscated by the State. "The accused totally failed to satisfactorily account for the money (Tk. 1,90,81,565) disproportionate to his known source of income, the Judge observed.

The judge in this sensational case however, acquitted the accused of the charges of misappropriation of gifts valued over Taka 11 lakh. The prosecution totally failed to prove that the accused dishonestly and fraudulently misappropriated or otherwise converted the gifts in question to his own use, the Judge stated.

The Judge said after considering the facts and circumstances of the case (amassing of wealth) the accused was held guilty of the offence of the criminal misconduct under Section 5(1)(E) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947. While delivering the 62-page judgment, the Judge stated that as the accused was in custody for more than a year, this factor was taken into "consideration for the purpose of determining the term of imprisonment."

The court did not accept a defence appeal that today's conviction be run concurrently with the ten years sentence given to Ershad last year for possessing illegal arms.

The Attorney General's prayer asking for punishment for Tajul Islam Chowdhury, Defence witness No 1 and Treasurer of Jatiya Party, for lying in the court was also not accepted by the court. He was told to submit the prayer later.

The prosecution brought charges against the accused on two counts. The first charge was that Ershad during his nearly seven years (11.12.1983 to 6.12.1990) tenure as President of the country had received 120 gifts valued at Taka 11,02,500 and did not deposit those with State Toshakhana as per Law. The second one related to the accumulation of wealth worth Taka 2,94,86,755.67 by the accused, while his known source of income that included salary and remunerations in 34 years of service in the Army and nearly, seven years as President totalled 73,21,527 leaving a gap of over Taka 2.21 crore. The charge was that Taka 2.21 crore that included cash Taka 1,90,81,565 found at his (Ershad's) Senabhaban was disproportionate to his known source of income.

The First Information Report for this Special Case Number 7 was lodged with Cantonment thana on 8.1.1991 and the charges were formally framed on 20.3.1991 under Section (5(1)(c) and 5(1) (E) of the Prevention of Corruption Act of 1947.

The arguments in the case concluded early last month and a total of 58 persons (48 prosecution witnesses and 10 defence witnesses) made their depositions in nearly seventy days of hearing.

Attorney General Aminul Haq, prosecution side, categorically denied the defence charge of political motive in instituting the case. The case was nothing but a legacy for the present Government as the charge sheet was submitted before they (Government of Begum Zia) came to power, he said. Senior advocate Serajul Haq who was the chief defence counsel alleged malafide intention and political motive of the prosecution in instituting the case.

Attired in a black coat, cream-coloured trousers and striped tie, the former President looked unperturbed as the judgment was read out.

UNB adds: Before the judgment, Jatiya Party leader Moudud Ahmed and Ershad's co-accused in a corruption case met him (Ershad) in his court rest room. They were alone for some time when Moudud is believed to have tried to keep up the morale of his party chairman in the face of odds.

Ershad entered that court room with broad smiles which, his critics say, is his usual art of hiding himself.

But soon he turned gloomy and pale. He listened to the judgment with rapt attention till the judge finished.

The verdict seemed to have no apparent effect on the face of the former President.

The trial began on March 20, 1991 and was completed in 67 sittings of the court till January 11.

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