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SAARC generates new hopes in S Asia: Khaleda

Democracy, accountability must for economic uplift

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said on Friday SAARC has generated new hopes and aspirations among one billion people of South Asia, reports BSS.

She said the association has stimulated a new awareness among the countries of the region and the bond of mutual cooperation is gradually growing stronger and areas of collaboration are expanding.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 6th South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA) at a hotel in Dhaka, the Prime Minister said the common aim of development and welfare of the people of this region was being reflected in new and diverse areas of cooperation because of SAARC.

Commerce Minister M.K. Anwar, SAFA President Habibur Rahman, SAFA Vice President K. M. Agarwal and Chairman of the 6th SAFA Conference Committee Jamaluddin Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

The main theme of the conference this year is "economic development and accountability."

The Prime Minister said "accountability and democracy are synonymous and they are complementary to each other". Democracy is meaningless without accountability and similarly the absence of democracy makes accountability difficult, she added.

The Prime Minister said democracy and accountability are the prerequisites for economic development. "Without active participation of the people and without proven arrangement for accountability at every step, meaningful, welfare oriented and pro-people development is in no way possible.

She termed the present decade as the decade of democracy and accountability and of irresistible stride towards progress and pros-

perity.

She said with new century to be ushered in less than ten years from now, mankind was looking forward with new expectations. The people of Bangladesh are also being inspired by these expectations and they had trituated the walls of autocracy and established democracy, she added.

Begum Zia said the sovereign national parliament and the free press are the symbols of accountability and transparency of the government in the country.

The changed democratic environment has added new dimension and momentum to the philosophy of and craving for our national development. She said adding this has brought forth ample of opportunities for the building of the na-

tion and the country.

She expressed her belief that the combined intellect, wisdom, power and efforts of the country's ten million people would commence a new era for the nation.

The Prime Minister expressed her happiness that the dreams of Shaheed President Zia who had first envisioned SAARC has come true through the flourishing of possibilities and potentialities of SAARC. She also expressed her pleasure that the concept of mutual cooperation and exchange of views of SAARC had trickled down to different professional bodies like the SAFA.

She hoped that the SAFA would play its due role in achiev-

ing economic development of the region.

On the occasion the Prime Minister directed the Commerce Ministry to take necessary measures so that the revised Company Act of 1913 could be discussed in the next session of parliament.

The function was attended, among others, by Ministers, Members of Parliament, heads of different foreign missions in Bangladesh and high officials.

The two-day conference, which has been jointly sponsored by Institute of Cost and Management Accountants and Institute of Cost Accountants, is being participated by 400 representatives from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.