

SAARC for peace, progress,

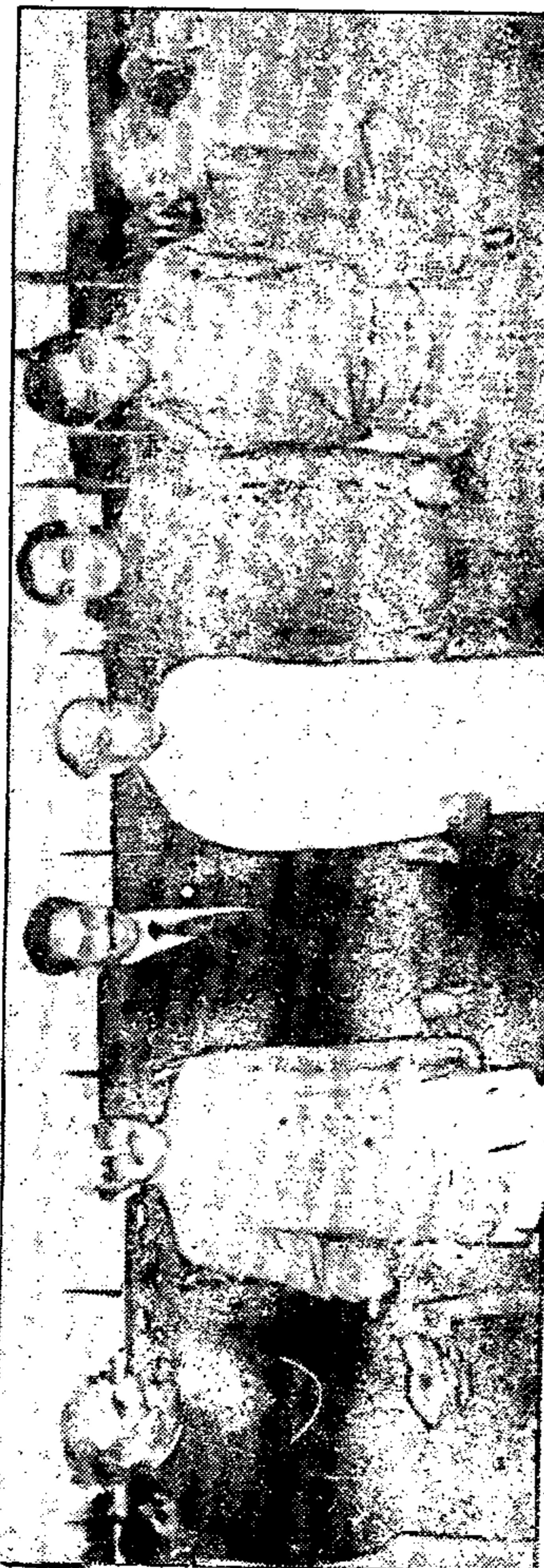
By Alamgir Mobiuddin

The leaders of the South Asian Nations on Saturday opened the first summit with a call for close co-operation for prosperity of a billion people and an end to the historical differences to dispel misunderstanding and suspicion.

The call went out from the plenary session of the two-day conference that will launch the South Asian Association of Regional Co-operation (SAARC). President Hussain Muhammad Ershad opened the summit between King Jigme Singye Wangchuk of Bhutan, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi of India, President Abdul Maumoon Gayoom of the Maldives, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev of Nepal, President Ziaul Haq of Pakistan and President J. R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka at the 53-million-dollar modern Parliament House.

In an unprecedented expression of solidarity, the leaders, true to terms of reference, did not muse over any bilateral issues.

The leaders in their speeches called for a collective pledge to renounce the threat or use of force against one another and work concertedly for the consolidation of good-neighbourly relations for confidence building. They expressed concern over prevailing tension and



The Heads of State and Government of seven SAARC nations (from left) Pakistan President Ziaul Haq, Nepalese King Birendra, Bangladeshi President Ershad, Sri Lankan President Jayewardene, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, Bhutanese King Wangchuk, and Maldivian President Gayoom at the civic reception accorded to them on Saturday. —Times

Golden Key of Dhaka for SAARC leaders

By A Staff Reporter

President Hussain Muhammad Ershad said on Saturday that South Asian Regional Cooperation symbolised the promise of regional self-reliance and underlined the need for joint and increasingly sophisticated response to global economic compulsions.

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SAARC for peace, Tapping Nepal's

By A Staff Reporter

President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom of Maldives expressed the hope that South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation could be the instrument for creating "good neighbourly relationships" among South Asian nations in which "magnificent" response to global economic

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Suspicion dispelled

By A Staff Reporter

Nepalese King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev on Saturday offered his country's untrapped vast reservoir of water resources for exploitation to the mutual benefit of the countries in this part of the region.

The King told the inaugural

Larger states must be

By A Staff Reporter

Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi told the inaugural session of the seven-nation summit on Saturday that SAARC member-nations had dispelled the suspicions "that were thoroughgoing and increasingly sophisticated" response to global economic

Contd. on page 8 col. 5

Water stressed

By A Staff Reporter

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Grayoom

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He told the inaugural session of SARC summit that it could also enhance our sovereignty and foster peace, freedom and social justice among the member states.

Addressing the inaugural session of SARC summit meeting at the plenary hall of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the Bhutanese monarch felt that South Asian nations must transcend the narrow nationalism that prevailed in the region due largely to his political reasons.

King Wangchuk was against the exclusion of political factor from the regional cooperation and said that it would be unrealistic to ignore the primacy of the political factor in the geopolitical realities of the South Asian region.

"The main obstacle is not only

the psychological and emotional barriers of the past, but the fears, anxieties and the apprehensions of the present," he said adding that if the regional cooperation was to be enhanced South Asian nations

must move away from the attitude of suspicion to one of understanding and trust despite major differences in political and security perceptions.

Wangchuk

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be matched by genuine friend ship of the smaller states".

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Stability

continuing nuclear arms race which one leader said should be banished.

While there was a suggestion for action in political fields to dissipate mistrust and promote goodwill to reduce waste and diversion of resources to the unproductive uses, the leaders noted that the region faced the formidable problem of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and disease, which must be overcome in highly adverse external environment. President Ershad while opening the summit said the SAARC symbolised the promise in the fertile idea of regional self-reliance and was a symbol of hope and expectation transmuted by reasons and historical experience.

"It stipulated that it shall not stand in the way of bilateral and multilateral commitments and obligations," President Ershad said pointing to the fact that the "strategy has been a sound and fruitful one."

King Wangchuk while expressing hope that the new organisation will lend due support to collective self-reliance regretted that arms race had intensified in "our region" and asked without naming Pakistan or India to enter into dialogue. He also expressed concern over global military expenditure.

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Birendra

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session of the seven-nation SARC summit that "after a long winter of mistrust, coldness and suspicion," the South Asian countries certainly looked for ward to a new spring.

He said that the South Asian nations were faced with the challenge whether they were able to turn their weakness into strength by resolving to react into a principle of agreeable harmony and betterment of the peoples of the region.

BSS adds: King Birendra in his speech, referred to the past heritage of the South Asian region and said there existed many differences among the countries of the region in size, situation, population, resources and levels of development. "It is a way this diversity has been our drawback in the past," he said, but added that these nations could gather now to make a new beginning of their economic relations.

He expressed the hope that South Asian regional cooperation would turn into a 'vibrant really' for the well being, peace and joy of the peoples of the region.

Jayewardene

Contd. he can

not fail

By A Staff Reporter

Pakistan President Gen. Muhammad Ziaul Haq on Saturday called for a "collective pledge" by South Asian nation renouncing the threat or use of force against to one another for the develop and safeguard the free

Contd. on page 8 col. 1

Ziaul Haq

Contd. Collective pledge to renounce threat, force

By A Staff Reporter

President of Sri Lanka Mr. J. R. Jayewardene called upon all the countries to curb terrorism strongly and said "all our countries need stability to develop and safeguard the free

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অবিষ্কৃত ০৮ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৮৫
সুন্দরী প্রকাশনা

SAARC for peace

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Prime Minister Gandhi nearly echoing the King's concern said that the tension and the continuing nuclear arms race

Ershad

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Inaugurating the plenary session, President Ershad said the SARC strategy is based on clear understanding that our cooperation and joint enterprise would in no way limit freedom of judgement and freedom of choice.

BSS adds : Underlining the significance of the SARC summit he said the leaders of seven South Asian countries were meeting for a "fruitful and ongoing dialogue that responds to the basic needs and urges of our peoples".

He hoped that the dialogue would serve as a framework for dispelling 'misunderstanding, suspicion, fear and anxiety'. The framework of the SARC summit as the key to the regional cooperation of the interactions of the national leaderships is bound to broaden into the interactions of our people's", he added.

Speaking about the areas of cooperation and structures identified by the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries of the seven countries President Ershad told his audience that the work was done painstakingly in a spirit of "pragmatism based on hard-headed calculations of the realm of actuality and the realm of promise".

Yet the tangible cooperation achieved thus far by no means completes our agenda or exhausts the scope of our enterprise, the President said adding "indeed we are on the threshold".

Speaking about the reasons for capturing the imaginations and allegiances of the people by the SARC, the President said it had offered an historic opportunity to "reshape the post-independence political cultures of our respective societies within the framework of sovereign equality and independence".

He said SARC promised a new resonance to the political discourse of the peoples of the region and of the present time." It promises a dimension of creative hope and expectations away from the desperations of sub-nationalisms and parochialisms, of limited horizons and of limited vision", he hoped.

(See page 5)

posed a serious threat to the progress and prosperity and called for a conscious effort to remain outside the vortex of these tensions and conflicts.

President Gayoom noting the steady progress of the SAARC said that it was duty of every nation to see that the principles and ideals were fully respected and adhered to.

King Birendra of Nepal noting the differences among the nations of the region said that this weakness must be turned into the strength by resolving to reach into a principle of agreeable harmony, an order that says not for one but for all to the betterment of all the peoples of the region.

President Ziaul Haq said more contacts through regional co-operation mistrust will be dissipitated and goodwill created. He called for political action to create the goodwill that could reduce waste and diversion of resources to unproductive uses.

President Haq also called for a collective pledge renouncing the threat or use of force against one another, banish nuclear weapons and develop a system of consultations on matters of common concern to SAARC.

President Jayewardene expressed concern that terrorist movements have raised heads in several countries of the region and referred to Tamil problem in his country. He called for non-violence.

Jayewardene said India, larger than all the rest of us combined can by deeds and words create the confidence among us so necessary to make a beginning.

"Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is its chosen leader. On him we rest our hopes. He must not fail us. He cannot," he said.

Earlier the seven leaders laid wreaths at the Jatiya Shaheed Smriti Shoudha at Savar in memory of the Liberation fighters.

Jayewardene

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doms."

The Sri Lankan President in his address at the inaugural session of the SARC Summit meeting on Saturday morning stressed the need for trusting each other and said "India the largest in every way, larger than all the rest of us combined, can by deeds and words create the confidence among us so necessary to make a beginning. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi is its chosen leader; on him we rest our hopes. He must not fail us. He cannot. Our duty is to help him to the utmost. He should tell us what each of us should do and we must respond as best as we can."

President Jayewardene said that regional stability and human development should get priority in regional co-operation.

He said the idea of regional co-operation was not an intellectual fancy divorced from mundane needs, rather it was a constructive step in the development process.

The Sri Lankan President said that the presence of the leaders of the seven South Asian nations in Dhaka for making "our collective as well as individual future" was a historic occasion. The responsibility these leaders faced was heavy while the stakes were high and their expectations great, he said.

Therefore, he said, we should approach the task with hope and with optimism, for we all believed that as the full potential of the venture came to be realised, its benefits would be incalculable to the welfare of "our several peoples and countries."

He also pointed out that due to certain clearly identifiable historical as well as geo-political factors which militated against regional closeness the process in organising regional co-operation was slow.

Historical legacies of conflict, vast prevailing disparities of size and resources, different levels of development both socio-economic and technological and differences of strategic perception stemming from these factors were a stumbling block, he said.

But this did not mean that the need for a desirability of the countries of this region to get-together in their collective interests had not been recognised or articulated earlier, the Sri Lankan leader said.

Next summit

Contd. from page 1

ime of Action's calendar of activities for 1986.

They slightly amended the draft charter providing for the annual summit meetings and twice a year meetings of Council of Ministers. The summiters themselves did the drafting.

Mr. Abul Ahsan said that the Heads of State and Government exchanged their views within the SARC framework on the fundamental elements of co-operation and gave a number of new ideas and directions.

Nepal's King Birendra suggested regional co-operation on the common river water resources for the maximum utilisation of its waters for the benefit of the South Asian countries.

President Ziaul Haq of Pakistan suggested renunciation of use of forces or threat by the SARC countries against one another.

King Wangchuk of Bhutan said that regional co-operation has a political dimension. Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi stressed the need for peaceful co-existence and sovereign equality. President Jayewardene of Sri Lanka said that regional political stability and human development should have priority in regional co-operation. The spokesman said that SARC Heads of State and government also decided that an expert committee would determine its co-operation with different multilateral organisations in which developing countries of the region specially the LDCs have a special interest.

The summit spokesman that President of Pakistan offered to host the SARC expert group meeting to determine co-operation with other multilateral forums. The President of Pakistan also suggested formation of a regional organisation for women. Asked whether non-aggression pact came up for discussion at the working session, the spokesman said no. In reply to another question he said ITU, FAO and EEC had made specific proposals to finance SARC's co-operation programmes.

He told another questioner that the airlines of the region were working on a proposal to package fare for promotion of tourism and connect capitals of SARC countries by air.

Rajiv 08 DEC 1985

Ziaul Haq

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own benefit.

Addressing the inaugural session of the summit, he felt that the regional cooperation would inevitably lead to greater understanding, which, he said, in turn would also dissipate mistrust, promote goodwill and help reduce waste and diversion of resources to unproductive uses.

This process, the Pakistani President felt, should be backed and accelerated by concurrent actions in the political field.

President Zia maintained that South Asian nations could take steps to banish nuclear weapons. He also suggested for creation of a system of consultations on matters of common concern to SARC members.

President Haq urged the South Asian countries to resolve not to waver from the path of cooperative endeavour for the common good of the people of the region. He said the search for peace, stability and progress in South Asia could make a vital contribution to international peace, and security, and assist in the world.

President Zia referred to the common commitment to the United Nations Charter and the Non-aligned Movement which provided sound basis for the consolidation of good neighbourly relations among the SARC member-countries.

Recorded deep indebtedness to President H M Ershad for the cordial invitation to the summit meeting and for the warm welcome by his government and the generous people of Bangladesh.

TRIBUTES TO LATE ZIA

The Pakistani President recorded the far sight and statesmanship of late President Ziaur Rahman in recognising the imperatives of regional cooperation and said our meeting in the capital of Bangladesh represents a tribute to him (President Ziaur Rahman) for his dedicated efforts to pioneer the comity of South Asian nations.

The seed sown by President Ziaur Rahman has grown into a sturdy plant, thanks to the painstaking care with which it has been nurtured by the Government of Bangladesh.

Departing from the written text, President Zia said the remarks by Sri Lankan President J. R Jayewardene that the establishment of peace and stability in each of our country and in each of our region were of fundamental importance to strengthen the SARC spirit.

Referring to the informal discussions and consultations at the experts level, he said the views exchanged by the SARC leaders and the remarks by the Sri Lankan President were extremely useful for making the SARC more effective.

Cond. from page 1
co-operation in the region.

The Indian Prime Minister felt that the model of co-operation evolved by SARC nations was in accord with realities, compulsions and genius of South Asian countries. "We have not sought to melt our bilateral relationships into a common regional identity, but rather to fit South Asian co-operation into our respective foreign policies as an additional dimension.

He said that his country welcomed the diversity of the region and affirmed sovereign equality of seven states of South Asia. "We have profound faith in peaceful co-existence," Mr. Gandhi said.

Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi hoped that the practice of regional co-operation under SARC would have a beneficial impact on bilateral relationships among member-nations.

He said that a spirit of solidarity, sharing and unity of purpose have brought the South Asian nation together.

Mr. Gandhi said that South Asian nations had been able to evolve modalities which did not allow bilateral stresses and strains to impinge on regional co-operation. "Our co-operation tempers enthusiasm with pragmatism and initiative with consensus," he said. The Indian Prime Minister said that the summit had given rise to great expectations among peoples of South Asia and outside world. Its success would depend on the involvement of our peoples in their hundreds of millions, he said.

ECONOMIC SITUATION

Referring to the global economic situation, Mr. Gandhi said that the world economy remained immersed in deep crisis with international economic institutions in disarray. "The consensus on development has broken down." Multilateralism have come under severe strain.

He said though the South Asian countries had weathered the economic crisis well, they were still being confronted by formidable problems like poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and disease. He said that SARC nations would have to overcome those problems in a highly adverse external environment.

Mr. Gandhi observed that the endeavours of South Asian nations would strengthen the forces of multilateralism and world-wide co-operation.

The Non-aligned Movement, the Indian Prime Minister said, to whom all South Asian nations belonged had made the pursuit of peace, progress, prosperity and the establishment of a new world order, the centerpiece of its efforts. "SARC gives practical form in our region to the declaration on collective self-reliance adopted at the New Delhi Non-aligned Summit."